



PAGOSA SPRINGS, ARCHULETA COUNTY, COLORADO 81147

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On to state



SUN photo/Clayton Chaney

Four Lady Pirate wrestlers qualified for the state tournament being held in Denver beginning today. Pictured, left to right, are Bella Jackson, Kylie Matyniak, Laykyn Baxstrom and Madisen Stretton. For more on the grapplers, see related story on A10.



SUN photo/Clayton Chaney

Four members of the Pirate wrestling team and one Unified division wrestler qualified for the state tournament taking place in Denver beginning today. Pictured, left to right, are Colton Lucero, Samuel Kelly, Taylor Hancey, Anthony Manzanera and Antonio Quezada. For more on the wrestlers, see related story on A10.

PLPOA field, gym discussed at meetings

By Clayton Chaney
Staff Writer

On Monday, Feb. 3, the Archuleta County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) met with the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association (PLPOA) board, with discussions covering PLPOA's proposed gymnasium, as well as grants needed to construct a sports field behind the current PLPOA recreation center.

PLPOA General Manager Allen Roth explained that with the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the two entities, PLPOA is now able to apply for GOCO grants for funds to construct an athletic field located behind the PLPOA recreation center.

He noted that the PLPOA anticipates working on writing those grant applications this fall.

Commissioner Warren Brown commented that the MOU was signed

■ See PLPOA A5

Town council to discuss Fourth of July celebration

By Derek Kutzer
Staff Writer

The Pagosa Springs Town Council will be considering this year's Fourth of July celebration at its meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 18.

Parks and Recreation Director Darren Lewis explained that this would be "a great opportunity" for the public to voice their comments about this year's celebration.

Lewis noted that the town will be considering three options:

- To have a parade following the same route as last year's parade, along Hot Springs Boulevard, Apache Street and South 5th Street near Yamaguchi Park.

- To have a celebratory party at Yamaguchi Park, instead of a parade, that would "lead into the town's fireworks display."

- To have a "stationary parade" on 6th Street, where the floats can line up along the street for spectator viewing.

Lewis explained that he will "point out" to the council the "safety con-

■ See Celebration A9

On to state



Photo courtesy Angelica Leslie

Local alpine ski racer Isabelle Ratcliff will be representing Pagosa Springs via Durango High School on Feb. 20 and 21 in Aspen. As a freshman, Ratcliff placed third at the Keystone qualifying race in giant slalom against 56 girls ages 14-18. Ratcliff has raced at Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Loveland, and Keystone and will end the regular race season at Ski Cooper Friday, Feb. 14. Additionally, Ratcliff has been racing for Durango Winter Sports Club and has been competing in the Southern Series circuit. Last weekend, she "skied" away with first- and second-place medals in slalom at the Arizona Snowbowl. Today, Feb. 13, Ratcliff is competing in Steamboat Springs at a qualifying race for the Rocky Central Championships taking place in March.

Pagosa Springs, Archuleta County remain most expensive places to live in region

By Garrett Fevinger
Staff Writer

The Town of Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County remain the most expensive places to live for a family of four in southwest Colorado, according to a study released Feb. 6 by the Region 9 Economic Development District.

"We found that in Region 9, Montezuma County is the least expensive... and Archuleta County is the most expensive," Region 9 states in a summary of its findings.

Region 9 encompasses the southwest corner of the state, and includes Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan counties, as well as the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Indian tribes.

Region 9 reports that for a household of two adults with two children, one in preschool and the other school age, the estimated annual living expenses in Archuleta County are \$105,919 — a figure driven "primarily" by housing costs.

That same family living in La Plata County would need to earn \$104,827 and \$91,519 in Montezuma County, according to Region 9.

"Using housing costs specific to each community we found that Pagosa Springs is the most expensive community in the region for a family of four," the report states, with each working adult needing to earn an estimated \$25.08 per hour for a livable wage.

Region 9 defines a livable wage as "the level of income necessary to meet basic needs without public assistance," according to a statement prefacing the latest findings.

By that measure, a single adult with no children living in Pagosa Springs would need to earn \$22.39 hourly, or \$47,296 annually. A single adult with one child in preschool would need to earn \$39.09 hourly, or \$82,552 annually, according to the report.

Region 9 found Cortez and the town of Dolores to be the least expensive communities in the region, with each working adult in a family of four needing to earn \$18.74 hourly in Dolores and \$18.93 in Cortez.

"When people earn less than a livable wage," the report notes, "they may have to work multiple jobs, longer hours, or make difficult choices to cover the costs of basic needs like food, housing, transportation, and

■ See Expensive A9

Measuring up: Feb. 1 snowpack below average

By Danelle Fernandez
Special to The SUN

Editor's note: Danelle Fernandez is a student at Pagosa Springs High School. She and her classmates in the Josh Kurz's global sciences class analyzed snow data extending back to 1940. The following is an extension of the article by Kurz that appeared in the Jan. 16 issue of The SUN. The article by Kurz was limited to SNOTEL data that only extends back to 1979, and, according to Kurz, "My Global Science students analyzed a longer period of record by including February 1st snow course data that extends back to 1940. Snow course data was collected at the Upper San Juan site on the 1st of the month between January and June."

I think we've all seen those movies where on the side of the road there are some people waving signs and hollering about how the "End is near." You laughed it off at the time and

continued with the movie, but now you're thinking they're probably right. I don't blame you. It's a scary time to be alive. Los Angeles was on fire again, and the snow is almost nonexistent for us in Pagosa Springs.

While it is predicted to snow a little, a little isn't enough to make up for the lack of snow this past December. So, the world must be ending, right?

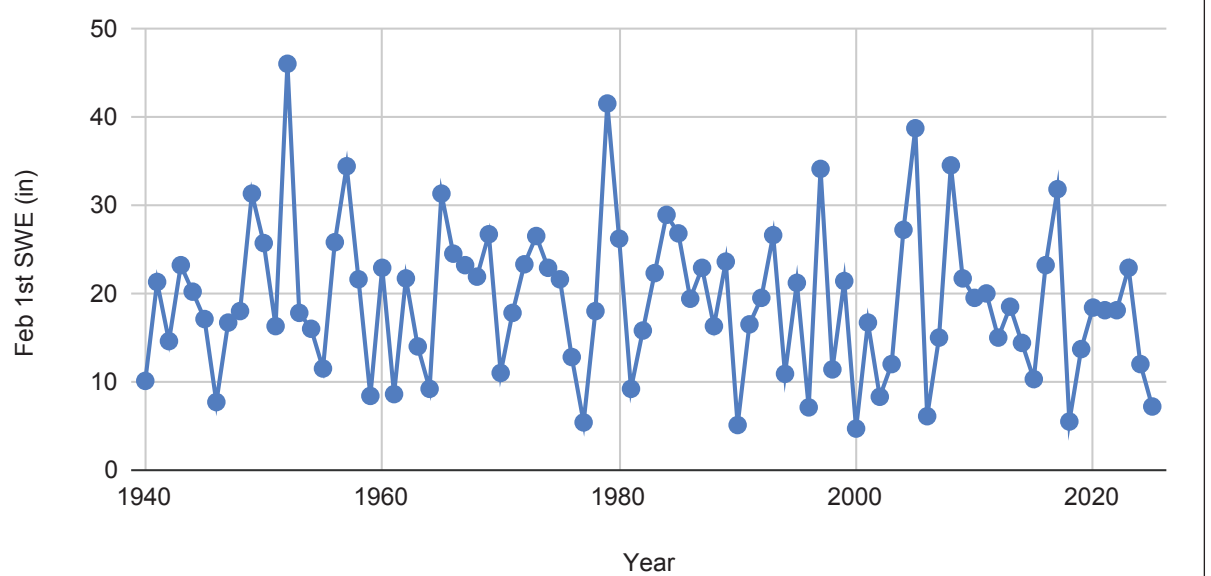
In actuality, no. The world is not ending quite yet. While the snow levels are disturbingly low, they aren't the worst that Pagosa has seen. In fact, compared to the last 86 years, we aren't even in the top five worst years. So, how do I know that? Well, I have to introduce you to a good friend of mine, the Upper San Juan SNOTEL.

The Upper San Juan SNOTEL is the site on Wolf Creek Pass that measures our snowpack, more scientifically known as snow water equivalent

■ See Measuring A9

Variability of February 1st Snowpack

Upper San Juan (1940-2025)



Graph courtesy Josh Kurz

Index

Opinion	A2
Letters	A3
Business	A7
Community Awards winner announced at Chamber Gala	
Sports	A10
Lady Pirates show confidence in regional tournament	
Public Notices	A12
PREVIEW	
Live Performers	2
Sudoku	12
PREVIEW Calendar	17
Word Search	18
Crossword	20
Classifieds	27

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Opinion

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"HOME OF THE WORLD'S DEEPEST
HOT MINERAL SPRINGS"



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OUR VIEW

Dancing for snow, watching funding freezes and washing our hands

We're finding ourselves watching for updates on several fronts lately, among them projected snow totals for this evening and Friday, what the federal government is doing that could affect the livelihoods of folks in our community and across the nation, and data on illnesses spreading rapidly.

As you'll see in articles in this issue of The SUN, concerns continue about the lack of snow this winter — more grass fires than inches of snow is never good — and what that means for fire season moving forward. We hope you'll take the time to read these articles, perhaps understand our situation better, and take any needed actions to help lessen your fire risks, which can, in turn, help the entire community.

All week as we've been reading these stories and keeping an eye on the fire danger, we've also been watching the forecast and doing snow dances with the hope that the heavy accumulation we're hearing about becomes a reality. While we've enjoyed being out in the sunshine and spring-like temps, we'd love to actually dig out our winter sports gear this year (we'll even not complain about shoveling and running the snowblower) and enjoy

winter. But, while we're watching those snow totals with mostly optimism, we're also mindful of the fact that, as of right now, federal funding freeze issues mean our vulnerable neighbors who need help in heating their homes in the winter don't currently have access to that help.

Colorado's Low-income Energy Assistance Program, or Colorado LEAP, is one of many programs affected by the ongoing federal funding issues, which happen to be taking place during a season where reportedly a record number of Colorado residents are seeking help from Colorado LEAP to pay a portion of their heating bills to help them stay warm.

Whether you agree or disagree with the federal funding freeze, its effects are undeniable, and we feel like the potential impacts of this continuing that we would list here would likely only scratch the surface.

According to a letter from Sen. John Hickenlooper, Sen. Michael Bennet and Gov. Jared Polis, more than \$570 million in obligated funding to Colorado remains inaccessible.

"This disruption threatens local economies and the workforce across the state,

particularly in rural communities, where the funding freeze creates widespread ripple effects," the letter states, adding later, "Communities, businesses, and families depend on this."

Time will tell how far those ripples go in our community and how deeply they'll be felt.

We've also been watching illness reports as a variety of germs are making their way through the community. Colorado, like much of the country, continues to have the flu circulating at very high levels, and recent emails with Archuleta County Public Health Director Ashley Wilson confirm that RSV and flu are circulating locally at higher rates.

We also know other seasonal illnesses, including highly contagious strep throat, are making their rounds.

For the sake of our community, we remind everyone to take basic precautions against illnesses, such as washing your hands and staying home when sick. While an illness may be mild for you, it could land your friend, neighbor, co-worker or the people in the store in the hospital or worse.

Randi Pierce

LOOKING BACK



From the Feb. 12, 1970, Pagosa SUN — A ROUGH DAY — Grade school students had a rough day last week when they were given penicillin shots. A high incidence of "strep throat" was reported among grade school students and the shots resulted. This group of little girls have just had their shots and are taking it easy until the shock wears off.

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LEGACIES

By Shari Pierce

100 years ago

Taken from SUN files of
February 13, 1925

The I.O.O.F. will give a dance at their hall Saturday evening, Feb. 21st, commencing at 9 o'clock. The usual price of one dollar will be charged. The proceeds of said dance will go to the endowment fund of the Odd Fellow's home. Rock's orchestra will furnish the music. Everyone is invited to come out and assist in this worthy cause.

The house has adopted the resolution to submit to the voters in 1926 a constitutional amendment permitting counties to pay sheriffs a regular wage.

The senate on Tuesday passed two drastic state prohibition laws, on making the possession of a still punishable by a term of two to five years in the penitentiary, and the other making the purchaser of illicit whiskey equally guilty of law violation with the man who sells it to him, punishable by a fine of from \$10 to \$100 and a jail sentence from 5 to 60 days.

75 years ago

Taken from SUN files of
February 11, 1950

The County Court House is receiving some badly needed work this week with carpenters busy installing new shelves in the vaults. The records that have accumulated since the county was organized have piled up so in past years that there was not adequate storage space available for all of the records and they had been kept piled up in the basement vault which created a fire hazard and was not conducive to the preservation of the papers and books. The new shelves are being installed in the vaults in the Clerk's office, the Treasurer's office and in the storage vault in the basement.

The San Juan Basin Health Unit has placed an incubator for premature babies in Pagosa Springs, according to an announcement this week by Ben Lynch, President of the Unit. The incubator is the property of the Unit but has been left at the ambulance station and is available to any resident of the area.

The incubator is a small portable affair heated by hot water bottles and is complete with oxygen tank and all the necessary attachments.

50 years ago

Taken from SUN files of
February 13, 1975

"It just keeps snowing, and snowing, and snowing," was the comment this week of Ed Team, weather observer on Wolf Creek Pass.

With 62 inches of new snow in two days, and 87 inches for the week, the observation bears merit. Snowplow crews on Wolf Creek Pass were kept busy this past week with heavy snows, two slides and regular duties.

The 87 inches of new snow contained 1.73 inches of moisture content. Heaviest snowfall was between 8 a.m. the 9th and 8 a.m. the 10th when 33 inches fell. The following day was almost as heavy with 29 inches of snow. That is 62 inches in 48 hours, enough to keep the crews busy around the clock.

Snow depth is not available because the marker is buried. It was, though, over five feet the last time the marker could be seen. Last week 25 inches of snow fell on the 4th and 5th, for a week's total of 87 inches. That brings the total snowfall for February to 92 inches to date. Last year 17 inches fell during the entire month.

25 years ago

Taken from SUN files of
February 10, 2000

A property rights question festering in western Colorado and across the West is focusing on an issue that sprouted in Archuleta County.

The question at issue is, can the U.S. Forest Service abrogate private property rights that existed prior to the existence of the Forest Service?

A group of citizens who believe that the Forest Service cannot violate those old private property rights has visited with the Archuleta County commissioners twice during the past two weeks. They want the commissioners to take a stand backing the older rights and opposing the Forest Service position. That stand could include county assertion that the roads are county roads, thereby removing them from Forest Service jurisdiction.

A focal point of the issue is the criminal conviction of Dianna R. Luppi, an Archuleta County resident who owns property on Turkey Springs Road patented by the U.S. Government under the 1882 Homestead act.

Luppi and her supporters argue that tenets of the Homestead Act, plus other legislation connected with creation of the Forest Service in the early 1900s and other laws, guarantee her access to her property. The homestead patent on her property was granted before the Forest Service was created.



Weather data

Date	High	Low	Precipitation		
			Depth	Type	Moisture
2/4	56	26	0.00	NA	0.00
2/5	53	23	0.00	NA	0.00
2/6	56	22	0.00	NA	0.00
2/7	52	20	0.00	NA	0.00
2/8	49	24	0.00	NA	0.00
2/9	44	17	0.00	NA	0.00
2/10	44	22	0.00	NA	0.00

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU REMEMBER IT BEING THIS DRY?



AMY NEESIA



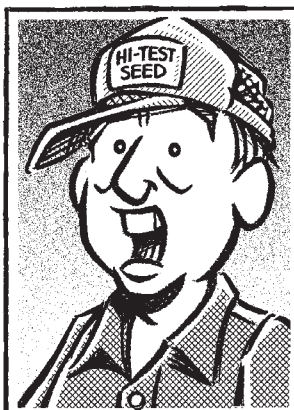
"Dunno — I can't remember it ever being this dry before!"

ERLY TRUBBLE



"Back in '37, when th' wells in these here parts all dried up!"

I. B. ESSER



"In 1981, when there wasn't even a bucket of water fer irrigation!"

J.P. DOODLES



"Yesterday — when I emptied th' rain gauge with a dustbuster!"

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.

Gratitude

Dear Editor:
I wanted to express my gratitude for the City's efforts to trim the brush from the shoreline of the San Juan River opposite The Springs Resort. I frequent this area most mornings after getting a coffee from The Root House. The number of folks I've seen enjoying the cleared spaces along the river front and under the bridge leading to The Springs has been noteworthy since the trimming occurred. The trees being trimmed, and the cleared brush will allow for healthier growth in the spring. The picnic table is a nice touch for families with small children. It's nice to see so many people enjoying more access to the river which provides our beautiful town with such great energy.

Many thanks!

Kevin Brownlee

PLPOA owner survey

Dear Editor:
Some facts according to the 2023 PLPOA Owner Survey (OS) results:
• Of the respondents to the OS, page 2 only 23% were "With Children", this is what a Board member wanted removed and then the pie chart recalculated. Ages 50-66+ comprised over half at 55% of the respondents.
• The OS nor the 2023 Strategic Plan did not use the word "gym" or "gymnasium" once in both documents but PLPOA portrayed them as facts and results in the 10-25-24 PLPOA Eblast.
• At the last gym meeting 2-5-25, Lars said "Based on the survey, we need youth activities..." as justification for the gym. The survey results provide a different fact: Of the top 3 areas you would like to see addressed by PLPOA, page 8; Providing recreational programs/activities for school aged youth was ranked extremely low, 10th out of 12.

• Of these listed below in the Capital Improvements plan, pages 15-16; select 3 that you would like to see STAY. Gymnasium, the lap pool, the outdoor hot tub was not even listed.
• Of these listed below in the Capital Improvements plan, pages 17-18; select 3 that you would like to see REMOVED. Again the gymnasium, the lap pool, the outdoor hot tub all were not even listed. The Rec Center parking lot was listed as the number 2 project to be removed.

• The question; Which of the following improvements would you prefer most at the Rec Center, page 20; Outdoor pickleball courts, the Multi-Purpose Athletic Field and the lap pool, which finally made its debut, were ranked 1, 2 and 3. Gym was not listed.

• Of the 26 activities listed, pick your top 5 if the resources and opportunities were available, page 22. Pickleball ranked 9th and court sports such as basketball, volleyball, soccer and racquetball ranked 23rd. Four out of the top 5 were outdoor activities.

• Parks and Rec sports teams and leagues question, page 24; do you think PLPOA should "Assist with organizing with the town program" was the top ranked and "Do nothing" was ranked 2 out of 5. Create its own program was last, 5th out of 5.

• The gym, lap pool and outdoor hot tub were not even included in the 2023 Owner survey and yet it somehow mysteriously was inserted in the newly revised 11-14-24 PLPOA Recreational Plan. What is PLPOA's verified justification for inserting these items?

• The Rec Center Parking lot was ranked last, 10th out of 10 in projects to "STAY" and 2nd in the projects to be "REMOVED" according to the 2023 Survey Results. Making it a prime project to get rid of according to the 2023 Survey results. What is POPOA's factual justification to construct a project in 2024 that ranked a low priority in 2023?

Multiple PLPOA's statements contradict the facts of the 2023 OS results.

Perhaps this is a result of inserting PLPOA's own vision and agenda instead of the members?

Art Dilione

USAID

Dear Editor:
USAID is getting a bum rap. Look-

ing at it from a selfish perspective, gutting USAID means billions of dollars of loss for American farmers. American farmers supply about 41 percent of the food aid for the agency which in 2020 was about 2.1 billion dollars. Our farmers are in a precarious position as it is, and with this reduction in revenue, it will put many of them out of business. Commodity prices are an exceedingly small part of what Americans pay for food so any hope that withdrawing federal purchases will result in lower food prices is a mirage. Other employees, researchers, church affiliated charities and contractors who have contracts with USAID will also lose jobs and go out of business.

Also, from another selfish perspective is the diminished power and prestige of America in the eyes of foreign recipients and governments. USAID is known as soft power; that is a way of convincing undeveloped countries that America has their best interests at heart without military force. Right now, China is losing influence in those countries because the development that China has been doing is paid for with loans from China. The repayment of those loans is crushing fragile economies. Recently, this has given the US a window to buy rare minerals and other commodities that support our high-tech economy. We are giving this away, and China is cheering.

Another mission of USAID is the monitoring and treatment of disease in other countries. Our recent experience with COVID19 shows us how fast disease can spread around the world. We obviously did not have monitors in China, and China did its best to conceal the spread of COVID until any effective response was too late. USAID was treating and monitoring outbreaks of Ebola in Uganda until it was suspended. Do we really want to see Ebola in the US?

Most importantly, USAID was preventing deaths from starvation in many countries. Whether you are an ethical person because of empathy or your faith, is that not an imperative for you? Does it matter whether those children are Christian, Muslim or pagan? Does it matter whether they are Black or Brown or White? Do you want the deaths of children on your conscience?

USAID is 1% of the US budget. That money will not be used to help Americans, unless you are a millionaire looking to reduce your already tiny tax bill. Do not believe the misinformation being spread about the corruption and waste in USAID. If there is some, and no program is perfect, remove it with a scalpel, not with a mortal blow.

If you have a shred of decency, call Representative Jeff Hurd (202-225-4676), and tell him that the unconstitutional act of putting USAID "through the wood chopper" as Elon Musk stated must be reversed immediately.

Lynn Frederick

Hydrants

Dear Editor:
I have always had some level of comfort knowing that the local fire

hydrant is just on the road side of my property fence near Lake Hatcher. When I was constructing my straw-bale home, there was considerable risk of fire when loose straw was present. Having a fire hose, a hydrant wrench and the hydrant in view was reassuring. Once the straw bales are enclosed in the stuccoed wall, the home is fairly fireproof so I worry less. I recently learned that no one has responsibility for testing the hydrants and that mine has likely not been tested for more than 20 years.

Considering the abnormally dry conditions we are experiencing and the concerning record low moisture in the soils in the National Forest, we could be in for a catastrophic fire season. It would be nice to know that the water system feeding the hydrants and the hydrants themselves are up to their designed tasks. Someone or some agency should be testing them.

Robert Hagberg

Postage rates

Dear Editor:
Talking about a problem never fixes it; that's why I am writing this letter. I believe it will receive a generous and vehement response.

I am holding in my hand a letter that I have classified as "junk mail." I don't plan to open it but use it as fire starter in one of our Earth Stoves. The letter is six inches by nine inches. It weighs 2.3 ounces. Graphics of the Stars and Stripes flag and the word "Christian" are part of the address label. The word "NONPROFIT" is part of the postage mark. There is also what appears to be a number assigned by the post office. To mail the envelope cost the sender 14.6 cents. I know without opening the envelope that the sender is begging for financial support and that there is a return envelope for that purpose in it.

It does not look like the postage rates for NONPROFIT organizations have been reviewed for a number of years? Maybe someone can get to President Trump and have him write an executive order to investigate the US Post Office.

What is going on there does not seem ethical. Someone is getting paid under the table. It does not seem right that "junk mail" rates stay the same while first class mail rates are going through the roof. If anyone wishes to dialogue with the author of this letter, here is his name and address:

Peter Laue, 965 Cloud Cap Avenue, Pagosa Springs, Colorado 81147. That address is on the west side of Lake Pagosa. Impromptu knocks on the door area always welcome. Peter is 92 and does not get out of his robe and pajamas very often. Peter and Rebekah have lived in the same log cabin on Lake Pagosa since 1977. Pagosa has been a wonder place for Peter and Rebekah to live, raise their kids and grow old.

Peter Laue

PLPOA gym vote

Dear Editor:
February 5, meeting: PLPOA president, Lars Schneider, made some personal comments at the last "additional gymnasium meeting". A loose summary is set out below:

— The President was upset and frustrated with the way the gymnasium presentation has gone. Not because the project may fail, but because he did not realize that some people in the community would go online and personally attack people because of their views on the project. The PLPOA does not want to shove it down their member's throats. The Board is just offering a project for consideration. It is based on surveys!—

So why have things gone so poorly? I am reminded of a comic strip character named Pogo who suffered similar frustrations. He finally realized the answer, "We have met the enemy and he is us!"

Consider the following:
A. The PLPOA never published the 2023 PLPOA Survey Results which they tout as the basis for demonstrating membership desire for a gymnasium. However, a copy of those survey results has been located and is now published in several places by the membership. Those survey results notably do not contain the term "field/gymnasium" or the words, "gym" or "gymnasium".

However the PLPOA published the following statement in the October 25, 2024 Eblast:

"... The 2023 survey provided crucial data on community preferences regarding recreation improvements, categorized by age group and resident type. Top three choices are listed below:

Age 20-50 with children: 1. Field/

■ See Letters A4

LIVE MUSIC

at The Springs Resort =
5-7 pm in the Lodge Atrium



Friday, February 14th
Taryn Jones
Saturday, February 15th
Bob Hemenger
Sunday, February 16th
Jackson Mountain Ramblers
Monday, February 17th
Rock N Rebels
Tuesday, February 18th
Jason Rose
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Goals & Accomplishments

SUN staff asked representatives of publicly funded agencies in Archuleta County to individually answer a trio of questions relating to the goals and accomplishments of themselves and their agencies at the turn of the year. Their answers will be printed in The SUN over the coming weeks. Answers are printed as received and are not edited.

Pagosa Springs Medical Center, Upper San Juan Health Service District

Kate Alfred, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Upper San Juan Health Service District



What are your three biggest accomplishments of 2024?

Pagosa Springs Medical Center had a good year in 2024. CEO Rhonda Webb, M.D. and her administrative team managed expenses and had modest annual net revenues consistent with the approved budget.

All rural hospitals struggle to remain in business. The biggest reason is that rural areas tend to have a high percentage of patients

covered by Medicare and Medicaid (approximately 70% of PSMC patients) and Medicare/Medicaid reimburses at a rate much less than the cost to actually deliver the care. CEO Rhonda Webb has served on the Board of the Colorado Hospital Association and the Board of the Western Healthcare Alliance to advocate for policy and legislation to ensure that all rural hospitals in Colorado can continue to offer care in their communities.

In 2024, the PSMC Board studied new services to address patient needs and support the financial health of PSMC. We expanded orthopedic services, adding surgeon Dr. Jeremiah Steed, a native of Pagosa Springs and acquiring a Stryker Mako Robotic System to expand orthopedic surgery offerings. We increased physical therapy services and we will offer these services in our renovated Medical Wellness Building on the PSMC campus. In addition, PSMC will offer pain management services and wellness in the Medical Wellness Building. Also in 2024, Dr. Holcomb joined the PSMC staff offering Pulmonology services for our community.

In 2024, PSMC began community educational presentations by our physicians. PSMC's first educational event focused on orthopedics by Dr. Bill Webb and Dr. Steed, and the second presentation was about pulmonology services presented by Dr. Barry Holcomb. Both educational events were held at the Liberty Theater through the generosity of Evelyn Tennyson. More will be scheduled for 2025.

