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ELECTION SEASON KICKS OFF EARLY WITH ANNOUNCEMENT ON LIBRARY STEPS



On May 8, a projection of unity and stability was on display as five current Montrose County Elected/Appointed Officials announced their intent to run for re-election in 2026. (L to R) Montrose County Commissioner District 3 Sean Pond, Montrose County Sheriff Gene Lillard, Montrose County Treasurer Rosemary Murphy, Montrose County Clerk and Recorder Tressa Guynes, and Montrose County Assessor Brad Hughes. Photo by Gail Marvel.

By Gail Marvel

MONTROSE--It's a little over a year and a half before the 2026 Colorado General Election takes place; however, Montrose County's political season has officially started.

On May 8, 2025, the steps of the Montrose Regional Library served as the backdrop for five current Montrose County Elected/Appointed Officials to announce their intent to run for re-election in 2026.

The only term-limited positions in the county are for Montrose County Commissioners, who are limited to two four-year terms; there are no term limits on the other county elected positions.

Montrose County Assessor Brad Hughes:

In August 2006, Hughes was appointed to finish the prior assessor's term and then elected to office in November 2006. Hughes is seeking a sixth term.

Hughes explained the reason for announcing early, "We, as a group, decided to announce earlier than normal this election cycle to provide reassurance to our constituents that

Continued pg 5

BOCC MEETS IN NUCLA AND MONTROSE, HANSEN HONORED FOR SERVICE

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE COUNTY-With a work session, a meeting in the West End, and a special meeting in Montrose last week, the Montrose Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) continues to display a grinding work ethic, plowing through multiple agendas and listening to constituents on both ends of the county.

On Wednesday, May 7, the BOCC traveled to the Nucla Community Center for a regular meeting:

During the Nucla meeting, Commissioners took comments from the public, with a number of constituents commending Commissioner Sue Hansen for her service.

Convening as the Montrose County Board of Health, commissioners re-appointed Interim Public Health Director Mirza Ahmed as the Director of Public Health, and approved \$125,000 in additional funding for the Basin Clinic in Naturita for the 2025 budget year.

At the Nucla meeting's conclusion, BOCC Chair Scott Mijares thanked citizens for attending, "I'm so happy you guys turned out for this meeting..."

Commissioner Sue Hansen was then presented with an award for her service; she drew laughter when she thanked the community members who honored her. "Thanks everybody, I mean that sincerely...I am just doing my job as commissioner, I'm not dying!"

At the request of the *Mirror*, Hansen gave some background on the award: "The

Continued pg 11



Electrical Industry Consultant Jim Heneghan spoke during the BOCC's Public Hearing on proposed amendments to Zoning regulations at the special meeting in Montrose May 8.

22nd Hotchkiss Sheep
Camp Stock Dog Trial!

Wildlife Rescuers: An Endangered Species:
By Dr. Lauren Hall Ruddell, PhD!

Planting a Spiritual Garden:
By Rev. Dr. Arlyn Macdonald!

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By Cliff Dodge!

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Dear Readers:

We appreciate your letters! We like reading and hearing opinions from all perspectives. We are sharing herewith our updated guidelines: In the past we have had one rule, to be implemented at the editor's discretion. We are now including two more suggested "Rules" for letter writers.

RULE 1. The Dead Horse Rule has been in place from the start of the *Mirror*. This is somewhat self-explanatory, but there are times when something has been said so many times it can run afoul of the "Dead Horse Rule," in which case we will inform the writer.

RULE 2. While there are always exceptions, a letter can often say what needs to be said in one page or less. Our pages are 8.5 X 11, we use a 10 pt Calibri font; letters that are roughly 800 words fit well within this suggested guideline.

RULE 3. Please limit repetitive mud-slinging to avoid bumping up against Rule 1. Also, in the case of those writing to intentionally discredit a public official or candidate for public office, please provide a link to the source of your allegation if possible. Unsourced, unproven allegations are not credible, and could in fact be untruths.

Finally, opinions expressed in letters and commentary are those of the authors themselves, and do not reflect the views of the *Montrose Mirror* or editorial staff.

Thank you,
 Caitlin Switzer,
 Montrose Mirror Editor

the Montrose Mirror



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Editor: Caitlin Switzer

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We welcome community contributions and commentary! Please note, submitted content does not necessarily reflect the views of the *Montrose Mirror* or its editorial team.

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Hiking Safety Class

Intro to Hiking Safety

Tuesday, May 13

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COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

HOW ARCHAEOLOGISTS RECORD, DOCUMENT AND VISUALIZE THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Have you ever wondered how archaeologists record, document and visualize the cultural landscape? Please join us to hear Greg Munson (Society of Cultural Astronomy in the American Southwest) discuss the process including dynamic panoramas, 3D modeling, astronomical cycles and much more. May 21st at 7pm at the United Methodist Church 19 S Park Avenue Montrose. Chipeta Archaeological Society. Free.

REPUBLICAN WOMEN TO HOST SD5 SENATOR MARC CATLIN FOR LEGISLATIVE RECAP

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Montrose Republican Women will host SD5 Senator Marc Catlin for an end of session legislative recap Friday, May 16 at Hampton Inn Montrose from noon - 130p. Social time at 1130a. Please bring a friend. Brown bag lunch. Contact Kerri at 970-209-5170 for information.

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ELECTION SEASON KICKS OFF EARLY WITH ANNOUNCEMENT ON LIBRARY STEPS

From pg 1

there is stability within Montrose County. As your elected officials, with 55 combined years of service, we want the citizens of Montrose County to know that our offices will continue to run smoothly and efficiently with strong leadership."

When asked why he, as an individual, wanted to run for a sixth term he said, "Being the Assessor is a challenging job, but with my years of experience, I understand the complexities of the position, I am effective at the job, and I truly enjoy working for the citizens of this County."

Montrose County Clerk and Recorder Tressa Guynes:

In February 2015, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) appointed Guynes to fill the vacancy left by Fran Long. Elected in November 2016, Guynes has held the position for a little over 10 years. She is seeking a fourth term.

Guynes noted that a display of unity was a determining factor in making the announcements as a group. Speaking from her individual perspective she said, "I am choosing to run for another term for a number of reasons. In the years serving as Clerk & Recorder, I've seen the importance and benefit of having institutional knowledge to effectively manage and direct the vast differing and multiple offices within the Clerk & Recorder Office. We receive positive feedback from customers on a regular basis, which is an indication the office is being managed appropriately and provides great customer service. I want to continue providing the stability, leadership, and customer service that benefit all residents of Montrose County."

Montrose County Sheriff Gene Lillard:

In 2018 Lillard won the Primary Election against Adam Murdie and was uncontested in the 2018 General Election. Lillard is



At noon on May 8, 2025, approximately 40 citizens assembled at the Montrose Regional Library to hear five current Montrose County Elected/Appointed Officials announce their intent to run for re-election in 2026. Montrose County Assessor Brad Hughes explained the rationale for the early announcement was to offer the community a sense of stability and continuity with the county government. He said, "Together we [those seeking re-election] have over 55 years of experience." Photo by Gail Marvel.

seeking a third term.

Montrose County Treasurer Rosemary Murphy:

Elected in November 2006, Murphy is seeking a sixth term. She said, "As a group, our years of experience offer stability. Treasurers take the oath of office so that they are in place for the first day of the year. All the other elected officials take their oath of office later in January."

Montrose County Commissioner District 3 Sean Pond:

Pond was appointed by the Republican

Commissioner Vacancy Committee on Feb 15, 2025.

The vacancy occurred when Commissioner Rick Dunlap passed away.

Pond will hold the office until the next general election, which is 2026. As a Republican, he must go through Caucus and Assembly to access the Primary Ballot in June 2026. If elected, he will serve the remaining balance of the (Dunlap's) term.

New to politics Pond said, "This is a time for you to get to know me. It is a great honor to serve you."

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

HISTORICAL CEDAR CREEK CEMETERY TOUR

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-The Historical Cedar Creek Cemetery Tour hosted by the Montrose County Historical Museum promises a unique opportunity to delve into the history and legends of local pioneers. With the tour taking place at Cedar Creek Cemetery, participants will not only learn

about the individuals who shaped the region but also gain insight into evolving cemetery traditions over the years. This tour is broken into two parts because of the vast buried history. The first part will take place on Sept. 7 and the rest of the stories will be in the part two tour on Sept. 14th. You will want to sign up for

both tours for the complete buried stories. For those interested in attending, remember to RSVP by calling 970-249-2085. The tour is priced at \$10 per person, and space is limited, so it's a good idea to secure your spot soon. Enjoy the tour and the intriguing stories it will bring to light!

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

SOUTHWEST COLORADO OPIOID REGIONAL COUNCIL AWARDS \$1.5 MILLION TO COMBAT OPIOID CRISIS Programs in Montrose County to Receive Over \$450,000 to Expand Treatment and Education Efforts

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE — The Southwest Colorado Opioid Regional Council (SWCOPC) has finalized its funding decisions to distribute \$1.5 million in opioid settlement funds over the next two years across six counties: Montrose, Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Ouray, and San Miguel. With more than \$9.5 million in requests, the competitive process underscores the urgency and widespread need to address the opioid crisis in Southwest Colorado.

Programs serving Montrose County will receive over \$400,000 in funding to support expanded access to opioid use disorder treatment, workforce development, and public education. Funded programs include:

-River Valley Family Health Centers – MOUD Expansion in Montrose and Delta Counties (\$155,210): To hire a new medical provider with MAT expertise, expand Narcan access in rural communities, and support treatment retention through

emergency social services.

-Western Colorado AHEC – Education and Prevention Outreach (\$120,000): To sustain and expand public education and harm reduction efforts, including support for local opioid response workgroups, Naloxone kiosk distribution, and youth opioid awareness education.

In addition to the services specific to Montrose County, another program will serve **all six counties**.

-Advantage Treatment Centers – Montrose ENACT Program (\$225,000): This regional initiative expands the Montrose facility to serve individuals involved in the criminal justice system from all six counties in the Southwest region. The funding will support the construction of a new treatment and community corrections hub offering gender-responsive services, 90-day residential treatment, and high-intensity outpatient care. The ENACT program will integrate case management, life skills, and job placement to reduce recidi-

vism and support long-term recovery for individuals with substance use disorders.

Montrose County Commissioner Sue Hansen, who serves as Montrose's voting member on the council and as the council's vice chair, praised the collaboration and commitment of all involved. "By funding innovative, community-based solutions we are taking concrete steps to save lives and support long-term recovery," said Hansen. "I'm proud of the thoughtful, community-driven process that led to these funding decisions, and grateful for the partnerships that make this work possible." The Southwest Colorado Opioid Regional Council continues to oversee the responsible allocation of opioid settlement funds with a focus on evidence-based practices, community collaboration, and measurable impact.



MONTROSE REGIONAL HEALTH WELCOMES NEW GASTROENTEROLOGIST, DR. CHRIS HARMON

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— Montrose Regional Health is continuing to grow its Digestive Health Center service line, announcing the arrival of new Gastroenterologist, Dr. Chris Harmon.

