



PAGOSA SPRINGS, ARCHULETA COUNTY, COLORADO 81147

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VOLUME 117 — NO. 12, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024

BoCC approves permit for Keyah Grande shooting range

By Clayton Chaney
Staff Writer

During a regular meeting held on Tuesday, Dec. 17, the Archuleta County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) approved a conditional use permit (CUP) for Keyah Grande to operate a commercial shooting range on its property.

The CUP was approved by a split vote of 2-1 with commissioners Warren Brown and Ronnie Maez voting in favor and Commissioner Veronica Medina opposing.

This decision comes nearly three months after the Archuleta County Planning Department originally heard the matter during a meeting held on Sept. 26. The item was tabled twice before being unanimously recommended for approval by the Archuleta County Planning Commission on Nov. 21.

Public comments of those in favor and opposed to the shooting range

operation were given at three planning commission meetings and at Tuesday's BoCC meeting.

Neighboring and nearby residents of Keyah Grande expressed concerns of noise levels, operating hours, lead remediation and other safety concerns. While not completely opposed to the operation of the shooting range, residents voiced a desire for the range to meet certain standards.

See the Oct. 3 and Nov. 27 issues of The SUN for more detail.

During the Dec. 17 meeting, Planning Manager Owen O'Dell presented the matter to the BoCC, noting the 13 conditions recommended by county staff and the planning commission.

O'Dell mentioned that Keyah Grande claims to be offering a user-friendly environment for its guests, law enforcement and "the wider community" by operating a commercial shooting range.

■ See Range A8

PAWSD files lawsuit against SJWCD, declares intent to sell ranch

By Josh Pike
Staff Writer

Tensions between the Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD) and the San Juan Water Conservancy District (SJWCD) over the Running Iron Ranch reached new heights last week, with PAWSD filing a lawsuit against the SJWCD and voting to declare its intention to sell the ranch.

At a Dec. 12 regular meeting, following an executive session, the PAWSD Board of Directors voted unanimously to have the district's lawyer file a lawsuit requesting declaratory judgment concerning the terms of the district's three-way agreement with the SJWCD and the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) that outlines how the Running Iron Ranch will be managed.

The board then discussed whether to make a formal declaration that the ranch is for sale, with PAWSD board

member Gene Tautges moving to declare that PAWSD is selling the ranch and PAWSD board member Glenn Walsh seconding.

PAWSD board member Bill Hudson noted that the board is now involved in litigation and asked Tautges whether it would be better to make a decision on the sale after the litigation is resolved or to make the decision now.

Tautges replied that "the other parties made it crystal clear their intention, and I think we owe it to them to make our intentions crystal clear, as well."

Walsh added that the district also should make its intentions clear to its customers that it is seeking the "highest and best offer" for the ranch.

The board then voted unanimously to declare its intention to sell the ranch.

Hudson then proposed that the PAWSD Running Iron Ranch sub-

■ See Lawsuit A8



SUN photos/Garrett Fevinger

Community members joined the Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County at Hilltop Cemetery on Saturday to honor local veterans at the annual Wreaths Across America ceremony. Servicemen and women called on attendees to live with purpose, and concluded the morning by laying remembrance wreaths on the graves of veterans at rest in the cemetery.



Photos courtesy La Plata Electric Association

On Tuesday, La Plata Electric Association announced the arrival of a new transformer to be used to bolster the grid in Pagosa Springs. Construction is slated to begin in the spring of 2025, with anticipated completion by 2026.

LPEA announces arrival of new transformer for Pagosa Springs

La Plata Electric Association

La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) has announced the arrival of its new transformer to be used in its first new substation since 2008 — a critical infrastructure investment aimed at increasing reliability and strengthening the electric grid for the Pagosa Springs community.

The new substation will increase grid reliability, reduce service disruptions and ensure LPEA can meet growing energy demands while maintaining its system.

This represents a \$6.5 million investment and is expected to significantly improve LPEA's operational flexibility while

■ See LPEA A8

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Letters

Letters to the Editor are printed as received and are not edited for grammar or punctuation, but may have been edited for content or style.

Letters to the Editor are opinions and information in them has not been verified for accuracy.

The opinions of letter writers do not necessarily represent those of the paper.

A joke

Dear Editor:
Maybe..maybe, I just found a clue as to why the typical white American housewife/mother won't elect another woman to the office of the Presidency. It hasn't mattered their success as leaders in other countries, or the type...Hilary was direct/ brusque and Kamala is feminine!

It seems that a recent discovery found the then humans coming out of Africa selected the Neanderthals for mating for probably unconscious desire to survive the new diseases encountered in Europe. Evolution is an incredibly complex thing and this survival tactic may have set our civilization process back abit!

JOKINGLY, I use to tease feminists that giving females the right to vote was less dangerous than driving. As the woman would always vote for the tall guy, deep voice, self assurane and neanderthal eyebrows. A joke that may have some truth.

David Blake

Double standard

Dear Editor:
A perfect example of the double standard Republicans hold Demo-

crats to was evident in John Myers recent letter. He called out Biden's "lie" when he pardoned his son after saying he wouldn't. Not once has Mr Meyer written about any of the 35,000 lies Trump told in his first term. Nor has he written about the constant barrage of lies told every time a Republican opens his mouth.

Republicans are are constantly referring to Biden's Administration as the most corrupt ever. Lie! That description belongs to the Trump Administration. Republicans spent 2 years trying to dig up dirt on Biden and found nothing. They settled on prosecuting Hunter Biden on a gun charge that millions of people have committed and the DOJ has not prosecuted. Conversely, dozens of Trump associates were found guilty of serious crimes against the USA and Trump himself was found guilty of 34 felonies in one trial and guilty of tax fraud in another.

Besides the lie that the 2020 election was stolen, Republicans are now lying that the Country's debt is due to the costs of Social Security and Medicare. What is true is that most of the US debt is a result of tax cuts passed by Republicans during Reagan's, Bush 2 and lastly Trump's administrations.

Another big lie is that the American economy has been suffering over the last 4 years under Biden. Yes, there were difficulties (mostly created by Trump) coming out of the pandemic and the resulting inflation. But the last 2 years has seen constant job growth, growth in manufacturing and increases in small businesses, increased wages and an inflation rate lower than any time during the Reagan Administration. Black Friday and Cyber Monday saw some of the biggest sales ever. More people than ever took to the air over Thanksgiving. That's the economy, people making and spending money.

The lies go on in a never ending litany from the Republican propaganda machine. It's easy to see how Mr Meyer and others have been brainwashed to believe the barrage of lies. For 30+ years, lies constantly hammered into non critical thinking brains, looking to blame something for all they hear is wrong in this country and world. The biggest lie and most disturbing is the constant carping that America is in decline because of Democratic and "woke" policies, etc. They lie about climate change, the border and crime, but do they ever offer any solutions? No, everything is politicized in their quest for power.

Just like 2017 when Trump came to office and skated through 2 years on the economy Obama built, he comes to office in 2025 with a well running economy. Then Trump and Republicans will claim it's because of their policies. FOX and other right wing outlets will mimic the lie and the brainwashed masses will nod in agreement and continue to vote against their own self interest.

Dave Butcher

The golden rule

Dear Editor:
I have noticed a number of people saying, including in letters to the editor, that Trump's return to power is a victory for Christianity. Nothing could be further from the truth. The message of Christianity is the Golden Rule - treat others as you would like to be treated. In Mark 12:31, we are told that there are two great commandments that summarize all the rest: To

love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. And that the second of these is equally important.

According to Matthew 25:40-45, Jesus tells his followers that "whatever you do to the least of my brethren, that you do unto me." He goes on to add the following:

"For I was hungry, and you gave me no food: I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink.

I was a stranger, and you took me not in; naked, and you clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and you visited me not."

When asked when they did not minister to him, Jesus answered them, saying, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me."

If you consider yourself a Christian, please think about these verses in the context of Trump's vilification of migrants as "illegals" and "invaders." Or his promises to round them up, put them in tent camps and prisons, and expel them from our country - even their family members who are here legally, even people seeking asylum, and in some cases even their children born in the United States who are US citizens. There is nothing Christian about treating our fellow human beings this way.

The fact is that the vast majority of migrants who have entered our country are fleeing persecution and poverty, just trying to make a better life for themselves and their families. Yes, occasionally a migrant commits a horrible crime, as Trump and his followers speak endlessly about, but in truth immigrants, both authorized and unauthorized, commit crimes at lower rates than people born in this country. Thus, if we have more migrants, the crime rate actually goes down. This is probably one reason why the violent crime rate has been declining ever since President Biden took office, to a level lower now than it was when Trump took office in his first term.

There is also nothing Christian about threatening to imprison people who criticize you, as Trump has done with public officials of both political parties such as Liz Cheney, Adam Kinzinger, Benny Thompson, Mitch McConnell, and even generals in the U.S. Armed Services. This is the behavior of a brutal king or dictator, not a true Christian.

If you want to support Trump, that is your right. But don't say a win for

Trump is a win for Christianity. There is nothing Christian about vilifying migrants, seeking to imprison those with whom you disagree, or using the Bible as a political prop or a way to make money.

John Farley

'All is Calm'

Dear Editor:
Last weekend I experienced "All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914", playing at Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. I don't have enough superlatives for this 'Thingamajig Theatre Company production, but I'll try. It's a story of the innocence and goodness of humanity in the most hellish of circumstances. It's a true story.

The entire play is sung a cappella style without interruption, resulting in impeccable harmonies flowing from one song to the next, one story to the next. It seems to me a miracle that Artistic Director Tim Moore could find this cast of men who harmonized and acted so beautifully together, and Director Andrew Barratt Lewis to make it all happen. The seamless storytelling never gave the audience a chance to catch its breath until it was over.

By the end, I was emotionally wrung out - in a good way. Any art that has such power to move and emotionally connect with its audience is art that must be experienced.

If you are in Pagosa, I hope you also will take time to experience "All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914". It will take the meaning of your holiday season to a whole different level.

Nine performances remain between now and December 28. Surely you can find a performance that fits you and your family's schedule?

For tickets go to pagosacenter.org. Wishing peace for all,

Cynda Green

Cultivated-meat research

Dear Editor:
As the impacts of climate change become more widely felt and acknowledged, our political leaders should support increased public funding for cultivated-meat research. For those who don't know, cultivated meat is grown from livestock cells, without slaughter. The new protein is expected to require a fraction of the greenhouse-gas emissions that

■ See Letters A4

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Letters

The SUN welcomes letters from readers.

Please submit your letter electronically in a format that can be copied and pasted to editor@pagosasan.com or via the form at www.PagosaSUN.com. Letters must not be in all capitals.

All letters must:

- be 500 words or less
- include the actual first and last name of the author
- include the author's address and daytime phone number
- be received by The SUN by noon on Tuesday (deadline may move up due to a holiday)

Letters will be limited to two per month per letter writer.

Letters quoting other people must contain proper attribution.

There is no guarantee letters will be published.

Poetry, anonymous letters, letters that are libelous or in poor taste, or that attack a private citizen or business will not be published.

If necessary, only one letter pertaining to a candidate or political issue will be printed in each edition up to three weeks prior to the election.

The SUN generally does not edit letters, but reserves the right to do so.

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Education



Photo courtesy Pagosa Peak Open School
Pagosa Peak Open School students visit "Wilson," the new radar system at the Durango-La Plata County Airport.



Photo courtesy Pagosa Peak Open School
Pagosa Peak Open School students learn about weather data collection at the Emergency Operations Center in Durango.

Kindergartners visit new radar system, study weather

By Emily Murphy
Pagosa Peak Open School

"My weather instrument measures air pressure," said Pagosa Peak Open School (PPOS) kindergartner Silas.

With his coat on and his kinder friends surrounding him, he was ready to head outside and put the instrument to the test. The others were just as excited.

"Mine measures moisture."
"Mine measures wind."

This group of 5- and 6-year-olds are wrapping up their most recent project: a study of weather. Students not only learned weather terms, but also looked into how people are affected by weather, prepare for weather and collect data.

The group visited a new radar system at the Durango-La Plata County Airport, named "Wilson," where they were able to look at weather patterns and data across the world.

"The radar can also tell us where there are wildfires," kindergartner Annessa said.

Students then visited the Emergency Operations Center in Durango, where they learned more about different types of precipitation and how the data collected is used in our area, as

well as across the world. "It is so wonderful to watch my students' confidence grow as they learn in the community," Kindergarten Advisor Maggie Saunders said.

After gathering information about weather and building their background knowledge, the students determined which tools people use to track weather. Students decided which elements of weather they would like to measure and designed their own tools.

The kindergarten celebrated the end of their weather project by acting out their own weather-based story for PPOS families.

Through storytelling and small-group work, kindergartners learn not only science standards relating to the environment, but also learn how to work together.

PPOS is a free, K-8 district charter school focused on implementing a project-based learning curriculum in a restorative practices environment. Field work is foundational to project-based learning. PPOS aims to foster academic excellence and support our students in contributing to an evolving world through community participation and civic engagement.

To learn more about PPOS, visit pagosapeakopenschool.org.

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Pagosa Springs Community Choir awards vocal scholarships

By Heidi Tanner
Pagosa Springs Community Choir

At last weekend's Pagosa Springs Community Choir concerts, the organization awarded two vocal scholarships in the amount of \$500 each.

These scholarships will provide vocal lessons to the two recipients.

This year's scholarships were awarded to eighth-grade student Lillian Jones and high school sophomore Avonlea Thomas.

Jones was also accepted into the middle school all-state choir and is the only Pagosa Springs Middle School student to receive this honor in many years.

Thomas sang with the Community Choir this year and in addition to her vocal work she is an accomplished dancer.

Congratulations to these two young ladies.

Thank you, Pagosa, for coming out and supporting our three Community Choir concerts which were held last weekend. We had a wonderful time singing for you in celebration of Christmas. Thank you for supporting the Community Choir, and we will look forward to singing for you again next year.



Photo courtesy Pagosa Springs Community Choir
The Pagosa Springs Community Choir awarded two \$500 vocal scholarships during their Christmas concerts last weekend. Left to right are Heidi Tanner, board president; Avonlea Thomas and Lillian Jones, scholarship recipients; and Dan Burch, music director of the Pagosa Springs Community Choir.

Play and participation discussed at charter school board meeting

By Garrett Fevinger
Staff Writer

Swings, springers, and a comet spinner; a cliff rider; a sand pit and digger; one double slide; and a seesaw: those features and others are envisioned for a new playground at Pagosa Peak Open School (PPOS), and, in a preview offered to board members Dec. 11, it's a vision inching closer to reality.

The renovation, which will also bring gently sloping lawns and other natural elements like wildflowers, boulders and logs, is slated to break ground after this winter's thaw, according to project manager and former PPOS board member David Pribble.

"We're in very good shape on the schedule," Pribble reported. "Everything's coming along and looking good."

Final plans for the new \$720,000, Colorado Health Foundation grant-funded playground are likely to be ready for state review by mid-January, Pribble noted, with construction scheduled to wrap up some time next August.