What are your three top goals for 2025? What is your action plan to meet your goals?

We look forward to another good year for PSMC in 2025 providing quality, compassionate healthcare and wellness for each person we serve.

Rhonda P. Webb, MD, Pagosa Springs Medical Center CEO and CMO



2024 has seemingly come and gone at a blink of an eye. During the first year as the Pagosa Fire Protection District Chief, I quickly learned how fortunate I was to be handed such a great team of volunteer and career members. The year was spent observing and evaluating all aspects of operations and looking for opportunities to further develop the team to serve the citizens to the best of our abilities.

What are your three biggest accomplishments of 2024?

In 2024, the dedicated team of professionals at Pagosa Springs Medical Center made three significant accomplishments to transform the quality and accessibility of care for our community:

1. Added Pulmonology Services: PSMC hired pulmonologist Barry Holcomb, MD who provides expert care for lung diseases and conditions such as asthma, COPD, and sleep apnea. The pulmonary services at PSMC ensures quicker diagnosis and management to improve the long-term health outcomes for our patients.

2. Expanded Orthopedic Surgery Services: PSMC's long-standing orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Bill Webb, continues to treat patients and has

been joined by an additional orthopedic surgeon and Pagosa-native, Jeremiah Steed, MD. Dr. Steed is certified in Mako robotic-assisted joint replacement, a technology now available at PSMC for knee and hip joint replacement.

3. Renovated PSMC's Medical Wellness Building for Expansion of Physical Therapy Services: With the support of generous community donors and a DOLA grant, PSMC substantially renovated its building at the corner of 160 and S. Pagosa Blvd. in order to meet the growing demand for physical therapy services. In 2025, this updated facility will offer enhanced outpatient physical therapy services with substantial space, state-of-the-art equipment, and a procedure room for pain management to support patients recovering from surgery, injuries or chronic conditions. The renovated space is beautiful and an excellent environment for first class care and physical recovery.

What are your three top goals for 2025? What is your action plan to meet your goals?

In 2025, we have many goals, among them are to sustain the financial viability of this independent hospital in an increasingly challenging healthcare environment, continue to expand services to meet the needs of the community, and evaluate the viability of an eastside ambulance station as PSMC operates the only ambulance in Archuleta County. I am proud to continue to lead the PSMC team who are committed to providing exceptional, accessible care for the health and well-being of this community.

Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District

Jim Smith, PAWSD Board President



What are your three biggest accomplishments of 2024?

The Snow Ball Plant is on schedule for completion in 2026. Its estimated cost before covid was 24 million. The cost when completed due to inflation is 44 million. PAWSD Manager, Justin Ramsey, took the title of Regional Project Representative as required to receive a 5 million dollar BIL grant. His duty for the title is acting head engineer for the project which is saving approximately 1 million dollars.

The PAWSD Board implemented the 2023 Santece rate study in order to meet all operating costs and to maintain an "A" bond rating. Unfunded mandates covering water and wastewater by the Federal and State governments coupled with the highest inflation rate in 40 years has caused higher cost to PAWSD's customers. At PAWSD's last board meeting in 2024, the Board lowered the 2025 wastewater service fee increase from 30% to 10%.

This fall, with the help of Boot Jack Ranch and Dale Hochett's crew performing river restoration, the PAWSD's San Juan River area where water flows to the inlet pipe was redesigned. The inlet pipe carries water from West Fork to the Snow Ball Plant. Boot Jack Ranch provided thousands of dollars in material that will help keep the inlet clean with minimum maintenance for years to come.

What are your three top goals for 2025? What is your action plan to meet your goals?

My first goal is to retire from the PAWSD's Board on May 1, 2025. I have served 8 years, 7 years as chair. I have had the opportunity to serve with conservative Board members who have been dedicated to providing the lowest rates possible for its customers in addition to supporting its employees.

I can't over emphasize how fortunate PAWSD is to have its lead employees, Justin Ramsey, Aaron Burns, and Renee Lewis. They have provided exceptional leadership, knowledge, and diligence in the performance of their jobs. All PAWSD employees are dedicated to providing the best service possible to its customers now and into the future.

The PAWSD's Board waived 63 Capital Investment fees for work force and low income housing in 2024. PAWSD is a leader in the community for addressing one of the most important issues facing the local workforce. I feel this will be an ongoing goal for PAWSD.

Letters

■ Continued from A3

gymnasium 2. Pickleball courts 3. Lap pool/child care room

Age 20-50 without children: 1. Field/gymnasium 2. Pickleball courts 3. Lap pool... etc..."

When it was recently discovered that a "field/gymnasium" or a gymnasium was not mentioned at all in the 2023 survey results many of the membership felt misled.

B. The membership was presented with a survey questionnaire asking

them how they wanted to pay for the gymnasium but which gave them no opportunity to express opposition to the project. Many felt the project was being forced upon them.

C. The Gymnasium Presentation Handout contained this statement from the PLPOA administration:

"...While we feel somewhat discouraged in having to seek permission for the gymnasium when other projects that serve far less of the community have not required it, we

respect and abide by the governing documents..."

That statement also explained that, "...In fact, the chance to vote on that project is a unique privilege..."

Many of the membership considered this language to be condescending as well as an incorrect description of their right to the vote.

D. As opposition to the project grew Mr. Schneider, personally, and not speaking for the PLPOA, went on Nextdoor with the comment,

"... stop for 15mins and watch an overview of what's being proposed instead of believing all the intentional lies being spread because a small group of the community is anti-everything. Then help debunk the lies..."

Many could have taken that statement as a personal attack.

Hopefully this review will help the PLPOA leadership, like Pogo, find its enemy.

Patrick Moore

■ See Letters A5

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The Town of Pagosa Springs is seeking applications from individuals interested in volunteering to serve as an alternate member for the Planning Commission. This position will be appointed by the Town Council.

Members are appointed for a four-year term and generally meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 5:30 pm at Town Hall. There may be interim meetings and work sessions on specific planning and development topics. Interested individuals must be a Town resident.



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PLPOA

■ **Continued from front**
so that the PLPOA could go after those grants and “the county would be acting as a pass-through because these monies are only available to municipalities.”

Brown further explained that by the county acting as a “pass-through,” if a grant is awarded, the county would receive the money and pass it straight to the PLPOA.

“That’s where this begins and ends,” Brown added, noting that the MOU does not require the county to contribute financial assistance for the project.

County Attorney Todd Weaver also explained that the county would be acting as the fiscal agent for the potential GOCO grant “and there is no financial contribution from the county.”

PLPOA board president Lars Schneider explained that due to the bylaws of PLPOA, the field must be open for the entire community to use, not just for PLPOA members.

“So, it’s a perfect opportunity for

a PLPOA-county partnership,” he said.

Schneider noted that the athletic field would be open to the public the same way that the PLPOA’s trails and playgrounds currently are.

“We don’t have PLPOA staff out on those trails asking people where they live,” Schneider added.

He also explained that the athletic field and gymnasium expansion projects are “completely separate projects.”

Roth noted that using GOCO grant funding for the athletic field project requires the space to be open to the public.

Responding to public comment on the matter, Schneider explained that the total cost of the athletic field project is estimated at approximately \$1 million.

He went on to mention that the GOCO grant the PLPOA plans to pursue is typically a matching grant, noting that PLPOA plans to put up \$500,000 for the project, which would be matched with \$500,000 from the

grant.
“It’s a million dollars solid to build an artificial turf,” Schneider said, explaining that, according to studies, an artificial turf field is cheaper in the long run compared to a natural grass field.

He noted that if the PLPOA is not awarded the grant, the athletic field project would become an entirely new project and would likely have to go to a vote of PLPOA owners.

“I don’t know how many people have the stomach for that one again,” he added.

Gymnasium update

“We’re putting it to a vote for a gym,” Schneider said, explaining that the vote went live for PLPOA members on Jan. 27 and will close March 1.

He mentioned that the gymnasium addition has been talked about since June 2024 when the PLPOA updated its master plan and it was decided as a board that “what might be best for the community would be an indoor gymnasium.”

Schneider explained that the gymnasium addition would be attached to the current rec center and that the board is not able to pass the project through without a vote of 51 percent in favor of the project.

Schneider also noted that a one-time \$255 special assessment fee is associated with the project that would be paid by PLPOA members that “will actually build the structure.”

Weaver clarified that the MOU relating to the athletic field project is not associated with PLPOA’s gymnasium expansion project.

“The county is not involved in it whatsoever,” Weaver stated.

Schneider explained that unlike the athletic field, the gymnasium

expansion would be “strictly” for the use of PLPOA members, except for those who are allowed to rent the space, “which is no different than the clubhouse.”

Conversations around forming a recreation district also came up during the work session, with Weaver explaining that forming a recreation district will likely take three to four years and cost upward of \$150,000 just to form the special district.

Weaver mentioned that the Pagosa Area Recreation Coalition (PARC) is exploring the possibilities of spearheading the project, as the county is not legally allowed to start the district.

He noted that part of the process in forming a recreation district is for it to be approved by the BoCC and receive approval from the courts.

Weaver indicated that PARC is currently discussing what grant opportunities may be available to fund the formation of a recreation district.

“Really to get the ball rolling and doing a recreation district, it’s gonna take about \$100k,” Weaver said.

Commissioner John Ranson commented that the community is currently dealing with major projects such as the county’s search for a new administration building, Archuleta School District’s facility concerns and the PLPOA gymnasium project.

He noted that it’s important that all of these entities “work together” in moving through these projects, cautioning that pulling large amounts of money from the community may be difficult.

“These meetings are what helps the kids years down the road,” Schneider commented, noting that the community will either “grow together” or grow separately, slowly.
clayton@pagosahun.com

Letters

■ Continued from A4 More about Fix Our Forests Act

Dear Editor:

There was a very informative letter recently about the Fix Our Forests Act, H.R. 471. I would like to add some additional comments about this legislation. The letter was correct. Many parts of this Act will provide for better forest management, fire mitigation and wild fire response. It was also correct that the approval was bipartisan: 279 in favor, 141 opposed. I wondered why there were “Nay” votes to something that seems so beneficial to all, especially to those of us who live so close to the San Juan National Forest. So I decided to read the Summary, which is on the House of Representatives website. I found that, as is sometimes the case, there is a bit of “devil in the details.”

The measure will expedite the review and compliance process for management projects so that some requirements do not have to be met, as usually required, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. There is certainly a need to speed up the response to dangerous wildfires and to waive aspects of the approval process that hinder immediate response. But I would hope that this doesn’t allow projects, that may be exploiting instead of mitigating, to avoid compliance. What is also troubling is that this legislation limits litigation that allows the court to review projects which may be of concern: mining, clear cutting, drilling, claiming to be beneficial, but may really be for profit and not for the health and protection of the forest.

The legislation does seem to support forest restoration, stewardship, improving technology, and assistance to wildland firefighters and their families; goals that would be approved by all of us.

The legislation now moves on to the Senate. I hope to follow it through that process.

Susan Yalom

Another option

Dear Editor:

There is growing talk here about the lack of snow and the fear of fires... almost that they are inevitable.

Most people know what a self fulfilling prophesy is. May I offer an-

other option? What if we could say to ourselves and to others, “Because it is so dry here I am scared about the high potential of fires and I am so grateful for the abundance of snowfall/rain that is keeping the mountains and us safe and healthy.”

You see, the job of the subconscious is to bring forward the LAST portion of what we say to ourselves or others.

May we say this or something similar often...together! Thank you,
Zhena

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Goals & Accomplishments

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Archuleta School District

Bob Lynch, Archuleta School District Board President



What are your three biggest accomplishments of 2024?

Student Achievement: Our Archuleta School District (ASD) schools made significant strides in improving learning outcomes for students in the 2023-24 school year. There were many bright spots in the overall assessment of achievement and growth, here are a few highlights. A sample of the many bright spots in the latest Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) test results include, in English Language Arts a compilation of results for students in 3rd through 8th grade shows that in 2022, 25% of students were meeting or exceeding the Colorado state standards, while in 2024, 42% of students were meeting or exceeding the state standard. In Math, similar improvements were noted. This is a small sample of an overall trend in the District that everyone should be proud of. While we celebrate this significant progress, it is quite evident to me that all the staff at ASD are intent on continuing this improvement path. Better results aren't a function of just trying the same thing harder, it's about doing key things differently. The focus of Superintendent Rick Holt and the leadership teams at each of our schools is to support teachers and students in three key ways; jointly selecting the most engaging curriculum, coaching to ensure fidelity to the best instructional methods and ongoing professional development for staff.

Building Master Plan: Beginning in the spring of 2024 the district began a process of assessing the condition of each of our school buildings. This assessment was conducted by RTA associates, an architectural firm that assesses and designs school buildings. The results of this independent audit revealed the strengths and weaknesses of each of our school facilities. It is no surprise to anyone who has visited our elementary or middle schools that each of these facilities has major issues that must be addressed in the very near future. The current facility maintenance team, led by Josh Sanchez, does a tremendous job keeping all the buildings operating, however, there are structural and systems issues that make the buildings sub-standard as learning environments. As an example, a perpetual problem of sewer line blockages at the Middle School will require a major structural solution soon. The results of the facility audit were presented to community groups in the fall and public input was collected. This assessment and community involvement process will continue into 2025 with the key upcoming phases referenced below.

Update Strategic Objectives: In October 2024 the Board held a planning retreat to assess progress toward our current strategic goals and to determine what new Strategic Objectives should be established. The Board has been very disciplined about establishing Strategic Objectives and empowering District Leadership to work toward accomplishing these goals over a period of years. Only when we have a level of success in the key strategic areas, do we then establish new goals for the future. We intentionally do not move the goal posts or change to the next educational flavor of the month. This year we assessed that important progress has been made in Student Achievement and in Attraction and Retention of Staff. Given this foundational progress, we added a focus on Staff and Student Well Being. This area is currently a focus of our leaders, but by

making this a strategic objective we will add actions and resources to help ensure that we have the healthiest environment for staff and students.

What are your three top goals for 2025?

Complete Facilities Master Plan. In 2025, we will determine the best path forward regarding facilities: The district is now in the process of forming a community advisory group to make recommendations to the District Board of Directors about the best path ahead. The community input group will advise the board on whether we should invest further in upgrading the older buildings or make a plan to construct new buildings. More community input sessions will be held in the first half of 2025 and this input, along with recommendations from the advisory committee, will be used by the board to decide about the best investments to make to optimize the learning environment for our staff and students.

Stay Focused on Student Achievement. We are intent on continuing to make strides in student achievement. It is very clear to me that the building leadership teams and teachers at each school are at the point of really cracking the code when it comes to applying and refining repeatable tools and methods that drive improvement in student growth and achievement. It is important to recognize the collective effort of all staff at ASD, and to note the great leadership from Superintendent Rick Holt, and our Building Leaders Sean O'Donnell and Chantelle Jordan at the High School, Chris Hinger and Janae Ash at the Middle School and Kelly Vining and Nicolle Looper at the Elementary. And most importantly, we have a wonderful staff of dedicated teachers and support staff that make our district one of the best.

What is your action plan to meet your goals?

Make Facilities Decisions. In 2025, the Board will listen to the community and make a plan for the future of our buildings. Our buildings need help. We will decide whether we are doing major structure and systems renovations, replacing buildings, or some combination of both. The community will help us decide, and we ask each of you to participate in some way to let us know which path to pursue. Money will be spent on short term fixes or on long term solutions, let's decide together what course has the greatest cost-benefit for our kids.

Continue Student Achievement Progress. We will stay the course on practices that ensure steady progress in student achievement. One of the main levers the board has for ensuring improvement in student achievement is to make sure we do everything we can to attract and retain great teachers. We have some of the best teachers in the state and we want to keep them on board and ensure that they are valued for what they do. The board will do all within our power to prioritize teacher salaries and to ensure that the environment is supportive and reinforcing. We want to make sure that Archuleta School District is a great place to work and a wonderful place to learn for students.

Expand CTE. We will continue to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings. Through our partnership with Build Pagosa, we are hopeful that a new CTE facility will be constructed in the next year or two. This facility will be used by ASD for CTE classes and by the Community as a Regional Workforce Training Center. We know that keeping students engaged in learning throughout high school means offering learning opportunities in skills and trades that are marketable upon graduation. We will continue to actively pursue this avenue of learning and opportunity for our students.

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Community Foundation celebrates 25th anniversary, announces granting for local nonprofits

By Rachel Rosenthal
Community Foundation serving Southwest Colorado

Community Foundation serving Southwest Colorado is excited to celebrate 25 years of supporting the nonprofit community in Southwest Colorado.

One of the ways we will celebrate this milestone is to grant \$25,000 to organizations serving a different sector for each quarter of 2025.

The foundation supports nonprofits serving in five counties, two sovereign nations and nine towns across our region, and quarterly granting will be distributed across the communities we serve.

For the first quarter, the foundation supported nonprofits with a focus on basic needs, committing to providing 10 nonprofits with a grant from our SPUR (Special Projects, Uniquely Responsive) Fund.

In addition to the funds already committed by the foundation, a generous donor in the community contributed \$50,000 to further the impact of granting for the first quarter.

"We are beyond grateful to the Michael and Elaine Moravan Foundation for their donation which triples the impact of granting this quarter," said Briggen Wrinkle, executive director of the Community Foundation. "We know these funds are greatly needed, especially during the coldest months of the year."

The Community Foundation will distribute \$7,500 to each of the following organizations: San Juan Public Health (Silverton, San Juan County), Good Sam (Cortez/Ute Mountain Ute, Montezuma County), Mancos Food Share (Mancos, Montezuma County), Dolores Family Project (Dolores, Montezuma County), Dove Creek Care and Share Food Pantry (Dove Creek, Dolores County),

Healthy Archuleta (Pagosa Springs, Archuleta County), Pine River Shares (Bayfield, Ignacio, Southern Ute Tribe, La Plata County), Community Emergency Assistance Program and Housing Our Workforce Locally (Durango, La Plata County), and the Warming Center (Durango, La Plata County).

Quarterly funding will focus on a different aspect of community need for each granting cycle, and the grants are unsolicited.

If you would like to support the Community Foundation's SPUR Fund with a donation or learn more about how you can partner with us, go to our website www.swcommunityfoundation.org and select the "Donate" button.

The Community Foundation inspires hope, leadership and generosity in the community by bringing economic stability, professional development and collaboration to

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Business



Photo courtesy Jeff Laydon

The Rotary Club of Pagosa Springs, represented by Warren Brown, was named the 2024 Non-Profit of the Year at last week's Chamber Gala.



Photo courtesy Jeff Laydon

Echo IT Consulting, represented by owner Eric Hittle, took home the prize as the 2024 Small Business of the Year at last week's Chamber Gala.



Photo courtesy Jeff Laydon

Bill and Nancy Crouse were named the 2024 Volunteers of the Year at last week's Chamber Gala.

Community Awards winner announced at Chamber Gala

By Mary Jo Coulehan
Pagosa Springs Area Chamber of Commerce

A festive evening was held on Friday, Feb. 7, where residents and businesses of Pagosa Springs were honored at the annual Chamber Gala and Community Awards celebration.

For the past month, nominations were submitted in each of the categories of Non-Profit, Small Business, Volunteer and Citizen of the Year. The winners were honored on Friday evening.

There were many qualified candidates in each of the categories, as there are every year. We appreciate the nominations that people took the time to submit and the time the selection committee took to make the hard decision of just one winner.

We expect to see some of the nominees return to the pool of candidates next year. Congratulations to all nominees and winners for the 2024 Community Awards.

Non-Profit of the Year

In the nonprofit category, the Rotary Club of Pagosa Springs was honored with 44 years of service to the community.

Included in its services are the youth scholarships, where it has awarded more than \$564,000 since 1982. It also offers teacher mini-grants, a backpack program, 2 miles of highway cleanup, a youth exchange program, its members build houses with Habitat for Humanity, and the group financially support a three-year giving campaign for three transformative community projects: the library expansion project, Aspen House and Wings Early Childhood Center. Its members participate in many other community programs and, just in its fiscal years 2023-2024, contributed more than 7,500 hours of service.

Small Business of the Year

In the small business category, nine-year business Echo IT Consulting was the winner.

Starting with just one person, this business now employs six full-time and three part-time people.

Specializing in IT technology, Echo IT has been instrumental in moving the broadband capacity in Pagosa Springs forward and working with other entities to provide regional broadband coverage. Its giveback to the community includes an assort-



Photo courtesy Jeff Laydon

Larry Ash, pictured with his family, was named the 2024 Citizen of the Year at last week's Chamber Gala.

ment of engagements, including the Wolf Creek Ski Team, 4-H, Archuleta County Fair and the Livestock Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, Rise Above Violence and more.

Named after the owner, Eric Christian Hittle, Echo IT has become known as the "go-to" business for premium IT service in Pagosa Springs.

Volunteers of the Year

The Volunteers of the Year for 2024 were Bill and Nancy Crouse.

Quiet, unassuming and humble, yet determined and engaged, this dynamic duo over the years has created projects and served the community tirelessly.

Nancy Crouse was one of a handful of women who started the weekly Loaves and Fishes program more than 20 years ago that was so needed in our community and functioned until COVID hit and then the sale of the Parish Hall downtown rendered the location to be no longer available. She also started the annual Thanksgiving and Christmas community meals at Loaves and Fishes. Prior to mammography services in Pagosa Springs, she created the infamous "Boob Bus," where ladies would travel to Santa Fe to take over an X-ray center for breast mammography exams. For more than 20 years, this trip was a social and physical respite for many women.

Bill Crouse has been an active volunteer for more than 20 years for the Pagosa Fire Protection District,

often being the one behind the wheel at most of Pagosa's events and rallying at many emergencies.

Both Bill and Nancy Crouse work with STEM students and mentor those needing extra help in subjects such as math. Their other volunteer activities include working with organizations such as Special Olympics, LASSO, the Humane Society, Aspen House, No Limits Ranch and more.

Citizen of the Year

The Citizen of the Year award went to Larry Ash, a resident of more than 47 years, premier builder and co-founder of the Build Pagosa organization.

Having graduated from Pagosa Springs High School and leaving the community, he returned to Pagosa to work and raise his family. Coaching sports, mentoring and serving on numerous community boards, Ash has helped guide new rules and regulations improving the safety and growth of Pagosa Springs in an array of areas including fire, water and building protection.

He is most recently known for his work as co-founder of the Build Pagosa nonprofit organization working to improve career and technical education studies, especially in the building trades, for our youth. Starting out with only 36 students, the class now serves more than 150 students. The organization is intent on completing a multimillion-dollar

capital campaign to build a regional workforce center for not only youth, but also adults.



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Biz Beat



The Colorado Bankers Association (CBA) has named Sherry Waner, chief development officer at First Southwest Bank, a recipient of the 2025 Bankers of Distinction Award, recognizing her exceptional leadership and commitment to community development.

With 32 years in banking, Waner specializes in creative business financing, public-private partnerships and complex capital stacks that drive economic growth. At First Southwest Bank, a CDFI, she has been instrumental in bridging financing gaps for underserved businesses across Colorado.

She is also CEO of HelloBello, a tech platform that simplifies lending for borrowers and lenders alike.

"Sherry's innovative approach to lending and leadership exemplify the values of the Bankers of Distinction Award," said Jenifer Waller, CBA president and CEO.

This award honors professionals who make lasting contributions through leadership, innovation and financial empowerment, making Waner a well-deserving recipient.

LPEA plans 'Coffee with Chris' events

La Plata Electric Association

La Plata Electric Association Inc. (LPEA) invites cooperative members to meet LPEA's new CEO, Chris Hansen, for a series of "Coffee with Chris" events.

These informal gatherings are an opportunity to engage with Hansen, ask questions, and learn more about the cooperative's 2025 operational plan and long-term energy strategy.

Appointed as LPEA's CEO in November 2024, Hansen brings more than 25 years of experience in the environmental and energy sectors.

A former Colorado state senator and executive director of the Institute for Western Energy, he has worked with renewable energy organizations, utilities and government agencies to advance efficiency and sustainability.

Hansen is eager to connect with members, listen to their perspectives and discuss LPEA's efforts to shape a sustainable and electrified future. These events have no formal agenda — just coffee, conversation and a focus on building community connections.

When, where and why

- Feb. 20: 10 to 11:30 a.m. at the Pine River Library in Bayfield.
- Feb. 25: 8 to 9:30 a.m. at the Smiley Cafe in Durango.
- March 27: 8 to 9:30 a.m. at Rise and Shine in Ignacio.
- April 8: 8 to 9:30 a.m. at Root House in Pagosa Springs.

These events will offer an opportunity to learn about LPEA's efforts to make electrification more accessible and beneficial for its members. Attendees can ask questions about the 2025 operational plan and LPEA's broader vision for the future while engaging in open and meaningful

conversations.

No RSVP is required; just stop by for coffee and conversation. You can learn more about the 2025 operational plan at lpea.coop.

About LPEA

LPEA is a member-owned, not-for-profit, electric distribution cooperative serving La Plata and Archuleta counties, with segments of Hinsdale, Mineral and San Juan counties.

LPEA is the fifth-largest cooperative of 22 in Colorado and aims to provide safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost to its approximately 36,500 members.

For additional information, contact LPEA at (970) 247-5786 or visit lpea.coop.

Call for Artists: Pagosa Springs Mural Project

The Town of Pagosa Springs invites artists to leave their creative mark by designing a mural for the Geothermal Building along the riverwalk and main street. This highly visible location offers a unique canvas to create an inspiring work that captures the spirit of Pagosa Springs. Imagine your art flowing with the energy of the town's world-famous hot springs, symbolizing renewal, vitality, and a deep connection to place.

The project budget is up to \$15,000, and the submission deadline for Round 1 is March 5, 2025, at 5:00 PM (MT). To apply, visit <https://mypagosa.org/2025-call-for-artists>.

For questions, email agadomski@pagosasprings.co.gov.

Don't miss this opportunity to contribute a lasting symbol of community pride and artistic vision!



December 2024 sales tax revenue up almost 11 percent

By Garrett Fevinger
SUN Writer

Sales tax collections in December 2024 increased by 10.64 percent compared to figures from one year prior, according to reports released Feb. 11 by Archuleta County Finance Director Chad Eaton.

Eaton notes the Town of Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County received a total of \$1,704,736.27 from the December tax revenues, with \$854,178.07 going to the town and \$850,558.20 going to the county.

The nearly 11 percent revenue increase accounts for an additional \$164,001.66, according to the reports, which highlight the categories that are up in comparison to December 2023, including:

- Manufacturing at 76.4 percent, or \$34,933.17;
- Retail trade at 5.95 percent, or \$53,703.13;
- Finance and insurance at 6.88 percent, or \$114.48;
- Real estate and rental and leasing at 2.66 percent, or \$746.90;
- Professional, scientific and technical services at 19.89 percent, or

\$2,333.57;

- Accommodation and food services at 17.84 percent, or \$44,660.53; and
- Miscellaneous at 26.34 percent, or \$49,516.67.