"We are thrilled to add Dr. Harmon to our team at the Digestive Health Center," says Jeff Mengenhausen, CEO of Montrose Regional Health. "At MRH, we strive to care for you like family and to offer the very best medical services in the region. Our Digestive Health team brings over 45 years of experience to our communities, allowing us to provide the very best care right here at home."

Dr. Harmon has over 18 years of experience in the field of gastroenterology, including specialties in interventional/advanced endoscopy, colon cancer screenings, colonoscopies, upper endoscopies, and diagnosing and treating GI issues.

Before transferring to the Digestive Health Center at Montrose Regional Health, Dr. Harmon practiced in Colorado Springs at one of the largest gastroenterology clinics in the state of Colorado. Harmon is looking forward to the opportunity to serve patients in a rural setting where he will be able to bring a personalized approach, caring for each patient like family. "I love the idea of a smaller hospital with more personal care," said Dr. Harmon. "Everyone connected with Montrose Regional Health has been welcoming and delightful and I look forward to working with other physicians in the community. This is a great opportunity for a good work/life balance."

The Digestive Health Center at Montrose Regional Health means patients in the Montrose region have access to expert care in diagnosing, treating, and supporting patients with gastrointestinal concerns. Dr. Harmon's office is located within the new Ambulatory Care Center facility at 3330 S. Rio Grande Ave. in Montrose. He is currently accepting new patients.



Gastroenterologist Dr. Chris Harmon'
Courtesy photo.

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BOCC MEETS IN NUCLA AND MONTROSE, HANSEN HONORED FOR SERVICE From pg 1

award was for the work I've done in the West End over the last two to three years. We started the West End Solutions Group with the purpose to address matters of concern in the West End, in addition to connecting the West End with relevant departments within the county to inform and discuss needs from the West End citizens. We discussed Road and Bridge issues, Human Services programs, Veteran services, Public Safety, and Public Health. This is a venue to openly hear from those citizens and keep them informed of what services are available to all citizens in Montrose County. Additionally, I've been working with the West End Vision Project and Community Builders to develop a regional effort for economic development in the West End and to develop a plan for the future. This is a robust effort by the leadership in the West End to get input from citizens on what they want to work on in the coming years to bring the region together."

Makayla Gordon of the West End Economic Development Corporation has taken the lead when it comes to citizen involvement, Hansen said. Mackenzie Taylor of the Community Builders organization was among those who presented Hansen with the award. Hansen said she was surprised by the recognition, which was unexpected. "It has been a distinct honor to be involved with this community and to help in any way I can," Hansen said.

On Thursday, May 8, the BOCC held a Special Meeting in Montrose with just one item on the agenda: "Public Hearing, Planning & Development... Zoning Regulations Amendment [AA25-001] for Consideration and possible approval of the proposed Amendment to the Montrose County Zoning Regulations related to Power Generation Facilities, Massage Therapy Businesses, and Natural Medicine Businesses."

The 18 citizens who stepped forward to offer insight and commentary on the proposed amendment brought a diversity of backgrounds and many helpful suggestions. From industry professionals to planning commissioners to landowners, Commissioners heard both support and suggestions.

Isaac Ketchum commented that the need



The Montrose BOCC traveled to Nucla for a meeting last week. Meeting screenshot.

is universal, "...If you're anything other than pro-caveman, you use energy every day..."

Electrical Industry Consultant Jim Heneghan said that agricultural land is also prime land for energy development, and that demand for facilities will continue to increase.

Planning Commissioner Lana Kinsey said that the county has fought long and hard to protect viewsheds, "...These large-scale solar projects severely impede some of those values... we don't hear about the preparation... the ground scraped to bare earth..."

Former Public Official Don Coram said that there is a solar plant planned for the West End, and that there is great potential in Vanadium as well. Coram urged the county, "...We don't need to be paralysis by analysis--we need to do it right."

Mother of four and local landowner Claire Prosser said that it will be important for her children to have renewable energy in the future. Solar energy is a great opportunity for everyone, she noted. "When you put solar on your house your neighbor benefits as well."

Jack Minor commented that it is the right of landowners to make choices for their land; "Solar Projects offer a lifeline..." he said.

In addition to extensive commentary from those present, who overwhelmingly favored adoption of the Zoning regulations Amendment, additional comments are included in the Meeting packet.

Following public comments, Commissioners recessed for a five-minute break.

Upon reconvening, Commissioner Sue Hansen said she would love to be able to approve the amend to the Zoning Regulations but would also be willing to consider a Continuance to implement some of the suggestions made during the meeting.

County Planning and Development Director Tallmadge Richmond spoke briefly, reviewing some of the suggestions made and offering clarifications.

BOCC Vice Chair Sean Pond said he would be interested in hearing from citizens in the West End, where a solar project is planned.

BOCC Chair Scott Mijares asked questions about the lifespan of solar projects. Commissioners Sue Hansen jokingly asked whether anyone at Atlasta Solar, which was well represented at the meeting, was actually working today. Hansen said that she would like the people of the West End to know how much effort has gone into the Zoning Regulation Amendments. Hansen moved to continue the discussion.

With Public Comment officially closed, Commissioners voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on Consideration and possible approval of the proposed Amendment to the Montrose County Zoning Regulations related to Power Generation Facilities, Massage Therapy Businesses, and Natural Medicine Businesses until June 4 at 930am.

The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned.

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CELEBRATE HUG YOUR DOG DAY ON MAY 17

By Vanessa Gurule

MONTROSE—We hope you can join Morningstar Therapy Dogs and MAPA (Montrose Animal Protection Agency) as we celebrate the third annual Montrose “Hug Your Dog Day” on Saturday, May

17, from 10 – 2. This event will be held at Chow Down located at 535 S. 1st Street in Montrose. Grab the family and come on down to have your picture taken with you hugging your dog. In addition to the photo op of you hugging your dog, there will be

games and prizes. There will even be a free drawing with prizes such as a \$100 grooming certificate.

Morningstar Therapy Dog Group has been supporting the Montrose community for over two decades. We are a non-profit organization that provides pet therapy throughout our community. Our therapy teams visit the high school, several elementary schools, airport, hospice patients, veterans’ hospital, nursing homes and many other places. If you are interested in learning more about how you and your dog can become a therapy dog team, Morningstar Therapy Dogs can give you information and help you get started on this wonderful volunteer journey.

Like a lot of non-profits, we depend on donations to help us with things we need such as vests for our dogs, shirts for our members and community outreach. Our group does a few fundraisers a year, but this one is our favorite. This event is free, but donations are greatly appreciated.

Saturday May 17th is going to be an exciting day for downtown Montrose. Not only will the farmers market be going, but in addition, the Montrose Visitor Center, in collaboration with Montrose Animal Services, is pleased to announce an upcoming event titled Paws and Pawsicles. This engaging event runs from 10:00 to 1:00 and will take place at the Montrose Visitor Center (north side of the building). Morningstar Therapy Dogs will have a booth at this event so stop by, see what we are all about and meet a real-life therapy dog. We encourage you to join us for this fun and eventful Saturday.

For more information about this event or if you are interested in becoming a therapy dog team, contact Vanessa at 970-729-2528, Sue at 970-596-9343 or Joy at 970-240-1561.

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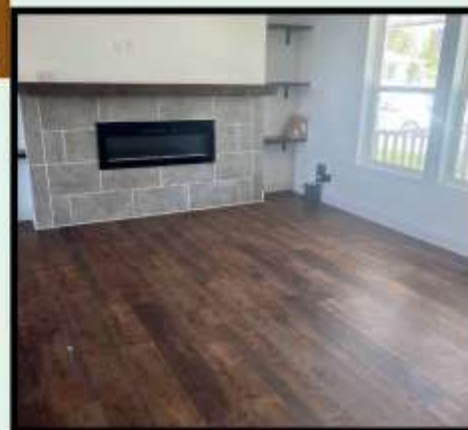
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WILDLIFE RESCUERS – AN ENDANGERED SPECIES



A western screech owl being transported by someone 'hooo' cares!

By Dr. Lauren Hall Ruddell, PhD

MONTROSE-A book that I have relied upon as a resource for many years when teaching my Human Dimensions in Wildlife course is titled "Who Cares About Wildlife?" Although some people couldn't care less, most humans find the plight of abandoned baby animals very compelling and they understandably want to do something to help them. The impulse is admirable, but most people do not have the professional knowledge to know when to leave them alone or what exactly to do when they find a lone animal that seems helpless and confused. Instead of searching for clues as to whether or not a parent is nearby, they pick up the mammal or bird, stick it in a box, and take it home. Not only is this often unwise, it is also illegal. Fortunately, there are a few licensed experts on the western slope who can be of assistance.

Enter folks like Brenda Miller of Roubid-

job sometimes, and definitely a labor of love. Many of the animals she receives have been kindly but illegally removed from the wild before being transferred to her care. Some, like young foxes, have been raised or rehabilitated through improved nutrition and medical attention and released in an area that is amenable to their life needs, like around the area of the Delta Correctional Center, where they help to control the population of feral cats. Young falcons, hawks, and owls are raised to an age where they can reasonably provide for themselves. When Brenda receives what we falconers refer to as a 'brancher,' she immediately visits the site of the animal discovery. She often finds that examination of the nearby trees reveals a nest with an anxious parent roosting nearby. When that is the case, she brings the young bird back to its parents, who pick up right where they left off feeding their growing nestling. But some-



Working with such serious cuteness as this fox kit is powerful motivation to volunteer! Photos courtesy of B. Miller

eau Rim Wildlife Rescue in Montrose County. Brenda has been a licensed rescuer for the State of Colorado for more than 20 years. She has helped to rewild young animals from foxes and badgers to birds of prey. It's a tough

times the situation is different and truly does require human intervention. This is where people like Brenda now, and myself once upon a time, provide a valuable public and humane service.

But there aren't nearly as many operations that provide these services as there used to be. From over 200 providers just a decade ago, the number of 'rehabbers' are currently around 90 for the entire state. There are only a handful of those on the Western Slope. Cost and licensing requirements have proved burdensome for many outfits, even as the need has grown. An incoming class of young volunteers to learn from experienced rehabbers who can then go on to sponsor them for licensing is very scarce these days.

Wildlife rescue organizations often rely on donations, grants, and volunteer labor, and these sources can be unpredictable or insufficient to meet the growing needs of wildlife in distress. Many organizations are understaffed and struggling to cope with the number of animals in need of care. Simultaneously, there is increased demand due to factors such as habitat loss, climate change, and human-wildlife conflict, which can lead to more animals needing rescue and rehabilitation, putting a strain on existing resources.

Baby animal season is here, and often the best approach well-meaning folks can follow is to do as the USFS marquis outside the Montrose office states-- 'leave baby wildlife alone'. If you feel that you

WILDLIFE RESCUERS – AN ENDANGERED SPECIES From previous pg



Congratulates Dr. Mary Vader



ON HER RETIREMENT

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simply must intervene to save a life, then contacting Brenda before transporting the animal to your home is the next best course of action. A Colorado Parks and Wildlife official may also be available by phone, but staffing shortages here and statewide may make wait time prohibitive. Brenda will try to pick up calls immediately and provide verbal assistance before other steps are taken. She has really flexible daily hours, but I would encourage readers to be courteous and respectful when they call, not like one citizen who called her at 9 PM to yell at her for not accepting a brood of newborn field mice right away.