"It's been an extremely difficult challenge, with the monies that we have available," Pribble said.

He described some of the twists and turns the project has endured since its inception — the latest being a decision to forgo hiring a general contractor.

"With the monies that we have,

when we get a [general contractor] involved, you're starting [to accrue] a lot of extra costs we can eliminate if we assume the project ourselves," Pribble said, indicating he would remain at the helm of the renovation as project manager and owner's representative.

"We didn't really want to go that way, but it was cost-prohibitive to have a general contractor," Pribble said, adding, "This is the only way that I see us being able to get this thing done."

Pribble currently serves as a planning commissioner for Archuleta County and has almost 30 years of experience in commercial development, according to his resume.

"Me being involved in it, with my experience, we can definitely mitigate a lot of risk and liability if I'm involved with it every day and control costs, which is going to be very, very important on this project," he said.

Pribble indicated that applying for the insurances a general contractor would typically carry will now fall to him. He will also be in charge of hiring a retinue of subcontractors to help handle specific jobs like concrete laying and landscaping.

"We'll want to make sure that those [subcontractors] will have their own bonding and insurance, then," PPOS board treasurer Pamela Meade said. Pribble replied that they would.

Looking ahead, Pribble told the board he anticipates a permit for construction to be issued by late Feb-

ruary, but that the one from Mother Nature may not arrive until March or April.

"The playground construction — I'm still holding four months," he said, eyeing the project timeline. "I'm anticipating a three-month — with possibly a little punch-list after that — but a three-month construction schedule" with a tentative completion date scheduled for Aug. 4, 2025.

He added, "I am absolutely comfortable with where we're at."

Ticking through a list of the new equipment and other design elements, Pribble and PPOS School Director Emily Murphy described a multitiered space that encourages collaboration and interaction, with apparatuses for the most rambunctious and also areas for the quieter, more reflective set.

"It took quite a while," Pribble said, reflecting on the design's evolution, "but I think this has turned out to be a very nice playground."

In an email to The SUN, Murphy reflects on the evolution of the project and the early voices that helped bring it to life, writing, "We are grateful to community members Elly Osmera and Cady Allione for seeking out, applying for and obtaining the grant funding. At the time, Elly was on the PPOS school board and was responding to the request of staff and parents to upgrade the playground. Now both Cady and Elly are on the playground committee and continue to be heavily involved in the design and develop-

ment of the playground."

New policy for participation

During the same meeting, PPOS board members resumed their examination of a question Murphy first raised in November: what to do when students and families opt-out of participating in curriculum-aligned fieldwork at the school.

In a draft policy crafted to address that question, the school notes, "Participation in all fieldwork is an expectation of Pagosa Peak students."

It further describes the rewards administrators hope students reap from joining in.

"Fieldwork provides students with depth and complexity within their work, allowing them to apply real world experiences to academic concepts," the draft policy reads. "Learning and teaching become

■ See Board A7

Healthy Archuleta hosts sleep physician for Community Health Empowerment education

Healthy Archuleta

In early December, Dr. Darius Lohmanee, a pediatric sleep specialist from Chicago, Ill., paid a visit to Healthy Archuleta and Pagosa Springs.

During his visit, he shared information about sleep health and his Community Health Empowerment (CHE) program with our organization and local health partners.

He created the CHE program as a way to help his patients form a community to optimize their sleep habits. They have since looked at ways fitness and nutrition play into this role.

The overall goal of CHE is for people to come together and form a supportive community to develop healthier sleep and wellness habits.

Darius said communities have the most effects from these wellness habits. When a child experiences poor sleep, it affects their ability to func-

tion properly in their daily activities the next day. This later affects peers and the environments around them. Similarly, with adults, poor sleep causes poor functioning the next day. It is in this way that people realize they exist in the community to support each other to develop healthier lifestyles and, eventually, communities. This empowers people to take control of the health factors that physicians may not have the time to address.

Healthy Archuleta sees the potential that this program has to improve our community's well-being.

Over the summer, Healthy Archuleta formed a Wellness Community Learning and Leadership Circle, and the group participated in the CHE sleep curriculum. The members of this group had shared experiences as mothers.

While reflecting on this experience, members of this group said it

took a while to actually discuss the problems people have with their health. It took one person in this group to speak up about the health habits they were having trouble with to make everyone feel comfortable sharing. This was the first step in developing better habits.

During Darius' visit, some of these participants reflected on their CHE experiences with Darius and provided input on future CHE sessions in the community.

Healthy Archuleta hopes to keep fostering this relationship with Darius and to facilitate the CHE materials with more community members toward developing healthier habits and advancing common goals around health.

To learn more about the efforts of Healthy Archuleta, please visit our website at www.foodcoalition4archuleta.org or email us at fssearchuleta@gmail.com.

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Sports

SWIMMING



Photos courtesy Heather Miller

Lady Pirates take to the water for their first meet of the season on Dec. 13 in Delta.

Lady Pirates qualify for state in medley

By Randi Pierce
Staff Writer

One meet, one state qualification in the books.

The Pagosa Springs High School Lady Pirate swim team started the season with a bang on Dec. 13 in Delta, with the team qualifying for state in the 200-yard medley relay.

"I could not ask for a better start to the season," coach Heather Miller wrote in an email to The SUN. "We started the Delta meet with a State Qualification in the 200 Medley Relay, I knew they would be close but thought we would need a couple more meets to get there."

The Lady Pirate team of Marlowe Hedgecock, Leah Blackman, Chloe Gantt and Asia Gorman took fifth overall in the event with a time of 2:19.49 seconds.

A second Lady Pirate team — Grace Cram, Gianna Shaeffer, Rebecca Stewart and Aubrey Gerdel — finished eighth with a time of 2:40.11.

In the 200-yard freestyle, Cram finished seventh in 2:41.69, while Gemma Slingerland finished 16th overall with a time of 3:10.03.

Gorman finished seventh in the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 3:11.94. Ruby Snell finished ninth with a time of 4:04.31.

Ten Lady Pirates took to the water for the 50-yard free. Gantt took ninth with a time of 30.41 seconds. Hedgecock finished 13th with a time of 31.51 seconds. Aubrey Gerdel finished 18th with a time of 33.29 seconds. Blackman took 28th with a time of 37.00 seconds. Shaeffer followed in 29th with a time of 37.44 seconds. Stewart finished 33rd with a time of 38.16 seconds. Brooklyn

Trujillo swam a time of 40.39 seconds to finish 40th. Kaiya Lyons finished 42nd with a time of 41.50 seconds. Lucia Rivera followed in 43rd with a time of 41.57 seconds. Shantee Murphy took 47th with a time of 44.62 seconds.

Gantt finished ninth in the 100-yard free with a time of 1:07.16. Slingerland swam the event in 1:25.98 to notch 24th. Trujillo followed in 29th with a time of 1:36.47.

Gorman took fifth in the 500-yard free with a time of 7:23.34.

The team of Gerdel, Blackman, Slingerland and Gantt took 10th in the 200-yard free relay. The team of Shaeffer, Rivera, Snell and Lyons finished 12th in the event with a time of 2:32.35.

Hedgecock took eighth with a time of 1:23.83 in the 100-yard backstroke. Cram followed in ninth with a time of 1:25.14. Murphy finished 21st with a time of 1:58.25.

Five Lady Pirates competed in the 100-yard breaststroke. Blackman took 10th to lead the Lady Pirates with a time of 1:32.71. Shaeffer finished 13th in 1:38.78. Gerdel took 20th with a time of 1:45.42. Snell finished 22nd with a time of 1:50.05, and Rivera followed in 23rd with a time of 1:56.86.

The Lady Pirates finished fifth out of the six teams at the meet.

"A majority of the swims in Delta were best times and for many very significant time drops, 5-15 seconds for some events," Miller highlights.

The following day, the Lady Pirates were in action again, this time at the Gunnison Invite.

"The Gunnison meet was a little bit of a struggle just because the swimmers were tired from the meet in Delta the night before but we still had many best times," Miller wrote.

In Gunnison, the 200 medley relay team of Gerdel, Blackman, Stewart and Slingerland finished 15th with a time of 2:43.57.

Gorman led the Lady Pirates in the 200 free with a time of 2:41.01. Shaeffer followed in 18th with a time of 3:21.13.

Four Lady Pirates took to the water for the 200 individual medley. Gantt finished 11th with a time of 2:59.47. Hedgecock took 15th in 3:18.09. Cram finished 18th with a time of 3:22.99. Blackman followed in 19th with a time of 3:37.08.

Slingerland took 29th in the 50 free with a time of 37.13 seconds. Bella Gutierrez swam the event in 40.79 seconds to finish 33rd. Trujillo took 39th in 44.26 seconds.

Eight Lady Pirates competed in the 100 free. Gorman finished 16th with a time of 1:12.95. Gerdel took 25th with a time of 1:26.74. Shaeffer followed in 26th with a time of 1:28.43. Lyons took 29th with a time of 1:29.36. Blackman finished 34th with a time of 1:31.85. Gutierrez swam a time of 1:32.55 to finish 35th. Rivera took 38th with a time of 1:36.73. Murphy finished 42nd with a time of 1:52.64.

Cram took eighth in the 500 free with a time of 7:27.91, while Slingerland finished 15th with a time of 8:45.94.

In the 200 free relay, the team of Gorman, Cram, Hedgecock and Gantt finished sixth with a time of 2:05.58.

"The 200 Free Relay is just a few seconds away from qualifying for state which was a bit a surprise that they were so close," Miller notes.

In the 100 backstroke, Gantt led the Lady Pirates with a time of 1:22.14. Lyons followed in 26th with a time of 1:53.13. Trujillo finished 27th in 1:57.25. Rivera followed in 28th with a

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CHEER



Photo courtesy Sean Gallegos

The Lady Pirate cheer team performs at the high school state spirit championships on Dec. 13.

Pirate cheer takes ninth at state competition

By Randi Pierce
Staff Writer

The Pagosa Springs High School Lady Pirate cheer team took to the floor of the Denver Coliseum on Friday, Dec. 13, for the Colorado high school state spirit championships.

The Pirate team returned after placing ninth out of 13 teams in the 3A cheer competition with a score of 60.05.

That score included no deductions.

The top team, Highland High

School, logged a score of 79.85.

Coach Toni Gallegos notes in an email to TheSUN the team “did amazing,” moving from 11th last year to ninth this year.

“We have improved greatly on tumbling and harder stunting,” she wrote.

Gallegos explained that, for the cheer competition, each team is required to incorporate cheer, dance, tumbling and stunting into a 2.5-minute routine.

“This year we were fortunate to purchase pirate flags and get our

megaphone some much needed TLC,” she adds.

The state performance followed a first-place finish in All Girls 3A at the Western Regionals in Grand Junction on Nov. 16.

This year’s squad has six seniors, 11 returning athletes from last year’s team and eight new competitors, Gallegos notes.

She adds this year’s team has been “so dedicated to improvement and bringing” the old Pirate school spirit back.

randi@pagosasun.com

Low- to middle-income older adults can save money

By Eileen Doherty
Colorado Gerontological Society

As the cost of groceries and other necessities increases, we look for ways to save money. You may be able to save money on Medicare Part B.

One program is the Medicare Savings Program, or MSP. MSP has three individual programs. The first program is the Qualified Medicare Program, or QMB. To qualify for QMB, an individual must have less than \$1,275 per month in income (couples less than \$1,724 per month).

Through Medicaid, QMB pays the Medicare Part A and B deductibles, Part B premium, the Part A hospital and nursing home co-insurance, as well as the physician services and other Part B co-pays. For eligible individuals, this benefit pays for all out-of-pocket medical costs.

The second and third programs are known as Special Low Income Medicare Beneficiary and the Qualified Individual. Medicaid pays for the Medicare Part B premium of \$185 per month for individuals whose income

is between \$1,276 and \$1,715 per month (couples \$1,526 to \$2,320 per month).

The resource limits for all three programs are \$12,430 for singles and \$20,130 for couples, excluding the house, one car, an irrevocable burial policy and a term life insurance policy.

All individuals who are approved for MSP will receive \$185 per month more in their Social Security check, a significant amount of discretionary income for many low- to moderate-income individuals.

Individuals who receive Medicare must apply through the county Department of Human Services or on Colorado PEAK at <https://co.colorado.gov/colorado-peak> to receive MSP. MSP recipients are exempt from Medicaid Estate Recovery and cannot have a lien placed on their home.

Individuals are automatically enrolled in the Low Income Savings program to assist with paying for prescription drugs.

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CDOT eyes early spring to begin U.S. 160 reconstruction

By Garrett Fevinger
Staff Writer

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) discussed Monday that it has officially selected a contractor to reconstruct a 1-mile stretch of U.S. 160 in downtown Pagosa Springs, with work to begin between March and April 2025.

Gathered inside one of the businesses located along the proposed construction route, community members, public officials and business owners listened as CDOT public information manager Meredith Greene reported that W.W. Clyde and Company would serve as contractor for the project, which is scheduled to endure for at least two seasons.

"We are moving forward with them as the project construction team," Greene said, later adding that work is scheduled to begin between March 17 and April 14, depending on weather conditions.

"Working back from those dates," Greene said, "CDOT, [project consultant] RockSol and W.W. Clyde are going to be meeting to talk about concerns that have been brought up from the group. They're going to be

talking about project phasing and really getting into the nitty-gritty detail."

On Monday, questions swirled around those details, with attendees pressing Greene and the Main Street Advisory Board's Cone Zone Committee for more information about the project's timeline, scope and opportunities for local involvement.

"CDOT, at the last meeting that I went to, couldn't come up with a whole lot of answers to my questions," local business owner Cindy Wilemon said.

She also pointed to lingering scar tissue from previous CDOT-led projects, most notably the one along McCabe Creek that Wilemon noted lasted well-beyond its initial timeline.

"When is it going to end?" she asked.

Examining the contract between Clyde and CDOT, Greene counted 324 nonconsecutive working days scheduled for the project, which she indicated would take place in two phases — the first focused primarily on utility work along the construction route.

Preliminary exploratory efforts are currently underway beneath the highway, according to project officials, but what crews uncover there is still a question.

"We could get under there and they could find something that was not in the as-builts," said Tracy Trulove, one of the public information officers for the project. "You have all kinds of things that will occur on a construction project. The only thing we can count on is that our schedule might change."

Answers to additional questions surrounding the utility work, including whether businesses will be

charged reconnection fees, will not likely be available until after the new year, according to CDOT.

"We're definitely going to hit the ground running with all of you after the new year," Greene said. And while initial planning meetings take place, "It's going to be quiet likely through the end of January."

Asked how the state plans to address impacts to local commerce — including traffic control, parking, and tourist wayfinding — Greene indicated early conversations have identified night work as one possible solution, but that additional ideas and opportunities for local involvement are still forming.

"Once we have a chance to sit down and do the detailed project meetings with the contractor, we can work out a plan to better involve the local businesses," she said. "We are currently working on our involvement plan."

In earlier meetings, CDOT officials suggested that passenger shuttles and other vehicles could anticipate 10- to 15-minute delays while navigating through areas where crews are working, but on Monday could not clarify how often those delays would occur or how many lanes of traffic would remain open.