Eaton's reports also identify categories that were down in comparison to December 2023, including:

- Construction down 15.38 percent, or \$5,392.88;
- Information down 20.95 percent, or \$8,086.66; and
- Other services (except public administration) down 22.09 percent, or \$8,527.25.

2024 sales tax in review

Cumulative sales tax revenues in 2024 were about \$618,605 higher than in 2023, according to data released by Eaton.

The cumulative 2024 revenue for January through December was \$18,422,448 — about 3.5 percent higher than the cumulative sales tax revenue for all of 2023, which was \$17,803,843.

Comparing sales tax data from 2023, the following categories saw revenue increases in 2024:

- Construction was up 6 percent,

or \$24,803;

- Manufacturing was up 19.6 percent, or \$125,529;
- Retail trade was up 2.9 percent, or \$283,506;
- Information services was up slightly more than one-half of a percentage point, or \$1,815;
- Finance and insurance was up 24.7 percent, or \$4,443;
- Real estate and rental/leasing was up 7.2 percent, or \$24,719;
- Accommodation and food services were up 6 percent, or \$190,881; and
- Other services (except public administration) were up 8.9 percent, or \$26,374.

Categories that saw cumulative declines in 2024 include:

- Miscellaneous was down .09 percent, or \$2,174 less; and
- Professional, scientific and technical services were down 24.7 percent, or \$61,290.

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Expensive

Continued from front
healthcare. Costs for quality childcare and housing continue to strain family budgets across the region.
According to its report, Region 9 has estimated livable wages in the southwest region since 1999. To form its 2024 update, Region 9 drew upon expenditure estimates prepared by the University of Washington School of Social Work, which compiled data for the five counties in the region.

Wages by job sector

Using 2023 data from the Quarterly Census of Wages (2024's was not yet available), Region 9 found that, in the region, "most employment sectors do not provide enough income to meet the basic needs of a family of four."
Across the region, wages from jobs in local government (13 percent), health services (11 percent) and retail trade (11 percent) were all considered inadequate.
"These occupations do not provide sufficient wages to support a

family of four," the report states.
By contrast, Region 9 recognized jobs in the mining and utilities sectors, as well as in "professional and management services," as broadly providing livable wages for families of four.
In Archuleta County, accommodation and food services accounted for the most jobs in 2023, totaling 1,015. Region 9 considers those jobs "low wage," with average annual earnings of less than \$36,406, according to the report.

Construction and retail trade were the next biggest employers in the county, with construction workers earning "mid wage" incomes between \$36,406 to \$54,608, and retail workers falling in the "low wage" category.
Wages for the 801 local government workers in Archuleta County were considered "high" in 2023, the report notes, with average earnings of more than \$54,608.
The four leading job sectors in Dolores County — agriculture, local government, accommodation and

food series, and retail trade — all provided employees with incomes that fell beneath the "low wage" threshold.
The leading job sectors in La Plata and Montezuma counties all provided "mid wage" incomes, according to the 2023 data.

Housing

"We found that in almost every community actual rental costs are substantially higher than Fair Market Rent estimates," the report states.
In Archuleta County, the most expensive in the region for renters, the median rental cost for a single-bedroom residence was \$1,750. A fair market rent estimate for the same residence, drawn from surveys conducted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, was \$1,063.
For a two-bedroom rental in Pagosa Springs, the median cost was \$2,000; its fair market equivalent was \$1,397.
Actual rental costs in La Plata and Montezuma counties were similarly

higher than their fair market equivalents.

Closing the gap

In its summary, Region 9 notes discussions taking place throughout the region aimed at making housing and child care more affordable for working individuals and families.
"Closing the wage gap between current wages and self-sufficiency wages require both reducing costs and raising incomes," the report notes.
In addition to reducing the costs of housing and child care, Region 9 also advocates for workers and employers to "work together in achieving a living wage," as well as advocating for "improving minimum wages at the local, state and national level."
The 2024 minimum hourly wage in Colorado was \$14.42, or about \$30,455 per year. That figure increased to \$14.81 for non-tipped employees as of Jan. 1.
For the complete Region 9 report, visit www.region9edd.org.
garrett@pagosasun.com



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Measuring

Continued from front
(SWE), and helps us approximate how much runoff will feed into the San Juan River in the spring. SWE is found by weighing the snow at the site to predict how much water is in the snow. Most of my data will come from this measuring site.

According to SNOTEL data, the lowest Feb. 1 SWE since 1940 is as follows (with the rank, year and Feb. 1 SWE):

1. 2000, 4.7 inches.
2. 1990, 5.1 inches.
3. 1977, 5.4 inches.
4. 2018, 5.5 inches.
5. 2006, 6.1 inches.
6. 1996, 7.1 inches.
7. 2025, 7.2 inches.
8. 1946, 7.7 inches.
9. 2002, 8.3 inches.
10. 1959, 8.4 inches.

So, how abnormal is this year's

snowpack and what should we be expecting?
As I said, Pagosa has seen worse, but let's first discuss what is considered "normal" according to the average SWE of the past 86 years.
According to a graph from the NRCS, up until December we were on track for a strong year. Since then we've practically flatlined.
As of writing this, Feb. 1, we should've had about 17 inches of SWE, but we've instead gotten a measly 7.2 inches. However, as the graph shows, while we get a majority of our water from snowfall, there's still precipitation seen well into October. So, while this year's snow is underwhelming at best, we can still hope that spring showers will bring us summer flowers.
Now, let's look at some numbers. On Feb. 1, the snowpack was at 7.2

inches, which is not nearly as bad compared to our worst recorded Feb. 1, 4.7 inches in 2000.
So, while it's the cause for some concern, it is not the first sign of the apocalypse.
If you need more reassurance, graphing the Feb. 1 SWE since 1940 illustrates to us how bipolar our weather patterns are. We have our "good" and our "bad" years, but not many "normal" years. There is rarely anything normal when it comes to weather.
So, what should we be expecting come April 1 and the end of winter? Well, my very inquisitive friends, we can look at the past 85 years' worth of snow data to predict April 1 of this year.
Based on data, as we had 7.2 inches this Feb. 1, we can assume we will see around 10-20 inches of SWE

on April 1. So, while we might see a below-average runoff, it isn't a sign that the sky is falling.
Now, let's take all that and apply it to our everyday lives.
Going back to the river, our part of the San Juan is one of the biggest assets of Pagosa alongside the hot springs and the mountains. It not only brings in tourists, but also provides enrichment to the community and a wildlife habitat. We also have to think about our neighbors downstream. The San Juan will eventually lead into Lake Powell, which provides power across the desert southwest. California and Arizona also use our water for agriculture. So, with the possibility of a lower river due to poor snow, I would suggest a couple of things. If you rely on the river for income, expect a slow year and budget accordingly. Brush up on your fire safety. Don't have bonfires, use this as motivation to stop smoking — what ever lowers the risk of us burning.
Weather is unpredictable at its best and, with a bit of luck, we'll get some snow this week. I'm personally hoping for a strong monsoon season.


Celebration

Continued from front
cerns," as well as potential parking problems, with a traditional mobile parade along the Hot Springs Boulevard route.
He said that town staff is really "looking forward to putting on a Fourth of July celebration," but that the town's options are limited due to the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT's) main street reconstruction project on U.S. 160 through the downtown.
With the construction slated to begin this spring and Hot Springs Boulevard being shut off for the parade route, very little parking options would be left for a parade route, he explained.
Administrative Service Manager Kathy Harker explained at a May 23, 2024, meeting that the Hot Springs Boulevard option was "an opportunity for us to test a new route ... to take a test run on that to see how it works."
But Lewis suggested that the new

option for a stationary parade on 6th Street would be "centrally located," with "easy" accessibility for walkers, and would be located away from the CDOT construction zone, avoiding the parking concerns of the Hot Springs Boulevard route.
Lewis also suggested that the option for a celebratory party at Yamaguchi Park, culminating with the fireworks show, would also avoid the parking and safety concerns of a traditional parade.
He added that he encourages the

public to attend the upcoming meeting and to participate in the public comment section of the meeting to voice their thoughts on the three options.
"The public is welcome to make public comments in person or by Zoom regarding the topic," he said, adding that "ultimately this will be a town council decision."
The meeting will begin at 5 p.m. at Town Hall. For more information on the meeting and agenda, see www.pagosasprings.co.gov.
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2 buildings and one parcel. The front of the building is a gallery and workshop. The back unit is an office set up which was a clinic in the past. There is also a Quonset hut on the back of the property. The gallery fronts Highway 160 and parking is on Eagle Dr and Trinity Ln. Included with the gallery are gallery lights, display fixtures, refrigerator and office furniture. There are 2 offices in the gallery, the back unit has a formal reception area with 2 larger offices, 2 smaller offices and 2 more small flexible rooms. Also, the roof was recently replaced.



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Sports

WRESTLING

Lady Pirates show confidence in regional tournament

By Clayton Chaney
Staff Writer

The Pagosa Springs High School Lady Pirate wrestling team placed sixth out of 17 competing teams at the regional tournament held in Gunnison on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 7 and 8, earning a total of 76.5 team points.

Moffat County claimed first place with a total of 177.5 points, Eagle took second place with 98.5 points and Rifle placed third with 82 points.

Four of the six Lady Pirate grapplers who competed in the regional tournament qualified to compete in the state tournament being held at the Ball Arena in Denver Thursday and Friday, Feb. 13 and 14.

"We've grown into that region,"

coach Dan Janowsky said, noting that the Lady Pirates' skills, confidence and maturity levels have risen throughout the season.

"They're there, and they know it," Janowsky added, explaining the team is understanding the "game" of wrestling.

Laykyn Baxstrom is making her second trip to the state tournament in her high school wrestling career after claiming first place in the 190-pound weight class in last weekend's regional tournament.

Baxstrom received a bye in the opening semifinal match, sending her directly to the first-place match, where she was able to pin her opponent in three minutes and 43 seconds.

Madisen Stretton placed second

in the 106-pound weight class, qualifying for the state tournament.

Stretton received an opening-round bye, sending her to the quarterfinal match, where she defeated her opponent by a decision of 7-1. She then defeated her opponent in the semifinal match on an 8-0 major decision. Stretton lost the first-place match by a technical fall in 5:33.

Bella Jackson took third place in the 100-pound weight class, earning a spot in the state tournament.

Jackson's opening-round match was a quarterfinal match in which she defeated her opponent by technical fall in 2:34. She then lost the semifinal match by technical fall in 4 minutes, sending her to the consolation semifinals. Jackson then pinned her opponent in 3:43 to advance to the third place match, where she won on a 9-1 major decision.

Kylie Matyniak earned third in the 130-pound weight class, also qualifying for state.

Matyniak received an opening-round bye, sending her to the quarterfinal match, which went to an overtime round, with Matyniak winning 2-0.

"Those are clutch matches," Janowsky said, noting the Pirates had two overtime match wins.

"To pull off two clutch wins in overtime, I love to see our kids do that," he said, explaining that to win those matches it often comes down to having "grit and some strategy."

Audrina Smith placed fifth in the 135-pound weight class, "one round short of state qualifying," Janowsky

wrote in an email to The SUN.

Smith's first-round match was a quarterfinal matchup in which she was pinned in 55 seconds. She then received a second-round bye, sending her to the consolation semis, where she was pinned in 43 seconds.

Smith then lost in the fourth-place match due to a no contest and received a bye in the fifth-place match.

Mackayla Beach competed in the 110-pound weight class and received an opening-round bye. Beach was then pinned in the second round in 1:13 and received another bye, sending her to round three of the consolation bracket. Beach lost her final match by pin in 55 seconds.

Janowsky commented that the Lady Pirates were confident and believed they were in a position to succeed going into the regional tournament, "and indeed they were."

He explained that the Lady Pirates had just two days to prepare for the state finals, as they headed to Denver on Wednesday.

He mentioned the Lady Pirates are "all very eager for the tournament" and are "anxious to get on the mat and get to tussling."

All state-qualifying wrestlers will compete in Denver in session one, beginning at noon today, and in session three starting at 8:30 a.m. Friday. Wrestlers who advance will compete in session four, starting on at 6 p.m. on Friday, and possibly Saturday, Feb. 15, at 9 a.m. Final matches are scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. on Saturday.

clayton@pagosahun.com



Photo courtesy Ashli Stretton

Bella Jackson gets her hand raised after defeating an opponent in last weekend's regional tournament. Jackson finished third in the 100-pound weight class, qualifying for the state tournament.

Pirates display quality team performance at regional tournament

By Clayton Chaney
Staff Writer

The Pagosa Springs High School Pirate wrestling team had four grapplers qualify for the state tournament at the regional tournament held in Parachute on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 7 and 8.

The Pirates had a total of nine wrestlers place in the regional tournament, earning 11.5 team points to place seventh out of 13 competing teams.

"As a team I think that was our best tournament," coach Dan Janowsky said, noting the team has been hindered by injuries throughout the season and struggling to field a consistent complete lineup. "That was our best performance as a team."

Colton Lucero placed the highest for the Pirates, taking first in the 144-pound weight class and qualifying for state.

Janowsky explained that Lucero dropped down from the 150-pound weight class, noting that decision was made about a month ago.

Janowsky specifically noted that Lucero's performance in the championship match in the regional tournament "showed how far he's come," noting that Lucero struggled with a knee injury mid-season.

"That's the best he's wrestled in a very long time," Janowsky said, highlighting Lucero was confident, explosive and savvy — "all the things you need to win regionals and place at state."

Lucero won his opening-round match after pinning his opponent in 22 seconds, sending him to the quarterfinals, where he defeated his opponent by a decision of 8-2. He then won his semifinal match on a technical fall in 4 minutes and 23 seconds.

Lucero won his first-place match by a decision of 13-6.

Anthony Manzanares earned second place in the 106-pound weight class, also qualifying for state.

Manzanares received an opening-round bye, sending him to the quarterfinals, where he pinned his opponent in 1:51. He then defeated his opponent in the semifinals by a 13-0 major decision.

Janowsky explained that Manzanares' opponent in the first-place match was one that he has faced before from Centauri and is the No. 1-ranked wrestler in the state for that weight class.

Although Manzanares lost the first-place match by pin in 4:30, "we did make some real good adjustments and started scoring some points," Janowsky said, adding that "[we'll] take that as a sign we're improving."

Janowsky added that Manzanares may have another opportunity against the same opponent in the state finals.

Taylor Hancey and Antonio Quezada both placed third in their respective weight classes, both qualifying for the state tournament.

Hancey competed in the 165-pound weight class and won his opening-round match in the quarterfinals by pinning his opponent in 1:13.

He then lost in the semifinals by getting pinned in 1:50, sending him to the consolation semifinal match, where he defeated his opponent by a technical fall in 1:19. Hancey won his third-place match on a technical fall in 4:32.

Quezada wrestled in the 285-pound weight class and received an opening-round bye, sending him to the semifinals, where he was pinned in 1:09.

Quezada then received a third-round bye, sending him to the third-place match in which he pinned his opponent in 1:21.

"They both wrestled real well," Janowsky said of Quezada and Hancey.

He mentioned that Hancey was out of the Pirates' lineup periodically throughout the season.

"It set our team back," Janowsky said, "so it was nice to have him back in there."

With Lucero dropping down to the 144-pound weight class, the Pirates' shifted their lineup slightly, with Vinny Fish competing in the 150-pound weight class, up from his usual division in the 138-pound weight class, Janowsky explained.

"He did well," Janowsky said of Fish, explaining that Fish has a "good JV record," but only one varsity win going into the regional tournament.

Fish won two matches in the tournament to earn sixth place in the 150-pound weight class. He lost his opening-round match by pin in 1:10 and received a second-round bye.

Fish then defeated his opponent in the third round on a 3-1 decision, and pinned his next opponent in 3:31, sending him to the consolation semifinals, where he lost to his opponent by a decision of 9-3. Fish then lost the fifth-place match by technical fall in 3:22.

Stetson Osborn competed in the 132-pound weight class and received an opening-round bye. Osborn then lost his quarterfinal match by getting

■ See Wrestling A11



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SWIMMING

'A great experience': Lady Pirates end season at state

By Randi Pierce
Staff Writer

The Pagosa Springs High School Lady Pirate swim team capped off its season Monday at the 3A Girls Swim and Dive Championship in Thornton.

The Lady Pirates qualified in two events, the 200-yard medley relay and the 200-yard freestyle relay.

The squad of Marlowe Hedgecock, Leah Blackman, Chloe Gantt and Asia Gorman finished with a time of 2:15.83, placing them 23rd in the preliminaries.

"The 200 medley relay did great," coach Heather Miller wrote in an email to The SUN, adding, "they cut another 33 [hundredths] off of their time. Unfortunately they fell just a little short of their goal of making it back for finals."

The top 20 teams advanced to the finals, with the top team, Discovery Canyon, swimming a time of 1:50.11.

In the 200 freestyle, the Lady Pirate squad of Gorman, Grace Cram, Hedgecock and Gantt took 28th in the prelims with a time of 2:00.78.

"The 200 free relay had another great swim but added .37 seconds," Miller wrote.

The top team in the event, Kent Denver, tied the 3A record in the finals with a time of 1:39.40.

"Overall," Miller wrote of the state meet, "it has been a great experience and learning opportunity to be better prepared for this meet next year."

The trip to the season's final meet was one of the top three highlights of



SUN photo/Chad Richardson

Chloe Gantt swims the butterfly at the state swim meet Monday in Thornton. Gantt was one of several Lady Pirates who represented Pagosa Springs in a pair of relays at the meet.

the season, according to Miller.

Beyond the state qualifications, Miller also highlights the team's "constant strive for improvement through the entire season which resulted in all of the conference swimmers making it back to finals."

The most important highlight of the season, however, is the team's sportsmanship, according to the coach.

"I feel the most important is the sportsmanship our team has, from cheering on our own teammates to supporting other teams as well," she wrote. "I have had many coaches, parents and other swimmers commend our team for their character and kindness."

Miller indicated she is also hopeful the team will see more individual qualifications next season.

"The big goals for next season are some individual qualifications for state. I think everyone who came to state this year stands a great chance of qualifying individually. It will not be easy but if they put the work in it is a good possibility," she wrote.

The team will work toward those goals after saying goodbye to this year's seniors: Gemma Slingerland, Aubrey Gerdel, Bella Gutierrez and assistant Charlie Gutierrez.

"It is really hard to imagine not having this year's seniors next year," Miller wrote, adding, "Our long bus trips to meets will be much less entertaining and very quiet. On the pool deck we will miss their enthusiasm, leadership and I will especially miss Charlie's assistance with anything and everything I needed help with especially with highlighting programs, splits and arranging counters for the 500's. In the pool we will miss Gemma's effort and willingness to do the distance events, Bree's spectacular speed and constant drive to improve and Bella's desire and drive to always give 110% and try challenging events such as the 100 Fly. They are truly a special group."

randi@pagosasun.com

BASKETBALL

Pirates pick up pair of league wins

By Garrett Fevinger
Staff Writer

The Pagosa Springs High School boys' basketball team continued to battle last week, notching two consecutive wins over league rivals Monte Vista and Ignacio at home.

With the results, the Pirates are now even in 3A/4A Intermountain League (IML) play and, at 4-4, stand in fourth place. The team is 6-12 overall.

"I think we're playing better," coach Wes Lewis reflected. "I think our defense has improved, and that's been able to keep us in games."

With their 53-34 victory over Monte Vista on Feb. 7, Pagosa's Pirates avenged their Jan. 17 loss as the team "continues to improve," Lewis said.

The Pirates led 9-8 at the end of the first quarter and 24-18 at the half. By the end of the third, Pagosa led 43-24, with that lead moving to 53-34 by the final buzzer.

"In the last month, we've really tried to simplify it ... instead of having too much on the play sheet, and I think that's helped," Lewis said.

Back on court Feb. 8, the Ignacio Bobcats sprinted to an early lead in the game's opening minutes before the Pirates rallied to take control and enter the second quarter ahead, 17-12.

The Bobcats kept within striking distance of the Pirates, though, and for the remainder of the contentious game worked at whittling their hosts' lead down to margins as slim as two points.

"It's two fairly evenly-matched teams," Lewis said of the bout. "I was

■ See Basketball A11



SUN photo/Randi Pierce

Jaxten Scheil finds himself surrounded by Ignacio Bobcats while fighting for possession of the ball Saturday in Pagosa Springs. The Pirates battled to defeat the visitors 51-45.

Wrestling

■ Continued from A10

Osborn won his next two matches by pinning his opponent in 4:45 and by a technical fall in 4:23, respectively.

Osborn lost his consolation semifinal round match by pin in 3:52, sending him to the fifth-place match, where he was pinned in 33 seconds, claiming sixth place.

Eric Smith wrestled in the 120-pound weight class and earned sixth place. Smith received an opening-round bye and was then pinned in the quarterfinal match in 1:04.

Smith then received another bye, sending him to the third round of the consolation bracket, where he defeated his opponent by a technical fall in 2:19 to advance to consolation semifinals, where he was pinned in 4:33.

Smith then lost his fifth-place match by a decision of 12-6.

Ty Garcia competed in the 175-pound weight class, also claiming sixth place in the tournament.

Garcia lost his opening-round match by getting pinned in 29 seconds, then received a second-round bye to send him to the consolation semifinals. Garcia was then pinned in 2:43, and pinned again in the fifth-place match in 1:50.

Jesus Serratos wrestled in the 215-pound weight class, winning one of four matches to place sixth.

Serratos lost his opening-round match by pin in 5:31 and then defeated his opponent in the following round by a decision of 8-2. He lost the consolation semifinal match 5-1 in overtime, sending him to the fifth-place match, where he was pinned in 1:40.

"They needed one more round," Janowsky said of the Pirates who placed but did not qualify for the state tournament.

"They wrestled the best they've wrestled all year," he added, noting that the entire team put in some of their best performances all season.

Jonathan Baker competed in the 126-pound weight class and lost his opening-round match by technical fall in four minutes. Baker then received a second-round bye, sending him to the second round of the consolation bracket, where he defeated his opponent on a 10-3 decision. Baker then lost the following match by a decision of 3-1.

Hudson Mazur competed in the 138-pound weight class, losing his opening-round match by a decision of 17-11.

Mazur received a second-round bye and pinned his opponent in the follow-

ing round in 1:48. He then lost the next match by technical fall in 3:24.

Devin Gonzalez wrestled in the 157-pound weight class and was pinned in his opening-round match in 1:13.

Gonzalez then received a second-round bye and lost the following match by technical fall in five minutes.

"We certainly laid a good foundation," Janowsky said, explaining he anticipates multiple wrestlers returning next season with an eagerness to come back and compete having another year of experience.

Samuel Kelly also qualified for the state tournament in the Unified division and will be joining the Pirates in Denver.

"He wins points and positions," Janowsky said of Kelly. "He'll show his skills out there."

The state tournament is scheduled to begin today, Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Ball Arena in Denver.

All state-qualifying wrestlers will compete in session one beginning at noon today, and in session three starting at 8:30 a.m. Friday. Wrestlers who advance will compete in session four starting at 6 p.m. on Friday and possibly Saturday at 9 a.m. Final matches are scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. on Saturday.

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Outdoors



Celebrate birds in February with Weminuche Audubon

By Jean Zirnhelt
Weminuche Audubon Society

Weminuche Audubon invites you to celebrate the beauty of birds with us in two February events.

First up is the Great Backyard Bird Count, four days in February when the world comes together for the love of birds. It is a global event organized by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon Society and Birds Canada.

Beginning on Friday, Feb. 14, and extending through Monday, Feb. 17, you can participate by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes or for as long as you like wherever you are and then entering your observations on ebird.org.

Documenting bird populations across the globe before one of their annual migrations helps scientists understand how bird populations are faring.

For more information on the count, see birdcount.org.

Weather permitting, we invite you to join us in the count to look for birds on the Riverwalk on Sunday, Feb. 16. The weather outlook looks good for that day, but not for Saturday. Bring your binoculars and meet at the native plant garden near the Geothermal Greenhouse Partnership domes in Centennial Park at 8:30 a.m. This is a family-friendly event, but please leave dogs at home.

Back from the brink

On Wednesday, Feb. 19, join us in sharing good news stories about two

bird species that have come back from the brink in North America.

First up, videographer Darryl Saffer will present his beautiful short film on the limpkin and other wetland waders. The film has already won six international awards. Up until not many years ago, this bird of wetlands and swamps was only seen in the U.S. in central and southern Florida.

According to an article in National Audubon magazine, in 2023 limpkins started showing up as far north as Canada and west as Colorado.

Find out what has fueled this range and population explosion of a bird that not too long ago was considered for threatened status in Florida. Throw your hat in the ring to see who will be the first to spot a limpkin in Archuleta County.

Herb Grover will show his photos of another comeback bird, the whooping crane, taken during a recent trip to Texas.

Whoopers are one of the success stories of wildlife conservation as they were down to about 20 birds in the mid-1940s. Recovery has been somewhat slow, but would probably not have occurred without human intervention.

To get you thinking about the annual Crane Festival in Monte Vista, we will end the meeting with some of Grover's beautiful photos of sandhill cranes. Take a trip over the hill to Monte Vista for the festival events between March 8 and 10 and be wowed by the thousands of cranes and other birds that stop at the National Wildlife Refuge before heading off to northern

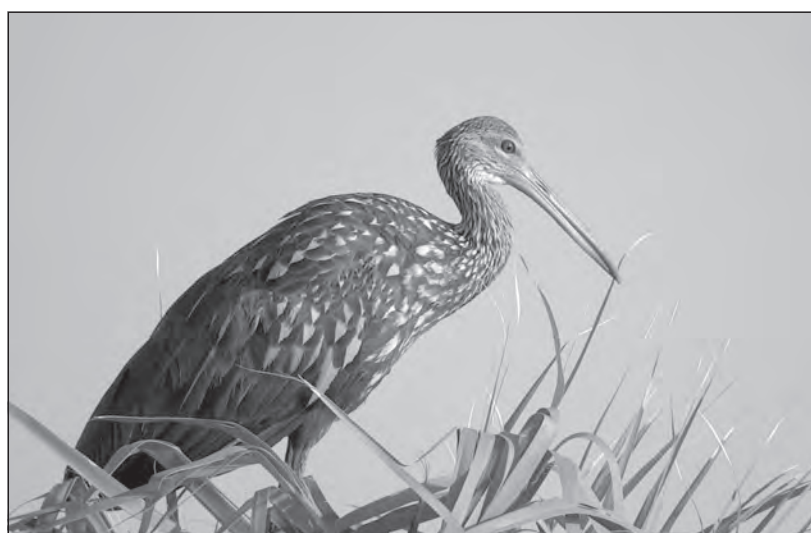


Photo courtesy Darryl Saffer

Videographer Darryl Saffer will present a short film on the limpkin and other wetlands waders at the Feb. 19 Weminuche Audubon Society meeting.

breeding grounds.