If readers want to examine ways to volunteer to become a rehabber, which can be a very rewarding experience as well as great fun and/or good resume material, Brenda would be an excellent resource to begin with. She cautions that it's not just about someone signing up and then getting to play with baby animals, there is a permitting process that will require the applicant to do some research and then navigate some bureaucracy, which is not possible to manage overnight on a whim. Brenda will guide serious inquirers through the hoops, but animal lovers with little patience for government regulations may find that volunteering for an animal shelter is more to their taste. As a licensed falconer in California, the land of insane regulations of all kinds, I did it properly and legally. The application process wasn't fun, but the rewards were tremendous. Any readers who have pondered for years whether this activity might be just their cup of tea but didn't know how to start can begin with Brenda. Her phone number is 970-209-5946, and again, be polite and respectful. She is not paid a wage for her efforts and even though she receives donations, it is a passion for her that seldom pays for itself.

Readers finding baby wildlife can contact her at that same number, or text her if it goes to voicemail. An email address is also available for volunteer inquiries. The website address is <https://rrwildlife.weebly.com/>

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

HOW A NEW COMMISSIONER BECAME A TARGET FOR EXPOSING THE AGENDA

Editor:

Just imagine, if all the noise stopped. If the public comment weren't scripted. If Ray Langston didn't show up to read someone else's lines. If Dennis Anderson wasn't twisting every event into a headline. If Sue Hansen actually tried to work with us instead of behind us. Imagine how calm things would be. How focused. How productive this county could be if the games stopped and the truth was allowed to lead. And imagine if we could count on Sue Hansen, the senior member of the board, to guide us, support us, offer her insight. But she hasn't. She's made no effort to work with us. Every bit of disruption we're talking about leads back to her actions and alliances. That alone should make people ask, why don't they want that? What are they protecting? What are they afraid we'll expose?

Because the truth is, I have only been here 84 days. And yet they've made me their target. That doesn't happen by accident. That happens when you threaten the machine. In my view, they are the driving force behind the chaos. Me and Scott? We just sit there and take it. We don't cause any of this. So ask yourself: who's really behind the noise?

What is happening in Montrose County is not ordinary politics. It is political theater, coordinated, staged, and driven by a handful of individuals desperately trying to hold onto power.

Commissioner Sue Hansen, her husband Kay Heinschel, Dennis Anderson of the Montrose Daily Press, Ray Langston, and a small group of loyalists are orchestrating this effort. It includes scripted public comments, media manipulation, and carefully timed appearances all designed to create division and confuse the public. What looks like civic engagement is actually a well rehearsed act.

On Thursday night, I saw Dennis Anderson, Mario, and Kay Heinschel having dinner together at Horsefly Brewing Company. My wife and I walked over, shook hands, and had a polite exchange. That didn't stop Dennis (Montrose County's own "Dennis the Menace of Misinformation") from using that encounter to spin another false narrative.

Roughly 30 to 45 minutes later, they all showed up at the Montrose County Republican Central Committee meeting. Before the meeting even began, before the Pledge of Allegiance or the invocation, Dennis Anderson was professionally and respectfully asked to leave by the chair. The reason? His continued use of the Daily Press to attack the Republican Central Committee, its subcommittees, the County Commissioners, and elected officials. The room applauded. I was just as surprised as anyone else and had absolutely nothing to do with it. But I was grateful. Finally, someone said what we've all been thinking for a long time.

Yet in his article the next day, Anderson included details from portions of the meeting that happened after he was gone, details he couldn't have witnessed himself. Either Kay or Mario relayed the information to him, or someone recorded it. That raises a bigger question: how many moles are sitting inside the Republican Party, feeding this political theater? And what is the party going to do about it?

At another meeting a few weeks earlier, I observed Sue Hansen and Ray Langston standing outside together, each holding coffee cups from the same café. It was clear they had either arrived together or one had brought coffee for the other. They appeared to be discussing the agenda and preparing his remarks for public comment. This kind of coordination between a sitting county commissioner and an individual who has openly called for a recall of other elected officials is deeply troubling. And this isn't just any individual, this is Ray Langston, the same person who currently has a restraining order issued against him by the Montrose County Republican Party for prior violent outbursts. He is not even allowed to attend Republican meetings. And yet, here he is, working to recall two conservative Republican commissioners, apparently assisted by Sue Hansen, her husband Kay Heinschel, and a few known moles still embedded inside the party. Think about that. A man banned from the party is now being supported by a sitting commissioner to remove her own colleagues. That's not

public discourse. That's political sabotage. In my view, Commissioner Sue Hansen is acting unethically and working behind the scenes to help orchestrate a recall of her fellow commissioners. To me, her conduct raises serious ethical concerns, possibly even multiple violations, and I believe voters in Montrose County should be paying close attention.

Then, during our BOCC meeting this Wednesday in Nucla, Colorado, I watched Sue Hansen walk Ray Langston through the agenda again, this time in a public setting just minutes before he spoke. I have a photo of the moment. Moments later, he stood up and questioned the funding for the San Miguel Basin Clinic, repeating nearly word for word what I've heard Sue say behind closed doors. Anyone who's been in those meetings would recognize it instantly.

The irony? I'm the one who put the Basin Clinic back on the agenda. Commissioner Scott Mijares had proposed it months ago, and Sue Hansen repeatedly refused to bring it forward. In fact, at the work session on Monday, just two days before the vote, she asked to remove it from the agenda entirely, just as she had done on several occasions in the past. But now, in front of her small circle of West End supporters, she seconded Scott's motion before I even had the chance. In Montrose, behind closed doors, she's been anything but supportive of the Basin Clinic. But in the West End, where she needs to play the part, she throws on her political cape and puts on a show. It's disappointing to watch that kind of performance from an elected official.

Dennis Anderson was again present, taking notes for his next hit piece. And now, they've recruited another performer into their act, Aimee Tooker, the "Princess of Pandemonium." She thrives on chaos and attention, and she's been showing up at town halls and public meetings trying to create both. Let's not forget, she recently ran for mayor of Nucla and was soundly rejected by her own hometown, then tried to get on the Nucla Board of Trustees and failed again. She is now a voting board member of Club 20, recommended and placed there by none other than Sue

HOW A NEW COMMISSIONER BECAME A TARGET *From previous pg*

Hansen. In that role, I believe she has aggressively criticized the majority of the Montrose County Board of County Commissioners, through guest columns, social media, and in person. In my opinion, this behavior raises serious questions about Club 20 and the standards they choose to uphold.

I, for one, see no reason why the Montrose County Board would continue its association with an organization that allows its board members to publicly attack our elected officials. Club 20 needs to seriously reconsider the conduct of its voting members, before it loses the support of rural counties altogether.

Tooker made a name for herself by crashing town halls and local meetings across the West End, stirring up chaos wherever she goes. Some have even called her the Great Divider of the West End. Truth is, people in Nucla, Naturita, and across western Montrose County are sick and tired of the drama. She attacks just about everyone, sometimes without reason, and no one seems to know what she's actually so angry about. She just seems mad all the time, and most folks have had enough of it. It's no wonder she can't win an election. She has no meaningful support, no vision, and no real accomplishments to speak of. Meanwhile, the people she targets are actually working and getting things done.

In light of how the Republican Party Chair asked Dennis Anderson to leave a meeting for disruptive behavior, maybe it's time someone in her own community does the same. Enough is enough. The West End deserves better. It's time to say: Sit down. Stop dividing us. You've done enough damage. This group of political actors wants the public to believe I'm the source of the disruption. That I'm recklessly tied to Commissioner Scott Mijares. That we mistreated the former County Manager and County Attorney. That we've been unfair to Sue Hansen. None of that is true. Not one word of it. Yes, we collectively voted to remove Sue Hansen from the chair position—but if you knew the full story, you'd understand exactly why. Compared to what she did to Scott Mijares during the primary and the election, and what she did to me following Senator Bennet's listening session, her actions have been collectively and individually

disrespectful and inappropriate. What we've done is minimal by comparison.

In regard to the former County Manager and County Attorney, I never mistreated either one of them. We never even had a disagreement. From the beginning, they kept me at a distance, made no effort to work with me, and treated me like I didn't belong. It was the most toxic, uncomfortable environment I've ever experienced. I made every effort to reach out, I went to lunch with them, tried to be respectful, and attempted to build trust. But they had already aligned themselves with the same individuals behind this ongoing political theater. That alliance is what made the environment dysfunctional and unsalvageable.

Big surprise, but it functions now. Our interim County Manager and interim County Attorney have stepped up in a big way. In just a few short weeks, they've restored professionalism, communication, and trust. They've done more to move this county forward in weeks than we saw under the previous County leaders. They deserve our respect, our gratitude, and the full trust of the public.

And through it all, I've done the job I was called to do. In just 84 days, we've made real progress.

We reaffirmed Montrose County as a Second Amendment sanctuary, breaking engagement records on the county's official social media. We formally opposed Senate Bill 25-003 and sent a letter to President Donald Trump urging federal intervention into Colorado's unconstitutional legislation targeting parental rights, private property, and the Second Amendment.

We also delivered new funding to vital community services, including the Basin Clinic in the West End, The Family Link, and Hoof and Paw, our local animal control provider. That contract was renewed, and we facilitated the donation of a surplus vehicle to strengthen their efforts.

Every one of these initiatives was something I personally brought forward, and every one passed. These are the facts they don't want to talk about. Instead, they manufacture outrage and rally to attack me.

I've tried to bring stability back to a broken system, to serve the people who trusted me, to fight for our conservative

values.

Not everyone has followed the noise. This week, four elected officials announced their candidacies. Two clearly didn't want me there. But Sheriff Gene Lillard and Clerk and Recorder Tressa Guynes invited me. They treated me with respect. I was honored to stand beside them, true public servants who rise above the noise.

To anyone unsure about what's going on, come talk to me. Let me explain what's really happened, what had to happen, and where we go from here. I work for the people. Not for headlines. Not for politics. I can work with Scott Mijares, he's done everything he can to collaborate and move Montrose County forward. I'm proud to serve alongside him. We don't always agree, but we share conservative values and a commitment to the Constitution. We are independent voices, not the reckless duo they want you to believe we are.

Commissioner Sue Hansen, on the other hand, has made no effort to work with either one of us. I've personally asked her to sit down, have lunch, and find common ground. She refused. That's the reality.

I'm not a polished politician. I'm not part of the system. I'm an imperfect man who stepped forward when others wouldn't. I lead with faith, reflection, and a deep respect for the people of Montrose County. When you talk to me, you're talking to a neighbor. A fifth-generation Coloradan. A father. A veteran. A worker. I'll always speak the truth. I'll always stand up for what's right.

Montrose County is at a crossroads. The progressive influx from the Front Range, California, and beyond is bringing failed policies to our doorstep, green energy mandates, top down regulations, and radical social agendas that have no place in rural Colorado. It's not just Democrats. It's liberal Republicans and moderates willing to negotiate with our Constitution and compromise away the values that define this county. We are fighting to keep Montrose County conservative, grounded in rural strength, and guided by common sense.

The Rocky Mountain Heist is real. We either stand now. or lose one of the last conservative strongholds in the West.