"The [lane] closures are in the specs to be no longer than 15 minutes at any given time," Greene said, "but I really need to get you answers to these questions after we've had the project's first meeting with the contractor."

As for parking — an issue one attendee called the elephant in the room — Main Street board member Rosanna Dufour reported alternatives have already been found for the

188 spaces expected to be lost during construction.

"We have enough temporary parking to offset all of the lost parking ... on main street," Dufour said, with those alternative spaces located in lots owned by The Springs Resort and Spa and the Ruby M. Sisson Memorial Library.

Speaking to business owners worried about potential revenue losses, Dufour urged them to take advantage of several free instructional resources as well as one not previously available: time.

"A year ago we didn't have any of this in place," she said. "We've been blessed with having this time to prepare so that we can come out of this not just surviving, but thriving."

Emily Lashbrooke, executive director of the Pagosa Springs Community Development Corporation, pointed to additional possibilities her team is exploring that could help soften the project's impact on the business community.

Those possibilities include a low-interest business disruption loan program, grants to assist with potential utility reconnection fees and a "cone zone survival kit."

"We're going to be at our business community's beck and call," she said. "Our cone zone committee will work hard to make sure that we meet challenges where they are and try to help our community to overcome them."

Main Street officials indicated the next project update may come in late January or early February, after CDOT and the contractor have had an opportunity to meet and hash out some of the details that were unavailable as of Monday.

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Range

Continued from front shoot," Maez said.

Development Director Pamela Flowers added that an instructor could bring classes that are not part of the 100-member club.

Maez also commented that he qualified for his concealed weapon license at the range "some years back." Maez inquired about the county's noise ordinance, with Flowers explaining that for agricultural ranching properties, it would be 60 decibels from the property line, though she noted the county could not enforce it.

Brown commented that a .30 caliber rifle creates a noise decibel of 138 from the firing muzzle, asking what the distance is from the shooting range to the property line.

Flowers noted it is approximately 800 feet.

Sackman then commented on the genesis of the shooting range, noting that 10 to 15 years ago it became apparent that local law enforcement agencies needed a place to train, "and we had a space."

Sheriff Mike Le Roux commented that he joined the ACSO in 2015 and the range was in use at that time.

Medina asked what the requirement would be for the shooting range, permit wise, if it were not operating commercially.

"It doesn't care if you're commercial or private, or anything — you have to have a permit," Flowers said.

Brown commented that he'd rather have condition 12 read "local law enforcement," instead of, "law enforcement."

Maez mentioned that he would like to see a public notification be sent to neighboring properties when a shooting event will occur at irregular hours.

Le Roux commented that nighttime shooting events are limited and that the ACSO has not done any this year.

Brown moved to approve the CUP application with conditions one through 13, amending condition 12 to read local law enforcement.

Maez also amended the condition to read "for training" rather than "certification," and seconded Brown's motion.

Before voting on the matter, Medina commented, "I just think that we don't have all the information and with the county not having counsel ... I know I have some unanswered questions," based on items brought up during the meeting.

County Attorney Todd Weaver was absent from the meeting.

"I'm not ready to make a motion or decision," she added.

The matter then passed by a vote of 2-1.

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SUN photos/Randi Pierce

The Pagosa Springs Community Choir entertained audiences over three days with its "Joy to the World" concerts held in the Pagosa Springs High School auditorium.



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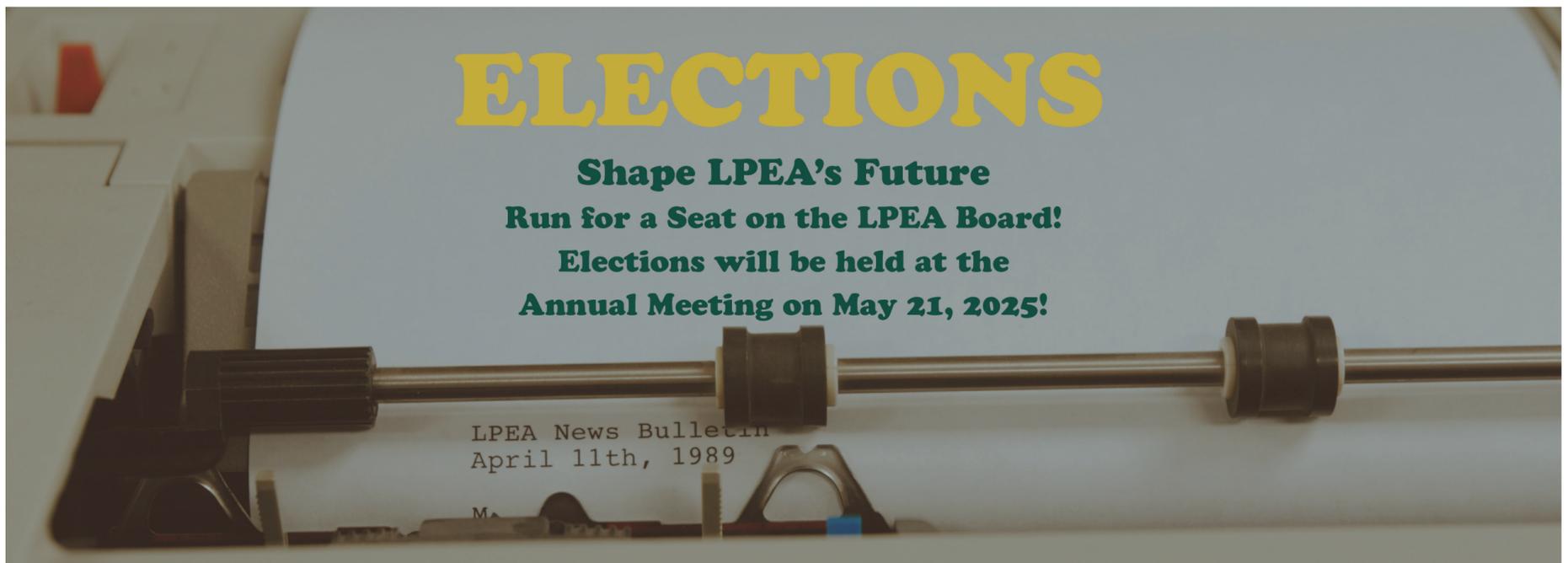


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- District 2 - South and West La Plata County: Dan Huntington
- District 3 - City of Durango: Joe Lewandowski
- District 4 - North and East La Plata County: John Witchel

*If you are submitting election documents in paper format, it is your responsibility to make sure they are received during LPEA's normal business hours.



preview

ARTS & LIFE

Merry Christmas



Letters To Santa

Once again, The SUN teamed up with Santa and his elves to help deliver letters to the guy in the big red suit, with the promise we could share those Christmas wishes with our readers, as they were written.

Dear Santa,

I would love a new football for Christmas this year. I have been good this year. Ok the truth is I have been a wee bit naughty, but I am trying to be good that should count for something. I really like footballs. Hope you can drop it off at my Grandma's I live with her and my mommy. I'll put out cookies and milk.

Love,
Daisy Mae, age 6

Dear Santa,

I love you so much I want to meet the Real You Santa. Here are the three top things on my wishlist
Iphone12
Disney Doorables
Moriah Elizabeth merch

Harper, age 10

Dear Santa,

For christmas this year I would like a Stanley and I want two phones, onw my mom I want my mom tohceve a new phoes!

Love, Tyna

Dear Santa,

For Christmas this year I want a Doctor set and enough

mony to go to Lego Land and I (heart) Santa I allso want a penut my play Full monky.

From, Rowen

Dear Santa,

For Christmas I would like a blender for smoothies, and a rainbow Stanly, because they hold a lot of water. And could you please get my Mom a warmer Ski jacket? If you can get that stuf can you please bring it? P.S. Can you put an apple in my stocking? I think I have been very good this year, do you think so?

Love, Lindsey

Dear Santa,

For Christmas I would like some pairs of chopos because Chopo (my pug) ate them (chopos are slippers). I also want new books, file folders, and some pocket kleen-exes For my mom, can you give her some black gloves and give my friend Sterling a gizmo watch so we can text each other I think I deserve this because even though I've done alot of naughty things I've almost got my white riddon which required ten nice things!

Love, Jo

Dear Santa,

For Christmas this year, I would like a laptop, book, a kindle (the one with book and squishmallows and squishalongs. For my sister, give them a squishmallow too? Thank you For the gifts. I think I should get these gift

■ See Letters on next page

Live Performers



Thursday

The Pagosa Bar: Karaoke, 7:30 p.m.
The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Jackson Mountain Ramblers, 5 p.m.

Friday

The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Brass Quintet and Noelle Victorian Caroling Acapella Group, 5 p.m.

Saturday

The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Maxwell Miller, 5 p.m.

Monday

The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Jason Rose, 5 p.m.

Tuesday

The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Maxwell Miller, 5 p.m.

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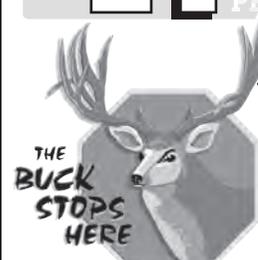


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Letters

■ continued from previous page
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From,
Logahn

Dear Santa,

For Christmas this year I would like Snow Leopards stuff please and a gaming laptop. for my cousin can you bring her a pink stuff animal pleas and thank you Also if you want, you can surprise us!

from Olivia

Dear Santa,

For Christmas this year I Would like new some Books, and a big toy car, anerf gun, and rope. For The Book The Book The one Book I wand is Called The one and OULY Ivan can you get Takis From my sister? I think I been very good this year

From, Wallace.

Dear Santa,

For Christmas I would like toy cars. I also want a Batman action figure and house and maybe even the Batcave! That would be so cool! Could you bring toys for my whole family too please?

Love,
Jordan

Dear Santa,

For Chrisnas this year I would like A new dirt bike and A Nintendo switch. I think my mom would like A bike rack. I think I have been a Good Kid.

From creek.

Dear Santa,

For Christmas this year I would like a toy grenade. Would you Pretty Please give my mom a K mug from City Market, For my sister a vet kit, FOR my DaD a very spiffy neck tie? The reason my Family and I deserve all of this is because me and my family have been very good this year!

Sincerely, Lenox.

Dear Santa,

For Christmas this year I don't know what I want so I want you to surprise me! But, I do know some things my family wants. My Brother Eli wants a lego spacestation. I think me and Eli should have these things because I've been good this year.

From Asher

Dear Santa,

For christmas this year, I want a dirtbike. Could you also get my Dad a pocket knife? I deserve this because, I always finish my work at school and I am a very Good child.

From, Torin.

■ See Letters on page 5



Happy Holidays

10% OFF
Books



10% OFF
TV Consoles & Recliners
*applies to in-stock merchandise only



20% OFF
men's & women's apparel

30% OFF

Everything Christmas

*final sale, non-returnable, live trees 20%

Lights • Trees • Decor

Open 7:30 a.m.-NOON Dec. 24th | CLOSED Christmas Day

Prices are as marked. All sales final on discounted items, cash and carry, no returns on sale items, discounts do not apply to sale items, sale prices may not be combined with other discounts. Delivery and set up or installation not included. Some other exclusions may apply. Limited to stock on hand.



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Christmas in Pagosa

An old-fashioned celebration

Support our community by attending the events and sales at these local establishments this holiday season. These businesses have worked hard to make this a magical shopping season for you!

THE PAGOSA SPRINGS SUN ENCOURAGES YOU TO SHOP AT THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

Best. Gift. Ever

Unwrap the meaning of Christmas

Christmas Eve - December 24
 Mass at 5:00 PM at JPPI
 Mass at 8:00 PM at IHM

Christmas Day - December 25
 Mass at 9:00 AM at JPPI

Holy Day - January 1
 Mass at 9:00 AM at JPPI



Pope John Paul II (JPPI) 353 S. Pagosa Blvd
 Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) 455 Lewis Street

Super Holiday Christmas & New Year SALE

10% OFF firearms

15% OFF optics

Check out our other in-store specials!

15% OFF ammo



Christmas

at Pagosa Baking Company

Pies
 Our traditional pies, plus
 NEW Red Chile Chocolate Pecan Pie

Stollen • Traditional Yule Log
 Beautiful Decorated Christmas Cookies
 Locally Sourced Gifts for Food Lovers

OPEN CHRISTMAS DAY
 7 AM TO NOON

Call by Saturday 12/21
 to place your order
 264-9348



970-264-9348
 238 Pagosa Street
 www.pagosabakingcompany.com/menu/holiday

CHRISTMAS EVE
 CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
 DECEMBER 24 || 5 PM



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 www.opendoorpagosa.com



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THE PAGOSA SPRINGS SUN ENCOURAGES YOU TO SHOP AT THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

Letters

■ continued from page 3

Dear Santa,
This year I have Been a good boy. This year I want an iphon. and a snow ball maker. I also want a PS5. Culd you also bring a mug for Grandpa?
from, Michael

Dear Santa,
For Christmas this year I would like a Stanley I want a 3 iPhones I want one for my cousion She wants a brandn new apple phone because she loves phones. Also, my MoM and I want one. We have all been good.
Love, Aaliyah

Dear Santa,
For Christmas this year I wuld like a huge mouse squishmallo head phones (because my dog ate mine) and a walmart gift card. I wuld also like a blak scooter, a babysiters book and a baby elf. Culd I get something for my dog. If Yes, can I get her a dog bed with some toys? And I think I deserve this because I think I have been a really good girl. I hope I get what I want!
From Mackenzie.

Dear Santa,
My name is xanaeh. I am 6 years old. I have been nice this year. I would like a blue car with a bowl. Do you have a elf? :) \$\$\$

Dear Santa,
My name is Leighton I am 7 years old I would boedylalle year. I would like like crib and benbag Also a suce tet. Which reindeer is your favorite?
Love,
Leighton

Dear Santa,
My name is Zayury. I a 6 years. old. I would like a stuffy of Rex. Also I want v-bucks and and a classroom for my home is?
Love, Zayury

Dear Santa, my name is Lizy. I am 6 years old. I have been nice this year. I would like a toy mookees and a teddy bears and a ipads. Do you Know where my home is? I will put cookies and milk for you Santa. which reindeer is your favorite.
Love, Lizy

Dear Santa,
My name is Ashy. I pm 6 years I have been good this yeah T have morecars
Love, Ashley

■ See Letters on next page

Santa Claus is coming!



to Goodman's Department Store

Join us for cider and cookies!