The public is invited to join us at the Community United Methodist Church on Lewis Street on Feb. 19. We will meet at 6 p.m. to socialize with appetizers and snacks before the meeting starts at 6:30.

Please enter through the side door off the parking lot or let us know to open the main door for handicap entrance. In appreciation for our meeting space, we welcome donations of nonperishable food for the church food bank.

Scholarship

Last is a reminder that Weminuche Audubon is currently accepting applications from area youth

between the ages of 15 and 17 for a scholarship to attend Bird Conservancy of the Rockies "On The Wing" camp in June.

This weeklong camp centered near Rocky Mountain National Park is an incredible experience open to youth with an interest in birds and exploring the outdoors.

Please see the scholarship tab on our website, weminucheaudubon.org, or email us at weminuche.audubon@gmail.com for further information on the camp and directions to apply.

Don't miss out on this awesome opportunity. The application deadline is March 1.

Living and being prepared in a fire-prone environment

By Bill Trimarco
Wildfire Adapted Partnership

As 2025 began, the world watched the devastating fires in southern California. The fires spread rapidly over chaparral-covered hillsides under extremely dry conditions and Santa Ana winds. Thousands were forced to evacuate as the fires moved into communities and passed from one structure to the next. More than 12,000 people lost their homes. More than 100 people lost their lives.

It is hard to imagine the levels of grief and disruption that the fires brought to the people living through it. A lot of questions, investigations and finger-pointing will come out in the aftermath.

Devastating fires have become so frequent that we have too many opportunities to learn what they can do and how they do it. Fortunately, we are learning how to be better prepared and protected from the risk.

During the driest winter in most people's memories, residents of southwest Colorado are experiencing a wake-up call about the wildfire threat. Many people are beginning to fear what our next fire season will bring. Our wildfire season here has already begun. If we want to minimize our risk, we need to take a realistic look at our ecosystem, homes and lifestyle.

Most of southwestern Colorado can be referred to as a frequent-fire ecosystem. For thousands of years before European colonization, wildfire was part of the landscape. Lightning was the most frequent source of ignition. Fire would spread through the underbrush and grass. Sections of forest would burn, but usually not the huge-acreage fires that we see today.

What's changed to make these fires so large? As an example, let's look at the ponderosa pine forests that are so prevalent in our area. Those frequent lightning strike fires in what is now the San Juan National Forest in Colorado historically occurred every five to 15 years in any one location. Those fires would spread through the underbrush, young saplings and grasses and sometimes would torch a few stands of mature trees.

Ponderosa have adapted to fire. The lower branches of the tree die as new growth progresses at the top. The dead branches no longer have green needles on them. Those pine needles contain volatile oils that are readily flammable. It takes more heat and flame to ignite those dead lower branches than it does to ignite the green needles. The tree's thick bark does not readily ignite. This self-pruning process and protective bark allows a brush fire to pass under the tree and not reach into the tree canopy, where it could easily pass from canopy to canopy.

That frequent burning kept the ponderosa forest thinned, leaving

gaps between the trees. Those gaps could slow or stop the spread of a canopy fire. Centuries of repeating this scenario led to a patchworked landscape, with single trees and clumps of trees separated by some open areas. The ever-present Gambel oak underbrush was regularly burned back, removing the ladders that fire could climb to reach the tree canopy. Much of the time a fire would run out of fuel when it reached an area that had previously burned.

European settlement changed all of this. Grasslands were grazed. Forests were clearcut and abandoned after they were harvested. Fire was suppressed. From 1910 onward, wildfires were put out as soon as possible in order to protect resources.

After decades of fire suppression, the underbrush has grown unchecked. Trees have grown so close together that they are stunting their own growth, in many cases so much so that they are too small to harvest for the sawmill. This dense, stunted forest is a prime candidate for outbreaks of disease, insects and rampant canopy fires. Let's not forget that, in recent decades, we have built towns and subdivisions in this landscape.

The intervals of fire are different in pinon and juniper forest types, but the situation is similar. Wildfire has not been allowed to maintain the landscape and it is overgrown with highly flammable coniferous trees, brush and cheatgrass. This is prime real estate for towns and subdivisions. Most of our homes are in the lower-elevation ponderosa and pinon/juniper environments.

The high-altitude spruce and fir landscape follows a different fire and disease interval that sees much larger impacts naturally on a 200- to 300-year cycle.

What all of this means for most of southwest Colorado is that we are living in areas that are surrounded by an unnatural overabundance of fuel for wildland fires. We also are seeing the effects of a changing climate. Periods of drought and high winds promote tinder dry conditions in our

forests. What has been happening in California is not unique. The situation there is amplified by a much higher population.

What can we do?

For many years, we tried to put all wildfires out. Experience has shown that that approach has been contributing to the problem. We have learned that as long as lightning, people and machines are around, we cannot prevent wildfires from occurring.

Once they are burning, it is very difficult to control them, but we do have a lot of resources to call on.

Some of the most dramatic-looking means of control involve aircraft drops on the fire. Fire retardant dropped from planes is just what the name says, "retardant." It can do a lot to slow a fire or create areas that it is harder for the fire to move into. Aerial water drops can also slow a fire, but keep in mind that a very hot burn can vaporize a lot of that water before it reaches the flames. I've heard many a wildland firefighter say that you need enough water to turn the ground to mud if you want to put a fire out. That is more water than you can feasibly drop from the air. Keep in mind also that there are a lot of limitations on when you can fly above a fire to drop water or retardant. Terrain, wind speed, smoke and people flying drones can all ground air support.

Hand and equipment crews on the ground can do a lot to remove fuels and create breaks. It is hot, dirty work. Smoke can make conditions unbearable. Although these crews take many precautions, both they and the aerial crews put their lives at risk while fighting the spread of wildfires. In spite of all their efforts, it very often takes a change in the weather for crews to get a handle on a large wildfire.

No matter what they do, they cannot control embers on the wind. Any one of those thousands of blowing embers can start a new spot fire.

We cannot stop wildfires from occurring, and we cannot always control them when we want to. But we

can make our wild lands more resilient to wildfire.

Thinning the forests and cutting the underbrush are quite effective

■ See Prepared A14

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The Springs Resort awarded the Kathy Clark Access Award

The Springs Resort

The Balneology Association of North America (BANA) has awarded The Springs Resort the Kathy Clark Access Award. The Springs Resort is one of only two places in 2024 to receive this award, which recognizes businesses that go above and beyond to connect people with the therapeutic benefits of natural hot springs.

Established in honor of Kathy Clark, the award has only been granted to five hot springs since 2022. During the pandemic, Kathy Clark recognized the therapeutic benefits of hot springs and worked tirelessly to keep Charles Hot Springs open, ensuring access to its healing waters.

The Springs Resort is the first hot springs in Colorado to receive this prestigious award. BANA fosters and maintains deep connections with hot springs all over the nation.

The Springs Resort takes pride in creating an inclusive and welcoming experience for everyone, from local community members to individuals on retreats, couples, families, children, the elderly, and those with physical or developmental disabilities. Whether it's a first-time visit to the hot springs or a cherished local tradition, the

resort's healing waters are accessible to all. Affordable local pricing, flexible memberships, multi-day passes, and community initiatives make it easier than ever to connect, relax, and enjoy the benefits of natural hot springs.

This commitment to inclusivity extends beyond the resort and into the community. In 2024, The Springs Resort donated over a thousand soaking passes to local and regional organizations such as Healthy Archuleta, the Pagosa Fire Protection District, The Special Talents High School, Pagosa Springs Middle School, Wounded Warrior and Vets for Vets, Fatherless Teens, Dust2, and other scholastic teams. These contributions ensure that even more members of the community can experience the healing power of the water.

The Springs Resort and Spa is currently undergoing a massive expansion. This expansion, expected to be completed in Spring 2025, will result in even greater accessibility. The number of hot springs pools at The Springs Resort and Spa will double with this expansion, offering more space and opportunities for people to enjoy therapeutic bathing in a soothing, relaxing, and uncrowded atmosphere.

Above all, The Springs Resort aims to help locals and visitors from across the state, nation, and world connect with and benefit from Pagosa's healing waters. These waters are renowned globally for their exceptional mineral content and are sought after by hot spring enthusiasts everywhere.

Resort member Michelle Juneau is just one of many locals who feels the love: "I love the versatility of the Springs Resort. There is a pool and temperature for everyone - from tiny kids to older folks! I recently brought my friends from Germany here; they absolutely loved it! Plus, you can drink coffee, an adult beverage, or have some lunch. It's really great for the whole day!"

It's no surprise that this impressive hot springs resort was honored with the Kathy Clark Access Award from BANA. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of its team, the Springs Resort is truly accessible to all. Behind the scenes, employees work tirelessly to ensure that everyone feels welcome to experience the profound benefits of therapeutic bathing in its natural hot spring waters. This special resort exemplifies its purpose of enhancing the well-being of all who visit.

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Prepared

Continued from A13

at helping to create a healthy forest. Proper spacing between trees and less underbrush (ladder fuels) can help keep wildfire on the ground and out of the tree canopies, where it is difficult, if not impossible, to control. This mitigation also means that trees have less competition for moisture in times of drought. Trees with enough moisture use sap to push beetles out of their bark. Beetles can get the upper hand when trees don't produce enough sap to protect themselves. Healthy forests are less susceptible to drought, wildfire and beetles.

This type of mechanical thinning work is expensive. If the trees harvested are overcrowded, stunted and small, they are not of much value to a sawmill. Some of that less marketable wood is being utilized as wood chips, made into biochar and other uses. The federal government helps subsidize the mitigation of private and federally managed lands through the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Bureau of Indian Affairs and grants to organizations. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) also has programs to help defray the costs.

Once land has been restored to a more resilient state, managed fire is arguably the most effective and least expensive way to maintain the natural resiliency. Under the proper wind and weather conditions, managed fire can keep underbrush in check and mimic the natural thinning process of the forest. Afterward, the easily ignited fuels are no longer available to feed an uncontrolled wildfire. Nutrients from the burned vegetation are returned to the soil.

Procedures and protocols for managed fires are strict and have been successfully used hundreds of times. No matter how many precautions are taken, however, there is a possibility that the managed fire could escape its intended area. Over the years, although they have been few, there have been some disastrous exceptions, usually brought about by an unexpected change in the weather. Hopefully, continual improvements in weather prediction and strict adherence to favorable conditions will allow safe managed burns to continue.

The other issue with managed fire is smoke. The smoke can be a health issue for those at risk. Sometimes it can hang in the air for a week or longer. Unlike a wildfire, which does not have a predetermined start and end date, residents can prepare in advance to cope with the impact or to plan some away time. As one old-timer put it, "I'd rather put up with a few days of smoke now than deal with flames at my back door tomorrow."

Understandably, starting fires in order to protect the landscape from wildfires is not an idea that everyone is comfortable with, but managed fire is an extremely effective way to protect the forest and surrounding communities from the unpredictable devastation of a wildfire.

How does a fire move into populated areas? What can happen then?

There are two common ways that

fire can spread.

One way is that flames will move from one fuel source to the next. If the fuels are continuous, flames can walk along, burning everything they can. Wind and slopes can accelerate the travel and heat generated. Even if the fuels aren't touching, if the radiant heat is high enough, nearby objects can reach combustion temperature and will ignite, seemingly exploding into flame.

The other way that fire can spread is through embers and firebrands. These burning embers can be picked up by the wind and carried anywhere the wind takes them. Near a wildfire, a blizzard of embers can swirl, dropping hot firebrands far from the main fire. If they land on suitable tinder or kindling, a new spot fire is started. Burning embers have been known to travel 2 miles or more. During the West Fork Complex Fires near Wolf Creek Pass in 2013, embers were carried 2.5 miles over the Continental Divide and started fires on the other side of that rocky, treeless barrier.

When a wildfire gets into a community, it still follows the same ways to spread. In this case, the paths of fuel may be houses, sheds, vegetation, trees, shrubs, wooden fences, wood piles, decks, fuel tanks, vehicles and radiant heat from burning structures. Any and all of those fuels can create embers that start spot fires ahead of the original burns. Things can amplify quickly when homes are close together.

What can we do to prepare our homes for wildfire?

We need to realize that wildfires are inevitable. They have been happening since the glaciers receded from this land. It is a question of when, not if, the next one will occur.

Another important fact that we should be aware of: More than 85 percent of the homes lost to wildfire are not directly touched by the flames.

This might sound crazy, but remember, flames have to be close enough to ignite a structure. Embers can carry fire almost anywhere. If a wildfire or its embers gain a foothold in a residential area, the structure fires can spread quickly and overwhelm local firefighters.

Water can become an issue also, as numerous hydrants are in use and water lines in burning homes rupture. Every water system has limits as to the amount of pressure and volume that can be provided when that much water is being consumed.

If embers can get inside of a structure, they can usually find something flammable. If we can harden our homes against embers, the odds of our home surviving a wildfire go up dramatically.

A good place to start is the roof. Roof coverings should be class A fire rated. Metal, tile and composite shingles all carry this rating. Valleys and dormers need to be kept clean and free of needles and leaves. Eaves-troughs should not be made of combustible material and should be kept free of debris. Soffit and fascia are important. Fire-resistant materials are best. There should be no gaps or exposed eaves. Roof and crawl space

vents need 1/8-inch metal screening. Walls should be of ignition-resistant material (noncombustible, retardant treated wood or heavy log). It is highly recommended that 6 inches to 18 inches of siding at ground level around the home be noncombustible. Embers like to accumulate where the walls meet the ground, so this area is critical. Heat can often crack glass, allowing embers an entryway. Double-pane windows offer one other layer of protection. If they are tempered glass, that is even better.

Decks are a critical part of the structure. If they are attached to the house, they are part of the house as far as fire is concerned. Flammable items on or under the deck can be just the fuel that embers need to ignite your home. It is recommended to screen under decks with 1/8-inch metal screen to keep leaves, needles and critters from building nests. Fire-resistant decking is a good option, but remember that the decking is mounted on wooden joists. You don't want a pile of leaves to serve as kindling under those joists.

As we move out from the home, the first 5 feet are really important. If any fire is burning within 5 feet of a structure, that building is threatened. This is especially true if the structure siding is wood. Things to avoid are any flammable plants, wood chip mulch, leaves, needles, grasses more than 4 inches tall, etc. Probably the worst thing to plant in that 5-foot zone is anything in the evergreen family. Junipers and decorative pines are common culprits. Their needles contain volatile oils that are highly flammable.

The next area of concern is the zone from 5 to 30 feet out from the structure. Some shrubs and trees are acceptable here as long as there are no branches within 10 feet of the house and the trees or shrubs are separated from each other by at least 10 feet. Small groups of trees or a clump of shrubs are acceptable but require at least a 30-foot separation. Any trees in this zone should have ladder fuels removed beneath the tree crown plus an additional 10 feet. Grasses should be mowed to a height of 4 inches.

From 30 to 100 feet from the structure, a bit more vegetation is acceptable, but spacings are recommended. Minimums would be 6 to 10 feet between individual tree crowns, 30 feet between crowns of small groups of trees and 30-foot spacings between clumps of brush. Ladder fuels under trees should be removed, but grasses need not be mowed.

These are simplified minimum criteria to make it harder for wildfire to damage your buildings or home. Steep slopes will increase the area that must be protected. Firewise/USA and the CSFS have information and graphics that illustrate home hardening and the defensible space zones that were mentioned earlier. A wildfire mitigation specialist can give you a better idea of what your particular property needs.

Who can help private landowners in Archuleta County?

The NRCS is a federal agency that

can aid landowners with forestry, rangeland and riparian concerns.

If you own or lease cropland, rangeland, grass land or forest land, it has programs that can help with payments for vegetative improvements. Over the last five years, it has helped county property owners treat almost 1,000 acres of forest land and reimbursed those owners \$1.3 million toward that work. The NRCS has an Archuleta County office at 505 County Road 600 (Piedra Road) and can be reached at (970) 731-3615.

For home, structure and surrounding land protection, Wildfire Adapted Partnership (WAP) is the local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides individual property owners and communities with assistance.

Last year alone, WAP performed 100 free site visits (on lots ranging from one-quarter acre to 200 acres), helped homeowners protect more than 200 structures and reimbursed them almost \$200,000 toward removing hazardous vegetation.

WAP strives to inspire, educate and enable individuals and communities to protect lives and property from wildfire. It was one of the national pioneers of utilizing neighborhood ambassadors to help protect communities from wildfire.

It has operated since 2003 in the southwest Colorado counties of Archuleta, La Plata, Montezuma, Dolores and San Juan. WAP is also the local liaison for the National Fire Protection Association Firewise/USA Recognition Status program, which aims to protect communities from wildfire.

Information and local contacts can be found at wildfireadapted.org.

The Chama Peak Land Alliance is a group of landowners and managers who are committed to embracing and practicing responsible land, water and wildlife stewardship in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. Its membership manages more than 200,000 acres in our area and has helped obtain funds to perform much-needed work across both states. It can be reached at chamapeak.org.

An important and influential organization that strives to improve the health of forests watersheds and communities is the San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership. This collaborative group has been

operating in the Pagosa Springs area since 2008. The stakeholders in that group are quite diverse and include the organizations mentioned earlier plus local government (county and town), the USFS, the CSFS, local water groups, Pagosa Fire Protection District, Weminuche Audubon Society, Mountain Studies Institute, members of the general public and too many others to list here.

This partnership has successfully contributed to numerous local projects to improve our forests and communities, in particular mitigation on Reservoir Hill, at Cloman Park, low-income mitigation in Aspen Springs and targeting work in the Fourmile watershed that allowed firefighters the opportunity to stop the eastward progress of the Plumtaw Fire in 2023. Information and lists of partners can be found at sanjuanheadwaters.org.

Another innovative partnership was formed in this area, the 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership. This group was formed in 2016 around the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy priorities of restoring and maintaining landscapes, creating fire-adapted communities, and responding to fire.

The organization is one of the first to address these issues across two state lines, three river drainages, two major watersheds and in two USFS Forest Service regions.

Stakeholders span the diverse groups, agencies and individuals who are active in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. They meet regularly to discuss and plan on how the area can address the goals of the strategy and on means to fund and implement actions that support the landscape and communities within it. Additional information is available at 232partnership.org.

Federal funding freezes

On Jan. 27, a White House memo

put a freeze on federal grants. The funds that had been allocated to WAP were immediately stopped and WAP was informed that the stoppage could be temporary or permanent.

The next day, a federal judge called a temporary halt to the freeze, and on Jan. 29 the White House rescinded the freeze order.

Statements from the White House were that the freeze is being postponed for the time being, but will be enacted at a later date.

Although the freeze was rescinded, there are executive orders that have stopped many of the grants approved by Congress. Like many other organizations who perform public services, WAP receives congressionally approved grant funds as a reimbursement for work done and services performed.

WAP, like most small nonprofits, does not have reserve funds or advance funding. Losing these contracted funds would end the programs that WAP has been providing in this county.

WAP is the sole organization in Archuleta County that provides property owner education and assistance with wildfire mitigation regarding home hardening and defensible space. Funding for this work is provided by donations, local government and federal grants. Ninety-nine percent of WAP activities in Archuleta County are funded by federal grants. It has not yet been determined if the grants which were approved by Congress for a specified number of years will still be honored.

WAP has been helping the residents and property owners in southwest Colorado for more than 20 years and will continue to offer education and outreach in Archuleta County through its network of volunteer ambassadors for as long as possible.

Currently, it is unknown if its other programs will continue.

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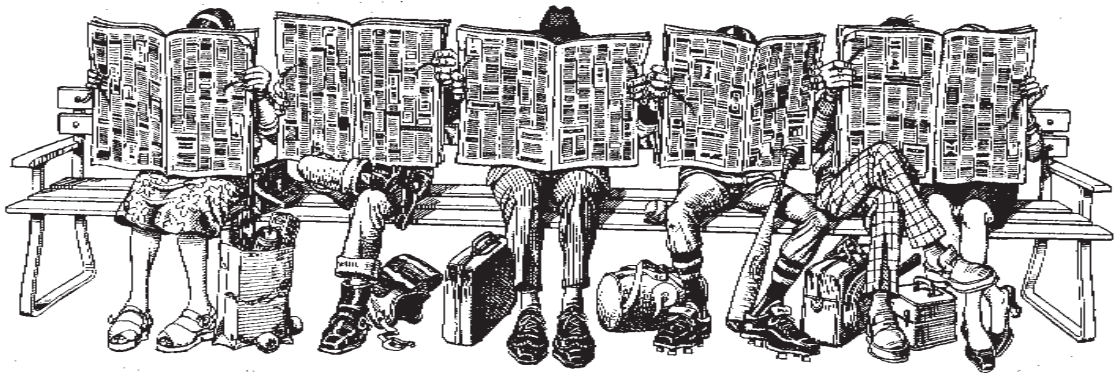
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Town agrees to participate in future nonmotorized transportation plan

By Derek Kutzer and Clayton Chaney
Staff Writers

On Feb. 4, the Pagosa Springs Town Council authorized town staff to execute an agreement to collaborate with nonprofit organization Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency (4CORE) on developing a zero-emissions mobility plan for the Pagosa Springs area.

"This initiative aims to deliver an actionable clean transportation and mobility plan for the community, serving as a valuable resource for pursuing future funding opportunities related to sustainable transportation in the Archuleta County region," an agenda document states.

Development Director James Dickhoff asked the council to consider if it wanted the town "to enter into the agreement," explaining that the town's main obligation would be to help provide and gather information, which would ultimately lead to a plan to improve "nonmotorized transportation options" for the community.

Dickhoff explained that participating in the agreement would not come with any financial burden; instead, the town stands to gain \$16,700 in compensation for its participation.

He added that town staff's primary obligation would be to collect data to help identify where "gaps" exist for nonmotorized transportation in the community, and to review both draft and final plan documents on a future zero-emissions mobility plan.

4CORE was a subrecipient of a \$135,000 grant provided by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to create a zero-emissions mobility plan, and the organization is now seeking community-based organizations (CBOs) to "assist with current condition inventories and community outreach efforts," the agenda document states.

4CORE has identified the town, Archuleta County and the Pagosa Springs Community Development Corporation (PSCDC) as potential partners.

Each of the three local CBOs identified would stand to receive approximately \$16,667 in compensation for participating, with no financial match required.

Dickhoff noted that the Archuleta County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) also considered entering into the partnership at its meeting the same day, but took no action on the matter.

In an email to The SUN, PSCDC Executive Director Emily Lashbrooke indicates that the PSCDC is "planning to assist," adding, "Our role will be holding public engagement events and sharing communications with the community we also will be collecting many other tedious data items."

However, Lashbrooke also states, "We were notified this project is on hold until the federal government grant hold was sorted out."

When opened to questions, council member Leonard Martinez remarked that he did not understand why the BoCC didn't take any action on the matter because he couldn't see any "downsides" to the partnership.

Dickhoff explained that the BoCC "decided to wait" to see what happens

at the federal level, with uncertainty swirling around federal programs.

"They didn't oppose this, by any means, but it may be on hold until further notice," Dickhoff said.

Council member Matt DeGuise asked if the money received in compensation for participation could be used for "tangible things," such as improving crosswalks.

Dickhoff replied that the money the town would receive would go into the town's General Fund, and "from there it's just in the General Fund and if the town council wanted to allocate the money for a certain project, you could certainly consider that."

Council member Madeline Bergon asked if "taking on this project" would cause any extra burden or stress on town staff.

Dickhoff replied, "We have talked about not wanting to over-obligate ourselves, but, on the other hand, if 4CORE called us for this information, we would be gathering it for them, because they're really doing the plan for our community."

He added, "This agreement is just that we are party to this planning process, and we are providing the data that we have" to help aid the plan.

Council member Brooks Lindner asked, "So, that's all that's being required of us is to provide data?"

Dickhoff said, yes, "gathering data and then, of course, reviewing those drafts" and then the final document.

He explained that staff would be collecting data on "the number of sidewalk miles that we have, where those sidewalk gaps are and how many miles of trails we have, and where those gaps are."

He added they would also be working with the county and local businesses to identify any gaps in transportation offerings.

Mayor Shari Pierce asked if being a participant in the program would help the town be "more poised" to receive grant funding down the road.

"Once all that information is gathered in one place, and we have a plan to start addressing those gaps... it would be really beneficial in grant applications," Dickhoff replied. "They really like to see those public engagement planning processes, and a plan that's been adopted as reference and for a purpose as to why you are applying for those grant funds."

When a motion was made to approve the agreement to enter into a partnership for the Colorado Clean Mobility Strategic Planning Program, authorizing the town manager to execute the agreement, it was seconded and approved unanimously by the council.

Lack of motion at BoCC

During the BoCC meeting held earlier that day, the board considered the matter of joining the town in the Colorado Clean Mobility Strategic Plan.

The matter ultimately died for the lack of a motion.

During a work session held that morning, the BoCC was briefed on the matter by Public Works Director Mike Torres, who explained the county had been approached by the town to join and help with the plan.

According to the BoCC meeting

agenda, the objective of the plan is to "engage communities across Colorado that face higher obstacles to zero-emission mobility to develop community driven plans for multimodal, zero-emission mobility and pathway toward their implementation for underserved and disadvantaged communities."

The agenda also notes that the total "cost" of the plan is \$50,000 with the county's portion being \$16,666.67.

During the work session, Torres explained that, by joining the plan, the county could have the option to go after "green energy" grants.

"There's a number of grants this may help us out with," he said.

Commissioner Warren Brown asked what the money would be "put toward," with Torres explaining that trainings and "a lot of public outreach" would be performed.

"Just a wide variety of things that that money's gonna go towards," he added.

Brown commented that the proposal contains a lot of information that was "just essentially provided" to the BoCC, adding that he was unsure he could make a decision on it at the Feb. 4 meeting.

"There's potential benefit to this," he said, indicating he'd like to know what else the county would be bonded to, other than the \$16,000.

Commissioner Veronica Medina also commented on the update on the freezing of federal funds, adding that the president is looking to "dismantle these type of initiatives, so we don't know if this is actually gonna be something available" for the county to participate in.

Commissioner John Ranson commented that he would "lean for this," adding that it will likely be in more jeopardy with the current state of federal funding programs.

"It's anybody's guess right now," he added.

County Attorney Todd Weaver noted the "green programs" have been specifically identified to stop receiving federal funding.

During the meeting, Ranson mentioned that he was not "real comfortable" with joining the town in the strategic plan, citing concerns of the federal funding freeze.

"These could be the areas we're gonna get hit," he said.

Brown added that the 2025 budget has already been set and the county would have to find where to come up with the \$16,666 request.

He noted that he likes the idea of working on a plan with the town, but was unsure about entering a "wrap-around agreement" at this time.

Archuleta County is listed as a "Sub-Subrecipient" in the agreement.