Sean M. Pond

Montrose County Commissioner, District 3

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GEORGIA FICCO EARNS TRACK/CROSS COUNTRY SCHOLARSHIP

By Cliff Dodge

MONTROSE-Montrose High School Senior Georgia Ficco is the recipient of a track/field and cross country scholarship to Point Loma Nazarene University located in San Diego, California. Ficco sat down and signed her papers last Tuesday in front of parents, coaches, teammates, and friends.

Georgia's parents, Joe, a data analyst, and Kim, a county planner, sat beside their daughter as she made the college commitment. Georgia was also flanked by her sister, Vivian.

When asked about her favorite high school classes Georgia ticked off several including AP Biology, Medical Biomedical Innovations, Human Body systems, and others. Georgia ran track and cross country for four years at Montrose High School, specializing in the 1500, 800, and 400 meter distances. She will concentrate on these distances when she enrolls at Point Loma. She plans to major in Biology, Pre-Med, and of course Track and Field. When asked if she had a message for the gathering she said, "My faith is a cornerstone of every aspect of my life, and I've been blessed to have been sur-



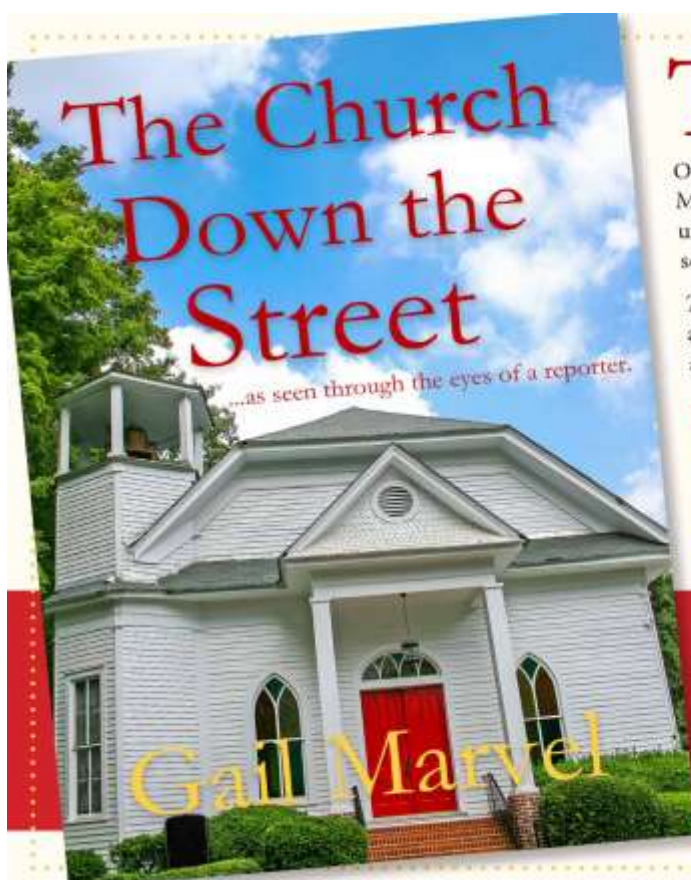
The Ficco's: Joe, Georgia and Kim. Photo by Cliff Dodge.

rounded by a team that encourages my walk with the Lord.

"That's a huge reason why I've chosen to compete for a Christian school, and I

could not be more excited to see what God has in store for my athletic career."

On to the next step in an interesting career.



The Church Down the Street, published pre-COVID, peers into the worship services of more than 70 churches, some of which have a weekly attendance of less than 10.

Organized in a topical format (Hospitality, Program & Source Material, Music, Meditations & Invitations, and The Message), the author uses an unbiased approach to allow readers to experience the worship service as seen through the eyes of a reporter.

The Church Down the Street contains anecdotes and stories from the actual worship services and asks thought-provoking questions that allow readers to draw their own conclusions.

Readers will:

- See strengths and weaknesses in the worship service
- Re-evaluate hospitality toward visitors
- Become more aware of source material used in the worship service
- Compare and contrast music presentations and selections
- Discern the value and content of the sermon.

Gail Marvel's book, *The Church Down the Street*, is available online at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [wingedpublications.com](https://www.wingedpublications.com).

GAIL MARVEL
Montrose Author & Reporter





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CITY NAMES MAYOR AND MAYOR PRO TEM

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-Montrose Mayor J. David Reed presided over the start of the May 6 regular City Council meeting, for the final meeting of his tenure. Reed called the meeting to order, and all joined in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. There were citizens in attendance, and all councilors were present.

Mayor Pro Tem David Frank had no changes to the meeting agenda.

Council issued a [proclamation](#) declaring May as Mental Health Awareness Month. Reed read the proclamation into the record. The proclamation was accepted by Lauren Knobbe of Tri County Health Network. Knobbe thanked the City of Montrose, "Any opportunity that we have to shine a light on mental health...is a wonderful opportunity. Thank you again for doing it this year and we will see you next year."

CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Reed read the rules for public comment, and asked for a show of hands of those who wished to speak before asking the four of them to line up in the back of the room. "It makes it easier and more efficient, if you wouldn't mind going to the rear of the room and coming up one at a time..."

First to speak was Leah Vandersluis. She encouraged council to revisit the concept of declaring Montrose to be a non-sanctuary city, in light of Colorado's status as a sanctuary state and recent executive orders pertaining to illegal immigrants. "...I know that if we remain in the sanctuary attitude in terms of being part of Colorado, much funds will be taken away from our state...please consider declaring us to be a non-sanctuary city."

Next to speak was John Brown. "As you have seen, the federal government is taking action against cities and states that have declared themselves to be sanctuary. They are not only withholding funds from those cities and states, they are bringing charges against the state governors, attorneys general, mayors...I don't know why you have not declared Montrose to be non-sanctuary by this time. I don't know what to think about the city council and prior to ty they are spending not only our



Attendees recite the Pledge of Allegiance prior to the May 6 meeting of the Montrose City council. Meeting screenshot.

money from our sales taxes but federal and state monies on a lot of projects this year.

"By doing nothing the city council is saying that they don't really know and are sitting on the fence, or with a little more leaning to the sanctuary by allowing NGO's to fund accommodations, medical, and other needs of undocumented illegals. They are lawbreakers at least, just by being here. It is time for the city council to wake up and listen to your constituents...and stop allowing NGO's to continue to support these illegals in our midst. We also need to start supporting federal agencies and laws. When Colorado became a state, she agreed to uphold the constitution of the United States, just as all our elected officials have done, including the city councilors and county commissioners. It's time for all of you to stand up to your oaths to God and to Country and to the fine citizens who voted you into office. The same goes for all employees who work for the state, county, and city who signed the very same agreement to support and uphold the Constitution. I was a federal employee and a state employee and both times I had to pledge allegiance to the Constitution of the United States, just as you guys have. I think I have done more than that after serving my time in the military and staying with what I'm doing. I think we really need to take hold of our situation concerning the non-sanctuary and change it. We did a year ago...I think it's time to have another vote. Thank you."

Kendra Stucki spoke next, "On a little more positive note...I just wanted to take a minute to express our gratitude for the support from the City of Montrose employees who assisted in making our Earth Action event a big success..."

Stucki thanked a number of individuals from the City and other entities, including businesses and non-profits, "...and with a special gratitude to our partners, Altrusa International of Montrose, for awarding us a grant to install a little free library at the Flex Park, coming this summer...the family fun event was engaging, educational, informative and enjoyable, with live music, snacks, games, and a tree planted and dedicated to the pioneers of our organization, Uncompahgre Valley Alliance..."

Jim Haugsness spoke next. "...I've been riding my bicycle in the city and the county for the last 25 years," Haugsness said, adding that he has noticed some pretty bad behavior on the part of both cyclists and motorists. "Recently I've been noticing an uptick in some unusual...behaviors...mostly on the part of cyclists. These behaviors range from carelessness, sometimes plain stupidity, and other times rudeness."

Haugsness said that there has been an influx of electric bicycles in Montrose. "...We have Class 1,2, and 3—some of these bicycles will go up to 28 miles an hour with an assist. Some of them have an assist, some even have a throttle so you don't even have to pedal...more people are getting on bikes, and more people

CITY NAMES MAYOR AND MAYOR PRO TEM From previous pg

don't even know what the heck they're doing."

Haugsness described situations he has observed on the walking trails along the Uncompahgre River. "This is where I think the rudeness factor comes in."

Walkers, whether alone or with dogs, are constantly experiencing near misses with cyclists, he said.

"I would like to see the city do something about getting an outreach, putting up some signs at the park, looking at a speed limit on the bike trail—there's no reason somebody needs to be doing 25 miles an hour on that bike trail down there, it's just absolutely dangerous.

Haugsness said that there are also Type 4 bikes that range anywhere from 25 to 65 miles an hour. "I have witnessed these bicycles on the sidewalk...I just would like you to take a look at that, see if there's something you can do. You might be able to save a life."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council voted to approve the minutes of the March 31, 2025, special City Council meeting and the March 31, 2025, regular City Council meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR AND MAYOR PRO TEM

Mayor Reed made some remarks. "As I stand before you this evening, or in this particular case sit before you this evening, I'm filled with a deep sense of gratitude, reflection, and pride. Serving as the Montrose Mayor has been one of the greatest honors of my life. This community, our community, is special for the most part..."

He named some of Council's accomplishments, and thanked his fellow councilors, city staff, and those citizens who make the effort to be involved. "...As I pass the torch to the next mayor, I do so with full confidence in our city's future, and I mean that very sincerely...the challenges that lie ahead are real and they cannot be ignored, but so are the opportunities..."

Being Mayor has been an honor and privilege, Reed said. He then nominated Mayor Pro Tem David Frank as Mayor for the coming year.

Council voted to approve Frank as Mayor and Councilor Judy Ann Files as Mayor Pro Tem.

PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING MAYOR

Mayor David Frank recognized Councilor

Reed with a gavel inscribed with Reed's name, as well as a plaque, and there was applause. City Clerk Lisa DelPiccolo rearranged the council name plates to reflect the change.

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE AWARD PRESENTATION

Mayor Frank presented the You Make A Difference Award to Carlton Mason, Director of CASA. He spoke about Mason's accomplishments, calling him a mentor and inspiration to many, noting that Mason has made a tangible, positive impact in the lives of countless children and families.

Mason said that he sees himself as ordinary, and proclaimed his respect for the City of Montrose and the individuals on council, "Thank you all, you have helped me do the work I do."

NEW HOTEL AND RESTAURANT LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION

Council voted unanimously to approve a new hotel and restaurant liquor license application at 1019 E. Main Street for D'Luna Restaurant LLC, doing business as D'Luna Restaurant, for consumption on the licensed premises.

ORDINANCE 2682 - FIRST READING

As recommended by the City Planning Commission, Council voted unanimously to approve Ordinance 2682 on First Reading, amending the zoning district designation of Lot 11 of the Richards Subdivision Final Plat Filing No. 5 from B-3, General Commercial District to P, Public District. The meeting agenda states, "...The property is located at the end of Anderson Road. The site is anticipated to be a part of the overall site of the new Public Works facility."

2025 PAVEMENT MARKING CONTRACT EXTENSION

Council voted unanimously to approve the extension of an existing contract with Stripe-a-Lot LLC for pavement marking services for the total contract amount of \$300,000.