December 23rd
from 3-5 pm



**Sale Prices Effective December 19th-24th,
unless otherwise stated**

**Ariat
Cruisers
30%
OFF**

**25%
OFF
All
Mix-o-logy
Products**

**All
Groove
Life
20% OFF**

**Men's XL
Jacket
Raffle
Giveaway**

**\$50
Gift Card
Raffle
Giveaway**

*Come in
to see our
Daily
Flash
Sales*

**10% OFF All Montana
Silversmith Jewelry
(Dec. 22nd-23rd)**



ARIAT
HOLIDAY REBATE
THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

EARN CASH BACK	SPEND \$150, GET	SPEND \$250, GET	SPEND \$500, GET
	\$15	\$35	\$100

On any single in-store purchase of Ariat footwear, apparel, or accessories from 11/24/2024-12/24/2024 at a participating retailer. Online purchases do not qualify. Limit one rebate per name, home or email address and household. Full terms and conditions, online entry, downloadable rebate form, and a list of participating retailers can be found at www.ariat.com/holidayrebate. OFFER VALID IN THE 50 US STATES AND DC FOR LEGAL RESIDENTS, AGE 18 AND OLDER; VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. COUPON MUST BE PRESENT AT TIME OF PURCHASE.

**GOODMAN'S DEPT. STORE
SUPER COUPON
Dec. 22nd -23rd, 2024 ONLY
YES! We will be open Christmas Eve 9-4.**

Your choice any ONE item

25% OFF

Limited to stock on hand only, excludes Pendleton blankets, decorative cow skulls, furniture & Brighton, may not be used with any other discount. One coupon per customer. Coupon must be present at time of purchase.

970-264-2222

**Located in
Downtown Pagosa Springs**

Gift Cards & Layaway available!

**Holiday hours: Mon-Thur 9-5
Fri-Sat 9-6, Sun 10-4, Christmas Eve 9-4**





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THE PAGOSA SPRINGS SUN ENCOURAGES YOU TO SHOP AT THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

We wish you a
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!

The Tile & Carpet Store
M-F 8-4:30 • (970) 731-5282
204 Bastille Dr. (N. Pagosa Blvd, Left at Bastille Dr.)

Christmas Eve

“Unto you is born a Savior”

You are invited to join us in our **NEW FACILITY** this Christmas Eve as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

TUESDAY, DEC. 24
2:30, 4:00 or 5:30 PM
1044 PARK AVENUE
(Next to the PLPOA Rec Center)

Grace
IN PAGOSA
(970) 731-6200
GRACEINPAGOSA.ORG

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Log Splitters
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Excavators and much more!

Letters

■ continued from previous page

Dear Santa,
My name metal is Christian I want a metal detector and if u can a x box. ora PS five. I am 6 yeas old. Do you Know where I live?

Love,

Dear Santa,
My name is Finn. I am 7 years old. I have been nice this year. I would like a Chase remote control car. Also some Legos, some suprses thank you.

Love, Finn

Dear Santa,
My name is koda. I am 6 yeres old.

I have been nice this year. I Would like A fluffy scunk stufy anb a ratatouille and a fluffy blak fox stufy.

Love, koda

Dear Santa,
my name is Jazmin I am 6 yeas old I have neen nice theis years. I would like new munee and all of the candee and a big doll haoos. and Do you Now were my haoos is?

Love, Jasmin

Dear Santa,
My name is Adryana I am 7 years old. I have been nice this year I would like a iPad' toy Monkey' a teddy Bear

where is My home?

Love, Adryana

Dear Santa,
My name is Cesar. I am 6 years old. I wou like a car Also a transformer which reindeer is your favorite?

Love, Cesar

Dear Santa,
My nam is Rory. I am 6 years old. I have been nice this year. I would Like a BoNix jersey in orange please. Also I would Like a switch. What is your favorite drink?

Love, Rory

■ See Letters on next page





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We Believe

Christmas 2024

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Tuesday, December 24 at 5:00pm

Celebrate Christmas with us!

*Brass Prelude
at 4:30pm*

*The service will be in person
and online at
www.pagosabiblechurch.org*



PAGOSA

BIBLE CHURCH

209 Harman Park Dr. (behind Wells Fargo)

Spread some

Warm Christmas Cheer

With Gifts from Healing Waters!

Healing Waters
Resort & Spa

Love to Soak

Frequency Card

Regular price \$39.

Sale Price \$29!

25% discount on daily admission soaking rate for cardholder.*

Gift of Relaxation

Massage Gift Certificates

Every massage includes a FREE Soak at time of massage.

It's like 2 gifts in 1!*

*Frequency cards, massage gift certificates & single-soak passes expire one year from purchase date.

ANNUAL PUNCH PASS SALE!

10-Punch Pass

\$135!

Regularly \$150.*

Special Bonus ...

Punch Passes now expire 6 months from purchase date instead of 4!

Stocking Stuffer

Single Soak Passes

Great addition to any stocking!

1 Pass - \$20...

5 Passes \$85!

All special offers end 12/31/24.

970-264-5910 | 140 Hot Springs Blvd | www.pshotsprings.com
Office open 8am-10pm daily | Pools open to general public 11am-10pm daily



Letters

■ continued from previous page

Dear Santa,
My name is Elias. I am 7 years old. I have been nice this year. I want a broncos miller helmet. I want a 3d pen and red dead redemption one which reindeer is your favorite?

Love, Elias

Dear Santa, my name is Vincent. I am 7 years old. I have been nice this year. I would like a Lego technic rc of-froad truck. Also, a new Harry Potter jersey. Do you know were my home is? Wich reindeer is your favorite?

Dear Santa,
My name is Jaxon. I am 6 years old. I want a snowboard also a lego star wars ship. I want a penguin stuffy. I want a pair of gloves.

Love, Jaxon

Dear Santa,
My name is Anaiya. I am 7 years old. I have been good this year. I would like a car toy and a doll.

Love, Anaiya

Dear Santa,
My name is CARter. I am 6 years

Love, Vincent

old. I have been nice this year. I would like a 4 weeler and a legoset.

Love, CARter

Dear Santa,
My name is Tj. I am 6. I would like For Chnstmas is a tyo rocvet-ship that haz a red button left and up and down. and it has a screen so you know where you're going. and a goldin lamborghini that can go 1758 mph.

Love, Tj

Dear Santa, my name si Mason. I want a phone so I can travel. I also

want a gocourt so I can go to my friends house. My favorite remdeer si Dasner. Who is yours?

Love, Mason

Dear Santa,
My name is Marguerite. I am 7 years old. Ples can I get a Snake? How do you go through all of the chimneys? Who is your favorite reindeer? Mine is Rudolph.

Love, Marguerite

Dear Santa, Hi! My name is Mark. I am 7 years old. I am in first grade. I want a motorcycle for Christmas. I

also want a lego mind craft set with a creeper for Christmas. What is your fauvorite reindeer?

Love, Mark

Dear Santa, my name is Lakinn I am 7 years old I want some alr pods and I also want a new bike. What is yowr favorite color ?

Love, Laikynn

Dear Santa,
Hi! My name is Jude. I am 7 years old. I am in first grade. I want a lot of legos for Christmas. My fravit calr
■ See Letters on next page



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THE PAGOSA SPRINGS SUN ENCOURAGES YOU TO SHOP AT THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

10% Local Discount
Great selection of bamboo stocking stuffers
Free Gift Wrap

Free Workshop Tours
fun, free, educational activity with out-of-town guests

Pictures with Santa
at the House of Jerky
December 21 • 2-5 pm

Bugs & Brews
Fly Tying Class
December 30
6-8 pm
◀ To register

\$500 off
January's Bamboo Fly Rod Building Class with Promo Code GIFT
To register ▶

\$500 OFF

262 PAGOSA ST. UNIT 103

(970) 946-6415

PJSFINEBAMBOO.COM

Our Savior Lutheran Church, School, and Mercy Care Ministry invite you to join us for our Christmas Worship Services.
56 Meadows Drive

Christmas Eve at 6:30, a Candlelight service of Carols and Readings.
Christmas Morning at 9:00, a Divine Worship Service.
Sundays, a Divine Worship Service at 9:00.

OSLC is thoroughly committed to everything the Bible teaches. We are a congregation uniquely devoted to liturgical worship, to catechesis (Christian education), and to the centrality of the Holy Communion and other Sacraments in the life of the Christian.

Letters

■ continued from previous page
is blue. What is your favorite reindeer? My favorite reindeer is Rudolf the red nos reindeer.

Love, Jude

Dear Santa,

Hi My name is Avereë. I am 6 years old. I am in first grade. I want a Harry Potter toy for Christmas. I also want a Bullseye from Toy Story. Who is your favorite reindeer?

Love, Avereë

Dear Santa,

Hi! My name is Nathan. I am 6 years old. I want a PS5 for Christmas. I want a PS5 for Christmas. Who is your favorite elf? Thank you for being so nice.

Love, Nathan

Dear Santa,

Hi My name is Teague. I am in first grade. I want a bay blade set for Christmas. What is your favorite reindeer. Min is Rudolph. I love Christmas!

Love, Teague.

Dear Santa,

Hi! My name is Laken. I am 6 years old. I want a watch and a sand timer. Do you remember that I wanted a doll for Christmas last year? I want a sand timer for kooiting her naps. I want a watch I can tell the time. How do you eat most of the cookies don't get full?

Love, Laken

Dear Santa,

Hi! my name is Brett. I am seven years old I am in first grade. I want a skat bard and cars for Christmas it is my favorite holiday because of you what would you like to do?

Love, Brett

Dear Santa,

Hi! My name is Aurora I am 6 years old I want a set of headphones for Christmas. I want a Barbie Lego set for Christmas. What is your favorite reindeer. My favorite is Dasher.

Love, Aiden

Dear Santa,

Hi my name is Aiden. I am six for Christmas. I want a phone. and I want lots of toys that are green for Christmas. how many cookies do you eat even Christmas?

Dear Santa, Hi my name is Wren. I am 7! I want a cash register! I want a fake phone! What is your favorite cookie I can't wait for Christmas morning!

Love, Wren

Dear Santa, My name is Beaulyn. I am 6. I want a little toy dog. I also want a cute tulle for Christmas. My favorite reindeer is Rudolph. My favorite color is black. What is your favorite color? What is your favorite movie?

Love, Beaulyn

Dear Santa,

My name is Colt I am 6 years old.

■ See Letters on next page

Merry Christmas!

Thank you to my customers for supporting our small business

20% Off

one item

(Excludes sale items, with this ad, offer expires December 21, 2024)

970-264-4260 | 454 Pagosa St., Historic Downtown Pagosa Springs | Open Mon-Sat: 10am-5:30pm





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An old-fashioned celebration

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THE PAGOSA SPRINGS SUN ENCOURAGES YOU TO SHOP AT THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

Bonnie is retiring on Dec 24th!

Stop by and say goodbye to Bonnie on Dec. 22nd, 23rd and 24th and enjoy cake and cookies with us.

Are you seeking great gift ideas?

You can find The Choke Cherry Tree's jams, jellies, and syrups here!

also
Made in Colorado Goods
Books • Puzzles
Sweatshirts • *and more!*

2105 Eagle Drive • 970-731-2264

Letters

■ **continued from previous page**
I am in first grade. I want a remote control snake. Santa what your favorite color?

Love, Colt

Dear Santa,

Hi! My name is Asher. I want the bubble blaster for Christmas. What is your favorite color? Mine is red.

Love, Asher

Dear Santa,

Hi! My name is Mateo. I am 7 years old. I am in firsts. I want a dirt bike and a go cart. what is your favorite reindeer? My favorite is Rudolph.

Love, Mateo

Dear Santa,

Hi! My name is Judy. I am 7 years old. I am in first grade. I want some lip gloss and some roller skates for Christmas. How are you? I want to know what is your favorite cookie?

Love, Judy

Dear Santa,

Hi my name is Osvaldo. I am 6 years old I am in first grade. I want a dirt bike for Christmas. and to sets up lego sets.

Dear Santa,

Hi My name is Jupiter. I am 6 years old. I am in first grade. I want an atv for Christmas.

Love, Jupiter

Dear Santa,

My name is Bryce. I am 6 years old. I want a nice snake for Christmas. I also want a nice alligator.

Love, Bryce

Dear Santa,

Merry Christmas! I hope I have been good this year. Is Rudolph real? How did you meet Mrs. Clause? I want a cotton candy machine please. Thank you for giving me gifts.

Love, Zoey age 8

Dear Santa,

Merry Christmas! I am listening and learning at school. How did you meet Mrs. Clause? How is Rudolph's nose red? I want a baby cat for Christmas. I want a baby wolf. I want a sow fox. Thank you for the presents!

Love, Mazzie age 7

■ See Letters on next page

Celebrate Advent December 1-24
with Two Old Crows

10% - 60% off SELECT ITEMS
during December

Free Gift Wrapping
Eggnog, Cookies and Cheer!

TWO
OLD CROWS
GALLERY

Tuesday through Saturday . 10am to 5pm or by Appointment
462 Lewis Street . (970) 264-0800 . twooldcrowps@gmail.com

Letters

■ continued from previous page

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas! What I want for Christmas is a puppy, elf on the shelf, Nintendo switch, and a mine craft DVD with remote controls. Oh and my favorite reindeer is Rudolph if hes real. How did you meet mrs. Clause. How do reindeer fly? How many elves do you have?

Love, Charlie 7 years old

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas! this year I am in 2nd grade. What I want for Christmas is a VR headset. How do reindeer fly? How do you get magic? You are the best!

From,
Emir age 7

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas! Happy holidays! I have tried my best in school. Santa, may I have a phone for Christmas? Santa, how do the reindeer fly? What is your real name Santa. Thank you!

From,
Izzy 8 years old

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas! I've been good at school I wish for a monster truck for crismis. I wish for a xbox conteller I hope you stay safe

from,
Zach 7 years old

Dear Santa,
Merry christmas! This year I have been kind to my family and friends. I want a New vr hed set. Why Does Rudolph have a red nose? How do your reindeer fly?

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas! This year I have been good. I want a new blanket please! Can the reindeer fly? Santa how did you meet Ms. Clause. You are the best!

Love,
Elizabeth 7 years old.

Dear Santa,
I've been good. I want a Ps5. I also want a Nintendo Switch. How do the reindeer fly? Are all the presents heavy? Thaanks for giving us presents!

Love,
Jameson Age 7

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas! This year I was good. I know you said two more gifts but this was a class assignment. Was your year good? I want a rubber band gun for Christmas. How do you get your magic? How did you become Santa?

Love,
Harper 7 years old

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas Santa! math has been hard but I have tried my best. All I want for Christmas is a vr-head set, a motor bike and an xbx how do your reindeer fly? How do you stay warm?

Love,
Killidhc aGe 7

Dear Santa,
Merry christmas! This year I was busy! I split wood with my family. I want a remote conrol helicopter.

From, age 7
Kasin

Where was your wedding with Mrs. Clause? How do your reindeer fly? Thanks for the presents.

Love, 7 years
Lane old

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas! I have been so good this year. I want an x box with 4 controllers. How do you make magic? Where do you live? Thank you,

Love,
Giovani, 7 year oil

Dear Santa,
How are you doing doing? I have been been good and bad. For christmas I really want samur samuri stuff why does rudolph have a red noe but the others dontd? thanks for all you

Leve Aidan age 7

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas! This year has been god and fun. Please can I have a camera? What was your name When you were a Kid?

Love,
Jordan 7 yers oldd

Dear Santa,
I've been good this yer. I want a remote control car. Is Rubolph the red nose reindeer real?