"The Subrecipients shall pay the Sub-Subrecipient for the Services the amount of \$16,666.67 on the basis set forth in the Statement of Work and otherwise on the terms and conditions set forth in the Subrecipient Agreement," the agreement states.

During a later interview, Torres explained that the county can potentially be reimbursed for those costs, indicating the BOCC may reconsider the matter at a later meeting.

derek@pagosahun.com

Archuleta County Democratic Club to meet Feb. 24

By Lynn Frederick
Archuleta County Democratic Club

The Archuleta County Democratic Club will meet for lunch at Coyote Moon at 11:30 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 24.

Pagosa Peak Open School (PPOS) Director Emily Murphy will share her insights and experience in encouraging social justice and community connections with students through restorative practices and project-based learning.

PPOS is an intentionally small K-8 district charter school that is free to all. It opened in 2017 by a group of local parents looking for something different: a school

of choice to complement our other local school choices in Archuleta.

The Archuleta County Democratic Club meets every month with a speaker presenting at noon. The club gives local Democrats the opportunity to meet with other Democrats and to hear speakers from the community, meet candidates for local and national offices, and hear about topics of timely interest.

All are welcome to attend. Please plan on coming by 11:30 a.m. to order lunch.

For more information, email lynnfrederick1@gmail.com.

Pirates

■ Continued from A12

She adds, "What we love about this milestone is it not only celebrates Elizabeth's accomplishments, but all the teams she has been a part of since freshman year who helped her reach this goal. I am beyond proud of Elizabeth reaching this goal, but even more proud of the characteristics she has shown that have gotten her there."

In addition to Currier's total on Saturday, Ketchum added 16 points and Shahan had 11.

Shahan led the team's rebounding effort against the Bobcats, bringing down seven, followed by Snarr with six. Shahan also contributed seven assists.

The Lady Pirates sank one of five free-throw attempts against Ignacio, and finished with 11 turnovers and 17 assists, in addition to seven steals.

"The team played well against both Monte Vista and Ignacio Friday

and Saturday night," Osborn reflects. "We as a team made some huge progress in the parts of the game we have been focusing on."

Looking ahead, Pagosa will travel to Alamosa on Friday to face the Mean Moose, who are currently 6-2 in league play and stand in third place in the IML standings.

The Lady Pirates defeated the Mean Moose 59-38 the last time the two teams faced one another.

Tipoff for Friday's game is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. at Alamosa High School.

On Saturday, the Lady Pirates will travel to face Montezuma-Cortez—currently 1-7 in league play and in sixth place in the IML standings.

The Panthers lost to the Lady Pirates 69-47 on Jan. 25 in Pagosa Springs.

Saturday's game is scheduled to begin at 2:30 p.m. at Montezuma-

Cortez High School.

Anticipating those games, Osborn wrote, "The girls have done a great job of staying focused, taking it one game at a time, and enjoying the process. If they continue to do these things I believe they will find themselves where they want to be for the postseason."

garrett@pagosahun.com

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Associate professor **SCOTT TAYLOR** (center), PhD student **SARA PADULA** (left) and graduate student **WILL ANDERSON** (right) study alpine plants at CU Boulder's Mountain Research Station near Nederland, CO.



preview

ARTS & LIFE

Happy Valentine's Day

Friday, Feb. 14





Photo courtesy Annette McInnis

Traci Landis and her second-grade class recently held a bake sale, and all the proceeds were given to Aspire Medical Services and Education.

Live Performers

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The Pagosa Bar: Karaoke, 7:30 p.m.
- Friday**
The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Taryn Jones, 5 p.m.
- Saturday**
The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Bob Hemenger, 5 p.m.
- Sunday**
The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Jackson Mountain Ramblers, 5 p.m.
- Monday**
The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Rock N Rebels, 5 p.m.
- Tuesday**
The Springs Resort lodge atrium: Jason Rose, 5 p.m.

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Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month: What parents should look out for

By **Marissa Marquez**
Rise Above Violence

Parents and guardians of local youth — listen up.

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, and this month Rise Above Violence wants to highlight common unhealthy teen dating behaviors and how you can help our community youth.

Movies, books, TV shows and even music all show romance at some point. Are they showing good relationships or toxic ones? If they show toxic relationships, do they show how to get out of it? Do they normalize unhealthy and even abusive relationships?

Don't tell yourself it doesn't apply to your kid yet because the dating age is getting younger and younger. Small kisses on the cheek on the playground have been happening for years, but dating for kids is looking quite different these days. Dating relationships are lasting longer, are more intense, and show higher signs of unhealthy and even abusive behaviors.

There are rites of passage for everything, but should having a bad dating experience be one of them? When we think of teen romance, we often think of "young and in love." It's an intense relationship that has rose-colored glasses and ends in heartbreak. While we can't stop the heartbreak that inevitably comes with dating, there are other things that we can prevent.

Here are some unhealthy relationship signs that you can look out for:

- **Isolation:** The beginning stage of a relationship should be fun, and your child and their partner should want to spend time together. However, there is a difference between spending time together and intentionally isolating them from their friends. As a parent, keep an eye out for if your child stops talking/hanging out with their friends that they had before their relationship. A dating partner should not take up 100 percent of someone's time or force them to stop hanging out with other people.

- **Normal texting behaviors:** Yes, it's normal for kids to text 24/7 nowadays, and it's normal for dating partners to text a lot, too. Texting becomes unhealthy, though, when a dating partner expects to text all the time. If one person gets upset because their boyfriend/girlfriend isn't responding fast enough and it leads to repeatedly texting the other person, this is not only unhealthy, but harassment. Harassment is a form of dating violence and not a normal part of teen dating.

- **Privacy:** As a youth advocate in the schools, I hear quite often, "If you don't have anything to hide, then it shouldn't be a problem for me to have your phone password,

or Snapchat password, or ..." We also hear, "If you love me and want to date me, then you'll give me your phone password." This isn't dramatized for the newspaper; teens are being threatened this way. Sharing passwords, ultimately invading their right to privacy, in order to stay in a relationship is borderline blackmail. This is teen dating violence.

- Monitor your child's behavior:

As a parent, you know your kids, notice when something is off with them, and you recognize the little changes in them. You are the first line of defense for a teen who is entering an unhealthy or abusive relationship. Did you know 33 percent of teens admit to being in an abusive relationship? Don't tell yourself it won't happen to your kid because there

- See Dating on page 6

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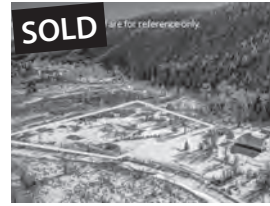
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Living a heart-healthy lifestyle

By Cindi Galabota
PREVIEW Columnist

Tomorrow is Valentine's Day, a day to celebrate our heart-filled love for one another. Yet, we should celebrate, and thank, our very own hearts every day.

Did you know your heart beats around 100,000 times every day? It pumps about a million barrels of blood during an average lifetime. This fist-sized muscle is your silent companion, working right alongside you and doing its best to keep up with the demands of your life.

Heart-healthy living involves understanding your risk of getting heart disease and making healthy choices to reduce your chances of getting a heart disease. Keep reading to learn more about caring for your heart.

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of death in the U.S.

"Nearly 2,500 people in the U.S. die from cardiovascular disease every day. Those are alarming statistics to me — and they should be alarming for all of us, because it's likely many among those whom we lose will be our friends and loved ones," said Keith Churchwell, M.D., FAHA, the volunteer president of the American Heart Association.

In fact, cardiovascular diseases, including heart disease and stroke, claim more lives in the U.S. than all forms of cancer and accidental deaths — the No. 2 and No. 3 causes of death — combined.

Common cardiovascular diseases include atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), hypertension (high

Extension Viewpoints

blood pressure) and heart failure, all of which are related and often coexist.

Heart disease is a broad term for conditions that result in narrowed or blocked blood vessels that may lead to chest pain, heart attack or stroke. Most often, heart disease occurs due to poor lifestyle choices, including lack of exercise, tobacco use or an unhealthy diet. Heart disease may also occur from infection or genetic abnormalities, and age and gender may increase your risk.

The good news is that you can make some fairly simple changes to your lifestyle to help you live a longer, healthier life.

Below are four things you can do to help prevent heart disease and give your heart a little love:

1. Consume a diet rich in vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Research shows that consuming a diet rich in fruits and vegetables may help to lower blood cholesterol levels and aid in healthy weight maintenance. Research also shows that eating foods rich in soluble fiber may decrease LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels. Some good foods to try are peas, legumes, fruits, brown rice and barley.

2. Limit foods and beverages with added sugar. Sugar is natural and nontoxic. When eaten in moderation, it can be part of a balanced diet. However, excessive consumption of sugar has been linked to obesity, heart dis-

ease, hypertension, diabetes, certain cancers and tooth decay. The World Health Organization recommends consuming no more than 10 percent of daily calories from added sugar and "free sugars" such as honey, syrup and juices.

3. Choose foods with low salt content. Sodium, a major component of salt, plays a crucial role in blood pressure regulation. Dietary guidelines suggest that reducing sodium intake may prevent and control high blood pressure (hypertension) by helping to lower blood pressure. A decreased sodium intake is also associated with reduced risk for congestive heart failure.

4. Limit the amount of saturated fats in your diet. Following a diet low in saturated fats and cholesterol may lower one's risk for cardiovascular disease by reducing LDL cholesterol levels.

So, this year, try celebrating Valentine's Day with heart-healthy choices for the love of your heart.

For more information, ideas and recipes, visit the Colorado State University Food Smart website at foodsmartcolorado.colostate.edu.

CPR and first aid classes

CPR and first aid certification classes are offered every other month at the CSU Extension office, generally on the third Monday and Wednesday from 6 to 10 p.m. The cost for the classes is \$80 for combined CPR/first aid and \$55 for CPR, first aid or recertification. Call the Extension office at (970) 246-5931 to register.

Check out the online option on our website, <https://archuleta.extension.colostate.edu/>.

Call our 24/7 Hotline at (970) 264-9075 to reach a trained advocate. Parents and teens can call the hotline at any time.

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Dating

■ continued from page 3

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Rise Above Violence is a nonprofit

and serves victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Pagosa Springs. Rise provides 24/7 crisis support, advocacy and long-term resources for victims and survivors. Through prevention education and community outreach, Rise works to end violence before it starts.

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- A children's garden for programs and environmental education

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Renderings courtesy Reynolds, Ash and Associates

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Photo courtesy Healthy Archuleta

Members of Healthy Archuleta meet with a Denver representative of Hunger Free Colorado, a statewide non-profit advocacy organization.

Advancing local food system advocacy: Healthy Archuleta meets with statewide nonprofit

Healthy Archuleta

Healthy Archuleta, a local nonprofit, has been working to advance a vibrant and resilient local food system in Archuleta County.

A strong local food system not only improves food access, but also supports the local economy, reduces environmental impact and enhances community well-being. By prioritizing locally sourced food, we can create a more sustainable and interconnected community.

During a recent visit with a Denver representative of Hunger Free Colorado, a statewide nonprofit advocacy organization, members of Healthy Archuleta gathered to discuss connecting people in Archuleta County to food — via specialized programs, food access initiatives and various community outreach actions — and supporting our local food system.

You may be wondering what Hunger Free Colorado is exactly and how this statewide organization connects

to the efforts of Archuleta County.

Hunger Free Colorado focuses on two areas—directly connecting Coloradans with food, and advocacy and policy efforts related to increasing food access across the state.

Healthy Archuleta, through its local food system efforts, is also interested in these two areas for Archuleta County.

This meeting was an opportunity for Healthy Archuleta team members to learn about statewide food advocacy and policies and for Hunger Free to learn about the grassroots efforts that are happening at a local level.

Both Hunger Free Colorado and Healthy Archuleta are working toward food systems that create a healthier Colorado, both locally and statewide.

Strong advocacy in this arena aims to create a better Colorado, but good decisions can only be made when people step up and give their voices.

In line with Healthy Archuleta's mission in advancing nutrition secu-

urity, the discussion focused primarily on how to advocate for healthy food access in our local communities.

During this meeting, attendees were asked the question, "What does advocacy mean to you?"

The responses varied, but still maintained a common theme: "Being a voice for a cause, working for change, asking questions and being a voice for someone who has a need."

Hunger Free Colorado shared some recent food system policy and advocacy efforts it has worked on, like the Healthy School Meals for All voter initiative and how these ideas move through policy development and implementation.

Additionally, the group addressed issues and identified policies that need to change related to individual access to food and food assistance programs; current food policy efforts at the state level; the federal nutrition program — where the resources

■ See Food on next page

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Daughters of the American Revolution will meet Feb. 15

By CiCi Stuart

Sarah Platt Decker Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution

Are you aware of the clues from your quilts? Come find out "What Quilts Can Tell You About Your Family History".

Those of us who have family quilts might know who made the quilt and where it came from but many quilts are anonymous as to their origin other than just handed down through the generations. We treasure our family quilts as they act as a link to our historic

past. Our presenter is Patricia Joy, professional quilter and quilt historian.

Come to the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) meeting on Saturday, Feb. 15, 10:30 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Bldg., 1550 Main St., Durango, Colo.

For more information or to car-pool, call Sherryl Ege at (970) 507-0646 or come to our meeting.

The Sarah Platt Decker Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution is a nonpolitical/nonprofit service organization representing the Archuleta and

La Plata counties. Membership is open to all women over the age of 18, regardless of race, religion, or ethnic background, who can trace their lineage from an ancestor who aided in achieving American Independence. The DAR, as we are known, has three missions: historical preservation, promotion of education and patriotic endeavor.

The members are a lot like you, coming from diverse backgrounds and having a variety of interests. Their common bond is their lineal descent from patriots of the American Revolution.

Food

■ continued from previous page

come into the state and community — and if these programs are accessible and adequate.

In working with organizations like Hunger Free Colorado, Healthy Archuleta strives to understand the importance of advocacy and policy issues, how advocacy influences policy, and how advocacy affects lo-

cal healthy food access.

Hunger Free Colorado has offered to help identify which local, state and federal levers to use in determining policy change.

To learn more about the efforts of Healthy Archuleta, please visit www.foodcoalition4archuleta.org or send us an email at fsfearchuleta@gmail.com.

Please mark your calendar for Saturday, Feb. 22, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Healthy Archuleta is hosting a food drive at City Market to support the neighbors who use the local food pantries in Archuleta County.

For more information on the food drive, please visit <https://www.foodcoalition4archuleta.org/food-drive.html>.

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1,000 Books Before Kindergarten an ideal free literacy program for babies and toddlers

By Carole Howard
PREVIEW Columnist, and the library staff

One of the greatest gifts you can give your babies and toddlers is to sign them up for a free early literacy reading program called "1,000 Books before Kindergarten" for children from birth to 5 years old.

You can sign up any time at your library. You will receive a folder with bubbles to keep track of the books you read to your child. The concept is simple: Read 1,000 books to your newborn, infant or toddler — yes, you can repeat books — before your precious one starts kindergarten. You'll get a free book each time your child completes 100 books.

One thousand may sound like a huge number of books, but it's not really. If you read just one book a night, you will have read 365 books in a year. That is 730 books in two years and 1,095 books in three years. If you consider that most children start kindergarten at around 5 years of age, you have more time than you may think.

Library closure

Your library will be closed Monday, Feb. 17, in honor of Presidents Day.

Online author talks

Our highly popular free online author talks with New York Times best-selling authors continue in February with one more opportunity for you to interact with bestselling authors.

Tuesday, Feb. 18, at noon will feature Lee Hawkins, author of "I am Nobody's Slave," discussing "How

Library News

Uncovering My Family's History Set Me Free."

For details and to register, go to <https://library.org/pagosalibrary/upcoming>.

Friday Flix tomorrow

Enjoy a PG movie chosen by participants plus free popcorn Friday, Feb. 14, from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

LEGO Club Saturday

Kids aged 6-11 are invited to the free LEGO Club on Saturday, Feb. 15, from 11 a.m. to noon. Bring your own LEGOs or use ours to free build.

Pokemon Club on Saturday

If you're aged 6 to 11 and love Pokemon, this free club is for you. Bring your cards on Saturday, Feb. 15, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Adult DIY

At the free in-person adult DIY next Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 1 to 2:30 p.m., Miranda will teach you how to make one-of-a-kind polymer jewelry. All supplies will be provided.

Spanish conversation

Practice your Spanish in a free group setting on Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. There is no

minimum skill level needed.

Note this group now meets twice a month, on the first and third Tuesdays.

Game night

Come play Scrabble, cribbage, cards or bring your own game to Game Night next Thursday, Feb. 20, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Popcorn will be provided.

High school math tutoring

Free high school math tutoring for ages 14 and up takes place Mondays from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Registration is required.

Family storytimes

Wednesdays from 10 to 11 a.m., join a free educational hour of reading, singing and free play to build early literacy skills.

Elementary tutoring sessions

Children ages 6 to 11 are welcome at these free sessions on Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. where they will build essential skills in core subjects.

■ See Library on next page



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@middle school library 309 Lewis St

Monday, March 10th at 1:00PM
@public library 811 San Juan St

Monday, March 24th at 5:30PM
@PCI 550 Hot Springs Blvd

www.habitatarchuleta.org
970-264-6960



Library

■ continued from previous page

Preregistration is required.

Ruby's Writers Guild

Every Thursday from 9 to 11 a.m., the Ruby's Writers Guild welcomes writers looking for opportunities, support, resources and camaraderie with other writers at this free gathering.

ESL classes

Free in-person evening classes take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with 4 to 5 p.m. reserved for beginners, 5 to 6 p.m. for intermediate and 6 to 7 p.m. for advanced students. Please help us share the word about these classes.

Tech Time

Free in-person slots are available from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays and 2 to 4 p.m. Thursdays. Judy helps you with basic questions relating to computers, smartphones and tablets, and also provides assistance in accessing the library's online resources.

No appointment is needed for these drop-in sessions, but please bring your device's charger and passwords with you.

Pagosa Adult Learning Services (PALS)

Join Mark or Sally for free PALS sessions Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 to 8 p.m. to help with high school equivalency, GED, college prep, financial aid, tutoring and more. No appointment is necessary.

Activities calendars

Pick up monthly events calendars at the library so you don't miss any of the free activities available to you and your family.

Downloadable books

CloudLibrary has a wide variety of downloadable e-books and audiobooks for all ages. To access this

free digital collection, download the cloudLibrary app, answer a few simple questions, select AspenCat Union Catalog for the name of your library, then enter your library card number and four-digit PIN. Library staff are happy to help you set up your device if you need assistance.

Local history books

"Indians of New Mexico" by Richard C. Sandoval is a history of tribes including the Rio Grande and Pecos Valley Indians which has just been added to our Hershey Collection section. "Sacred Objects and Sacred Places" by Andrew Gulliford, professor of history at Fort Lewis College in Durango, explores the importance of tribal preservation and historic places.

Other nonfiction

"Knitting Pretty" by Kris Percival is an illustrated guide to comfy projects. "Loving Life As It Is" by Chakung Jigme Wangdrak is a Buddhist guide to ultimate happiness. "Stronger Than BPD" by Debbie Corso is a girl's guide to taking control of intense emotions, drama and chaos from borderline personality disorder. "Cribsheet" by Emily Oster, named NPR Book of the Year, is a guide to more relaxed parenting from birth to preschool. "The Trauma of Burnout" by clinical psychologist Claire Plumbly offers advice on dealing with anxiety, trauma and burnout.

Mysteries, suspense and thrillers

"Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Vendetta" by Brian Freedman is a Jason Bourne adventure. "Livid" by Patricia Cornwell is the latest in the Dr. Kay Scarpetta forensic pathologist series. "Witchcraft for Wayward Girls" by Grady Hendrix is a psychological Gothic thriller. "A Sea of Unspoken Things" by Adrienne Young takes place after the untimely death of a twin's brother. "Beautiful Ugly" by

Alice Feeney features a man who sees his missing wife on a remote Scottish island a year after her mysterious disappearance.

"Gathering Mist" by Margaret Mizushima is a Timber Creek K-9 mystery. "Grave Danger" by James Grippando is a Jack Swyteck mystery.

■ See Library on next page



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Unitarian Universalists to hear sermon: 'The End is Never the End'

By De Anna Hoyle
Pagosa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

This Sunday, Feb. 16, the Pagosa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will once again feature a sermon from Foothills Unitarian in Fort Collins, which is part of a series called "No Matter What Happens."

The sermon, entitled "The End is Never the End," is delivered by the Rev. Sean Neil-Barron, associate minister, and will be streamed during our service beginning at 10:30 a.m..

Neil-Barron will take us on a journey to explore and states, "No matter what, there is a mess to clean up, all around you ... just because hope seems to be gone does not mean hope is at an end."

The inspiration comes from the Rev. Theodore Parker, a radical 19th century Unitarian minister and

theologian who shared in a sermon in the 1850s: "I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight, I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice."

Our familiarity of this message comes from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his reference to a similar theme in his speech from 1968. This timely theme comes back again as we witness injustices in our country and in the wider world.

We come together in community to confront our own judgments as we practice living our values of interdependence, pluralism, justice, transformation, generosity and equity, all centered in love. We are a community of free-thinkers, encouraged to learn and grow.

If you are curious about our programs or Unitarian Universalist foundations, visit our website for links: Pagosauu.org.

We meet at Unit B-15 of the Greenbriar Plaza, 301 N. Pagosa Blvd., on the north side facing the Pagosa Peak.

Meditation practice begins each Sunday at 9 a.m. and is open to those wishing to begin or deepen their practice.

HUD
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.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

Library

■ continued from previous page

"Still See You Everywhere" by Lisa Gardner focuses on a search for a murderer's long-lost sister. "Imposter Syndrome" by Joseph Knox is about a con artist dragged into the lavish London underbelly. "The Note" by Alistair Burke explores the complex bond of female friendships after a prank goes wrong on a Hamptons vacation.

Other novels

"The Hypocrite" by Jo Hamya is about a daughter who writes a play based on her father's faded career. "Lightfall" by Ed Crocker is book one of a new Everlands epic fantasy series. "Water Moon" by Samantha Sotto Yambao is set in a magical pawnshop behind a ramen shop. "Death of the Author" by Nnedi Okorafor is a tale of a disabled woman whose new sci-fi novel changes her life. "Good Material" by Dolly Alderton focuses on a stand-up comic exploring a ruined relationship.

"How to End a Love Story" by Yulin Kuang features a successful YA author and a popular screenwriter. "The Lotus Shoes" by Jane Yang is a tale of two women from opposite sides of society in 1800s China. "How to Sleep at Night" by Elizabeth Harris opens when a husband announces he wants to run for Congress. "You Dreamed of Empires" by Alvaro Enrigue is a reimagining of the destiny of Tenochtitlan, today's Mexico City. "Homeseeking" follows two separated lovers through six decades of Chinese history.

New donations guidelines

The Friends of the Library have

announced new guidelines for donations to the library.

Books on time-sensitive topics that can quickly become out of date are wanted only if they have been published within the last five years. These subjects include politics/current events, health and medicine, sports/exercise, business, technology, science, education and travel guides. Not accepted are reference materials, textbooks and non-print material like CDs, DVDs, Blu Ray, VHS or cassette tapes because they do not sell at Friends of the Library sales.

When the library is open, high-quality used book donations are gratefully accepted at the front desk - not down the outside returns slot at the library or the dropbox at City Market, please. No more than two boxes at a time because of space constraints and all books in excellent condition, please.

Quotable quote

"Never tread water. Always move ahead." — Dick Button (1929-2025), two-time Olympic figure skater gold medal winner, five-time consecutive world champion and Emmy award-winning TV sports analyst. He is considered the most accomplished men's figure skater in history and is credited with taking figure skating into the mainstream with his ABC "Wide World of Sports" commentaries.

Website

For more information on library books, services and programs — and to reserve books, e-books, books on CD and DVDs from the comfort of your home — please visit our website at <https://pagosalibrary.org>.

SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

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

ANSWER:

Spiritual Experiences Group to continue spiritual IQ series Sunday

By Laurah Brock Young
Spiritual Experiences Group of Pagosa Springs

We are in month two of the "Raise Your Spiritual IQ" series. This month, our focus is "Your Dream Worlds Revealed."

This complimentary program offers 10 techniques included in a "Raise Your Spiritual IQ" experience journal. It includes three books that can help you unlock the power of your dreams, understand more about reincarnation and learn the meaning of your inner experiences.

What to expect:

- Expand your inner awareness of past lives, dreams and how they impact you today.

- Share your experiences with other like-hearted people.

- Learn ways to handle challenges from a spiritual perspective.

- Discover techniques to access your divine intuition.

- Get simple spiritual exercises to directly connect with the Life Source.

- Receive a free book and beautifully illustrated experience journal to jump-start your spiritual adventure.

Drop in. We'd love to see you. You may come to any of the discussions.

We will meet Sunday, Feb. 16, at the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association Clubhouse, 230 Port Ave., at 1 p.m.

Eckankar, a spiritual resource for people of all faiths and backgrounds, sponsors this free event. It

is an individual, creative practice to experience our unique relationship with the Divine.

Join the Spiritual Experiences Group of Pagosa Springs at <https://www.meetup.com/pagosa-springs-spiritual-experiences-group/>.

H&R BLOCK
is happy to announce that
JoAnn Howell
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SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center announces upcoming events

By Shayla McClure
SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center

The Sunday service at 11 a.m. on Feb. 16 at the SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center will feature "Mary Magdalene Messages from the Grotto and Saint-Baume Cave in South of France" with Stephanie Morrow.

Upcoming events

Feb. 13: Thursday Sacred Valentines Heart Blessing and Ceremony with Jenelle Syverson and Shayla McClure. Receive heartwarming cacao, chocolates, wine, self-love affirmations and rewards to celebrate your heart's journey. Sign-up now for your spot. The cost is a \$33 donation. Contact (970) 510-0309.

About us

The 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.



MILD DEHYDRATION AFFECTS MOOD IN HEALTHY YOUNG WOMEN

Is it PMS or is it thirst? Is it lack of focus or dehydration?

This article excerpt may have you rethinking. In two recent studies, researchers at the University of Connecticut's Human Performance Laboratory discovered the mental, mood and cognitive downside of even mild dehydration.

Investigators determined that it didn't matter if a person had just walked for 40 minutes on a treadmill or was sitting at rest – the adverse effects from mild dehydration were the same. Mild dehydration is defined as an approximately 1.5 percent loss in normal water volume in the body. The take home message is that individuals need to stay hydrated at all times, not just during exercise, extreme heat or exertion.



"Our thirst sensation doesn't really appear until we are 1 [percent] or 2 percent dehydrated. By then dehydration is already setting in and starting to impact how our mind and body perform," says Lawrence E. Armstrong, one of the studies' lead scientists and an international expert on hydration.

The importance for everyone to stay hydrated is a message that needs to be promoted. "Dehydration affects all people, and staying properly hydrated is just as important for those who work all day at a computer as it is for marathon runners, who can lose up to 8 percent of their body weight as water when they compete."