SANITARY SEWER CIP 3 DESIGN CHANGE ORDER NO. 1

The final action item was approved unanimously, Change Order No. 1 in the amount of \$97,800.00 for completion of the Sanitary Sewer CIP3 Project phase 2 design.

STAFF REPORTS

Sales Tax Manager LeeAnne Whittaker presented the Area and Monthly Sales, Use & Excise Tax reports.

YOUTH CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Youth City Council Mayor Pro Tem Grayson Vidmar congratulated Mayor Frank and Mayor Pro Tem Files, thanked City Council, management, and the parents and families of Youth Council members, and gave a recap on Youth Council activities throughout the year, adding, "Thank you all very much, we couldn't have done it without all the people in this room, we look forward to another great year of service."

Mayor Frank thanked Youth Councilors as well as Youth Council Mentors Gunnison Clamp and Briceida Ortega.

Councilor Ed Ulibarri said that there have been dangerous incidents involving motorized bikes in area roundabouts. "I think it might be something to look at in the future..." He also praised the recent Youth Council Non-Profit Expo, "I have received nothing but good comments about the non profit show, and how well it was handled by the student council, how informative, and how organized it was...to put something together the first year sometimes has a lot of snags, and you guys accomplished it..."

City Engineer Scott Murphy provided traffic and construction updates.

Councilor Ulibarri said he was impressed that city crews were installing sprinkler systems along West Main as part of the landscaping for the revitalization project. Mayor Frank said that Council travels a lot around the state and goes to lots of conferences, and he hears comments about Montrose. "...I hear a lot of comments from the committees I am on, on both the state level and the Colorado municipal level, and we are truly blessed to have a city council that is as engaged and as cooperative as we have...a lot of city councils are very combative, they're very contentious, it's really a pleasure working with a council like us, it's really well done.

To those attending the meeting, Frank stated, "The City of Montrose is not a sanctuary city, the City of Montrose has never been a sanctuary city, and the City of Montrose has no intention of becoming a sanctuary city.

"We will stand adjourned," Frank said.

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TRACKSTERS FARE WELL AT DELTA TWILIGHT

By Cliff Dodge

MONTROSE-The Montrose Red Hawks spring track and field season is fast drawing to a close as the Red Hawks prepare for the state meet and for graduation. In one of the final competitions the Red Hawks joined eight other schools in Olathe for the running of the Delta Twilight 2025 on Thursday, May 8. Here are the results for the Montrose Red Hawks participants:

Girls:

100-meter dash:	Emarie Simpson	1st
	Zuri Balleck	5th
200-meter dash:	Emarie Simpson	2nd
4x200-meter relay:	Relay team	2nd
4x800-meter relay:	Relay team	1st
High Jump:	Makenna Cline	5th
Long Jump:	Audrey Righter	4th
Discus:	Makenna Cline	4th
Shot Put:	Tanner Bielak	7th

Boys:

100-meter dash:	Deklan Woodden	1st
200-meter dash:	Deklan Woodden	1st
4x100-meter relay:	Relay team	4th
4x200-meter relay:	Relay team	3rd
4x400-meter relay:	Relay team	2nd
4x800-meter relay:	Relay team	2nd
High jump:	Bergen McCormack	4th
Shot Put:	Alex McKenna	9th

Other schools participating included: Cedaredge, Coal Ridge, Debeque, Delta, Olathe, Palisade, Ridgway and Telluride.

RED HAWKS BASEBALL ROUNDUP

By Cliff Dodge

GRAND JUNCTION CENTRAL WARRIORS 3, RED HAWKS 2

The Montrose Red Hawks baseball team came within a single run of breaking out of a long losing streak and the Red Hawks played extra innings only to lose to the Warriors by the score of 3-2. The Warriors broke on top with a run in the bottom half of the third inning. Undaunted, the Red Hawks pushed across a pair of runs in the top of the fourth inning. The score remained the same until the bottom of the seventh inning when the Warriors pushed the tying run across the plate. The teams played two additional innings and the Warriors scored the winning run in the bottom of the 9th inning to win 3-2.

Seven Red Hawks, Joe Benitez, Ryan Balleck, Jayce England, Jack Pankey, Cade Saunders and Cohan Sauter all had base hits with Jack Pankey clouting a booming triple to lead the Red Hawks offensive attack. Garrett Wolfe and Cade Helber handled the pitching chores for the Red Hawks.

GRAND JUNCTION CENTRAL WARRIORS 10, RED HAWKS 0

The final regular season game of the year saw the Red Hawks hosting their nemesis from up north, the Grand Junction Central Warriors for the second time in a week. The Warriors prevailed once again, this time the score was Central 10, the Red Hawks 0.

Statistics tell stories but not all stories have the desired outcome. The Warriors out-hit the Red Hawks in the second game by pounding out 7 base hits compared with only 4 for the Red Hawks. In all, both teams combined for 11 singles. Neither team had an extra base hit. Brekin Hutto and Jack Pankey toed the rubber for the Red Hawks.

The Red Hawks were unable to get their offense going this season and had difficulty in getting the critical base hits when runners were in scoring position while the opposition thrived on Red Hawks pitching.

The Red Hawks ended the season with a record of 4 wins and 19 losses, while the league mark stood at 0 wins and 8 losses.

OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

TRUMP'S FIRST 100 DAYS

Editor:

There has been nothing like Trump's first 100 days in office.

No President since polling started has had a lower approval rating at this mark than Donald Trump. In short, cuts to: healthcare funding (wait until your Medicaid policy is cut or reduced Montrose citizens and Montrose Regional Health), research, grants to various programs, environmental rollbacks, forest service, education, elimination of USAID which saved thousands of lives with healthcare, food, and vaccine assistance.

Add to it: Unlawful deportations, Canada, Greenland, Panama Canal, R. Kennedy, P. Hegseth, attacking judges, his crypto grift, on-and on.

I will just address two: First, Musk's quasi-government DOGE Service says it has saved \$150 Billion in waste. What happened to the \$2 Trillion he said would be

found? This meager savings will likely be off set by the estimated \$145 Billion in legal costs and loss of IRS revenue. Musk has been forced back to Tesla to try and resurrect his failing car company-good riddance. Well done. Second, a single man - Donald Trump - has caused a loss of more than \$6.5 Billion in value from public companies by inflicting tariffs on our friends and allies with no endgame. The stock market reflects the uncertainty he alone has caused. He blames Biden for the drop-of course he does - yet took credit for a strong stock market when he came into office-so typical. Not to mention the disruption in foreign markets. No straight story from anyone in his administration as to why we implemented tariffs (remember, first it was Fentanyl) and what we can realistically expect to gain (I assume it's not higher prices - which is coming). Who can keep up with what tar-

iffs are "on", "delayed", or "off" and what the impact is all coming from a man whom his aides say "will never bend"? He still doesn't understand how tariffs actually work.

Tariffs, which can be beneficial when used correctly and voted on by Congress, are ultimately a tax on consumers. We will be forced to pay more for goods and services. He has said they could replace the income tax and are a windfall for the treasury. I have not seen any credible financial analyst on the right or left support this policy-except those he surrounds himself with. To quote the Wall Street Journal (hardly a liberal rag) "the dumbest Trade War in History". It's time for democrats, independents, and concerned Republicans to publicly voice their frustrations and push back on the MAGA crowd who seem to think we're in a golden age and all is well.
Steve Welch, Montrose

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

DEMOCRATS CANNOT LIST OR DISCUSS THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS TO THE NATION'S CRISES

Editor:

I'll start this week with a chuckle. Joe Biden started his "I'm not dead" tour this week with an interview with the BBC in which he said dropping out of the 2024 race was a "hard decision" because his presidency was "so successful." (That's the funny part.) This is the same week the Pentagon Inspector General report revealed Biden's failed Gaza pier project was even worse than we thought. One of Biden's biggest embarrassments, the half-baked Gaza pier, cost more than \$230 million and lasted just 20 days. Of the small amount of aid that reached the shore, very little went to the intended recipients because Hamas stole most of it. According to the new report, the pier was more of a failure than Biden's administration publicly admitted. The Biden Pentagon hid costs and injuries to military personnel. We now find that it injured 60+ US soldiers, and one soldier died. All for a political stunt to placate terrorists and their sympathizers in the Democrat party.

That's just one more "success" in a four-year string of "successes." Four years of Biden-Harris mismanagement left our country with soaring inflation and declining real wages, an intentional invasion of 12 million unvetted illegals, a failed "Build Back Better" agenda that built nothing but unsustainable debt, a shrinking middle class, foreign criminal gangs such as MS-13 and Tren de Aragua embedded in U.S. cities, and much worse. Trump has soundly reversed those trends. It is not an accident that the border was secured within several weeks of Trump assuming office. It is the result of Trump returning us to the "America First" doctrine of putting American citizens before cartels. In just a few short months, Trump has done what Democrats chose not to do: restore economic confidence, reignite job growth, and increase wages. That "America First" doctrine also puts the American taxpayer before the people who run our massive government bureaucracies. Trump's DOGE teams have exposed the fraud and criminality of those institutions who have been

fleeing taxpayers of trillions of dollars.

Trump is also rebuilding from decades of bipartisan failure that prioritized globalization and weakness over American jobs and families. The Trump administration announced this week their first breakthrough trade agreement. The unprecedented deal was the first time in decades that American producers will have freer and streamlined access to markets in the United Kingdom. It will create \$5 billion in export opportunities (including beef) for American farmers, ranchers, and other producers. In spite of the fake left-wing hysteria about Trump's negotiating tactics on trade and tariffs, countries are lining up to negotiate new tariff and trade agreements favorable to the U.S. There is also a cascade of companies announcing new billion dollar investments in the U.S.

More than 8 in 10 voters want Trump's 2017 tax cuts extended before they expire at the end of this year (95% of Republicans, 81% of independents, and 74% of Democrats.) Regardless, every Democrat in Congress opposes that renewal, in spite of the fact all their attack lines against the reduced taxes have been proven totally false. In reality, the new tax law cut taxes across every single income group, benefiting tens of millions of families and individuals. It resulted in hiring and investments that helped the economy take off. Unemployment plunged to the lowest levels ever recorded. Wages finally surged, after years of stagnation. Revenues taken in by the government increased, thanks to a growing economy. Still, your Democrat Congress has no problem voting against the tax cut extension, which would automatically trigger the largest tax hike in American history.

Trump is also cleaning up the mess Biden created with student loans. Despite major court decisions, including the Supreme Court, Biden and Harris made promises to student borrowers they knew they couldn't keep in an effort to buy their votes.

The Trump administration is bringing sanity back to loan repayments with the radical approach that loans must actually be

repaid.

It is easy to see why the Democrat Party is losing its significance. To them, cutting government waste and curtailing the theft of taxpayer money is a threat to democracy. Requiring proof of citizenship to vote is racist. Cutting taxes for anyone is bad because it limits the size of an already oversized federal bureaucracy. Anti-Semitism is perfectly OK. Endorsing vandalism, rioting, and arson are fine if it is targeted against your opponents. They believe males should be allowed to dominate women's sports and invade their locker rooms. The only way the U.S. can be fixed is to tear it down because it has always been racist. Regulations create jobs and grow the economy. They believe nothing is wrong with our trade relations around the world. Democrats didn't know about Biden's mental collapse and had no part in any cover-up. Schools and the government are responsible for raising your kids, and parents need to butt out. Lying is perfectly acceptable if it is about the opposition. Anyone who disagrees with them is a Nazi. Personal responsibility for one's actions does not exist. They believe it is heroic to murder successful businessmen if you dislike the industries they work for. And so much more.