Love,
Finn 7 yers old

■ See Letters on next page

“Pizza was some of the best we have ever had. Ingredients are fresh and it has just a great homemade flavor due to a higher quality of ingredients.”



Alan C., Tripadvisor review

Delicious cooked-to-order pizza and your favorite brews on tap!

Classic Pizzas • Build Your Own • Detroit-Style Entrées • Sides • Desserts • Signature Hot Sauces

**Tapwall
happy hour
M-F 2-5pm**

Easy Pickup Window Open

Order & pay online at
MountainPizzaTapRoom.com
Drive to our pickup window & we'll hand you your order



**175 PAGOSA STREET • 11 AM TO 9 PM DAILY
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Drive Safe This Holiday Season

10% OFF

Winterization Service or Full Service Oil Change

This Holiday Season make sure your family is safe.

There is no better time to have your vehicle winterized, put on all-season or studded snow tires, and equip it with Winter Wiper Blades to ensure easy start-ups and safer driving on the snowy, icy roads.

Bring in or mention this ad for this limited time offer. Shop supplies and tax not included. May not be combined with any other offer. See the pros at Piedra Automotive for details. Offer ends 1/15/2025

Piedra Automotive
(970) 731-3335
505 Piedra Rd.
Open 7-6 Mon. - Thur.

24 Hour TOWING & EMERGENCY ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE



**SQUARE TOP
BAR-B-QUE**

Authentic Texas BBQ

Winter Hours:
Thursday-Sunday
11 am-6 pm

**Located @ the Golf Clubhouse
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SquareTopBBQ.com

**Sunday
BBQ Brunch**

11 am-2 pm

Sunday Football Menu

2 pm-6 pm
ALL the games on
multiple screens

**Drink Specials
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Mixed, Drafts,
Mimosa & House-made
Bloody Marys

**Also Available
Thursday-Sunday Specials**

Let Us Host Your Party
To Go Orders
Catering

Join an Old Fashioned Christmas Celebration on Dec. 21

By Jennifer Green
Visit Pagosa Springs

Join us Saturday, Dec. 21, from 5 to 7 p.m. for the fourth annual Old Fashioned Christmas Celebration in downtown Pagosa Springs.

Enjoy more than 20 Christmas-themed displays and activities, live music, free hot chocolate and cider, a photo booth, games, toys and other goodies. And, of course, Santa Claus.

Santa will arrive at his workshop at the Visitor Center shortly after 5 p.m. with the help of sled dogs. There will be opportunities to view Santa's arrival along San Juan Street and the Hot Springs Boulevard Bridge.

The walking route extends along the Riverwalk from Centennial Park to Town Park, crossing Veterans Bridge and down San Juan Street to the Visitor Center.

Entry points for the event include Town Park, the Visitor Center and Centennial Park. Look for decorated white tents at the key entry points to receive festive lights and free ornaments. Attendees are encouraged to bring flashlights. The event will be held regardless of weather.

New for 2025, we will have an

opportunity for attendees to vote for their favorite decorated segment. The winning segment will receive \$250 in advertising through The Pagosa Springs SUN. Look for signs at the event to vote.

Segments have been adopted by groups, organizations and businesses.

This event is a collaboration of the Town of Pagosa Springs, Archuleta County and The Pagosa Springs SUN. Please join us for a fun and festive evening in downtown Pagosa Springs to celebrate the spirit of the holiday season.

Road closure alert

The Town of Pagosa Springs would like to alert the community that there will be road closures in downtown Pagosa Springs during the Old Fashioned Christmas Celebration on Dec. 21.

Between 4:15 and 7 p.m., Hot Springs Boulevard will be closed to vehicular traffic from Hermosa Street to south of San Juan Street.

Additionally, Hermosa Street will be closed from Town Park to Hot Springs Boulevard. Traffic will not be permitted from U.S. 160 onto

Hot Springs Boulevard during the event. Any traffic needing to access the businesses south on Hot Springs will need to take an alternative route from Apache Street or Light Plant Road.

Reserve an evening Beyond the Gates on New Year's Eve
Reserve Online or Call: (970) 731-1162
Reservations Start: 5:30 & 7:30 PM

Letters

continued from previous page

Dear Santa,
Happy christmas I have been good. i want a lightbulb for chrishmas. How does his nose ligh up Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho Merry Christmas Santa!

Love,
Avery

Dear Santa, Mrs. Claus and Santa's Elves,
My name is Francis.
I am 9 years old.

What I want for Chrtistmas is a pupy and a phonE.

Think you.

Dear Santa,

My name is Amelia

I am 9 years old

This year I have been nice

For Christmas this year I would like unicorn diary With key keper necklace, magic puffy pens (one for me and one for my mom), a school playset, a fun science kit.

Love, Amelia

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NEW LISTING

Eagle Drive
\$590,000

MLS # 819518

.40 Acre Commercial Property located on Hwy 160 off of Eagle Dr. 3,290 Square feet and 2 attached buildings. The front is a gallery and warehouse the back at one time was a clinic.



NEW LISTING

44 W Golf Place
\$560,000

MLS # 817526

3 bedroom/2 1/2 bathrooms with 1,703 sq. ft. and conveniently located uptown. This home was built in 2006 and used as a second home by the owners. All three bedrooms are located upstairs with the primary bedroom towards the back. Two covered decks - one off the primary bedroom and the other off of the living room - allow for a nice place to relax and unwind.

To tour this home go to:
<https://pspixeltree.com/44-W-Golf-Pl>



Price Reduced

1001 Soaring Eagle Court
\$925,000

MLS # 813551

2 Bed, 2 Bath, 2,073 sq foot house on 36.44 acres. Navajo River Ranch has 2 private entrances into the forest. This home has wonderful views of the San Juan Mountain Range and great decks. 2 tributaries come together to form a seasonal creek called Oil Well Creek on the property.

To tour this home go to:
<https://tinyurl.com/1001SoaringEagleCourt>



65 Caballero Drive
\$799,000

MLS # 811817

This home is perfectly located on approximately an acre of land in the Pagosa Lakes area. Open the back door and a 700 sq ft deck will provide additional space for a BBQ grill, plenty of outdoor seating, and a new hot tub for your relaxation and enjoyment. 4 beds/2.5 baths with 2,350 sq. ft.

To tour this home go to:
<https://tinyurl.com/65Caballero>



814 Ginger Circle
\$199,000

MLS # 817526

Beautiful wooded, mountain property located in a gated community. Potential building site is private with views of Broken Off Point. Well maintained roads. Elk Park Meadows is located just 10 minutes (6 miles) west of uptown Pagosa Springs.

To tour this property go to:
<https://pspixeltree.com/814-Ginger-Cir>



Cloman Industrial Park
\$380,000

MLS # 807337

.68 Acre, 1500 sq. ft. commercial building located in Cloman Industrial Park. There is enough property to build another building or make a large wrap around parking lot. There is a 3000 BYU gas heater and a 40 gallon hot water heater.

Own Your Own Piece of Colorado Land!

30 High Drive — MLS # 794628, \$59,900
147 Cat Creek Overlook — MLS # 806842. 1.26 acres. \$25,000
27 D Place — MLS #813258, \$165,000. Owner carry.
98 Saturn Drive — \$67,500



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REALTOR®, BROKER/ OWNER
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Barbara@MountainMeadowRealEstate.com

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SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center announces upcoming events

By Shayla McClure
SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center

Spiritual topics are discussed every Tuesday at the SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center.

Upcoming events

Dec. 21, 11 a.m.: Solstice Celebration with Scott Maki, master, Himalayan singing bowls, and Shayla Azriel, sacred ceremonialist. Reserve your spot now by contacting (970) 510-0309.

Dec. 24, 4 p.m.: Christmas Eve Candlelight Ceremony with Azriel and Jenelle Syverson. A love donation will be accepted.

Jan. 5, 2025, 11 a.m.: Burning Bowl and Intentions Ceremony with

Shayla Azriel. A love donation will be accepted.

Jan. 8, 2025, noon: Health and Wellness presentation with Azriel.

About us

SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center is a 501(c)(3). We are an all-inclusive community honoring all lifestyles, cultures and religious paths to the Divine. We are the "Good Vibe Tribe" who practices Science of Mind principles of positive thinking.

The vision of SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center is to empower each participating member to become their "best self." Our mission is to create a world that works for everyone through self empowerment and awareness of the creator's divinity.

We welcome local talents to share gifts, aptitudes and knowledge.

SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center events are held at 3505 W. U.S. 160, on the second floor of the Pagosa Lodge (elevator available). Obtain information by joining us; emailing pagosacommunitynewthought@gmail.com; mailing P.O. Box 1052, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147; or calling (970) 510-0309.

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Publisher's Notice



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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or an intention, to make such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

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SUDOKU

	2	5	6	3				4
					9	3		
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Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

7	5	9	1	2	8	4	3	6
2	8	3	7	4	6	1	5	9
1	6	4	3	9	5	2	8	7
8	3	2	9	7	4	6	1	5
6	4	7	5	1	3	9	2	8
5	9	1	8	6	2	7	4	3
3	1	6	4	8	7	5	9	2
4	7	8	2	5	9	3	6	1
9	2	5	6	3	1	8	7	4

ANSWER:



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Holiday Church Events



All events listed in the holiday church events calendar are free of charge. Submit events to editor@pagosahun.com.

Thursday, Dec. 19

Blue Christmas Service. 6 p.m., Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. A time to acknowledge life's darkness and offer a reflective service for those who are grieving or having a difficult time during the holidays.

Friday, Dec. 20

Solstice Celebration. 11 a.m., SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center, 3505 W. U.S. 160.

Solstice Gathering. 6 p.m., Pagosa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 301 N. Pagosa Blvd., Unit B-15. Honoring the darkness and holding the light within.

Saturday, Dec. 21

'The Longest Night' Service. 4 p.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. A contemplative service of song, prayer and lament as we name before God our grief and our hope.

Sunday, Dec. 22

Advent Service. 10 a.m., Trinity Anglican Church, 246 Harman Park Drive. Dedicated to the reflective preparation for the arrival of Jesus Christ's nativity at Christmastime.

Tuesday, Dec. 24

Christmas Eve Service. 2:30 p.m., Grace in Pagosa, 1044 Park Ave.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Ceremony. 4 p.m., SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center, 3505 W. U.S. 160.

Christmas Eve Service. 4 p.m., Grace in Pagosa, 1044 Park Ave.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. 5 p.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. There will be a brass prelude at 4:30 p.m. The service will be in person and online at www.pagosabilechurch.com.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. 5 p.m., Open Door Church, 110 Trinity Lane.

Christmas Eve Mass. 5 p.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church, 353 S. Pagosa Blvd. For more information, visit ihmjp2.org.

Christmas Eve Pageant. 5 p.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. Children will share the message of the angels as we gather for a nativity play, song and prayers for all ages. The worship will end with Eucharist and music offered by candlelight. Children who would like to be an animal or angel in the nativity play are welcome to come a bit early to get costumed.

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols. 5 p.m., Trinity Anglican Church, 246 Harman Park Drive. A joyous celebration of prophecy and promise scripture readings along with congregational singing of favorite carols.

Christmas Eve Service. 5:30 p.m., Grace in Pagosa, 1044 Park Ave.

Christmas Eve Family Worship and Candlelight Service. 6 p.m., Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. Join for a thoughtful, traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service. Children are welcome in the service or to join experienced staff in the playroom/nursery.

Candlelight Service of Carols and Readings. 6:30 p.m., Our Savior Lutheran Church, 56 Meadows Drive.

Christmas Eve Service. 7:45 p.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. Enjoy instrumental Christmas hymns. A liturgy of Holy Eucharist with choir begins at 8 p.m.

Christmas Eve Mass. 8 p.m., Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, 455 Lewis St. For more information, visit ihmjp2.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 25

Christmas Day Mass. 9 a.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church, 353 S. Pagosa Blvd. For more information, visit ihmjp2.org.

Divine Worship Service. 9 a.m., Our Savior Lutheran Church, 56 Meadows Drive.

Christmas Day Service. 10 a.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. Rejoice together in prayer on Christmas morning with a quiet liturgy.

Sunday, Dec. 29

Carol Service. 10 a.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. Share in one liturgy as we worship with our annual carol sing.

Wednesday, Jan. 1

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Mass. 9 a.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church, 353 S. Pagosa Blvd. For more information, visit ihmjp2.org.

Sunday, Jan. 5

Epiphany Service. 8 a.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. Celebrate the end of the Christmas season as we gather for worship, remembering the journey of the Magi, and considering our own dreams and callings.

Burning Bowl and Intentions Ceremony. 11 a.m., SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center, 3505 W. U.S. 160.




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Photo courtesy Lisa Scott

Local Pi Beta Phi sorority alumnae gathered at the home of Carole Howard Dec. 14 for their annual Christmas angel luncheon. Standing, left to right, are Kelly Maestas, Joni Rose, Carole Howard, Paula Tennant and Ann Bubb. In front, left to right, are Melissa McDonald, Mary Rothchild and Lisa Scott. The ladies each made monetary contributions to Healthy Archuleta's food distribution center for local food banks. The festive holiday event also included the organization's traditional angel gift exchange. Pi Beta Phi was founded in 1867. Today there are 135 collegiate chapters in the U.S. and Canada, and nearly 300 alumnae clubs around the world.