In the study, separate groups of young women and men were tested. Twenty-five women with an average age of 23 took part in one study. The men's group consisted of 26 men with an average age of 20. All of the participants were healthy, active individuals, who were neither high-performance athletes nor sedentary — typically exercising for 30 to 60 minutes per day. Each participant took part in three evaluations that were separated by 28 days. All of the participants walked on a treadmill to induce dehydration, and all of the subjects were hydrated the evening before the evaluations commenced. As part of the evaluation, the subjects were put through a battery of cognitive tests that measured vigilance, concentration, reaction time, learning, memory, and reasoning. The results were compared against a separate series of tests when the individuals were not dehydrated. The young women experienced mild dehydration which caused headaches, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating. They also perceived tasks as more difficult when slightly dehydrated, although there was no substantive reduction in their cognitive abilities.

Source: "Dehydration Influences Mood, Cognition." By Rick Nauert. <http://psychcentral.com>

Bonus Tip: Visit <http://www.AmazingFacts.org> for spiritual refreshment every week!

"but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14

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A California wildfire relief effort

By Jonathan Dobson
Special to The PREVIEW

The Los Angeles fires erupted on Tuesday, Jan. 7. Mysterious origins, probably the messy, overburdened utility lines, possibly arson, nobody knew — it just exploded, Los Angeles County and everything around it for hundreds of miles a tinderbox where rain hadn't once fallen since May. An errantly discarded cigarette is all it might've been.

With Santa Ana winds clocking at up to 99 mph in Altadena, in the foothills of northern Pasadena, and the Pacific Palisades, including parts of Topanga and Malibu, a roaring wave of brushfire spun out of control, providing ominous fanfare to the transition of power that was to take place in Washington, D.C., less than two weeks later.

Four thousand acres burned just that first night. People were made aware of a rampaging blaze and were suddenly thrown into a panic, no time to even contemplate belongings or comprehend what was happening, barely even two minutes to find pets. Twenty-nine waited too long or couldn't get out for other reasons.

Everything one owned and that a person could not leave with in their hands was, in more cases than not, lost to the Palisades and Eaton fires.

Pagosa Springs and the larger Archuleta County area are now part of the story. This is due to the successful and remarkable effort that members of this community, many of whom I am happy to know read this paper, made, contributing faith, monetary and material donations to an idea that could have just as easily and fairly been judged as foolish and abandoned.

I will tell you that upon approaching LA, arriving out of the Mojave into the flowing, surreal 14-lane highways, I did flush and become preoccupied deeply for at least a period of an hour or two with distinct feelings that I was Don Quixote himself, modern-day cognate, particularly doomed carrying over \$18,000 worth of goods bought with donations — made by 100 different people from Archuleta County and nearby environs — who expected my valiance.

Somehow, Jonah (my son, 13, who I had pulled out of school Friday in order for us to even have a prayer of pulling this off) and I boned up, would have to invent the capacity to penetrate the outer chaos of this vast, inefficient city to find the wound at its heart.

We, so enchained, would have to sniff out with poise the hands to receive what it was we had brought, what everyone reading this paper had given us, and gather the story of someone afflicted terribly by all of this looking us in the eye to say thank you. And, Dulcinea, we only had one day to do it — Saturday, Jan. 26.

We parked the full truck and open, loaded trailer in a protected area on

Writer's Circle

the property of a Marriott the night before and got a good sleep. The security staff knew what the cargo was and kept an extra eye: 1,400 units in a dozen large cardboard boxes of small batch, flavor-packed meals ingeniously packaged.

They were not cheap, but a reasonable discount was extended considering the intention. A business out of Durango uses "upcycled" produce from local farms, dehydrated. You pour boiling water (that's all you need) into the tough, sustainable pouch and voila.

These are meals designed as the kind of thing you would bring on a long hike over a couple of nights — easy wilderness cuisine. They happened to have more than 1,500 on hand and were elated to imagine they could get the business during winter, their slow time of year. The product (the varieties included garden mac and cheese, green chili cheddar grits, Thai carrot slaw, golden oats, harvest green curry and rainbow pasta) — and they even donated a few hundred lattes — the perfect thing into which we might sink the lion's share of the amazing amount of money we raised.

The product offered lent legitimacy to what we were doing. In addition to the considerable number of nonperishable meals we bought from them, a few freshly baked pecan pies from the bakery were bought (espe-

cially prized).

Also, we made stops in Durango and Barstow on the way to purchase enough clean and extremely comfortable-looking socks to fill two large plastic bins, tons of AA and AAA batteries, squadrons of lip balm, cough drops by the case and throat medicine (we had done our research about what was really needed).

I went for it and bought a Nintendo Switch with one Legend of Zelda game. I know this is controversial, but we were going hog wild and I became intoxicated by the idea of some kid really affected by sorrow about all that had happened being mightily affected finding out that such a towering act of generosity was even possible — some taste of redemption in a world that could also steal his or her home so cruelly.

In addition to all the great clothing, some toys, food and other helpful items had been dropped off at my address for the effort.

Pagosa Peak Open School sent out word and that precipitated the result of them coming by and making sure we were overdoing it, which was more than welcome. An extra-nice baby stroller, toiletries, further clothes, etc. They overdid themselves. The bulging load we ultimately assembled and delivered to LA was ready, but we still didn't know exactly where we were bringing it.

Heading down into Venice Beach the morning of the one day we had to deliver the payload, we became transfixed by the marvel of that seedy, dreamy place. We had to let the dog out for a run on the beach; she deserved it. An attempt to head straight

■ See Circle on next page



BJ Jones and Lars Schneider, owners, have spent a combined total of over 45 years in Pagosa Springs.

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Photo courtesy Jonathan Dobson
Jonathan and Jonah Dobson recently traveled to the wildfire-struck area of Los Angeles to deliver donated goods and meals to those affected by the fires.



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Circle

■ **continued from previous page**
 into the center of everything, finding the central Santa Monica headquarters for fire and police, ended up fruitless — nothing but huge, sterile, closed-up administrative buildings. I was starting to feel some despair and decided to stop dilly-dallying and go with my original instinct: Zuma Beach, north of Malibu. This is where the fire crews were staging.

Zuma ended up being the ticket. The people there, firemen and fire support, a camp of hundreds, maybe a thousand, had the marks of weariness and brotherhood on them. They were happy to see us and enjoyed hearing what we had to say to them.

When they got a closer look at what it was that we had actually brought them all the way from Colorado, I will tell you, it was about more than what we were saying. This was just what they needed, the perfect stuff. They meant it, and there was excitement about the pecan pies in their eyes. We had earned a spot with them and they took care to send us forward to a location in Hollywood where all meaningful donations were being accepted and organized for the victims in Altadena. We said our goodbyes and went that way.

As we began to head back east out of Zuma, saying goodbye to the ocean where we had seen a few dolphins and ran with them for a while, skittering sandpipers, pelicans, gulls, following the detour that it was necessary to take in circumventing the Pacific Coast Highway (Route 1) which was closed, I said to Jonah, "Hey, you know, let's try something."

We went back to Route 1, knowing that ahead the road would be blocked, being the main corridor passing through the off-limits areas, the epicenter of the worst of the ravage. After a few miles, we reached the

fellow who was guarding the way. I rolled my window down and told him, as he looked at me and my son and our dog in the truck, that we were from a little proud town in Colorado and had driven all this way to help and still had high-quality items to deliver.

He gave us a wink, and for the next hour Jonah and I drove through scenes of charred cars, devastated landscapes, some things spared and other areas burned out horribly, scoured. There was a terrible stench in the air. This put the emotion of it in us. No one stopped us all the way through Malibu — or what used to be Malibu — to Hollywood, where they tell stories, make movies, endlessly look for something new to believe in.

In my experience, it's the little things that are holy: The way someone smiles at you. The way those dolphins showed up at Zuma.

Our little town pulled something together to help a god-awful enormous city. Who could have believed such a thing? Well, we did.

In the movie "The Matrix" (1999), the characters Neo and Trinity infiltrate a "government" building to rescue Morpheus, yanking him out of the "building" by helicopter tether — one of the greatest sequences in all of movies, if you ask me. This is what it felt like for Jonah and I to make it through the fearsome highway system and gargantuan endlessness of LA, to deliver this gift.

It was a gift to them, but much more to ourselves, I believe. We also live in a place where wildfires pose considerable risk. It serves us well to take notice. We have given to these beautiful people who lost so much. What they, in addition to thanks, give us back is a warning.

Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of The SUN.

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Aspen House Mission:

To Cultivate and Environment of Success for Adults with Developmental Disabilities and their Community.

Aspen Services offers supportive services to adult with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to empower them to live full and rewarding lives. Aspen House will be the first fully-supportive housing for adults with I/DD in Archuleta County.

Aspen House/Aspen Services, A Safe Place in Pagosa, Inc., a recognized 501(c)(3) corporation
 TIN: 46-4975570 — Donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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 house sparrow.

During the Pagosa Christmas Bird Count in December 2024, of the more than 6,000 birds and 79 species counted, the combined total of only four species accounted for more than one-third of the total birds tallied. It is no surprise that Canada geese took the No. 1 spot, followed by American crows. American robins ranking at No. 4 is indicative of our unusual winter. Coming in at No. 3 was this week's bird, the house sparrow.

These small birds, described as being tough, adaptable and aggressive, are found in most places where there are buildings and few where there aren't. They are the sparrows that hop across the parking lot when you stop to buy groceries and show up under your feet when you eat your lunch at an outdoor restaurant.

To the dismay of some people who put up nest boxes, instead of tree cavities, house sparrows prefer man-made structures for nesting and will evict other birds from them.

House sparrows are chunkier and have more rounded heads and shorter tails than most of our native sparrows. Males have a chestnut-colored head with a gray crown, whitish cheeks and a black bib on the throat and chest. Plainer females have a light eyebrow and backs striped with brown, buff and black.

These plucky social birds feed in large flocks on grains and seeds, keeping in contact with their incessant cheeps. They will scour the ground under bird feeders and around livestock. In summer they eat insects and feed them to their young, recognizing the grills on vehicles as a great place to find smashed food.

House sparrows are not native to North America. From a small number imported to New York in the mid 1800s, in part as a way to control agricultural pests, by 1900 house sparrow populations had spread west to the Rocky Mountains. Today although their numbers are declining, they are common resident birds across all parts of North America except Alaska and far northern Canada.

You can be a part of a global winter bird census, the Great Backyard Bird Count, between Feb. 14 and 17. Find out how to participate at birdcount.org.

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



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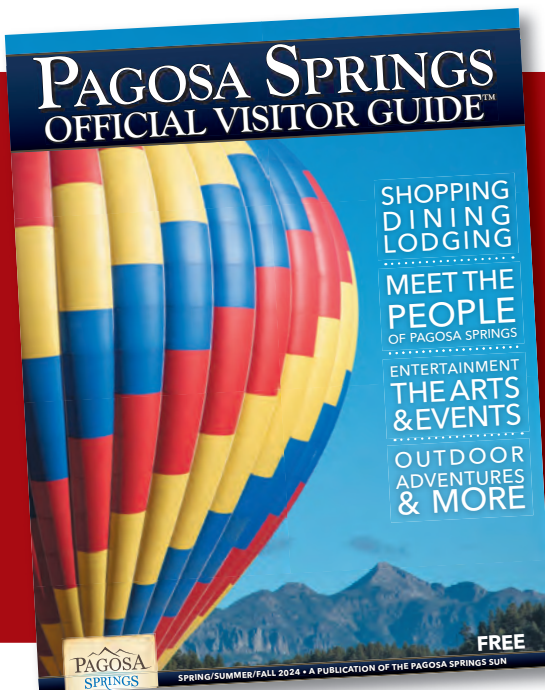
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Photo courtesy Shanna Robb

Members of the Pagosa Springs Catholic Community hosted Valentine's bingo at BeeHive Assisted Living on Saturday, Feb. 8. The festivities included a homemade king cake, hot cider, an assortment of prizes, fellowship and a whole lot of love.

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Preview Calendar

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

Thursday, Feb. 13

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.

Seminar: Emotional Health with Cheri Minnier-Wells. 12:30-2 p.m., Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. The topic will be "Matters of the Heart: How to Lower Stress and Find Peace in Your Life."

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.

T'ai Chi Chih. 2:30-3:30 p.m., Senior Center. Free for those 60 and better.

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.

Pagosa Weather Discussion. 5:45 p.m., Ski and Bow Rack, 354 E. Pagosa St. Pagosa Weather will talk about the weather and snow forecasting.

Friday, Feb. 14

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.

February Birthday/Valentine's Day Party. 1:15-2:15 p.m., Senior Center. Join for an informal celebration. Everyone is welcome.

Good News Club. 1:15-3:15 p.m., Pagosa Springs Elementary School. A weekly club for kids in kindergarten through the fourth grade where the Bible is taught with songs, stories, object lessons, games and more. For more information, email Frank and Connie Porter at ceflitttlekids@gmail.com.

Friday Flix. 2-3:30 p.m., Sisson Library. Join for a fun family movie and snacks. For all ages.

Pagosa Springs Valentine's Day Soiree Fine Food and Wine Pairing. 6-8 p.m., Community Center. Enjoy a selection of wines, savory appetizers and chocolates, as well as live music and a silent auction. Tickets are available at <https://givebutter.com/ValentinesWinePairingSoiree>, by calling (970) 264-2167 or visiting the Senior Center. A fundraiser for Archuleta Seniors Inc.

■ See Calendar on page 19



The Springs Resort awarded the Kathy Clark Access Award

The Springs Resort

The Balneology Association of North America (BANA) has awarded The Springs Resort the Kathy Clark Access Award. The Springs Resort is one of only two places in 2024 to receive this award, which recognizes businesses that go above and beyond to connect people with the therapeutic benefits of natural hot springs.

Established in honor of Kathy Clark, the award has only been granted to five hot springs since 2022. During the pandemic, Kathy Clark recognized the therapeutic benefits of hot springs and worked tirelessly to keep Charles Hot Springs open, ensuring access to its healing waters.

The Springs Resort is the first hot springs in Colorado to receive this prestigious award. BANA fosters and maintains deep connections with hot springs all over the nation.

The Springs Resort takes pride in creating an inclusive and welcoming experience for everyone, from local community members to individuals on retreats, couples, families, children, the elderly, and those with physical or developmental disabilities. Whether it's a first-time visit to the hot springs or a cherished local tradition, the

resort's healing waters are accessible to all. Affordable local pricing, flexible memberships, multi-day passes, and community initiatives make it easier than ever to connect, relax, and enjoy the benefits of natural hot springs.

This commitment to inclusivity extends beyond the resort and into the community. In 2024, The Springs Resort donated over a thousand soaking passes to local and regional organizations such as Healthy Archuleta, the Pagosa Fire Protection District, The Special Talents High School, Pagosa Springs Middle School, Wounded Warrior and Vets for Vets, Fatherless Teens, Dust2, and other scholastic teams. These contributions ensure that even more members of the community can experience the healing power of the water.

The Springs Resort and Spa is currently undergoing a massive expansion. This expansion, expected to be completed in Spring 2025, will result in even greater accessibility. The number of hot springs pools at The Springs Resort and Spa will double with this expansion, offering more space and opportunities for people to enjoy therapeutic bathing in a soothing, relaxing, and uncrowded atmosphere.

Above all, The Springs Resort aims to help locals and visitors from across the state, nation, and world connect with and benefit from Pagosa's healing waters. These waters are renowned globally for their exceptional mineral content and are sought after by hot spring enthusiasts everywhere.

Resort member Michelle Juneau is just one of many locals who feels the love: "I love the versatility of the Springs Resort. There is a pool and temperature for everyone - from tiny kids to older folks! I recently brought my friends from Germany here; they absolutely loved it! Plus, you can drink coffee, an adult beverage, or have some lunch. It's really great for the whole day!"

It's no surprise that this impressive hot springs resort was honored with the Kathy Clark Access Award from BANA. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of its team, the Springs Resort is truly accessible to all. Behind the scenes, employees work tirelessly to ensure that everyone feels welcome to experience the profound benefits of therapeutic bathing in its natural hot spring waters. This special resort exemplifies its purpose of enhancing the well-being of all who visit.

VALENTINE'S DAY WORD SEARCH



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 G B S T F I G S A U P W V O D C K H W C

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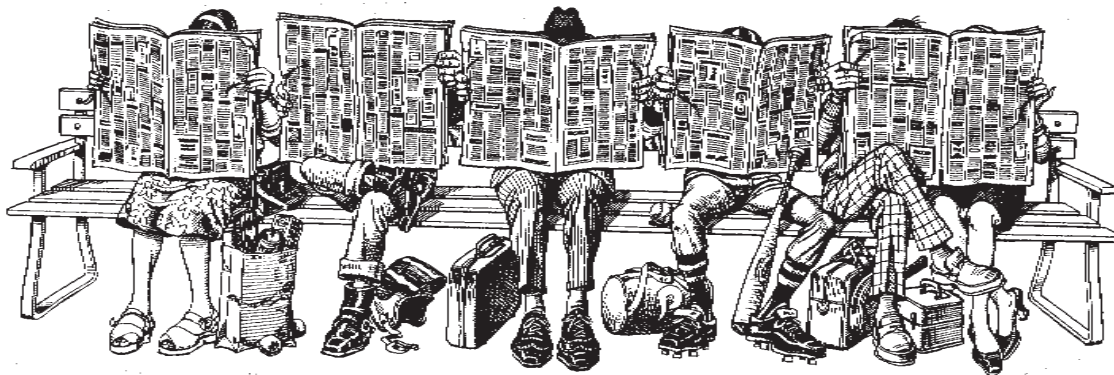
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Preview Calendar

■ continued from page 17

Saturday, Feb. 15

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.

Monday, Feb. 17

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) 264-2064 for more information.

Deepening the Faith Classes. 6-8 p.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church classrooms.

The Alpha Course. 6:30-8:30 p.m., Pagosa Bible Church. A series of video talks with discussion breaks about questions of life. Dessert, coffee and child care will be provided. Register at pagosabiblechurch.org.

Tuesday, Feb. 18

Stretching and Mobility Class. 9:30-10:30 a.m., Senior Center. A stretching and mobility class for those age 55 and up.

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.

Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County. 10 a.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. Veterans and family members are invited to share experiences with vets of all ages. Find out about the latest in vets benefits, vets news

and community-focused events. Contact (970) 880-8387 for more details.

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.

Online Author Talk: Lee Hawkins. Noon, virtual. "I Am Nobody's Slave: How Uncovering My Family's History Set Me Free" with Lee Hawkins. For details and to register, go to <https://libraryc.org/pagosalibrary/upcoming>.

Adult DIY: Polymer Clay Jewelry Class. 1-2:30 p.m., Sisson Library. Learn how to make one-of-a-kind polymer clay jewelry.

Bridge. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Hand and Foot Card Game. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center. No experience is necessary, so come willing to learn.

Mahjong. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.
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.

Conversational Spanish. 4:30-5:30 p.m., Sisson Library. Practice your Spanish conversation skills in a group setting. No minimum skill level required.

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.

Men's Fellowship. 6 p.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church classrooms.

Wednesday, Feb. 19

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

Introduction to Pickleball. 8:30-11

■ See Calendar on next page

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Notice of Planning Commission Vacancy

The Town of Pagosa Springs is seeking applications from individuals interested in volunteering to serve as an alternate member for the Planning Commission. This position will be appointed by the Town Council.

Members are appointed for a four-year term and generally meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 5:30 pm at Town Hall. There may be interim meetings and work sessions on specific planning and development topics. Interested individuals must be a Town resident.



For more information, member qualifications, and application to serve, visit www.mypagosa.org or contact ktunnell@pagosasprings.co.gov or 970-585-8636.

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Preview Calendar

■ continued from previous page

a.m., Ross Aragon Community Center. Register on the Pagosa Springs Parks and Recreation page at <https://secure.rec1.com/CO/pagosa-springs-co/catalog>.

Pagosa Catholic Quilters. 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church classrooms. For more information, contact Maxine Everaert at quilters@ihmjp2.org.

Kids Kare. 9:30-11:30 a.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. A weekly club for 3- to 5-year-olds where the Bible is taught with songs, stories, object lessons, games and more. For more information, email Frank and Connie Porter at ceflittlekids@gmail.com.

Family Storytime. 10-11 a.m., Sisson Library. Join us for great stories, fun songs, and plenty of reasons to get up and move. It's a great way for kids to have fun while building the skills they need to become independent readers. For all ages. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information.

Bridge. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Mindful Drawing. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Elementary Tutoring. 3:30-4:30 p.m., Sisson Library. After-school tutoring in reading and math for grades 1-3. Registration required. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information or to sign up.

Weminuche Audubon Society. 6 p.m., Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. Socialize with appetizers and snacks at 6 p.m. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. and feature stories about two bird species that have come back

from the brink in North America.

Thursday, Feb. 20

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.

End of Life Education. 1 p.m., Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. Funeral Director Pete Albo will speak.

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.

T'ai Chi Chih. 2:30-3:30 p.m., Senior Center. Free for those 60 and better.

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.

Game Night. 5:30-7 p.m., Sisson Library. Play a myriad of games like Scrabble, cribbage, cards or bring your own. Popcorn will be provided.

PALS Adult Education. 5:30-8 p.m., Sisson Library. Pagosa Adult Learning Services, or PALS, can help you with high school equiva-

■ See Calendar on next page

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Like some gases
- 6 Hearts or darts
- 10 Transfer
- 14 More upscale
- 15 Tehran's land
- 16 On vacation
- 17 Pot spot
- 18 Provide fresh air
- 20 Moray, e.g.
- 21 Out in front
- 23 Dressed to the

- 24 Walked-over
- 26 Actor Baldwin
- 28 Fishy organ
- 29 Marriage offer
- 33 "8 Mile" rapper
- 35 Dryer buildup
- 36 Schedule abbr.
- 37 Riot spray
- 38 Loose talk?
- 40 Potter's need
- 41 Farrow of film
- 42 Mean anagram
- 43 Like cold cuts
- 45 Ration out
- 47 Slugger Aaron
- 48 One of Columbus' ships
- 49 Desire
- 52 Put on a show
- 55 Parishioners
- 57 Likewise
- 58 "Kill the Messenger" comic
- 60 Bedeck
- 62 Place for polish
- 63 A single time
- 64 Shake awake
- 65 HS subject
- 66 Subway Series team
- 67 Hold off

- 5 Loom's pedal
- 6 Assumed as fact
- 7 Word after gray or Bay
- 8 Kind of orange
- 9 Med. specialty
- 10 Cotton fabric
- 11 McGregor of "Moulin Rouge!"
- 12 Check information
- 13 Peepers
- 19 Not up to the task
- 22 Ship steerer
- 25 Wine and ____
- 27 Horse with high odds
- 29 Piper product
- 30 Persevere
- 31 Up to the task
- 32 "The ____ Before Time" (1988)
- 33 Jane Austen classic
- 34 Letters
- 39 Not to mention

DOWN

- 1 Map in a map
- 2 Gunpowder stuff
- 3 Environment-related
- 4 Gun, as an engine

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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17						18			19			
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- 40 Double-decker checker
- 42 Litmus reddeners
- 44 Cord for an ID card
- 46 "Modern Family" actor Ed
- 49 Facebook tally
- 50 Like Odin
- 51 One beyond help
- 52 Teen spots
- 53 "Rush Hour" star, 1998
- 54 Some H.S. math
- 56 Bank statement abbr.
- 59 CD follower
- 61 John or Jane

Answers to Previous Crossword:

A	X	L	E		T	E	A	C	H		S	P	R	Y	
C	L	A	M		I	T	C	H	Y		T	R	I	O	
H	I	T	P	A	R	A	D	E	S		R	O	O	K	
E	X	H	A	L	E		C	A	S	S	E	T	T	E	
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P	E	T	A			R	E	N	E	E		T	O	G	A
S	L	E	D			D	R	A	W	N		E	W	E	R

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Senior Center announces birthday, Valentine's Day celebration

By Rose Chavez
PREVIEW Columnist

The Pagosa Senior Center is excited to host monthly seasonal holiday and birthday celebrations for community members of all ages.

Fostering social bonds between older adults and community members of all ages is vital.

Remember, Valentine's Day isn't just for couples — it's a chance for everyone, especially older adults, to feel loved, appreciated and connected. Celebrating the holiday with small gestures of love and compassion can significantly improve emotional well-being, reduce loneliness and promote a sense of belonging among our community.

If you have a February birthday and/or want to join in a low-key, informal Valentine's Day celebration, join us this Thursday afternoon, Feb. 13, from 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. in the dining hall at the Ross Aragon Community Center, 451 Hot Springs Blvd.

We'll have cake, along with games, goodies, music and opportunities for meaningful connections. Come experience Pagosa love and help us build and strengthen systems of community care.

Our community celebrations at the Senior Center are intergenerational, so everyone is welcome.

Supplies are limited and will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis, so arrive early.

For more details and updates about these monthly events, please visit www.psseniors.org or call (970)

Senior News

264-2167.

Community vaccine clinic slated for mid-March

In partnership with the Archuleta County Public Health Department and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), Archuleta Seniors Inc. (ASI) will host a community vaccine clinic at the Ross Aragon Community Center in mid-March.

This clinic will be open to community members of all ages and will take place in the CDPHE vaccine van parked outside the Senior Center at the rear of the community center at 451 Hot Springs Blvd. The van is equipped to process various types of insurance. However, uninsured community members will have access only to flu, COVID and meningococcal vaccines at this time.

More information, including time of the clinic, will be provided soon, so please stay tuned.

For further details, please contact the Archuleta County Public Health Department at (970) 264-2409.

New caregiver support group starting in March

Sanford.

Pagosa Springs Varsity Boys' Basketball. 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs High School. Pagosa Springs vs. Sanford.

Saturday, Feb. 22

Healthy Archuleta Food Drive. 10 a.m.-1 p.m., City Market. For more information on the food drive, please visit www.foodcoalition4archuleta.org/food-drive.html.

Knitters Circle. 1-3 p.m., Sisson Library. Join new or experienced knitters to get help with your project, or sit and knit.

Boy Scout Troop 807 Fundraiser Dinner. 5:30 p.m., Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP to (970) 946-8687.

Submit your calendar items to editor@pagosasun.com; mail them to The Pagosa Springs SUN, P.O. Box 9, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147; or deliver them to The SUN office by noon Monday.

The Senior Center will be hosting a new support group beginning in March.

If you are caring for a family member or friend with physical/mental disability, emotional health needs or cognitive decline, this group was created for you.

Note: This group is not limited to only caregivers of older adults. Caregivers of all types are welcome. This group offers a safe, welcoming space for caregivers seeking connection, empathy and encouragement. Whether you're looking for understanding during difficult times or just need a community to lean on, we're here for you.