More importantly, Democrats cannot list or discuss their own solutions to the nation's crises – because they don't have any. There is not a single Democrat blueprint of how to address a \$2 billion budget deficit, \$3 billion daily interest payments, \$37 trillion of national debt, or a \$1.2 trillion annual trade deficit. There is no post-Biden agenda to deal with his legacy of an invasion of 12 million unvetted illegals, or any plan to end the Biden-era conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine. Democrats have offered no counter-proposals, no alternate agendas, and no solutions to the nation's problems. It would seem Democrats would figure out that lies, hysteria, and cluelessness are not very appealing to thinking Americans who will not tolerate any more Democrat "successes."

Ed Henrie, Montrose

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DELTA ROCK WRANGLERS HOST ROCK, GEM AND MINERAL SHOW JUNE 7

Special to the Mirror

DELTA-Earth's Creative Art...Delta County Rock Wranglers 35th Annual Rock and Gem Show, Saturday, June 7, 2025, 9am-5pm at Bill Heddles Recreation Center, 531 Palmer Street, Delta. FREE ADMISSION...family friendly event. Kid's Bingo, Wheel of Rocks, spin the wheel and get a prize, Kids Rock Bag with a special prize, Silent auction and fluorescent room with examples of rocks that glow under black light. Over 28 top-notch exhibitors and vendors selling mineral specimens, rough rock slabs, jewelry, petrified wood, dinosaur bones and more. Delta County Rock Wrangler's meet Sept.-May, first Thursday. The Club schedules Free Field trips for members. For additional information please contact Harry Masinton 970-417-7336 or hpmasinton@gmail.com. See you at the Rock & Gem Show, FREE ADMISSION.



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MIRZA AHMED CONFIRMED AS MONTROSE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE — The Montrose County Board of Health is pleased to announce the unanimous, official appointment of Mirza Ahmed as the Director of Public Health. Ahmed has been serving the county since February 25, 2025, partially in an interim capacity before being confirmed to the permanent position.

During his brief tenure, Ahmed has already made significant contributions to Montrose County's public health landscape. He has established strong relationships throughout the west region community and has demonstrated exceptional leadership.

Notably, Ahmed spearheaded collabora-

tive efforts with neighboring counties to raise awareness about Measles, as concern and cases across the state grow. He also organized a successful Public Health Outreach Open House that served Montrose and surrounding counties, where 18 measles vaccinations were administered. "Following a comprehensive search process in compliance with Colorado state law, the Board of Health concluded that he was the most qualified candidate for the position. We look forward to working collaboratively with him to develop and implement a robust public health strategy for the residents of Montrose County," said Scott Mijares, Chair of the Montrose Board of County Commissioners.

Ahmed brings to the position extensive experience in emergency response, disease prevention, and health systems strengthening. His expertise in strategic planning, program development, and health equity will guide Montrose County's public health initiatives moving forward. Ahmed reports to and operates at the direction of the Montrose County Board of Health, and will oversee all county public health programs, ensuring the continued advancement of healthcare services and initiatives. His appointment marks a new chapter in Montrose County's commitment to public health, bringing both innovation and strategic direction to the county's health initiatives.



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Did you know?

The previous BOCC approved two Capital Building Projects, the Historic Courthouse AND the New North Campus, even AFTER the County finance Department told them it was not fiscally sound to do so because we do not have the money to complete both?

Now, the only remnant of the old BOCC, Commissioner Hansen says "we need to check with finance", when Sheriff Gene Lilliard is asking to move his department from the Colorado Retirement Association (CRA) plan to the Fire Police Pension Association (FPPA) to enhance the Department?

WHY? FPPA will help MCSD to attract more deputies and move from the current level of staff (0.6 per 1,000 residents (just 30% of recommended levels, to the proper ~2.0) which would bring MCSD to FBI standards!

Montrose Citizens D.O.G.E. is a non-partisan community watchdog group reporting on things that raise eyebrows in the City and County of Montrose, CO's government fiscal expenditures and other questionable actions, holding our public officials accountable to We the People. Join our efforts...

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Did you know?

Mayor Reed, when asked on March 10th, in the Montrose Mirror as well as a March 14th post on the [Montrose DOGE Facebook](#) Page and again in the Mirror and directly at the [City Council meeting](#) March 31 and Facebook March 30, 2025 to agree to a sit down to publicly refute the allegations made by Mr. David White of serious issues within the Montrose City Government. *To date, there has still been no response!*

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

THE TRUTH CONCERNING MONTROSE CLASSICAL ACADEMY (MCA) AND NEISHA BALLECK

Editor:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Montrose Classical Academy (MCA) and Montrose County School District (MCSD) Board Member Neisha Balleck. While not naming Ms. Balleck directly in her Op-Ed in the May 5, 2025, edition of the *Montrose Mirror*, by Ellen Angeles, in an email to the District Accountability Committee (DAC) there was a direct attack on Ms. Balleck and it was completely without merit. Both fail to recognize the value of quality educational choices for Montrose County Students and Ms. Balleck's dedicated leadership in serving our community.

The claim that Ms. Balleck prioritizes MCA over other district issues is completely unfounded, speculative and flat out false. As a school board member, Ms. Balleck consistently advocates for all Montrose County students, balancing the needs of traditional public schools with innovative options like MCA. Contrary to Ms. Angeles' assertion, Ms. Balleck did not attend the Pine Valley Church meeting in Elizabeth, Colorado, on April 8, 2025, for Independence Classical Academy. A quick internet search shows that the Elizabeth meeting Ms. Angeles referred to in her email and Op-Ed was held from 6:30 PM-7:30 PM, while Ms. Balleck was present via Zoom at the MCSD board meeting, demonstrating Ms. Balleck's commitment to the district she serves and the error in Ms. Angeles' accusations.

Ms. Balleck's efforts to research charter school models and other innovative approaches to education, reflect a proactive approach to ensuring MCA and any other means of education, meets the highest standards for our community. Her advocacy for a third-party external reviewer, proposed at the September 24, October 8, and October 21, 2024, board meetings, culminated in the board's approval of the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers (CACSA) as a reviewer on November 12, 2024, less than a month before the December 10, 2024, vote. This persistence underscores her commitment to thorough vetting.

The accusations against Kim Gilmartin, alleging ties to "Christian Nationalism" or profit-driven motives, are speculative and inflammatory, even bordering liable. Recognized as the 2025 Advocate of the Year by the Colorado League of Charter Schools, Ms. Gilmartin provides valuable expertise to help communities establish high-quality charter schools. Her involvement ensures MCA is built on

academic rigor and community engagement, not division or exploitation, as evidenced by her advocacy work with several Colorado communities looking for a classical tuition-free option. The claim that MCA's application had "85 holes" overlooks the iterative nature of charter school applications, which are refined through collaboration to meet local needs and state standards.

MCA is not a threat to public education but a complement to it. Charter schools like MCA are publicly funded and accountable to the Colorado Academic Standards, as outlined by the Colorado Department of Education. MCA offers a classical curriculum emphasizing critical thinking, literature, and history, appealing to families seeking alternatives within the public system. The suggestion that MCA "cherry-picks" students is misleading; charter schools are open to all, and MCA is committed to serving a diverse student body, including those with special needs and English language learners, as required by state law. MCA's commitment to inclusivity and compliance with state standards is without question.

Regarding MCA's proposed facilities, many successful charter schools begin in modest spaces, such as churches or leased offices, before securing permanent locations or growing into a larger space. This is a practical reality, not a flaw. MCA's leadership is diligently seeking a suitable site, and dismissing their efforts overlooks their commitment to fiscal responsibility and community fit. Contrary to Ms. Angeles' claims, MCA's model does not exclude students needing transportation or free and reduced lunch; charter schools must comply with federal and state equity requirements, and MCA will accommodate all families.

Ms. Angeles references the 2024 Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) results, implying public schools are sufficient. However, CDE data reveal that only 44% of students in grades 3-8 met or exceeded expectations in English Language Arts, with 34% in math statewide. In Montrose, just 30% of students meet reading standards and math proficiency sits at a mere 28.2%, with persistent gaps for multilingual learners and students with disabilities. MCA's classical approach, focusing on phonics, literature, Singapore math and individualized instruction, could address these challenges, offering a proven method to boost literacy, math and overall academic outcomes.

Ms. Angeles' claim that public education in

Montrose is "woefully underfunded" does not fully align with reality.

-MCSD: Spends \$13,155 per student, and while MCSD spends less than urban and suburban districts like Denver (at \$17,824) and Littleton (at \$16,879), it spends slightly more than similar rural districts like Delta (at \$12,896) but less than smaller rural districts like Moffat (at \$14,112). The data does not show a correlation between increased funding and improved outcomes.

-Funding Context: Colorado's funding formula adjusts for district size, cost of living, and at-risk populations. MCSD, with 37.7% economically disadvantaged students and 43% minority enrollment, receives significant state and federal funds but less local property tax revenue due to its rural setting, placing significant reliance on Federal Funds (which are potentially at risk for the 2025-2026 school year due to MCSD's reluctance to adhere to the "Only Two Genders" E.O. signed by President Trump).

-Outcomes vs. Spending: Despite high spending (5.4% of GDP), U.S. students lag in international assessments (28th in math, 6th in reading in 2022). Countries like Canada and South Korea achieve better results with lower per-pupil spending. More spending on education is simply not indicative of better results. Cries for more funding are simply not the solution.

Ms. Angeles praises existing options like Peak Academy and Vista Charter School, and I agree Montrose has strong programs outside the traditional public-school model. However, more choice strengthens our district.

MCA would provide an additional pathway for families drawn to a classical education without detracting from traditional public schools' resources or success. The fear that MCA will "siphon" funds ignores how per-pupil funding follows the student, ensuring equitable distribution based on enrollment.

Finally, the invocation of Jesus in Ms. Angeles' letter reminds us to focus on what serves children best. Ms. Balleck and MCA's supporters are doing just that, working tirelessly to create an equitable, high-quality option that uplifts all students. I urge the community to reject divisive rhetoric and embrace MCA as an opportunity to innovate within our public education system. Let us support Ms. Balleck's leadership and give MCA the chance to enrich Montrose's educational landscape.

Michael J Badagliacchio, "MJB"
Citizen-Montrose, Colorado

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS CENTER INDOOR ARENA FOOTING IS REPLACED *New footing ensures horse and rider safety*

Special to the Mirror

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY-- The San Miguel County Parks & Open Space Department, which is responsible for upkeep and maintenance of the County Fairgrounds in Norwood, announced that the work to replace the arena footing in the Events Center has been completed. The project was completed ahead of schedule by Kota Construction, allowing the numerous equestrian user groups to return to riding in the indoor arena.