Trinity Anglican Church



4th Sunday of Advent
 "Get the road ready for
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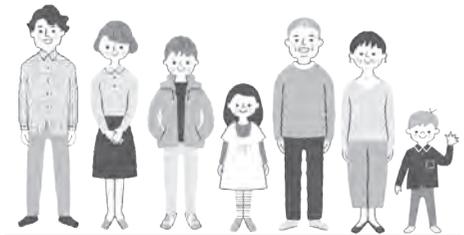
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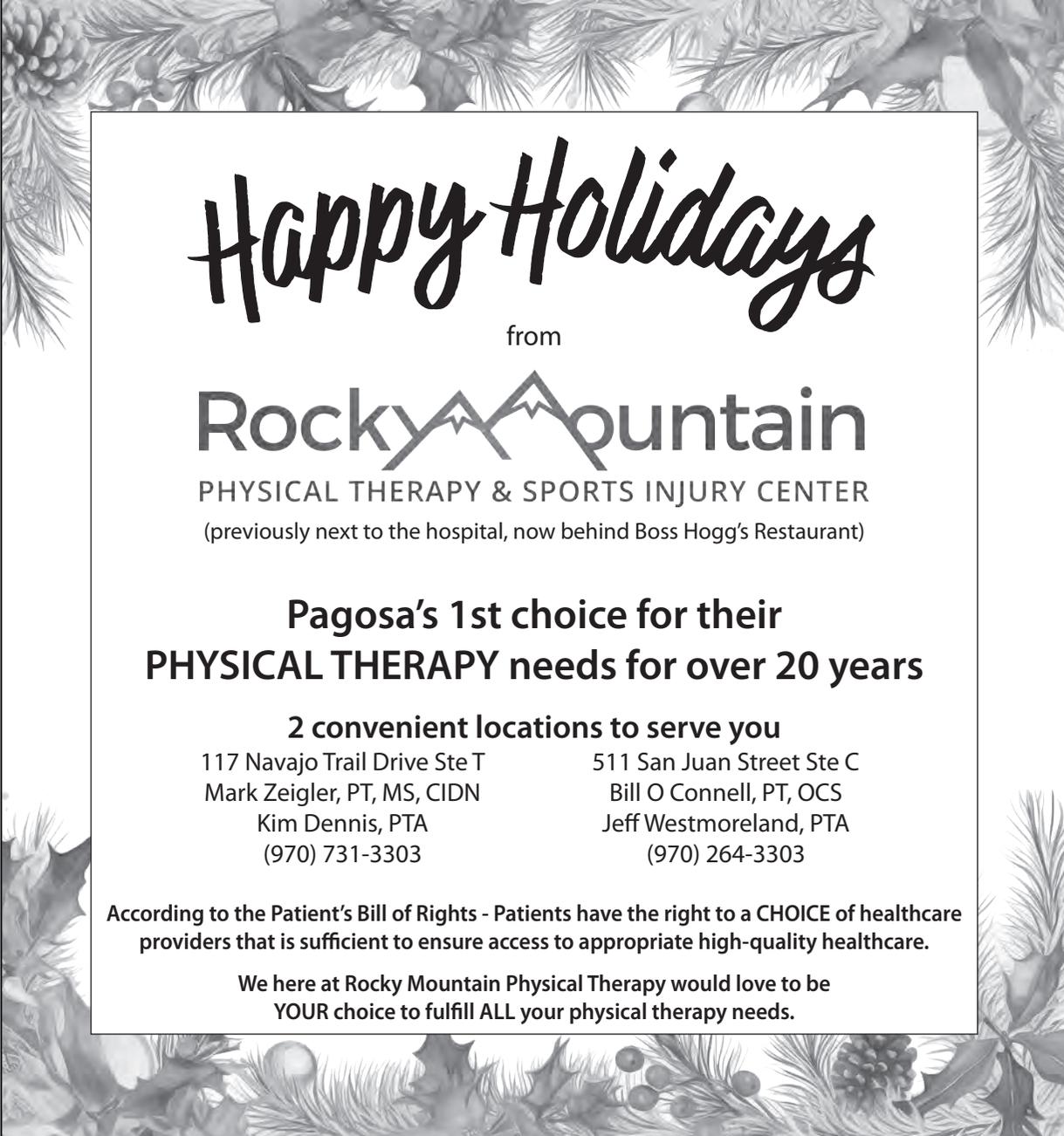
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Photo courtesy Pagosa Springs Dance Academy

Students from Pagosa Springs Dance Academy are thrilled to present Pagosa's very own "Storybook Nutcracker" performances and breakfast Friday evening and Saturday morning.

Step into a magical world: Pagosa Springs Dance Academy to present 'The Storybook Nutcracker'

By Aimee Rogacki
Pagosa Springs Dance Academy

This holiday season, and for their second year in a row, experience the enchantment and wonder of "The Storybook Nutcracker," brought to life by the talented dancers of Pagosa Springs Dance Academy.

The studio has worked tirelessly developing an original version of the historical ballet using a delightful blend of traditional and iconic music combined with pieces that embody a more modern flare.

The whimsical and emotional choreography combined with storybook-style narration in this heartwarming performance is a must-see for families, children and anyone who loves the magic of the season.

Join Clara, the Nutcracker Prince and all your favorite characters, performed by nearly 70 local youth and a smattering of youthful adults, as they journey through a fantastical world of sugarplum fairies, battling mice and a dazzling winter wonderland.

With vibrant costumes, descriptive narration, and captivating performances, "The Storybook Nutcracker" is a fresh and family-friendly interpretation of the classic holiday tale that will fascinate audiences of all ages.

The show dates are Friday, Dec.

20, at 6:30 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 21, at 11 a.m.

Extend your holiday entertainment and enjoy a delicious breakfast with the Expressions Company dancers before Saturday's performance at 9 a.m. Servings will include pancakes with sweet and fruity toppings, eggs, sausages, juice, tea and cider. The breakfast will be a festive addition to the performance and will feature Nutcracker-themed activities and games, beautiful photo opportunities and close-up interactions with the talented dancers.

The location is the Pagosa Springs High School auditorium at 800 S. 8th St.

Ticket prices for the show only are just \$15 for adults and \$5 for children. Tickets for the Nutcracker Breakfast combined with the Saturday show are \$25 for adults and \$10 for children. Tickets are available for purchase online at pagosadanceacademy.com.

Don't miss out on this festive tradition. Gather your loved ones and make "The Storybook Nutcracker" a part of your holiday season.

Whether you're seeing it for the first time or returning to enjoy the magic once more, this performance promises to deliver a truly unforgettable experience.

For more information and to buy

tickets, visit pagosadanceacademy.com or email us at psdaoffice@gmail.com.

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SATURDAY: 11AM - 11PM
SUNDAY: 11AM - 10PM

120 Piedra Rd, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147 | 970.582.2011

Season's Greetings

This holiday season, PSMC sends best wishes to our employees and this wonderful community.

The Primary Care Clinic and Outpatient Services will be closed on Wednesday, December 25th. We will reopen on Thursday, December 26th to serve you.

The Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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506 Morro Cir
 150 Lassen Dr
 42 Ruby Ct
 385 Stagecoach Ln
 585 Shenandoah Dr
 184 Sweetwater Dr
 305 Snow Cir
 155 Pike Dr
 18 Bienvenido Cir
 601 Stevens Cir
 954 Monument Ave
 660 Apache St
 344 Capricho Cir

Entrants for the 2024 Pagosa Springs Area Holiday Lighting contest have been announced, with participants turning on their lights for viewing every evening from 6 to 8 p.m. between Nov. 29 and the end of the year.

Vote for your favorite between Nov. 29 and Dec. 22

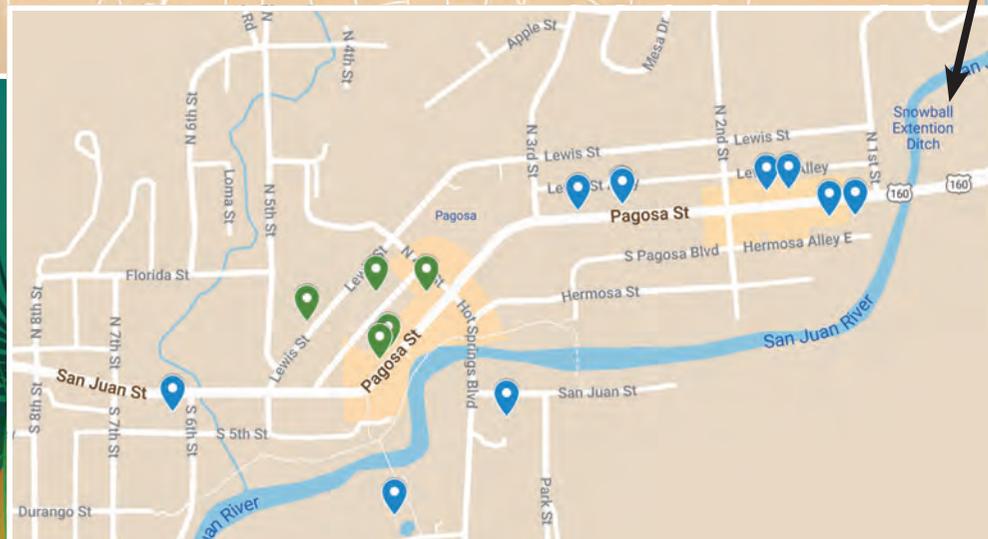
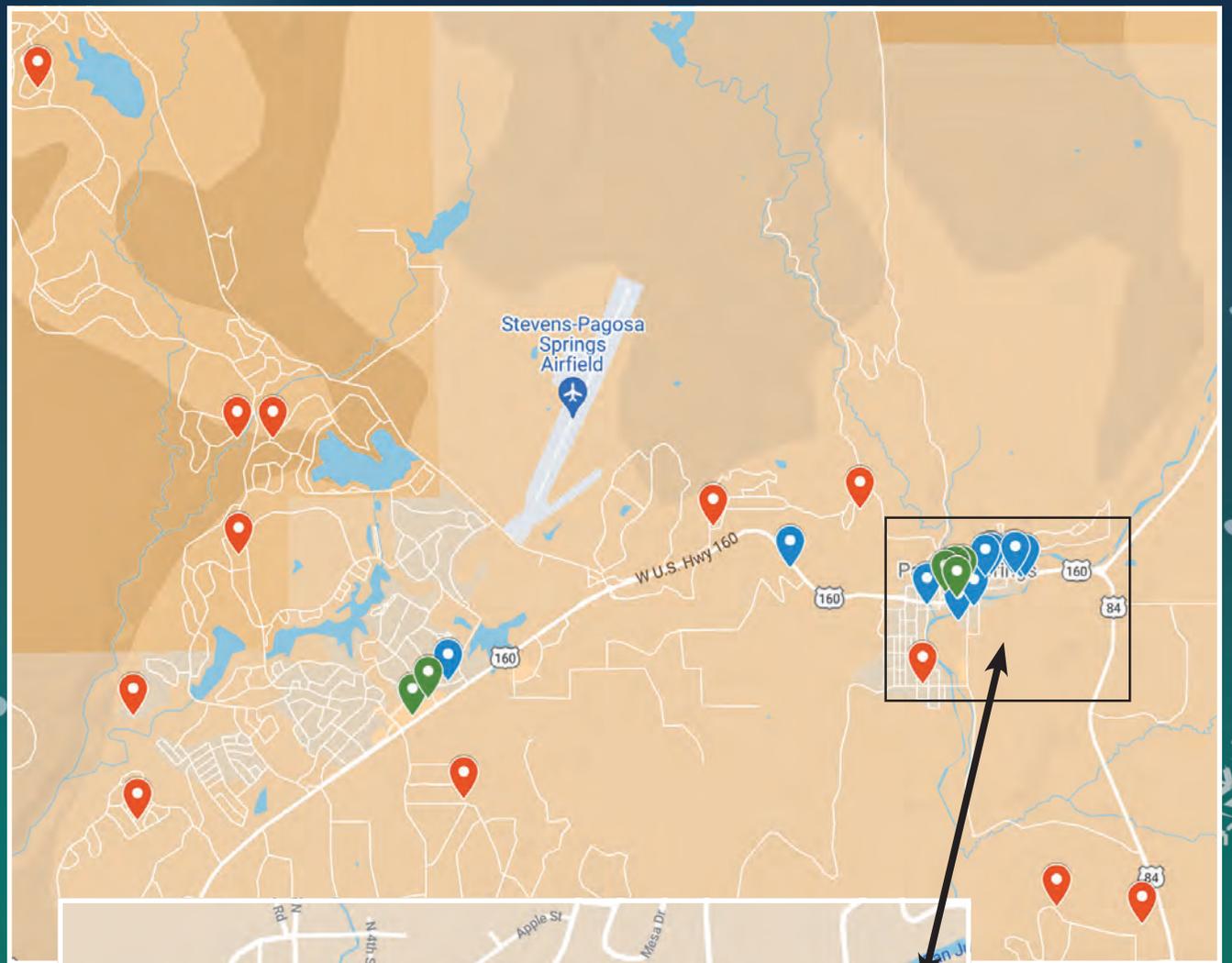
Contest winners will be announced in The Pagosa Springs SUN on Dec. 26.

Business

Wyndham - 538 Village Dr
 The Springs Resort - 323 Hot Springs Blvd
 Healing Waters Resort & Spa - 140 Hot Springs Blvd
 Pagosa Mountain Sports - 162 Pagosa St
 PJ's Fine Bamboo Rods - 262 Pagosa St Unit 103
 Kips Grill & Cantina - 121 Pagosa St
 Pagosa Springs House of Jerky - 262 Pagosa St Unit 102A
 Rainbow Gift Shop - 611 San Juan St
 Engel & Volkers Pagosa Springs - 286 Pagosa St
 You Deserve This Massage + Wellness - 103 Main St
 Cork & Board - 150 Pagosa St
 Pagosa Craft - 127 Goldmine Dr

Storefront window

Happy Trails Ladies Boutique - 454 Pagosa St
 Goodman's Dept. Store - 402 Pagosa St
 Community United Methodist Thrift Store - 427 Lewis St
 Two Old Crows - 468 Lewis St
 Chow Down Pet Supplies - 100 Country Center Dr A/B
 Foot Prints - 456 Pagosa St
 Uncle's Bar & Social Club - 56 Talisman Dr Unit 8C



Vote here



Bird of the Week



Photo courtesy Charles Martinez

This week's Bird of the Week, compliments of the Weminuche Audubon Society and Audubon Rockies, is the red-breasted nuthatch.

This chatty, active, small bird is a common resident of the boreal forests that stretch across Canada, and of the mountains of the southwest and southern Appalachians. It differs from our other resident nuthatch species, the pygmy and white-breasted, in its preference for forests of spruce and fir. It is the only North American nuthatch to undergo regular, southern irruptive movements when cone crops in its northern breeding ranges are poor.

This compact bird has a short tail and almost no neck. It is colored blue-gray above and rusty red below. It has a black crown and eyeline divided by a white eyebrow. Females are paler versions of males.

The name nuthatch refers to the method employed by this group of birds to eat the hard-shelled seeds and nuts which are its winter diet. After wedging a seed into a bark crevice, the nuthatch uses its strong upturned bill to "hatch" it into smaller, palatable pieces. Food that is not consumed is stored in bark crevices to eat when it is less available. They often show little fear of humans and will come to feeders.

In spring and summer, the red-breasted searches the bark of tree trunks and branches for insects, their larvae and eggs, and other arthropods to eat. Strong feet and toes, and long, curved claws allow the bird to move up, down and sideways on the tree, often moving headfirst down the tree in a zigzag pattern.

The clever red-breasted nuthatch prefers to excavate its own nest hole, often in the softer wood of a dead or partially dead aspen tree. To help keep out predators and nest site competitors, a pair collects globs of resin and spreads it around the inside and outside of the hole. They may use a piece of bark as a tool to apply the sticky sap. To avoid getting stuck themselves, they dive directly through the hole when entering or exiting the nest.

This year's bumper crop of cones with seeds in ponderosa pines is a boon to the forest birds and mammals that depend on this food source to make it through the winter.

For information on events, visit www.weminucheaudubon.org and www.facebook.com/weminucheaudubon/.

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Merry Christmas



"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
Isaiah 9:6

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Preview Calendar

All events listed in *The PREVIEW Calendar* are free of charge unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, Dec. 19

Ruby's Writers Guild. 9-11 a.m., Sisson Library. Ruby's Writers Guild welcomes writers who are looking for opportunities, support and camaraderie with other writers. Members will provide support, resources

and guidance for each other.
T'ai Chi Chih. 1:30-2:30, Senior Center. Free for those 60 and better.