These sessions will also offer educational resources to grow you in the knowledge and skill to strengthen self-care, to care for your loved ones and empower you to navigate your role as a caregiver, one day at a time.

Dates for the monthly caregiver support gathering in 2025 include: March 27, April 24, May 22, June 26, July 24, Aug. 28, Sept. 25, Oct.

■ See Senior on next page



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Call for Artists: Pagosa Springs Mural Project

The Town of Pagosa Springs invites artists to leave their creative mark by designing a mural for the Geothermal Building along the riverwalk and main street. This highly visible location offers a unique canvas to create an inspiring work that captures the spirit of Pagosa Springs. Imagine your art flowing with the energy of the town's world-famous hot springs, symbolizing renewal, vitality, and a deep connection to place.

The project budget is up to \$15,000, and the submission deadline for Round 1 is March 5, 2025, at 5:00 PM (MT). To apply, visit <https://mypagosa.org/2025-call-for-artists>.

For questions, email agadomski@pagosasprings.co.gov.

Don't miss this opportunity to contribute a lasting symbol of community pride and artistic vision!



Preview Calendar

■ continued from previous page

lency, 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.

Friday, Feb. 21

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

Puzzle Swap. 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Sisson Library. Trade, take or donate puzzles of your choice.

Good News Club. 1:15-3:15 p.m., Pagosa Springs Elementary School. A weekly club for kids in kindergarten through the fourth grade where the Bible is taught with songs, stories, object lessons, games and more. For more information, email Frank and Connie Porter at ceflittlekids@gmail.com.

Craftapalooza. 2-3:30 p.m., Sisson Library. Join for a variety of crafts for people of all ages and abilities.

Pagosa Springs Varsity Girls' Basketball. 5:30 p.m., Pagosa Springs High School. Pagosa Springs vs.



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2 buildings and one parcel. The front of the building is a gallery and workshop. The back unit is an office set up which was a clinic in the past. There is also a Quonset hut on the back of the property. The gallery fronts Highway 160 and parking is on Eagle Dr and Trinity Ln. Included with the gallery are gallery lights, display fixtures, refrigerator and office furniture. There are 2 offices in the gallery, the back unit has a formal reception area with 2 larger offices, 2 smaller offices and 2 more small flexible rooms. Also, the roof was recently replaced.



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MLS #
819518



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MLS # 819174



.68 acre, 1440 square foot commercial building. There is enough property to build another building or make a large wrap around parking lot. There is a 3000 BTU gas heater and a 40 gallon hot water heater. The doors and walls have a 90 minute fireproof rating. Walls are removable so the floor plan could be opened up. There is a kitchen sink, stove and dishwasher, half bath and the overhead door is 8' x 10'.



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Senior

■ continued from previous page

23, Nov. 20 and Dec. 18.

All meetings will be held at the Ross Aragon Community Center in the West Conference Room (except the August gathering will be in a local park) from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

If you have questions or would like to be added to our announcement list, please contact Yeun Fiedler at (970) 946-5810 or Madeline Sutton at (970) 507-1574.

T'ai Chi Chih

The Senior Center offers T'ai Chi Chih with accredited instructor Patti Popovich each Thursday from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. to support older adults who want to discover purpose and fulfillment in this transitional phase of life. Meet in the Senior Center dining hall.

T'ai Chi Chih is not a martial art, but rather a tool for self-healing. Softness, flow and effortlessness are the guiding principles in this practice.

All classes will be free for older adults (age 55 and better) and will last approximately one hour.

No special clothing or equipment is required.

For more information, call (970) 264-2167.

Brain fitness and mobility program

Join us Mondays, Feb. 24 through March 24, from 10 to 10:45 a.m. at the Senior Center for a free six-week new Ageless Grace exercise program, taught by Judy, a trained facilitator who will support and help you learn gentle movements to enhance brain health and mobility.

We will spend 30 minutes in a chair exercising and stimulating five areas of our brain functioning. Yes, it is possible to strengthen our neural connections even as we age.

Anyone age 21 and older is invited and encouraged to participate in this program.

It is a cutting-edge brain fitness program based on neuroplasticity that activates all five functions of the brain — strategic planning, memory/recall, analytical thinking, creativity and imagination, kinesthetic learning — and simultaneously addresses all 21 physical skills needed for life-long optimal health functioning.

Scrapbooking and crafters club

The Pagosa Springs Scrapbooking Crafters club continues to hold monthly meetings the second Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ross Aragon Community Center, 451 Hot Springs Blvd., within the dining hall in the Senior Center.

This creative tradition has been happening since 2005, and we invite all creative individuals to come and share ideas, connect with new and old friends, learn/share creative techniques, share supplies and indulge in a potluck lunch together. Bring your scrapbooking projects — or any crafting project that you may want to

work on with the group.

Help us create an intergenerational community. Those ages 18 and older are welcome. For those youth age 17 and younger, we kindly request an adult chaperone accompany them.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please send your request to copenhavercreative@gmail.com and you will receive notification each month of the upcoming meeting, along with handy tips and tricks for scrapbooking and more.

Meals on Wheels volunteers needed

For more than 50 years, the Senior Center (established in 1971)/ASI (established in 2013) has been meeting the social and nutritional needs of older adults (age 60 and better) in our community.

We serve thousands of nutritious meals annually in Archuleta County, and volunteers deliver Meals on Wheels and friendly visits/wellness checks to homebound older adults.

We depend on more than 55 volunteers annually to help us serve and deliver meals and provide other wrap-around services.

The cost of each meal is \$10.50, but we only ask for a suggested donation of \$6 per meal. Meal recipients are asked to contribute what they can afford, and no one is ever turned down.

Meals are delivered Monday through Friday. Participants must be at home to receive meals. Meals will not be left.

Meals on Wheels volunteers receive background checks and training prior to delivery. Typically a volunteer shift is one day a week from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. depending on the size of the route. Staff works closely with volunteers to allow for periodic breaks.

If you are interested in volunteering, please stop by the ASI office at 451 Hot Springs Blvd. to pick up an application. Questions? Please call ASI at (970) 264-2167.

Healthy aging and yoga therapy classes

The Healthy Aging Yoga Series continues to be offered in person at the Senior Center on Mondays from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

It is structured by therapeutic yoga tools and techniques with chair movement, standing stretches, gentle postures, breathing practices and reflective meditative moments.

Monthly themes for the series include topics such as sustainable strength for healthy aging individuals, brain health, heart and cardiovascular health, mental and emotional well-being, community connections, and stress management, to name a few.

Classes will be educational for participants to utilize practices in daily life and are meant for all levels of experience with yoga.

Mats and chairs will be provided at the Senior Center. Some blocks and Therabands are available, too. The addition of yoga props is always welcomed.

We request that individuals new to the series arrive early for intake inquiries and to please communicate with our instructor, Kimberly Anderson, directly by email at zinkgraf@gmail.com.

Stretching and mobility class

Community members are invited to attend free weekly classes every Tuesday this fall and winter from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Senior Center.

The stretching and mobility classes for older adults (age 55 and up) are designed to help build balance in the body through functional exercises that aim to improve mobility and flexibility.

Participants will have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of techniques that can help enhance overall movement efficiency.

Though not necessary, a mat is recommended for this class.

The program is instructed by local ballet dance instructor Dee Pitchon, who will provide modifications to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the exercises.

Bingo

The Senior Center continues to host free community bingo games twice a month on Friday afternoons from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

The upcoming dates are Feb. 14 and 28, and March 7 and 21.

Bring yourself and a friend for an hour of joyful fellowship. We will

■ See Senior on next page

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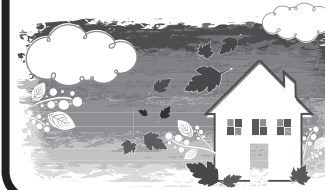
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Senior

■ **continued from previous page** provide prizes from local businesses for all winners, and snacks will also be provided.

No RSVP is required. Help us create an intergenerational community.

All ages are welcome, but we ask those 18 and younger to come with an adult chaperone. Seats are first come, first served.

For more information, contact us at (970) 264-2167.

Senior Conversations

Join us Mondays at 1:15 p.m. for a series of Senior Conversations with local Bill Salmansohn.

Salmansohn brings to our conversations a variety of topics designed to stimulate discussions within a safe and comfortable environment as we explore our well-being and shared experiences.

This is a unique opportunity to connect with others living within the Archuleta community for friendship and togetherness.

Snacks will be provided.

Afterward, hosted by Robin Williams, is a get-together created for those who wish to continue the conversation. This opportunity is typically from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., following Senior Conversations.

The group occasionally reconvenes as an informal gathering at various local restaurants.

Share lunch Monday through Friday

Open to all. Join us at the Silver Fox's Den, aka the Community Cafe, in person for daily hot/cold meals Mondays through Thursdays at the Community Center between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. It is open to all. Pickup is available all week.

Our dining hall is open to all ages and welcomes you all with kindness and warmth. We provide hot/cold meals for anyone in the community interested in a nutritious and delicious meal. For those 60 or older we request a suggested donation of \$6, but no one will be turned away. There is a \$10.50 charge for guests under the age of 60.

Meals include a main course, side dish, fruit/dessert, garden salad plus beverage.

To reserve your meal for the day, please make your reservation via text or phone call to (970) 264-2167 by 9 a.m. weekdays.

Community Cafe menu

Thursday, Feb. 13 — Pork carnitas, tortilla, refried beans, sweet corn, garden salad, fruit, muffin and milk.

Friday, Feb. 14 — Vegetable pizza, roasted cauliflower, spinach salad, strawberry angel food cake with fresh berries and milk.

Monday, Feb. 17 — Closed for Presidents Day.

Tuesday, Feb. 18 — Mediterranean stuffed mushroom with couscous, roasted beets, garden salad, fruit, chocolate cake and milk.

Wednesday, Feb. 19 — Pork kiel-

basa, sweet and sour cabbage, German potato salad, garden salad, fruit, cottage cheese and milk.

Thursday, Feb. 20 — Chicken fajitas with peppers, guacamole, sour cream, tortillas, Spanish rice, garden salad, fruit and milk.

Friday, Feb. 21 — Thai coconut shrimp soup, rice, chicken dumplings, garden salad, fruit, almond croissant and milk.

Grab-N-Go meals

Dine-in and Grab-N-Go meal reservations and cancellations are required. Please call or text by 9 a.m. the morning of the day you want to pick up a meal. A suggested donation of \$6 helps to sustain our program. For ages 59 and younger, the cost is \$10.50. No one will be turned away for their inability to donate. Please call or text us at (970) 264-2167 to make a reservation.

Meals on Wheels

We deliver fresh Meals on Wheels five days a week (and provide frozen Meals on Wheels for weekends) to homebound Archuleta County residents. Call or text us at (970) 264-2167.

Mobile food pantry service

Older adults needing a ride to a local food pantry should contact the MET to schedule a ride with its paratransit service. For more information, contact Lavonne at (970) 264-2250.

Text reservations

Don't forget that we offer a convenient texting service for you to communicate with us. Text us at (970) 264-2167. When texting, please include your name, phone number and the days you want a meal. If you are canceling a reservation, please include your name, phone number and the days you want to cancel.

Texting services are available for dine-in meal reservations, Grab-n-Go meals and Meals on Wheels recipients.

Mahjong

Mahjong is a 19th century Chinese tile-based game that is commonly played with four players. Each player receives 13 tiles with a goal to make matching sets and pairs (like poker). To win, a player must form four sets and one pair.

Come to the Senior Center to learn or play every Tuesday at 1:15 p.m.

Medicare call by appointment

For anyone who needs help enrolling and navigating Medicare plans, the San Juan Basin Area Agency on Aging helps with parts A, B and D. They can also help you with fraud concerns and troubleshooting any billing issues you may be having. By appointment only. Please call the Medicare line at (970) 264-0501, ext.2.

Mindful drawing

Mindful drawing is an easy-to-learn, relaxing and fun way to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns. Join our friendly instructor, Roberta Strickland.

Classes are every Wednesday at 1:15 p.m. in the Senior Center. This activity is open to all ages. Help us create an intergenerational commu-

■ **See Senior on next page**

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Photo courtesy Dave Marston

A hiker near Hite, Utah.

Beware the Trojan Horse targeting public land

By Ben Long
PREVIEW Columnist

Sometimes when I drive past the little house my wife and I bought when we first married, 30 years ago, it makes me sad. Not only because of nostalgia, but because of economics.

We were young professionals and bought a cute one-bedroom cracker box in a small Montana town for less than \$50,000. Today on Zillow, that house lists for more than \$300,000. There's no way salaries have kept up with that kind of inflation. Clearly, rising costs are hitting the working

Opinion: Writers on the Range

class hard.

The escalating prices of fuel, food and shelter squeeze families like a vise. But that doesn't excuse people who would use the national housing crisis to advance their agenda to strip Americans of their public land

heritage.

While there are some rare opportunities for public land sales to help

■ See Writers on next page

Senior

■ continued from previous page

nity. For those under 18 and/or with disabilities, you are welcome to join us, but we kindly ask you to please bring an adult chaperone with you.

Bridge

The longest-played bridge game in Archuleta County takes place on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 1:15 p.m.

Bridge is a four-player card game with partners sitting opposite each other around a table. It is a trick-taking card game using a standard 52-card deck. Come alone or bring a partner.

Hand and foot card game

Whether you are new to hand and foot or interested in learning, please join us most Tuesdays at 1:15 at the Senior Center.

This card game involves four rounds of playing until the final round is reached — some two to three hours later. Plan to stay and meet some new friends or catch up with those you have missed over the last couple of years.

No experience is necessary, so come willing to learn.

Board vacancies

The ASI Board of Directors has multiple vacant positions open. The terms are three years with an option to renew for an additional term.

Potential candidates should be at least 21 years of age or older and must have a passion for adult and aging services.

Support the Senior Center

Please support our ongoing operations and programming that provide critical services to some of the most vulnerable in Archuleta County.

You may mail your donation to P.O. BOX 3444, Pagosa Springs CO 81147, or please visit our website: <http://www.psseniors.org/> (donation button).

Donation checks can be written to: Archuleta Seniors Inc.

We are located at 451 Hot Springs Blvd. For more information about ASI, please visit <http://www.psseniors.org/>.

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Exploring the power of love

By Hank Slikker
PREVIEW Columnist

“So, when did the arrow strike?” It’s a question I sometimes ask couples about their encounter with Cupid. My probe draws immediate smiles framed within a variety of facial contortions. Most everyone remembers their “Cupid Moment,” when the mystical arrow draws two people together against their will.

Like with Tony and Maria in “West Side Story,” the arrow may have struck at a party, when one face suddenly arrests another face across the dance floor.

A Matter of Faith

Or, it may have struck while skiing when you happen upon a fallen, disheveled “princess.” Her snow-dusted eyelashes and blonde locks framing her wet face leads to a fire-side table.

Or, it may have struck within a chance-glance encounter through opposite sides of a revolving door

—one going in seeing the other going out. The arrow’s power has done its work.

But, unfortunately, a shadow loiters about. For as potent as the arrow is, it has no power over fate. And while the stars align for Cupid’s tar-

■ See Faith on next page

Writers

■ continued from previous page

ease the tight housing market here and there, wholesale liquidating of public land is a false promise.

People should know that the folks who ideologically oppose public land are exploiting the housing crisis to push their unpopular agenda.

Recently, some pundits have suggested that a fix for America’s housing problem is to sell off the public estate, thereby increasing the supply of available land. After all, the federal government manages hundreds of millions of acres.

In a few widely scattered places, it makes sense to allow careful urban development on limited public lands. Clark County, Nevada, has done just that on the outskirts of Las Vegas. But that scenario has been collaboratively developed over the years through legislation pushed through by the late Nevada Democratic Sen. Harry Reid.

A crop of mostly Republican politicians in the West resent the public estate simply because they dislike the idea of federal land ownership. They use both the courts and Congress in their attempts to reduce the public estate.

In their vision, Western states should be more like Missouri or Kansas, with almost no public land.

These folks insist they aren’t targeting national parks or even national forests. They know that’s political suicide. Instead, they focus on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property as a precedent, which most people have never heard of. And what are these lands like?

First, the vast majority of BLM land is remote and rugged. Think of the tundra of Alaska, the basin-and-range desert of Nevada and the Missouri River Breaks of northern Montana. These are history’s leftovers, and not where most people want to — or even can — live.

Second, these areas tend to be arid. Developments require water, and Western water rights already tend to be oversubscribed. Local climate alone means that human habitation in these places can’t be

very dense.

These lands also are often prone to wildfire. Loading these wildland-urban interfaces with more homes could lead to future disaster. Managing fire risk in the interface grows more difficult and costly as they are developed.

When the fires do come, damages can climb into the billions, rather than the millions. The tragic 2025 fires of Los Angeles would have been even more catastrophic had the adjacent Angeles National Forest been full of homes.

One more value is worth pointing out. Even if these public lands don’t have houses on them, public lands are being used.

Undeveloped canyons help control floods. Open lands provide habitat for wildlife — not just rare species — but also the deer and elk we like to hunt and the birds we like to watch. Public lands are valuable for recreation that’s good for our souls and are the goose that lays the golden egg for many rural economies.

The bottom line is that this debate has virtually nothing to do with the price of homes, which are high for a complex mix of reasons ranging from local growth policies, wealth disparity and high interest rates.

There’s a shortfall of millions of homes nationwide, but most of the demand simply isn’t where the public lands are. The BLM already has a process to liquidate lands when it needs to or when it makes sense. There is no screaming need for reform of that process, even if there is a screaming need for affordable housing.

To a local eye with any perspective, it’s clear that the argument to sell public lands for housing is a Trojan horse to take public lands out of public hands.

Ben Long is a contributor to Writers on the Range, an independent nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West, writersontherange.org. He is senior program director for Resource Media in Kalispell, Mont. Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of The SUN.

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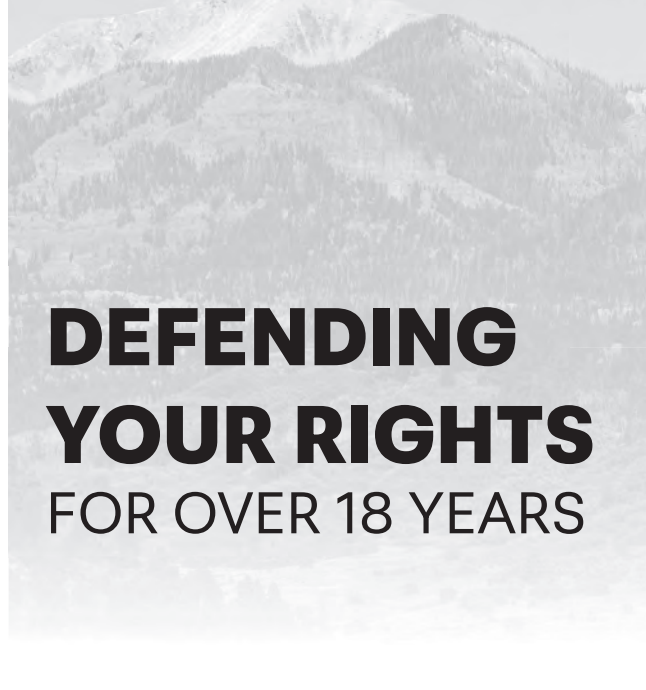
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Faith

■ continued from previous page
gets, a couple's destiny is a couple's destiny.

Bliss lasts only as long as fate allows.

You may recall Gen. Marc Antony of Rome and Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. They fall in love at first sight but suffer separations followed by tragedy. On a distant battlefield, Antony hears a false report of Cleopatra's death and, in grief, falls on his sword. As legend tells it, when Cleopatra hears of Antony's suicide, she took an Egyptian cobra to her breast.

Antony and Cleopatra's love cut short by fate perhaps offered the stimulus for Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." When Romeo hears Juliet is dead, he drinks poison. But Juliet is not dead. When she wakes from an induced stupor to find her beloved dead Romeo, she thrusts a knife into her heart.

Unfortunately, tragedies like these happen a lot.

On Oct. 10, 2017, the Bozeman Daily Chronicle reported the story of a Montana woman who died in an avalanche. Though her boyfriend survived the slide, he couldn't survive the heartache and took his life.

Not long ago, BlackDoctor.org reported the story of two teenage suicides. When he learned his 18-year-old girlfriend took her life in her

college dorm room, her boyfriend, in uncontrolled grief, ended his life two days later.

And then there's the USA Today story of an 11-year-old boy who read a prank text saying his 13-year-old girlfriend had taken her life. Shortly after, the stricken boy hanged himself.

The stories of Antony and Cleopatra, Romeo and Juliet, and of those above reflect the nature of destiny — of love cut short by fate.

Many of us have suffered similar things, except we choose to live with them. It's the story of the soldier drafted to war who does not return. It's the story of a lover lost to disease, or to a car accident, or to ambition or to another. Wherever we find love, we often find tragedy.

But Cupid doesn't quit. He carries unlimited arrows and searches far and wide for targets of his fancy. He takes no thought of what might be. It's the story of Valentine's Day, of candles and lace, chocolates and roses, and of "be my valentine" invitations.

But it's also the story of God, the source of love, whose nature is love.

Long ago and in a land far away, God betrothed Himself to the first two humans. Like Margery Williams' "Velveteen Rabbit," He loved them to pieces.

But, like love yesterday and today, it had no power against the dark force of fate. For, not long after God said, "I do" to his loving companions, for some reason they filed for divorce. He wept in grief; His angels, too. But He never forgot them, and He framed their pictures for His nightstand.

One day, He wrote them a letter. He told them He still loved them. He said He found a way to reverse fate's sting and to reconcile their separation. He invited them to a party, complete with all their family, friends, singers, musicians, dinner, linen napkins and chocolate strawberries dropped into the finest deepest-colored homemade cabernet. He sent them an engraved invitation by His personal Messenger that read, "Be My Valentine."

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CONCERNED ABOUT ANOTHER'S DRINKING? Pagosa Springs Al-anon Family Group meets Tuesdays 6-7p.m., Pagosa Bible Church. Questions? Call/text (303)815-8569. www.al-anon.org.

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.

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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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CLEANING WITH ATTENTION TO DETAILS. Residential and commercial. Please call Julie (970)946-8229.

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HANDYMAN SERVICE. Noah's Ark Enterprises. (970)901-5298.

HOME IMPROVEMENT: Drywall, Floors, Windows, Doors, Plumbing, Kitchens and Bathrooms, Siding, Decks, Snow Removal! (970)844-0554.

KRITTER GITTERS, SKUNK AND BAT Busters. We specialize in capturing and removing unwanted rodents and varmints. We don't trap pigs. 50 years experience, lifetime resident. Dan Snow (719)849-8873.



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THINK HAIR THINK ELIZABETH
970-903-5152

NOW HIRING. Archuleta Seniors Inc. is looking for a sous chef. Minimum 2 years cooking, food production experience. Must be detail oriented and strong communication skills. Apply in person at the senior center M ~F from 1 to 3p.m. Job hours M ~F 7 to 3p.m. weekends off and paid holidays.

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PROPERTY MAINTENANCE/ HOME CARE checks, providing snow removal, landscaping, handyman services. Call Eric (970)946-2061.

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RICHARD DECLARK ELECTRICAL is available for all your electrical services from remodels to new construction. I have been in Pagosa for 15 years, no job too small or too large. (970)903-1456.

RIVERSTONE CARPET CLEANING. 25 cents/sq. ft. and \$3 per stair. No hidden charges. Owner/operator 20 years experience. Professional, trustworthy and punctual. 100% eco-friendly. Call Mike at (970)403-9222. Credit cards accepted with no fee. Hallways and closets always free.

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TREE FELLING, TRIMMING, REMOVAL and lot cleaning! MTN Forestry specializes in hazardous and technical tree trimming and removals. Call anytime for a free quote! (970)403-6396.

WE HAUL. WE WILL haul off anything but your marijuana or your mother-in-law. No job too big or too small. We also move buildings. We don't haul pigs. Dan Snow (719)849-8873.

WEBSITE DESIGN, SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL AD EXPERT. Available to help grow your business. www.mgmpagosa.com Text: (928)246-1321.

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AMMA LEE SPIRITUAL LIFE COACH. Get unstuck. Call (970)779-0185.

HOT SPRINGS HEALERS. Sessions at hot springs! Introducing Quantum Reset. Also, cranial sacral, bodywork, massage. Serving Pagosa 27 years, Dr. Dean and Amanda, (970)844-0645, (970)903-5309.

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1ST SOUTHWEST BANK, a locally owned CDFI community bank, is seeking a **Personal Banker** and a **Teller**. FSWB offers competitive compensation, generous benefits, & career development. Join FSWB's award-winning team dedicated to supporting rural Colorado's agricultural, nonprofit, and small businesses. For details and to apply, visit fswb.bank/about/careers. EOE.

COLORADO DREAM HOMES is looking for painters and finish carpenters. Work year round! Paid time off 48 hours per year. Paid holidays and bonuses. Pay will be based on experience. Please bring resume to Colorado Dream Homes office 2283 Eagle Drive 8-5, or call (970)731-3071 for information. You can also submit a resume to coloradodreamhomesinc@gmail.com.

COME AND JOIN THE COLORADO DREAM HOMES TEAM! In business for over 30 years. We work year-round, very busy. Full Time 8a.m. -5p.m. (1) hour lunch. Monday thru Friday. Position available for purchasing decorating items for clients and tracking client expense budgets on Excel. Assistant to the lead decorator, in time this position will become the lead decorator. Client filing. Fill in answering phones. Must KNOW EXCEL! Paid time off 48 hours per year, paid holidays, bonuses. Starting pay \$20.50 per hour /Salary 40 hour week. 30 day review then raise eligible, based on knowledge. Must have good people skills, and will be working directly with owners. Happy working environment! Please call (970)731-3071 for information or drop by our office, 2283 Eagle Drive, or you can email resume at coloradodreamhomesinc@gmail.com. Position open immediately.

EMPLOYMENT AT SILVER DOLLAR LIQUOR. Must be 21. Full-time or part-time. Nights and weekends. (970)264-2749.

EMPLOYMENT: PLPOA DCS ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT A full-time position, including benefits, with the Department of Community Standards in the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association. Under the direction of the Department of Community Standards Manager, the Administrative Assistant is responsible for performing a variety of routine and complex clerical, record-keeping, and administrative functions to support the operation of the Department of Community Standards. Permitting, planning documents, construction knowledge, and bilingualism are a plus. Please submit a resume and reference letter(s) to the Administration office at 230 Port Avenue, attention DCS Manager, or email DCS.MGR@plpoa.com; the application close date is February 15, 2025.

EXPERIENCED CARPENTER- SUBCONTRACTOR OPPORTUNITY We are seeking a skilled carpenter to join our team as a subcontractor. Must have experience in residential construction, including framing, trim work, cabinetry, and custom builds. Requirements: Proven carpentry expertise with references. Ability to read plans and follow project specifications. Own tools and transportation. Valid liability insurance (required). This is a subcontractor role, offering competitive pay and consistent work for the right candidate. Call (970)507-0845 or email your details to info@rootdesigncompany.com.