Arena footing is the surface material used in equestrian arenas to provide a safe, durable, and comfortable base for horses. It prevents injuries by absorbing impact and reducing slippage. The last footing, installed in 2002, was showing its age with use and wear patterns compromising the base. While arena footing generally has a lifespan of 5-10 years, scrupulous Event Center management oversight of specific use and grooming protocols kept the footing viable for many years.

"We have active equestrian user groups within the local Norwood community and the County as a whole," explained Parks & Open Space Director, Janet Kask. "We

host events with individual riders, the Lone Cone Dressage Club, the San Miguel Basin 4-H Horse Program, the San Miguel Basin Rodeo and the San Miguel Basin Fair."

Input from those user groups expressing safety concerns was a key factor in launching the arena footing replacement project, which was spearheaded by Fairgrounds Coordinator, DeeAnna Burbridge, Kask said.

The project kicked off with the removal of the old footing, which was then repurposed by County Road & Bridge for their departmental use. The new footing is a decomposed granite aggregate material, which was hauled in from Moore's Mining, LLC located in Gateway, Colorado, which is the same product and source for the Fairgrounds 2020 Outdoor Arena Upgrade Project.

The Events Center indoor arena is once again bustling with activity as area riders gear up for the summer showing season and other events and competitions, including the upcoming San Miguel Basin Fair and San Miguel Basin Rodeo this summer.



The Events Center Indoor Arena in Norwood is shown here after the first layer of new arena footing was laid and smoothed. The project was completed ahead of schedule and the arena is once again busy with equestrian activity. (Photo courtesy of San Miguel County)



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COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

22ND HOTCHKISS SHEEP CAMP STOCK DOG TRIAL



Working dog moves sheep.



A well-earned dip in the Collie Cooler.



Sheep were set up for each trial run of the course.

Story and photos by Sue Zanol

HOTCHKISS-This past weekend, Hotchkiss was a happening place with three events starting with the three-day 22nd Hotchkiss Sheep Camp Stock Dog trial. The Ute Trails Car Club Classic Car Show and at the Fairgrounds, the Matanza Cook Off, were both held last Saturday. No politics, just good old fashion fun at all three events.

Hundreds of spectators enjoyed watching mostly Border Collies move sheep through a timed course guided by their

handler partners. Sheep were brought on the field and "set up" for each trial run of the course. A dog took the sheep back to the pen following each run. Dogs enjoyed taking a dip in the Collie Cooler after their run. Rancher Steve Allen ran Orrin, Jolie Clark's dog, in a special memorial running of the course in honor of beloved Jolie Clark who passed away unexpectedly mid-

March. She was the trial organizer for the past three years.

The Car Show featured over 250 classic cars and tractors at Zach's Barbecue. It is an annual event which brings a lot of car lovers who also enjoy Zach's yummy food. La Matanza, Spanish for the slaughter usually of a pig, today is more about feasting and cultural heritage. There were plenty of food booths, food trucks, and music making for a delicious and festive environment.



Spectators enjoyed watching the dogs and viewing the car show.


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The primary bedroom showcasing a vaulted ceiling and five piece en-suite bath with granite counter tops, tile finishes, private water closet and a generous walk-in closet. The guest hallway has an additional double door storage closet and 2 well sized bedrooms along with another full bath. The tandem 3 car garage has 578 sq ft of space and is perfect for your vehicles, recreational toys or even as a workshop. With this home conveniently located near the community's park and not far from downtown it's just waiting for your arrival.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MONTROSE REGIONAL HEALTH'S DIRECTOR OF CARE MANAGEMENT RECOGNIZED FOR CARE TRANSITIONS PROGRAM



Members of the Care Transitions Program, from left: Trisha Bush, Sally O'Connor, and Sherrie English. Courtesy photo.

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE – Sally O'Connor, director of care management at Montrose Regional Health (MRH), has been recognized by the Colorado Hospital Changemakers for her tireless efforts in creating the Care Transitions Program, an initiative designed to reduce patient readmissions at MRH. A hospital re-admission occurs when a patient must return after discharge due to complications. The national hospital readmission rate is 14.67%. In rural Colorado, that rate is significantly higher at 21.7%. The mission of the Care Transitions Program is to reduce these statistics and promote uninterrupted recovery at home. Some of the program elements include patient education, attending appointments with patients, medication management services, and more. "Care Transitions is a program that identifies complex patients, provides intensive care management/coordination services to reduce the risk of hospital re-admission, and optimizes transitions into the community," O'Connor said. "It strengthens post

hospital communication with community providers and agencies, and helps patients and families understand their health and resources available to them."

Colorado Hospital Changemakers, an organization that highlights advancements in Colorado hospitals, has recognized the many achievements of Montrose Regional Health's Care Transitions Program, including:

- Assisted 200 patients since launching the program in November 2024.
- Strengthened partnerships with community providers.
- Opened the program to community provider/clinic referrals.
- Secured housing for two previously unhoused patients. Montrose Regional Health is proud to care for every patient like family with services like the Care Transitions Program. To learn more about the program or refer a loved one, contact Sally O'Connor, director of care management, at soconnor@montrosehealth.com.



Where Wallflowers Grow is the coming of age story of a shy, introverted, 12-year-old girl. A 1960's latch-key kid, Gail's mom agreed to let her leave her home-alone existence and live in her grandma's boarding house.

The Shelly Boarding House, located in rural southeastern Colorado, was home to male pensioners and Social Security recipients who themselves were loners and had nowhere else to go.

For three years Gail lived in this unconventional family environment where she comes of age, while the old-timers age in place.

GAIL MARVEL

Montrose Author & Reporter

Where Wallflowers Grow is available online at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [wingedpublications.com](https://www.wingedpublications.com).





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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DELTA HEALTH CELEBRATES REMARKABLE NURSES: HONORING DAISY AWARD NOMINEES

Special to the Mirror

DELTA— Ryan Imhoff, Registered Nurse (RN) of the Delta Health Medical/Surgical Department, was recently honored with **The DAISY Award® For Extraordinary Nurses**. The award is part of the DAISY Foundation's programs to recognize the super-human efforts nurses perform every day.

Ryan was nominated by two patients, with the first submission reading: "[Ryan] was a very good, professional nurse! [He] cares and shows empathy definitely shows promise and drive to go far in the medical industry. His bedside manner is perfect and his attention to detail is EPIC. THANK YOU, RYAN, for taking care of me while I was going through colon-rectal cancer resection. Love to all the staff and Dr. Nickel."

The second nomination read: "Ryan was fantastic, I felt like he took very good care of me, compassionate and more!"

"Med/Surg is proud to have Ryan win this 1st quarter Daisy Award for 2025," Dawn Arnett, BSN, RN, Director of In-Patient Services, Med/Surg at Delta Health and DAISY Award Coordinator. "He has excelled at Delta Health, first being a C.N.A. and then completing his RN degree. He is in the nurse residency program for RN's in their first year of nursing at Delta Health. He possesses amazing attention to detail, along with modeling exceptional bedside manner, showing compassion and empathy for his patients and team members. Congratulations, Ryan!"

Ten other nurses were also nominated for this quarter's DAISY Award: Tiffany Abatti, RN – Home Health, Cassidy Austin,

RN- Emergency Department, Jenna Carney, RN- Intensive Care/Med/Surg, Brittaney Carter, RN – PACU, Angela Dupuis, RN PACU, Grace Greenwood, RN - Home Health, Susan Luna, RN - Storks Landing, Sierra Mathias, RN - Storks Landing, Isabelle Portillo, RN - Wound Care, and Reveille Sullivan RN- Med/Surg.

The not-for-profit DAISY Foundation is based in Glen Ellen, CA, and was established by family members in memory of J. Patrick Barnes. Patrick died at the age of 33 in late 1999 from complications of Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP), a little-known but not uncommon autoimmune disease. The care Patrick and his family received from nurses while he was ill inspired this unique means of thanking nurses for making a profound difference in the lives of their patients and patient families.

Said Bonnie Barnes, FAAN, CEO and Co-Founder of The DAISY Foundation, "When Patrick was critically ill, our family experienced first-hand the remarkable skill and care nurses provide patients every day and night. Yet these unsung heroes are seldom recognized for the superhuman work they do. The kind of work the nurses at *Delta Health* are called on to do every day epitomizes the purpose of The DAISY Award."

Honorees receive a DAISY Award pin and daisy stems. The Daisy Award winner also receives a beautiful and meaningful sculpture called A Healer's Touch, hand-carved by artists of the Shona Tribe in Zimbabwe. The Healers' Touch sculpture represents the bond between nurses and their patients.

To nominate a nurse for a DAISY Award,



Ryan Imhoff, Registered Nurse (RN) of the Delta Health Medical-Surgical Department, was recently honored with The DAISY Award® For Extraordinary Nurses.

go online to deltahealthco.org/bee-daisy-awards/ and submit a digital nomination form.

Printed nomination forms can also be found throughout the hospital and at all Delta Health clinics.

In addition to the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses, the Foundation expresses gratitude to the nursing profession internationally in over 4,600 healthcare facilities and schools of nursing with recognition of direct care Nurses, Nurse-led Teams, Nurse Leaders, Nurses Advancing Health Equity, Nursing Faculty, Nursing Students, Lifetime Achievement in Nursing and through the J. Patrick Barnes Grants for Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice Projects, Medical Mission Grants their new Health Equity Grant program. More information is available at <http://DAISYfoundation.org>.



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

A COSTLY MISSTEP FOR FEDERAL FUNDING AND LEGAL IMMIGRATION

Editor:

On May 3, 2025, Colorado Democrats passed Senate Bill 25-276, a sweeping immigration law that cements the state's status as a sanctuary jurisdiction, limits cooperation with federal immigration authorities, and expands benefits for undocumented immigrants. While supporters claim it protects civil rights, the legislation risks billions in federal funding, strains public resources, and undermines the legal immigration process that millions have followed diligently. Republicans were right to oppose this measure, as it prioritizes ideology over fiscal responsibility and national security.

SB 25-276 prohibits Colorado sheriffs from honoring Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer requests without a judicial warrant and bans public employees from sharing immigration status data with federal agencies. It also restricts ICE access to non-public areas of schools, hospitals, libraries, and jails without a warrant, and eliminates affidavit requirements for undocumented immigrants seeking in-state tuition and driver's licenses. Additionally, the law bars out-of-state National Guard units from operating in Colorado without the governor's explicit approval, potentially complicating federal immigration enforcement efforts.

Republicans have raised serious concerns about the financial and legal fallout. Colorado already spends over \$544 million annually on services for undocumented immigrants, including education, Medicaid, and legal defense, according to state House Republicans. Expanding benefits like in-state tuition and driver's licenses will likely inflate these costs, diverting resources from citizens and legal residents. More critically, the bill's defiance of federal immigration policies could trigger severe consequences. On May 2, 2025, the U.S. Department of Justice sued Colorado, Governor Jared Polis, Attorney General Phil Weiser, and Denver Mayor Mike

Johnston, arguing that the state's sanctuary laws unlawfully encroach on federal authority. Similar lawsuits against states like California have led to reduced federal grants, and Colorado risks losing funding for law enforcement, education, and infrastructure, potentially billions, as Republicans warn.