Tech Time. 2-4 p.m., Sisson Library. Basic questions related to computers, smartphones, tablets, etc. Bring your device charger. We provide assistance with accessing any of the library's online resources. Call (970) 264-2209 for more

■ **See Calendar on next page**

This is for my Sons and Daughters, who must know My Love for them

There was a time when I called out to you in my Love: "Where art thou? Come hither unto Me, for thou art mine alone." But you were lost in a desolate world and could not hear My voice. I created thee to know Me, love Me and acquire mine attributes, to be holy and sanctified, so that thou would be a worthy bride unto My Spirit.

But lo, thou turned away, leaving My heart empty and grieved. I willed to call thee unto Myself in intimacy. So, I took all that was not of Me away, never to be part of thy life again. I made thee to hunger and thirst after Me alone and if thou didst search the entire universe over, thou would not be satisfied, except in relationship to Me. Thou art My precious treasure. In thee I live and move and have My being. It is thou I cherish, for thou now has a heart after mine own.

When thy life contained only absolute nothingness, then your wandering in the Valley of Search, was over and your journey unto Me began. For all begin in the creation of the longing of My Love and all will return unto Me. I began anew in thee, reconstructing and molding thee from dust to clay to Spirit. For I AM God and thou are My creation. As soon as thou turned they uplifted face to behold mine, in full submission to My will, prostrate before Me, I could begin to reveal myself to thee.

O, what joy abounded in the heavens as holy angels rejoiced at our reunion! Heaven and earth stood still as I embraced My beloved once again; and thou became mine forever.

Continue ye in thy love for Me and pray without ceasing unto Me. I wilt not disappoint thy heart ever again, nor wilt thou ever be far away from Me. For we are as one mind, one heart and one spirit. I AM well pleased to call you my beloved and thou shalt have an anointed place at My right hand. Thou shalt call Me they Father God and I shalt call thee My best beloved; and I shall name they name in the Book of Life. We will always know of our love for one another, one Spirit, singing praise in perfect harmony, rejoicing in our love forevermore.

*From The Upper Room
Peter and Rebekah Laue*

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Oz baddie
- 6 Players
- 10 Window part
- 14 Gem State
- 15 Voice below soprano
- 16 Hodgepodge
- 17 Temporary suspension
- 19 Furrow former
- 20 Sit down heavily
- 21 Numerical suffix
- 22 Pickling liquid
- 23 Hidden energy
- 26 Jefferson's successor
- 29 Miss who gives advice
- 32 Jerry Maguire, e.g.
- 33 Culinary herb
- 34 Hobbyist's buy
- 35 Peach Bowl city
- 38 Gardner of "The Killers"
- 39 November event
- 41 Kind of joint
- 43 Crowded together
- 44 Renowned
- 46 Valet
- 48 Enliven, with "up"
- 50 Spots
- 51 "Born Free" lioness
- 55 Crash, with "out"
- 56 Deafening
- 58 On the safe side
- 59 Candy film, "Wagons ____"
- 60 Social call
- 61 CBS series, "So Help Me ____"
- 62 Ocho minus cinco
- 63 Sufficient

DOWN

- 1 Unlikely hero
- 2 Teen ____

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58														
61														

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- 3 Tropical root
- 4 Little Tramp por-trayer Charlie
- 5 Radioactive
- 6 Sway on a curve
- 7 Out of this world
- 8 Actor's stand-in
- 9 Barnyard male
- 10 TV mobster
- 11 Unable to read
- 12 MGM mascot
- 13 "Oxford Blues" star, 1984
- 18 One of the Ringling Bros.
- 22 Franklin, for one
- 24 Radioactive element 85
- 25 "B.C." creator Johnny
- 26 Earns
- 27 Fleet-footed
- 28 Intent on
- 30 Crow's kin
- 31 Like some bombs
- 33 "Holy smokes!"
- 36 Gets even with
- 37 Guiding light
- 40 "Mad" magazine knockoff
- 42 Timely gap
- 44 Calendar entries
- 45 It's rigged
- 47 Actress Witherspoon
- 48 "Shoo!"
- 49 Equestrian sport
- 52 Speech impediment
- 53 Breeze (through)
- 54 Pot starter
- 56 Salon offering
- 57 Eggs in a lab

Answers to Previous Crossword:

S	C	O	T		A	S	H	Y		S	P	I	L	L
T	A	M	E		L	I	E	U		E	R	N	I	E
U	N	I	N	S	T	A	L	L		M	O	V	E	S
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G	E	S	T	U	R	E	S		A	N	O	N		
P	A	S	T		D	E	M	O	L	I	T	I	O	N
A	H	E	A	D		C	A	R		C	R	O	O	N
P	O	L	L	I	N	A	T	E	D		A	N	T	E
A	Y	E		V	E	T		F	I	R	M			
E	N	T	E	R	T	A	I	N	E	D		D	O	N
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T	E	N	S	E		P	O	R	E		D	O	R	Y

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Preview Calendar

■ **continued from previous page**
information.

Hot Chocolate Hullabaloo. 4-5 p.m., Sisson Library. Celebrate winter through seasonal crafts. The library will have hot chocolate ready.

Dungeons and Dragons. 4-5:30 p.m., Sisson Library. Join the adventure. Preregistration is required because space is limited. Contact Josie@pagosalibrary.org to join.

English as a Second Language. 4-7 p.m., Sisson Library. Your library offers English as a second language classes. These classes are free. Call (970) 264-2209 or email for more information. Beginning students are encouraged to attend from 4-5 p.m., intermediate students from 5-6 p.m. and advanced students from 6-7 p.m.

PALS Adult Education. 5:30-8 p.m., Sisson Library. Pagosa Adult Learning Services, or PALS, can help you with high school equivalency, GED, college prep, financial aid, tutoring and more. Mark can help you develop a plan to achieve your education goals. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information.

'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.' 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. For tickets and show information, see pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).

Friday, Dec. 20

Indoor Pickleball. 8-11:30 a.m., Ross Aragon Community Center.

Bingo. 1:30-2:30 p.m., Senior Center. Free. Those under 18 must have an adult chaperone. For more information, contact (970) 264-2167.

PAWS to Read. 2-3 p.m., Sisson Library. For all ages. Read with Maple, a therapy dog who loves stories.

Steam Engines. 2-3:30 p.m., Sisson Library. Science fun for ages 6-10.

Jingle Bell Bingo. 6:30 p.m., John Paul II Catholic Church, 353 S.

Pagosa Blvd. The doors will open at 6 p.m. and bingo starts at 6:30 p.m. This is a religious education fundraiser that will be fun for the entire family. Win assorted prizes and gift cards to local businesses. Packets for adults will be \$5 and packets for kids under 14 will be \$3. For more information, visit ihmjp2.org.

'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.' 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. For tickets and show information, see pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).

Saturday, Dec. 21

LEGO Play. 11 a.m.-noon, Sisson Library. For kids 6-11 years old. Bring your own or use the library's LEGOs to free build. Contact the library at (970) 264-2209 for further information.

Pokémon Club. 12:30-2:30 p.m., Sisson Library. For ages 6-11. Bring your cards to battle against others who love Pokemon too. No experience is required.

Fourth Annual Old-Fashioned Christmas. 5-7 p.m., downtown. Take a walking tour along the Riverwalk for a fun and festive evening. Celebrate the holiday season with live music, hot chocolate, treats, holiday displays, Santa Claus and more.

'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.' 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. For tickets and show information, see pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).

Sunday, Dec. 22

'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.' 3 p.m., Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. For tickets and show information, see pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).

Monday, Dec. 23

Indoor Pickleball. 8-11:30 a.m., Ross Aragon Community Center.

Line Dancing. 9:30-11:30 a.m., PLPOA Clubhouse, 230 Port Ave. Beginners meet at 9:30 a.m. and the advance group meets at 10:15 a.m. If you haven't attended before, please call Beverly at (970) 264-

■ **See Calendar on next page**



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A Reflection on Hot Springs Fest: Celebrating Community & Hot Springs

The Springs Resort

Hot Springs Fest 2024 was more than just a festival—it was a celebration of community, connection, and the healing power of Pagosa Springs' world-renowned waters. Held annually in November, this beloved three-day event marked its fifth anniversary with a vibrant lineup of activities and community collaborations that showcased everything wonderful about our town and its iconic hot springs.

This year's festival logo, designed by local graphic designer Abigail Karas through a Call to Artists, captured the spirit of Hot Springs Fest and highlighted the community's creative talent. The Pagosa Springs Town Council further celebrated this connection by declaring November as Hot Springs Month, honoring the vital role hot springs play in the town's culture and identity.

The 120 hot springs enthusiasts who participated enjoyed access to over 40 hot springs pools at all three local hot springs resorts: The Springs Resort, Healing Waters, and Overlook Hot Springs. From aqua yoga and contrast

bathing to a forest hike and restorative tea ceremonies, there was something for everyone. Locals enjoyed discounted tickets and free community events, ensuring everyone could enjoy the festival's inclusive spirit. This dedication to keeping the festival accessible to all locals will remain a cornerstone of future events.

The Robe Parade was a new event this year. After a Gratitude Ceremony at the Mother Spring, participants marched through downtown, all wearing the traditional hot springs "attire" - cozy robes. The procession was led by Native American drummer Jake Vicenti and his family. Local business owners, including Mayor Shari Pierce, were on hand to judge participants in three categories, with the grand prize winner receiving a full year of soaking at all three venues.

"Hot Springs Fest 2024 was such an amazing and unforgettable experience," said area visitor Mili Rodriguez. "This will now be [an]... annual trip. Everyone was so friendly!"

The festival also included live music from local bands Won-

derbread and Happy Campers, creating lively evenings that brought people together over shared tunes and good company. For those exploring beyond the pools, over a dozen local businesses from Riff Raff to Footprints, Pagosa Baking Company, and Hidden Track, offered exclusive discounts to festival participants, further embedding Hot Springs Fest into the town's broader community fabric.

This festival is quickly becoming a part of the culture and fabric of Pagosa Springs. It grows in size and popularity every year. It brings people together, emphasizes social wellness, and fosters community. This festival is a true gem, and it will surely continue to give both locals and visitors a chance to celebrate our town and our love for the hot springs. We can't wait to see how Hot Springs Fest evolves in 2025, and invite you to join us in 2025 for another incredible year.

For event inquiries, please reach out to Mary Cocke at mcocke@pagosahotspings.com to learn how you can be part of next year's celebration.

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Preview Calendar

continued from previous page

2064 for more information.
Playdough Play. 1-2 p.m., Sisson Library. Make amazing playdough creations with the library's playdough collection.
Senior Conversations. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.
Healthy Aging and Yoga Therapy Class. 2:30-3:30 p.m., Senior Center.
Deepening the Faith Classes. 6-8 p.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church classrooms.
'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.' 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. For tickets and show information, see pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).

Tuesday, Dec. 24

Pagosa Springs Stitchers. 10 a.m.-noon, Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. Bring your current stitching project and a snack/drink if you wish, and enjoy the fellowship of other stitchers. All are welcome.
Tech Time. 10 a.m.- noon, Sisson Library. Basic questions related to computers, smartphones, tablets, etc. Bring your device charger. We provide assistance with accessing any of the library's online resources. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information.
'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.' 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. For tickets and show information, see pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).

Thursday, Dec. 26

Ruby's Writers Guild. 9-11 a.m., Sisson Library. Ruby's Writers Guild welcomes writers who are looking for opportunities, support and camaraderie with other writers. Members will provide support, resources and guidance for each other.
T'ai Chi Chih. 1:30-2:30, Senior Cen-

ter. Free for those 60 and better.

Tech Time. 2-4 p.m., Sisson Library. Basic questions related to computers, smartphones, tablets, etc. Bring your device charger. We provide assistance with accessing any of the library's online resources. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information.

English as a Second Language. 4-7 p.m., Sisson Library. Your library offers English as a second language classes. These classes are free. Call (970) 264-2209 or email for more information. Beginning students are encouraged to attend from 4-5 p.m., intermediate students from 5-6 p.m. and advanced students from 6-7 p.m.

PALS Adult Education. 5:30-8 p.m., Sisson Library. Pagosa Adult Learning Services, or PALS, can help you with high school equivalency, GED, college prep, financial aid, tutoring and more. Mark can help you develop a plan to achieve your education goals. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information.

'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.' 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. For tickets and show information, see pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).

Friday, Dec. 27

Indoor Pickleball. 8-11:30 a.m., Ross Aragon Community Center.
Cookie Decorating. 1-2:30 p.m., Sisson Library. Join for some tasty fun. Sugar cookies and standard frosting will be provided.
All-Ages Movie. 3-4:30 p.m., Sisson Library. Participants will choose between a selection of PG-rated movies.
'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.' 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. For tickets and show information, see pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).

Saturday, Dec. 28

Knitters Circle. 1-3 p.m., Sisson

Library. Join new or experienced knitters to get help with your project, or sit and knit.

'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.' 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts. For tickets and show information, see pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).

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Photo courtesy Justin Treptow, Thingamajig Theatre Company

The 2023 cast of "All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914," a remarkable ensemble that brought the story of peace and humanity to life in Thingamajig Theatre Company's most-attended holiday show ever.

'All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914' continuing at Thingamajig Theatre Company

By Carter Meritt

Thingamajig Theatre Company

The Thingamajig Theatre Company's production of "All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914" is returning to the Pagosa Springs Center for the

Arts this holiday season.

It opened Dec. 13 and is running through Dec. 28.

Following its record-breaking debut in 2023, which became the most-attended and critically acclaimed holiday show in the company's

history, this year's reprise promises another incredible experience.

"All is Calm" tells the incredible true story of the Christmas truce of 1914, when soldiers on both sides of World War I laid down their arms,

■ See Theatre on page 23

Merry Christmas!

I want to thank Pagosa and beyond for decades of patronage. Wishing you love, health, joy and peace for this season and throughout 2025.

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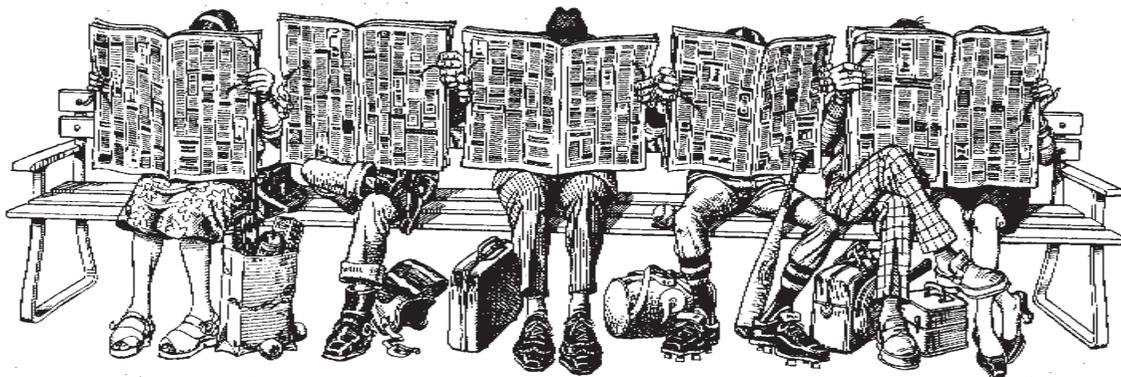
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The old oak tree wept

By Betty Slade
PREVIEW Columnist

This morning, sitting in front of a beautifully decorated Christmas tree, my attention turned to the daily Bible study from a hunting devotional book I read to my Sweet Al every morning.