GENERAL LABORER NEEDED Full time. Assorted Duties. Please send resume or work history to frontend@pagosalandcompany.com. Phone (970)264-5000.

GROWING, LOCALLY OWNED home health team looking for caring, compassionate CNAs and Nursing Assistants (willing to train) to help individuals maintain independence at home. We provide complete care management based on individual needs and preferences. We offer competitive wages and certification assistance. Contact cathy@compassionate-care.solutions or (970)507-0051.

IMMEDIATE OPENING for an experienced HVAC Installer. Requirements: Valid driver's license, clean driving record, 5+ years HVAC experience, EPA universal 608 certification. Must have own tools, Ability to work in confined spaces, Reliable and self-motivated, Excellent written, verbal, and interpersonal skills, Team player, Fabrication skills a plus!! Weekly pay, Direct deposit, Bonus opportunities, Competitive pay (\$28-35+, depends on experience) Paid holidays, Sick pay, Matched IRA, Family environment, Locally owned (under new ownership) Area Best Heating & Cooling. Send resume to: Office@areabesthvac.com (970)946-6314.

MALT SHOPPE NOW HIRING. Apply in person between 9a.m. and 2p.m.

MASSAGE THERAPIST -position open at Healing Waters Resort & Spa! We are looking for someone proficient in deep tissue and therapeutic massage to join our small team of therapists - medical or sports therapy background a plus! Must be available week-ends. If this sounds like you, let's talk! Email Kanaka at sales@pshotsprings.com or drop your resume by Healing Waters Resort & Spa at 140 Hot Springs Blvd. Soaking included with employment.

NORTH PAGOSA MARATHON is hiring a full-time cashier nights and weekends. Competitive wages. Please apply in person at 30 N. Pagosa Blvd.

OWNERS, THERE IS A LONG TERM RENTAL SHORTAGE IN PAGOSA SPRINGS. We have a waiting list for approved tenants. Need all types of rentals. Call us today for lowest commission and highest customer service. All you have to do is wait for your rent check to come in. We do the rest! Rocky Mountain Realty & Rentals (970)507-1192.

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MINT ROOFING Re-roofs, commercial and maintenance. Contact Mint Roofing at (970)426-5255.

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HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED



We're Hiring: Digital Marketing Consultant

Are you passionate about driving results through innovative marketing strategies? Do you thrive on helping businesses grow their online presence? Join our team as a **Digital Marketing Consultant** and make an impact!

What You'll Do:

Develop, implement, and optimize digital marketing campaigns across multiple platforms—Search Engine Marketing, SEO, Facebook, Video and much more. Plus, have a competitive advantage by including our own Pagosa Springs SUN digital and print audience. Bring cost-effective, website development opportunities to local businesses to help build long-term, win-win partnerships. Analyze campaign performance and generate actionable insights to maximize ROI. Collaborate with clients to understand their business goals and create tailored marketing strategies. Stay ahead of industry trends and identify new opportunities for growth.

What We're Looking For:

2+ years of experience in digital marketing, preferably in a consultancy or agency role.
Proven expertise selling digital advertising solutions.
Strong analytical skills with proficiency in tools like Google Analytics, Ads Manager, and SEMrush.
Exceptional communication skills and a client-first mindset.
A passion for creativity, strategy, and measurable results.

Why Join Us?

Competitive salary + performance-based incentives.
Access to professional development and growth opportunities.
Be part of a collaborative, innovative, and supportive team.

O'Rourke Media Group is a family-owned, diversified media company that was formed in 2018. Originally just a holding company that owned a few newspapers, O'Rourke Media Group (OMG) has established itself as an industry-leading, digital media company comprising a cutting edge digital agency and an impressive group of award-winning, hyper-local print newspapers and niche magazines. OMG now operates in eight states, 36 markets with over 50 publications and hyper-local websites. In Pagosa Springs, we publish The SUN, Preview and a number of niche publications.

Ready to take the next step in your career?
Send your resume and a brief cover letter to
CEO Jim O'Rourke at jorourke@orourkemediagroup.com.

The Pagosa Springs **SUN**



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Product or home design familiarity is a plus; proficient computer skills, exceptional communication, people and customer service skills are a must have.

Job requires working in a team atmosphere, high level of professionalism, and building long term

customers through a dynamic service repertoire.

Starts at \$18/hr with benefits. Full time/40hr week.

Applicants will need to be available for weekends and holidays. Apply in person at 525 Navajo Trail Drive.

ARCHULETA SCHOOL DISTRICT IS NOW HIRING!

We're looking for Outstanding Employees to join our team!



Archuleta School District

strives to achieve
"Success for Every Student —
Every Class — Every Day."

Currently accepting applications for the following positions:

Lead Mechanic

Full-time position with a starting salary of \$49,496-\$54,711 for a 250-day work schedule..

Elementary School Mild to Moderate SPED Teacher

Two Full-time positions with a starting salary \$51,645-\$66,724 for 175 days paid over a 12-month period.

Middle School Instructional Aides

Full-time positions with a starting salary \$27,899-\$31,175 for 173 days paid over a 12-month period.

High School Significant Support Needs Aide

Full-time significant support needs paraprofessional position with a starting salary \$29,283-\$32,559 for 173 days paid over a 12-month period.

Benefits for all FULL-TIME positions include (but are not limited to) PERA State Retirement, Life Insurance, optional Health and Dental Insurance and paid Discretionary Days.

You belong on the Archuleta School District Team!

For more details and to apply for these positions click on "Job Postings" on the following web-site:
www.mypagosaschools.com

EOE



BWD Construction is NOW HIRING!



Office Assistant:
Detail oriented,
tech savvy, must be
able to lift
incoming orders.

Email us at classads@pagosasun.com
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We currently have a **Route Truck Helper /Tipper position** open.

The starting rate for this position is \$19 / hour. Helpers ride on the trucks and empty trash carts and dumpsters. A valid driver's license is required, as helpers do a variety of tasks including cart delivery, shop cleaning, light mechanical and washing trucks and carts. We offer a competitive benefits package including a matching 401k Plan with opportunities to earn safety bonuses. We are committed to first-class service, where safety and people are our top priority!

Applications can be picked up at 250 Industrial Circle in Pagosa Springs, Colorado or call our office at (970)731-2012 or email tanner@elite-recycling.com to request one.

Elite Recycling and Disposal, a division of Bruin Waste Management, LLC is a rapidly growing organization with services expanding the Western Slope of Colorado.

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ROOF LABORER NEEDED with some construction experience. Will train. \$20-\$25/ hour to start. (970)749-0830.

SECRETARY/ FRONT DESK team member wanted. Willing to train. What we do matters! We make people's lives better through excellent customer service. We show up every day, work hard, and make a great living serving our patients. We are blessed to have weekends and holidays off! We work in a beautiful facility with great pay, 401K, & bonuses. Gain a sense of fulfillment by helping people! E-mail resume to office@pagosasmiles.com.

SEEKING AN OFFICE ASSISTANT to help with various tasks. Experience helpful, but willing to train. Basic bookkeeping skills a plus. Monday thru Thursday. Apply in person at 505 County Road 600 or call Susan (970)731-3335 to set an appointment.

THE RUBY SISSON LIBRARY Foundation & Friends is seeking an Executive Director to provide strategic direction and achieve fundraising objectives for the organization. Director will identify, define and develop funding sources to support existing capital campaigns as well as lead the development, writing, and submission of grant proposals. \$22/hour DOE, insurance stipend and PTO available. Email resume to: foundation@pagosalibrary.org.

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Classifieds

(970) 264-2100

Office Hours: Monday — Friday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Classified Deadline: Tuesday 10 a.m.

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Our Core Values are behind everything we do, including hiring. We are committed to:

Care, Commitment, Communication and Compassion

We are looking for a great coworker 4 days per week. We are looking for a permanent addition to join our fun work family. We are not a corporate dental practice.

We are a growing private practice with a fantastic reputation for our quality care and exceptional friendliness. Our patients enjoy their time with us and especially with our team. We are a boutique practice with a close-knit work family. Our reputation in the community is stellar.

Pay rate will be determined based on experience, \$23+.

Benefits may include:

- Paid time off
- Holiday pay
- Health benefits
- Uniform Allowances
- Dental benefits for you and your immediate family

Weekly hours are CONSISTENT. (M-Th 7:45am-4pm with an hour lunch break. Requirements for employment include:

- Remarkable friendliness and personality
- Knowledge of oral health and ability to educate in a kind manner
- Team-based attitude, willingness to cooperate and pitch in
- Competent in digital charts, typing 50+ WPM and navigating computer software
- Taking health histories and medical records
- Making people laugh!

Please email resume to drsmith@pagosa.dentist or stop by 308 Pagosa St.

4 TIRES LT285/70 R17, \$350 or best reasonable offer. 3 tires P245/55 R19, \$300. Twin mattress and box spring, \$20. Please text (970)946-8598.

ASPEN, DOUG FIR AND PINE Free delivery. (970)903-0731.

DO YOU BURN FIREWOOD? Pine/ Aspen mix available. \$350 a cord or \$600 for a HUGE dump truck load! Contact Dan with FIRE&ICE at (970)582-0006.

DRY FIREWOOD- PINE. Pick up \$255 a cord. Delivery available. Call for prices. Bayfield. Gabe (970)403-2784.

FIREWOOD FOR SALE. Pine and aspen. Cut about 16" long, split. Delivered by longbed truckload. Call (970)946-4450.

GOLD FOR SALE. One ounce krugerrands for sale for \$60 over spot at San Juan Trading Post. By appointment only. Ask for Ryan (970)946-2409.

LOG HOME KIT For Sale: 4 bedroom /3 bath /1,032 sq. ft. of wrap around porch. \$65,000. (817)771-6261 for specs and plans. Located in Pagosa Springs, CO.

NEW 20' CONTAINERS FOR SALE or rent. We deliver to homes or businesses. Pagosa Springs Storage (970)731-0007.

OUTDOOR VEHICLE STORAGE SPACES available. 16', 20', 25', plus indoor 12'x20'. Winter specials starting at \$60. Pagosa Springs Storage. Gated with security cameras. (970)749-1500.

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SELL OR TRADE YOUR GUNS. We buy for cash or trade it. No hassle. Licensed, bonded, insured. San Juan Trading Post, 635 San Juan St. (970)731-PAWN (7296).

WINDOWS FOR SALE. Assorted sizes. Text me for sizes and prices or all for one price. Mary (970)946-8598.

LIVESTOCK

MIXED GRASS HAY for sale. \$10 per small bale. Call/text (970)903-7499.

PETS

ADOPT FROM THE Humane Society. Stop by or call (970)731-4771. You'll be amazed at what we have to offer, www.PagosaHumane.org.

AKC FRENCH BULLDOG PUPPIES Blue/ Gray. Ready to go Mar. 21, health tested parents, chipped, wormed, shots, lifetime support. \$3,500. (719)640-6404. www.Dun-eViewFrenchies.com.

BLUE HEELER MALE puppies for sale. 8 weeks old on 2/17. Mother/ father great disposition and working dogs. \$500. Call Craig (765)730-9960.

DOGGY DAY CARE 81147.COM. Open 365 days of the year! Full day and half day doggy day care and overnight boarding. Conveniently located just 1 mile from downtown Pagosa. Call (970)264-9111.

LOVING DOG CARE BY LESLIE N. Text Pet Info to (469)667-4480. Boarding, day care, drop ins, house sitting. References and reviews available. Look for info on: leslieslittles.com.

WANTED

ROOMMATE WANTED. \$600/ month. For details, call between noon and 6p.m. (970)903-5139.

AUTOS

2013 GMC SIERRA 2500 HD SLE 4X4 extended cab. 43,000M, excellent condition, tow package, all highway miles, never used to plow, leather, 6.0L gas., \$31,000. (303)807-9672.

GUARANTEED CREDIT APPROVAL! 4X4 Auto Sales, 21698 Hwy. 160 West, Durango. (970)385-7940.

YARD SALES

BE SURE TO CHECK for more yard sales in the Too Late To Classify section.

ESTATE SALE. Kitchen items, patio furniture, holiday decor, clothes, unopened cosmetics, home decor, art work, Bev Dolittle, lots of art supplies, rugs, furniture, and more. Feb 15 and 16. 8a.m. sharp. 135 Eaton Drive, Unit 1021. MCES.

MOVING SALE. 5250 N. Pagosa Blvd. Saturday 2/15/25, 10a.m. -2p.m. Held inside barn and garage.

COMMERCIAL FOR RENT

2000 SQ. FT. SHOP/ WAREHOUSE 14x 14 overhead door. Restrooms and natural gas. Good parking. Call Doug (970)946-3762 or (970)731-4792.

260 SF OFFICE at the Metro Hotel downtown on Main Street. \$469 monthly, utilities included. Jacque (970)946-7636.

4 OFFICE SPACES. Freshly remodeled, \$400-\$525. Well suited for spa services, 140-270 sq. ft. Beautiful spacious restrooms. (970)946-3232.

DOWNTOWN OFFICE SPACE in the Historic Metro Hotel. 239 SF, available Dec 2024. Call Jacque (970)946-7636.

DOWNTOWN OFFICE Upstairs with skylight. Month-to-month, \$325/ month including utilities, internet and shared kitchen. No smokers. No pets. (970)946-2728.

METROPOLITAN HOTEL. 450 SF prime location on Main St. Available January 1, 2025. Rent is \$1,150 per month. Call Jacque at (970)946-7636.

PAGOSA VALLEY PROPERTIES: Offering "Aspen Plaza ProSuites" These are Professional Office Suites available for Long Term rental from 135 SF to 205 SF, priced from \$465-\$669/ month. Also, Large Conference/ Event Room Available. Call (970)889-2022 for more information.

PRIVATE OFFICE Uptown at 543 Park Ave. 10x12 \$175 price includes utilities. (970)300-9444 or info@pagosaselbstorage.com

TWO UNITS in West End Plaza —419 sq. ft. and 1477 sq. ft.— available the end of February. Call Gina (970)880-0910 for more info.

HOMES FOR RENT

COMFY 1 BEDROOM, one bath beautifully remodeled and furnished condo on golf course. Water, sewer, trash and snow removal included. 1 year lease preferred. \$1600 per month. No smoking. No pets. Available 03/01/25. (970)903-7088.

VACATION RENTALS

OWNERS, WE ARE BOOKED UP AND NEED MORE VACATION RENTAL PROPERTIES! Call us today for lowest commission and highest customer service. All you have to do is wait for your rent check to come in. We do the rest! Rocky Mountain Realty & Rentals (970)507-1192.

RESIDENTIAL RENTALS

2600 SQ. FT. HOUSE with 5 acres. Large kitchen, 3 bedrooms, 2 bath. Over 80 foot deck, garage, lots of windows. Some utilities included. No smoking. Pets negotiable. Available now. \$3,500/ month. 6 month or a year. Text (970)946-7859.

3 BED/2 BATH San Juan River Village. Clean, pristine and ready for you. 3/2 in highly desirable San Juan River Village. 2 level master on first floor. 5 min to town, 20 min to Wolf Creek. Water views and beautiful mountain views, first last deposit. Local landlord with great tenant history. No pets, no smoking, lots of storage, including indoor and outdoor storage. \$2300/ month. 6- and 12-month options available. Text (970)582-0148 for application.

AVAILABLE 1ST OF MARCH. 1 bedroom, 1 bath. Newly remodeled. Close to town. Propane heated and electricity not included in rent. All other amenities provided. Call Becky (970)264-6938. Application and background check required.

DOWNTOWN UNITS FOR RENT. New 3 bedroom, 2 bath unit. Granite countertops, all appliances and utilities included. Porch and patio. \$2000/ month. (318)347-6100.

CONTRACTOR SALES

Ponderosa Lumber is seeking a customer service oriented individual to assist contractors with purchasing building materials. Knowledge of building materials is necessary.

Responsibilities include:

- Providing excellent customer service
- Completing required paperwork
- Providing product information
- Data Entry

Please apply in person at

Ponderosa Lumber

2435 Eagle Drive or call (970) 731-4111

THE TOWN OF PAGOSA SPRINGS is seeking **Referees/ Officials** to officiate games or competitions for both kids and adult leagues organized by the Town to include any of the following sports: Softball, Baseball, Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball, T-Ball. For more information on the position and to apply, go to the Town's website at www.pagosapragos.com and select Employment.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

OWN YOUR OWN BUSINESS IN 2025! Four year-old profitable Side-by-Side rental business with extremely high reviews on Google. 1 to 8 Polaris Rzrs, LLC, website, reservation site, customer list, insured, bonded, licensed, maintenance and safety gear included. Better location than any of our competition. Operates May- Nov. Call or text Ryan (970)946-2409.

REACH TOURISTS COMING TO PAGOSA SPRINGS with the Pagosa Springs Official Visitor Guide, summer edition. Promote your business to your customers in 30,000 copies of the guide. These will be distributed locally at The Springs Resort, Walmart, Wyndham, the visitor center and other area establishments, at welcome centers throughout Colorado and mailed to SUN subscribers. View the guide on pagosason.com, explorepagosa.com and visitpagosapragos.com. Deadline for advertising is February 21, 2025. Distribution of the guide will begin in late April. Call The Pagosa Springs SUN today for rates and information at (970)264-2100 or email shari@pagosason.com.

SMALL CRANE BUSINESS FOR SALE. National Crane truck, business, client list, and all attachments come with business. Inquire at (970)903-2381.

PagosaSUN.com

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Classifieds

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Office Hours: Monday — Friday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Classified Deadline: Tuesday 10 a.m.

HOMES FOR SALE

HOMES FOR SALE

HOMES FOR SALE

HOMES FOR SALE

HOMES FOR SALE

"We owned a condominium in the Pagosa Springs area which was a rental property. For many years the firm provided property management services for us and we always found them to be very professional and responsive. If you are in need of a competent, professional property management firm or realtor, we would strongly recommend them. ~ Michael Gamba

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RESIDENTIAL RENTALS

LONG TERM RENTALS AVAILABLE. Call Team Pagosa (970)731-8599, 117 Navajo Trail Dr., pagosaproperties.com.

LONG TERM TOWNHOUSE rental, lake/mountain views. Lease, utilities, pets negotiable. 3 bedroom /3 bath, office space, driveway parking, fenced backyard, 3 decks, full or partially furnished. Call for details (505)250-5362.

PRIVATE FURNISHED room with office in lake front home. Common area deck with jacuzzi. Available mid-February. \$1,000/ month includes utilities and WiFi. One parking spot available. No smokers. No pets. Minimum 3 month lease. (970)946-2728.

ROOM FOR RENT. \$550. First, last and security. Own bathroom. Kitchen and living room access. (970)946-2540. Available March 1st.

STUDIO CABIN, downtown, rent \$750 deposit \$750, plus utilities, no pets. Text for more information (505) 319-1294.

COMMERCIAL

GAS STATION, CONVENIENCE STORE comes with nine long-term leases, high producing. \$1,650,000. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

PRIME BUSINESS LOCATION Large building and land. \$1,250,000. Motivated seller. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

HOMES FOR SALE

3 BED 2 BATH 2 car garage. 3.9 acres. 5 shares of water. Detached 1 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. Great views. \$585,000. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

HOMES FOR SALE

REAL ESTATE SERVICES

*Whether
Buying or Selling*



Call Marcie Lewis
(970) 759-8672



MarcieLewis.com

3 BED 2 BATH with office and privacy fence. Irrigation. Ignacio. \$440,500. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

3 BEDROOM 2 BATH. Workshop. 20 acres. Great views of the La Plata. Ignacio. \$475,000. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

REACH TOURISTS COMING TO PAGOSA SPRINGS with the Pagosa Springs Official Visitor Guide, summer edition. Promote your business to your customers in 30,000 copies of the guide. These will be distributed locally at The Springs Resort, Walmart, Wyndham, the visitor center and other area establishments, at welcome centers throughout Colorado and mailed to SUN subscribers. View the guide on pagosahun.com, explorepagosa.com and visitpagosahun.com. Deadline for advertising is February 21, 2025. Distribution of the guide will begin in late April. Call The Pagosa Springs SUN today for rates and information at (970)264-2100 or email shari@pagosahun.com.

OPEN HOUSES

OPEN HOUSE this Sunday, 2/16, 11:00 -2:00. 1015 E. Stollsteimer Rd. 2 bed /1 bath /600 sq. ft. cabin. Listed by Sherpa Real Estate. 1015EStollsteimer.com. Refreshments provided!

LAND/ BUILDING SITES

1.1 ACRE WITH RV GENERATOR and system tank, circular drive in, tall cool pines. NO HOA! \$75k. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

1.1 ACRE WITH TALL PINES on flat buildable land with drive in. NO HOA! \$70k. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

1.19 ACRES WITH VIEWS OF NAVAJO LAKE. All utilities nearby. \$99,000. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

LAND/ BUILDING SITES

1.48 ACRE LAND. Highway frontage. \$99,000. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

.28 ACRE LAND County Road 982 frontage \$55,000. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

3 FLAT BUILDABLE ACRES. Great mountain views, water cap and driveway in. Power to the property, fully fenced, corners marked. \$300k. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

.35 ACRE LAND County Road 982 frontage \$55,000. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

FANTASTIC VIEWS with electricity, concrete floor garage on 1 acre for \$195,000. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.

LAND/ BUILDING SITES

MOUNTAIN VIEWS, MEADOWS. Unique high elevation and complete privacy. 5.6 acres bordering national forest, (970)769-3588 blancoretreat@gmail.com. \$450K.

VERY MOTIVATED SELLER. 4 acres. Great views, access to river. Electric near. \$175,000. Give Deb Archuleta at Archuleta Properties a call (970)903-2817.



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

All real estate advertised in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing act of 1968 which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin, or an intention, to make such preference, limitation or discrimination."
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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Holidays will have alternate deadlines.

PagosaSUN.com

End of Life Education group announces upcoming speakers

By Joan Mieritz
End of Life Education

People interested in end-of-life education will meet the third Thursday of each month at the Community United Methodist Church at 434 Lewis St.

Use the convenient parking lot with the side-entrance into the kitchen and fellowship hall. The main doors into the church will remain locked.

Programs will begin at 1 p.m. with time for coffee, tea and treats, if people bring something to share.

It was decided that the official program should end around 2:30 p.m., but people can remain in the fellowship hall for socializing, discussions, support, etc. until 4 p.m. We are a casual group, so feel free to come and go as needed. Attendance varies for each program. Feel welcome to come anytime.

Our programs are free, but people attending can bring canned food for the church pantry or make a cash donation toward using the room.

On Thursday, Feb. 20, we will have a speaker, Pete Albo, a funeral director. Albo has had much experience and will answer all of our questions with love and some laughter. He is a caring kind of person and has an outstanding background as a funeral director.

On March 20, we will be introduced to the very latest concepts in funerary practices, called natural funerals. The presenter will be Karis Meskimen. She is from the Denver area. The new process that Meskimen will be sharing with us is called terramation, or body composting. I do not want to say too much here because it is new to me and seems quite interesting. It warrants an expert explanation and extra time for questions. After this session, you will

be in on the newest practices for the end of life so you can "go out in style."

On April 17, we will have a guest speaker, Sam Conti, who is a counselor. She will help us figure out how to be most helpful and supportive of people in the grief process. We are encouraging people to share their experiences with situations that worked and perhaps some that didn't. This will be a great opportunity to improve our personal communication skills.

On May 15, we will be hearing from a local woman, Dr. Pam Kircher, who I have known for years and have great respect for. She worked for years as a doctor with the aged and dying in the Four Corners area. After retiring, she led wonderful classes called "Conscious Aging" at the Pagosa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Earlier in her life she also wrote a book about a near-death experience.

If we can get copies of her book and there is interest, we may have additional sessions in May and/or June. I have wanted for a long time to learn more about her experiences, and I am so pleased that she has agreed to take the time to share with us.


As we approach summer, we will have one or two sessions like we had last year on filling out the recommended paperwork needed for the end of life, such as requesting or denying cardiopulmonary resuscitation, levels of medical interventions and artificially administered nutrition. We will meet to read the paperwork together and discuss these forms which are available at our local medical center and, when completed, require a doctor's signature.

I have heard the saying that when the student is ready the teacher will appear. We have many teachers lined up to improve the end-of-life experience for all members of the Pagosa Springs community.

You just need to show up at

the Community United Methodist Church at 1 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month.

If driving conditions are unsafe, we will not meet and the program will be rescheduled.




Trinity Anglican Church


*Heaven is like: a man works all day for an agreed amount.
Another works only the last hour and gets the same amount. Really?*

Sunday, 10am.


246 Harman Park Dr.
trinityanglicanchurch.org



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Turnkey income-producing business near Navajo Lake. Rentals, laundromat, post office, gas station, convenience store, liquor store.
MLS 791582 ■ \$1,650,000




19 Navajo Trail Drive
5,700 sq. ft. building at busy intersection. Building only.
MLS 801267 ■ \$1,250,000




11695 & 12691 Hwy 151
South-facing, 3 bed, 2 bath, 2-car garage and 1 bed, 1 bath, 1-car garage apartment.
MLS 820151 ■ \$585,000




117 Maple Avenue, Ignacio
Charming 3 bed, 2 bath, natural gas heat.
MLS 820347 ■ \$475,000




4797 County Road 318
3 bed, 2 bath, detached garage on 20 acres, 20 minutes from Durango.
MLS 820218 ■ \$475,000




75 Piedra Parkway, Arboles
3.7 acres, 5 minutes from Navajo Lake State Park
MLS 820794 ■ \$400,000



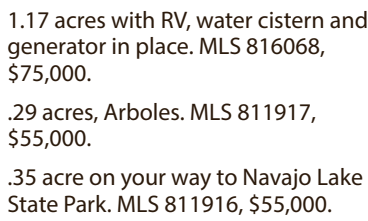
59 Green View Drive
Great build site
MLS 818681 ■ \$300,000



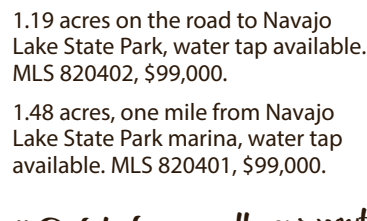
63 W. McCabe Street
Spacious mountain views from this 5 acre parcel. Connecting property with home also for sale.
MLS 802696 ■ \$250,000




X County Road 500
4.03 acres. Property is surveyed and ready for you. San Juan River close by.
MLS 820153 ■ \$175,000



1.17 acres with RV, water cistern and generator in place. MLS 816068, \$75,000.





1.19 acres on the road to Navajo Lake State Park, water tap available. MLS 820402, \$99,000.



.29 acres, Arboles. MLS 811917, \$55,000.




.35 acre on your way to Navajo Lake State Park. MLS 811916, \$55,000.

Call Deb to buy or sell your next property!

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