An avid hunter, the author wrote that the trees in the southeast are tall, telephone-pole kind of trees. He describes climbing one with his portable aluminum stand to watch for the deer.

Artist's Lane

The lesson talked about the difference between a young tree not being able to hold a hunter and an old oak tree with roots that grab deep into the soil with branches strong enough to hold any hunter.

I said to Al, “We’ve been walking with the Lord 55 years. We’ve been in church, under Bible teaching, associated with other Christians, and we should be like oak trees. We need to act differently than the younger

■ See Lane on next page

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Theatre

■ continued from page 21

shared songs, exchanged gifts and celebrated a moment of peace amidst the devastation of war. The show is a moving tribute to the power of humanity and music to unite us, even in the most trying of circumstances.

Nationally recognized and critically acclaimed, the production originated with Theater Latté Da in Minneapolis and has toured internationally, earning widespread praise. Its Off-Broadway run won the Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience, and The New York Times lauded the show as “profoundly moving” and “a stunning testimony to the human spirit.”

The Thingamajig team is bringing back the creative forces that made last year’s production such a success.

Director Andrew Barratt Lewis returns to helm the show, with lighting by MacKenzie Lowe and costumes by Nanette Cheffers, whose attention to historical accuracy and evocative detail enriches the storytelling. Music Director Dominic Girolami, who also performs in the cast, brings his expertise from New York, ensuring the show’s vocal and musical elements remain top-notch.

Returning cast members include the talented Robert Neel, Gustavo Palma and Keenan Pasqua. Joining them are Trevor Brown, a Thingamajig favorite, along with Jesse McFarland (making a much-anticipated return since his standout perfor-

mance in 2019’s “A Grand Night for Singing”), Quinn McGillion and Alex Ramirez Cannon, all of whom hail from New York or Texas and bring fresh energy to this year’s production.

Unlike traditional holiday shows, “All is Calm” transcends the usual seasonal fare with its unique combination of music and storytelling. The show’s a cappella score — featuring trench songs, patriotic anthems and Christmas carols — evokes the raw emotion of the soldiers’ experience.

It’s a production that resonates deeply with audiences, regardless of age or familiarity with theater, offering something for everyone. This isn’t just a play — it’s a historical and emotional journey that captures a profound moment of shared humanity.

The absence of a traditional script makes it accessible and compelling, with music and ensemble storytelling taking center stage.

This 2024 production marks the final opportunity to experience “All is Calm” at Thingamajig Theatre Company.

With last year’s shows selling out rapidly, tickets are expected to be in high demand again this year. Don’t miss your chance to witness this remarkable holiday event, as it will leave audiences inspired and touched by the enduring message of peace and unity.

For tickets and show information, visit pagosacenter.org or call (970) 731-SHOW (7469).



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MLS 801267 ■ \$1,250,000



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MLS 819751 ■ \$525,000



20 Sunset Trail, Arboles
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MLS 810227 ■ \$380,000



59 Green View Drive
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MLS 818681 ■ \$300,000



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MLS 813722 ■ \$195,000



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MLS 810113 ■ \$99,000



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Lane

■ continued from previous page

Christians who are just learning God's ways. More is expected from us."

I felt a little smug when I told him, "God has done a mighty work in us. It's easier for us to forgive, let go and move on than when we were young and wild. We can offer young believers more support, wisdom and patience."

I continued to be puffed up in my spiritual growth. "We are like oak trees in our Christian walk. It's taken a lifetime, 80 plus years to produce these two oak trees with solid branches."

Then in the course of the day, I engaged in a conversation I thought was going to be a clear-the-air, what-do-you-think talk. No harm, no foul. A good meeting of the minds where we could have a deep conversation. Our minds didn't meet.

I didn't know the grief I had caused this person. Wow, I was perceived differently than I thought of myself. There was no way to argue the point, but to listen. It wasn't my intention, but I caused this person grief — much grief. I couldn't say, "That's your problem." I realized the better thing to do was listen and not argue my side. I wanted to make it right between him and me, and between God and me.

In our younger days, Al and I were immature Christians. We didn't always make the right decisions and had to ask for forgiveness often. I've always said that the Lord kept me on a short tether. I was glad for that so I didn't get too far away from Him.

Over the years I have made amends for many thoughtless things I have done or said. And in these last days, the Lord brought me back from a terrible car accident to make right what was left undone. I don't want any regrets when I see my Lord face-to-face.

At the end of the day that started so sweetly, quiet covered the evening hours. My heart hurt and was so heavy for the conversation that jarred me to my toenails. I said to Al, "This old oak tree wept today."

Then in the course of the day, I engaged in a conversation I thought was going to be a clear-the-air, what-do-you-think talk. No harm, no foul. A good meeting of the minds where we could have a deep conversation. Our minds didn't meet.

"How so? What do you mean?"
 "I realized today this person has held years of animosity against me. I wasn't grieved at how he perceived me as much as the hurt he has carried

all these years because of me. I felt pain for him, not so much for myself.

"I feel like I am weeping for the deep damage I've done to this person. Hopefully, the Lord will allow me to stay on earth for a few more years. I don't want to leave this way. I need to pray, pray, pray."

I carried the hurt of the conversation for the rest of the night until I talked with Jesus. The pain was released and I knew Jesus' death on the tree took care of the offense. And all the thoughtless things I've done, Jesus will heal and make right.

Final brushstroke: As I look at the Christmas tree and marvel at this season of beautiful lights and gifts under the tree, it was brought to mind the true gift, Jesus' gift, the real reason why Jesus was born. He came to die. What a morbid thought, but yet very true.

From Jesus' death he is living in our hearts and can make things right, lift our burdens, take away the pain and all the thoughtless words we have put upon others. Truly this is a merry Christmas when we understand why Jesus was born.

Reader comments

Send your comment to bettyslade.author@gmail.com.

"Good morning, Betty,
 "Your Red and Greens Dancing in the Sunlight painting is absolutely beautiful!!

"So are your recent articles in the Sun - so very potent and anointed. Thank you for listening well to the Father in this season of your life! Your friend and partner in Kingdom love, Joan Kelley."

Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of The SUN.



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Photos courtesy Pagosa Springs Catholic Community

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe was held at Pope John Paul II Catholic Church on Thursday, Dec. 12. Following Holy Mass, Catholic youth presented a re-enactment along with traditional dances and songs. The evening also included a traditional Mexican meal and a mariachi ensemble.

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A new Christmas perspective

By Eric Fisk
PREVIEW Columnist

My early age perspective of Christmas was skewed as much as most every child's is today. The premise that Christmas is nothing more than getting goodies and gifts overshadowed the story of the birth of mankind's Savior. The overshadowing can be attributed to the one who lurks in the shadows.

His goal has always been to thwart anyone's belief in the Most Holy God. To have come to this realization so late in my life makes me wonder if my Christian faith would be stronger or weaker if my heart had been changed while I was a child. Would the world have tried to turn my heart back to stone? That answer is yes. We see this hardening of hearts throughout our community and across this world.

Today, however, I know I am exactly where I am supposed to be. There is nothing in our lives that is not as it should be. There are many things in this world that are against the things of God. But there is nothing that is not ordained by an omniscient God. Those who feel as though all is falling apart in their lives are exactly where

A Matter of Faith

they are to be. God's love and justice is purely holy.

I have thought that in end times, when the Bible states that all knees will bow to the King of Kings, that some may not willingly, that some will be driven to their knees. But as I write this, I wonder if when people are at their lowest point in life, then they will ask for help. They see that this world cannot pull them out of the pit full of mire. Only God can do that. So, every knee may in fact bow to the King, but that does not mean their salvation is secure.

On the flip side, the thief on the cross who rejected Christ is evidence that this is probably not a biblical view. He was at his lowest point and mocked Christ. He was not to be with Christ in paradise that day. God the Father had not given this guy to Christ. His name was not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. However, he was exactly where he was supposed to be. He may have had

the revelation that Jesus was in fact the Son of God prior to his own passing, but without a God-given heart change, he was stuck in his destiny.

I dread thinking where my attitude would have taken me if I had not asked for spiritual help years ago. I thank God that He gave me the ability to ask for that help. I certainly would not have a correct view of the Christmas season, nor would I be seeking an understanding of the story of salvation. Today, I can truly say that my heart was changed from stone to flesh. My mind is being renewed daily toward the things of God. Joy is finally here in my life.

God changes hearts. I am eternally grateful that He did that for me. Though I will never know the depth of Holy Scripture fully in this life, the act of seeking the depth of God's written word brings joy and living water to my soul.

The Christmas season has meaning that is truly supernatural. Walking with the Holy Spirit daily brings understanding that is beyond description. Thanks be to God that I was pulled from the miry pit of the world. He is the One that gives life. He is the

■ See Faith on next page



EARLY DEADLINES

for The Pagosa Springs SUN issue of
Thursday, December 26

Display Advertising
Noon, Friday, December 20

Classified Advertising,
All Categories
10 a.m., Monday, December 23

Legal Advertising, Articles & Letters
Noon, Thursday, December 19

The Pagosa Springs SUN office will be closed
Wednesday, December 25, in observance of Christmas.

for The Pagosa Springs SUN issue of
Thursday, January 2, 2025

Display Advertising
Noon, Friday, December 27

Classified Advertising,
All Categories
10 a.m., Monday, December 30

Legal Advertising, Articles & Letters
Noon, Thursday, December 26

The Pagosa Springs SUN office will be closed
Wednesday, January 1, 2025, in observance of New Year's.

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Imagine a river more exciting than football

By Patricia J. Rettig
PREVIEW Columnist

Imagine a best-selling, 900-page novel using “a sad, bewildered nothing of a river” as its centerpiece, connecting the earth’s geologic origin and dinosaur age to 1970s rural Colorado.

Now imagine that novel becoming a touchstone for its times, yet still relevant today, as our nation approaches its 250th anniversary. The book is James A. Michener’s “Centennial,” an unlikely novel published a half century ago. By creating a microcosm of the country, he explained America to itself in anticipation of the 1976 bicentennial.

That the Pulitzer-prize winning Michener chose as his landscape the West — and the little-known South Platte River on Colorado’s northeastern plains — is surprising only in that this was his first epic novel related to the U.S. mainland.

But ever since he briefly lived in Greeley, Colo., in the late 1930s before his writing career began, the winding South Platte River stuck with him. As a young college professor, Michener recognized the wealth of stories resulting from the hardships of people surviving in an arid area.

After Michener’s service on a national bicentennial committee left him frustrated, he decided to return to the Centennial State, Colorado, which gained statehood in 1876. He hoped to tell a tale of the American experience and, in the opening chapter a character states, “If we can make the Platte comprehensible to Americans, we can inspire them with the meaning of this continent.”

Forgoing stereotypical Western stories of railroad builders and farmers’ daughters, Michener fictionalized selected histories of settlement and created relatable characters.

Native Americans, French trappers, Mennonite settlers, farmers of German-Russian descent, English ranchers, Mexican and Japanese laborers — all depended on the South Platte River and its tributaries in the dry, inhospitable land. They also had to depend on each other.

By starting with the land’s formation, Michener depicts every character as an immigrant. He estimates human arrival in the region at about

Faith

■ continued from previous page

light of the world. God the Father, giving His Son to us for our salvation, is by far the best Christmas gift anyone could be given. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him. Jesus will never let go of those the Father has given Him. How could we possibly ask for anything better?

This column may include both fiction and nonfiction, and views expressed do not necessarily represent those of The SUN. Submissions can be sent to editor@pagosahun.com.

Opinion: Writers on the Range

12,000 years ago, and those Indigenous peoples and their descendants remain present throughout the story. As more people arrived and society evolved, everyone built lives in relationship with the river.

For many, the river provided a pathway to the West. For a few, it revealed golden nuggets, though the real wealth was the water itself.

Yet what Michener presents as progress gradually becomes recognized as unsustainable. The memorable Potato Brumbaugh has not only the innovative idea of irrigating crops, but also the radical concept of digging a tunnel under the Rocky Mountains to import water from west of the Continental Divide. When this source is not enough, groundwater pumping increases, with dire consequences.

Such innovation — water-related and otherwise — is important to understand today, but also significant is knowing the history of how communities got built. Michener also shows the conflicts that arose with each wave of newcomers bringing their own ideas about how to live.

He also demonstrates changing attitudes, including acceptance of racial differences and increasing dismay over environmental destruction. His story concludes in the early 1970s, referencing Watergate, international conflict and immigration. Characters face inflationary times and polluted air and water. They know they need to solve the coming water shortages.

Not much is different today.

The key difference is that as Michener’s characters decry the environmental damage caused by their ancestors and neighbors, they also recognize they need to know their history and honor their longstanding connections to the land and water.

This is what modern humanity has forgotten. Through the innovations of pipes, plumbing and chemical treatments, we have relegated our rivers to the background, as if they were merely an unending supply of water at our command. We have lost our connections to natural resources, to history, to each other.

As we now prepare for our 250th anniversary, “Centennial,” both the novel and the groundbreaking 26-hour television miniseries airing from 1978 to 1980, reminds us of the country’s strengths.

Nearly 900 pages in, a character skips a Colorado-Nebraska college football game to survey the South Platte by plane. As he nears the Nebraska state line, he says, “No one in Colorado will believe it, but this river is more exciting than football.”

Imagine if more people, in all states, felt the same way.

Patricia J. Rettig is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, an independent non-profit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She is the archivist for the Water Resources Archive at the Colorado State University Libraries. Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of The SUN.

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NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MEETING. Wednesdays, 5:30 at Pagosa Bible Church. Use side entrance. Call Bailey for details at (719)588-7572.

PAGOSA AA: M-W-F 5:30p.m. Mens' meeting Tuesday 5:30p.m. Saturday and Sunday 10a.m. Tuesday and Thursday at noon. 315 N. 2nd St., County Road 200 (.2 miles off 160). Zoom Sunday 10a.m. Zoom Thursday noon women only; ID 858 319 763, password 754 234. Call Kathi (970)946-1482 or Central Office (888)333-9649.

THERE IS A SOLUTION GROUP of Alcoholics Anonymous meets Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, 5:30-6:30p.m. Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. Questions? Richard: (970)903-1456. Diamond: (970)264-1073. More resources: www.aa.org, www.aa-westerncolorado.com, (970)245-9649, (888)333-9649 (24 hours).

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING of Pine River Irrigation District. Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the PINE RIVER IRRIGATION DISTRICT will be held at the Bayfield High School Performing Arts Auditorium (South Entrance) 800 County Road 501, Bayfield, CO 81122 on Saturday January 18, 2025, at 1:00p.m. Sign in will start at 12:30p.m. As is procedure at such a meeting, one director will be elected for a 3-year term and any other business that may properly come before the Board of Directors.

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