The legislation also devalues legal immigration. Republican state Rep. Carlos Barron, a legal immigrant, proposed redirecting immigration-related spending to public education, a practical idea rejected by Democrats. For the millions who have endured years of waiting, fees, and legal processes to immigrate lawfully, SB 25-276 rewards illegal entry, eroding the fairness of the system. As Rep. Chris Richardson argued, the bill "encourages illegal activity" and "doubles down on sanctuary status," a sentiment echoed by many Coloradans who value legal integrity.

Governor Jared Polis' stance adds complexity. While he has called for more federal resources to detain and deport "dangerous criminals," SB 25-276 undermines these efforts by limiting ICE cooperation. Polis expressed concerns about the bill's original version and worked with lawmakers on amendments, but his office remains noncommittal on whether he will sign it. This disconnect between the governor's rhetoric and the Democratic legislature's actions highlights the bill's contentious nature.

Democratic rhetoric has further inflamed tensions. Supporters like Rep. Lorena García frame the bill as a defense of "constitutional rights," but comparisons of ICE operations to historical atrocities have drawn Republican condemnation for poisoning discourse. Such rhetoric oversimplifies a complex issue, ignoring the need for balanced, lawful solutions.

With the bill now awaiting Polis' signature, Colorado faces a precarious future. States like California and New York have faced federal lawsuits and funding cuts for

similar sanctuary policies, and Colorado could follow suit. Republicans, led by figures like Rep. Ron Weinberg, are rallying opposition, emphasizing the risks to the state's economy and legal framework. They advocate for policies that prioritize citizens, legal residents, and a fair immigration system, a stance that resonates with Coloradans who value the rule of law.

Locally, Montrose has been continually urged to avoid risking federal funding by officially declaring Montrose a "Non-Sanctuary City." In March 2024, over six hundred citizens filled the Montrose City Council Chambers, with a line outside and all overflow space filled to the brim to voice their concerns and ask the City Council to declare Montrose a "Non-Sanctuary City." Only five people voiced opposition to the "Non-Sanctuary City" status, yet the City Council opted to avoid it. Since then, individuals have continued to voice their support at City Council meetings' "public comment periods," only to have it fall on the deaf ears of a City Council that does little except rubber-stamp the City Manager's spending spree. Meanwhile, the Montrose County Board of County Commissioners has declared Montrose County a Non-Sanctuary County, providing some sanity in local government.

As the August 6, 2025, effective date looms, Colorado stands at a crossroads. SB 25-276 may appeal to a narrow ideological base, but its passage threatens fiscal stability, federal relations, and the integrity of legal immigration. By rejecting this path, Colorado could embrace compassion without sacrificing accountability, ensuring a sustainable future for all its residents. Republicans are leading this charge, and their efforts deserve support from those who believe in a just and orderly immigration system.

Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"
Citizen-Montrose, CO

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DELTA HEALTH EARNS AN 'A' HOSPITAL SAFETY GRADE FROM THE LEAPFROG GROUP FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE TIME

Special to the Mirror

DELTA—Delta Health earned an “A” Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit watchdog focused on patient safety for the second consecutive time.

Leapfrog assigns an “A,” “B,” “C,” “D” or “F” grade to general hospitals across the country based on over 30 performance measures reflecting errors, accidents, injuries and infections, as well as the systems hospitals have in place to prevent them.

“I am incredibly proud of our Delta Health team for earning an “A” in Hospital Safety,” said Jonathan Cohee, MHA, OT, Delta Health Chief Executive Officer. “Our Quali-

ty and Patient Safety Departments have done a phenomenal job continuing to raise the bar for standard of care for Delta Health patients. They have remained committed to providing the highest quality of care that our community can trust, and this grade exemplifies their dedication to that mission.”

“Achieving an ‘A’ Hospital Safety Grade is a significant accomplishment for Delta Health,” said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. “It reflects enormous dedication to your patients and their families, and your whole community should be proud. I extend my congratulations to Delta Health, its leadership, clini-

cians, staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts to put patients first.”

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade stands as the only hospital ratings program focused solely on preventable medical errors, infections and injuries that kill more than 500 patients a day in the United States.

This program is peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring.

To explore Delta Health’s full grade details and to find valuable tips for staying safe in the hospital, visit HospitalSafetyGrade.org.





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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

ARE DEFECTORS TO THE GOP GENUINE OR STRATEGIC?

Editor:

In recent years, a notable trend has emerged, some Democrats are switching to the Republican Party or identifying as unaffiliated. This shift prompts a key question, are these defections driven by genuine alignment with conservative values, or are they strategic moves to influence the Republican Party from within, potentially misleading its base?

Genuine Ideological Shifts

The Democratic Party has seen significant internal changes, with its progressive wing advocating policies that some traditional Democrats find unappealing as noted by a [2022 Washington Post article](#). Issues such as economic regulation, cultural debates, and foreign policy may push moderates toward the Republican Party, which they view as more aligned with their evolving beliefs. For example, concerns about government overreach or dissatisfaction with progressive social agendas could make the Republican platform attractive. The GOP has historically welcomed diverse conservative perspectives, making it a logical destination for those disillusioned with the [Democratic Party's direction](#). High-profile figures like Tulsi Gabbard, who left the Democratic Party in 2022, have cited frustration with its leadership and policies as reasons for their departure.

Strategic Infiltration Concerns

Skepticism about these defections persists. Politics often involves strategic maneuvering, and some suggest that former Democrats may join the GOP to dilute its conservative principles. By adopting Re-

publican or unaffiliated labels, these individuals could advocate for moderate or liberal policies, weakening the party's core agenda as noted by E. Klein's article "The Politics of Switching" in the [New York Times](#) in 2023. Historical examples, such as moderate Republicans in the 1990s, show how internal factions can shift party priorities, sometimes clashing with traditional party loyalists as noted in a [University of Virginia Center for Politics article](#). This could create a false sense of unity, leading to policy compromises that conflict with the GOP's current "America First" priorities.

Positive Contributions from Newcomers

Not all impacts of defectors are negative. Recent additions to the Republican platform, particularly within the MAGA movement, demonstrate the influence of new voices. Two notable additions are anti-censorship and anti-war stances. [The Twitter Files](#), released in 2022, exposed efforts by some progressive groups to suppress conservative voices online, prompting stronger Republican opposition to censorship. Similarly, Tulsi Gabbard's critiques of the Democratic Party's foreign policy have resonated with Republicans skeptical of prolonged military engagements, highlighting a shift toward anti-war sentiment within the party. These changes reflect how defectors can align with and strengthen certain GOP priorities.

Mix of Motives

The reality likely involves a combination of motives. Some defectors are genuine, driven by ideological alignment with Re-

publican values. Others may see strategic opportunities to reshape the GOP, leveraging its openness to new members. The challenge for Republicans is distinguishing between sincere allies and opportunistic actors. Voters must focus on policy outcomes rather than party labels to assess these newcomers' true intentions.

The defection of Democrats to the Republican Party or unaffiliated status is a complex phenomenon. While some are motivated by genuine ideological shifts, others may pursue strategic goals through infiltration, attempting to compromise the core principles of the Republican Party, which believes in the founders' vision of a "Constitutional Republic." (For a detailed explanation of the differences between a Constitutional Republic and a Democracy, see my previous column, "[Democracy vs. Constitutional Republic](#)," on page 56 of the Montrose Mirror.) The founders envisioned a limited government rooted in rugged individualism, freedom, and liberty, as opposed to "Democracy," which, according to the Federalist Papers (specifically Federalist 10 and 14), they held in great disdain. They designed a system that supports individuals' opportunities to thrive without government interference—a principle embraced by the current national administration and one that should be replicated at the local level. By closely examining policy actions, voters can better understand the impact of these defectors on the GOP's future.

Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"

Citizen-Montrose, CO



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

(GMUG) NATIONAL FORESTS ANNOUNCE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF BEAR CREEK NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests announce temporary closure of Bear Creek National Recreation Trail for reconstruction efforts from May through October. The trail will be closed Monday through Friday but will remain open on weekends.

Crews will resume work to reconstruct portions of the trail between the trailhead and Yellow Jacket Mine, including extensive construction of stone retaining walls, drainage structures and low water crossings.

The upper sections of Bear Creek Trail will remain open and are accessible via Engineer Pass and Horsethief Trail.

"The safety of the public and the workers involved in the trail reconstruction project is our top priority," said Dana Gardunio, district ranger for the Ouray Ranger District. "By closing the affected section of the trail, we aim to complete reconstruction work efficiently and mitigate potential hazards during the construction process."

The work to reconstruct the trail is using funding from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) and is being completed through a partnership with the National Forest Foundation.

For current road conditions and closures, visitors can contact the Ouray Ranger District at 970-240-5300.

About the Forest Service: The USDA Forest Service has for more than 100 years brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation. Grounded in world-class science and technology— and rooted in communities—the Forest Service connects people to nature and to each other. The Forest Service cares for shared natural resources in ways that promote lasting economic, ecological, and social vitality. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, maintains the largest wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. The Forest Service also has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 900 million forested acres within the U.S., of which over 130 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

GOLDEN ACRES IN REDVALE

Letter to the Editor:

I received the assessed value of vacant land in Redvale, which is used for determining the Montrose County 2024 property taxes. The six lots were assessed at \$36,260. Each lot is 25 feet by 125 feet and is 3,125 square feet. The total 6 lots are, therefore, 18,750 square feet. There are, also, ½ of two vacated streets which bring the total to 27,000 square feet for

the entire parcel.

Subsequently, there are 43,560 square feet in an acre. That makes the parcel size 0.62 of an acre. It also makes the value of that land \$58,484 per acre.

Forty acres of such land, it would be worth \$2.3 million. If one were to buy a quarter section (160 acres) then that type of land would be worth \$9.4 million. Remember, this is vacant land. Also remem-

ber that this is 'Redvale' and not downtown Aspen.

Gold, currently, is worth approximately \$3600 per troy ounce. To buy a similar 160-acre parcel one would need 2,585 troy ounces of gold or 179 avoirdupois pounds (16 oz/lb). A quarter-section of this land is, therefore, literally worth my weight in gold.

Don Hemme, Redvale

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: COMMENTARY

THE CALIFORNICATION OF COLORADO — THANK YOU DEMOCRATS! NOT!

The Destructive Forces of Left-Wing Democrats are Bringing Colorado to Its Knees

By David White

As Colorado falls to the bottom of the 50 U.S. states in numerous categories (economic development and a healthy business climate, education, favorable regulatory climate, taxation, affordable housing, etc.), it is rising to the top of the liberal pile of “blue” states with its acceptance of lawlessness and associated crime, drug use and abuse, high levels of taxation in the form of fees and regulatory burdens, acceptance of illegal aliens and liberalizing laws that do little to protect citizens but rather favor the illegal aliens and criminal elements; regulations that are so burdensome on many industries that our very future is put in jeopardy especially with regard to the energy sector, and many more.

The leftists controlling the Colorado Legislature pulled out all the stops with this recently closed Legislative Session which ended on May 7th with their misguided efforts and beliefs that socialistic governmental policies are the answer to all of our ills. As has been proven throughout the centuries, such belief systems and their ensuing laws, rules and regulations signal the death of a sustainable (both socially and economically) and viable society. Such is the State of Colorado. The death spiral is there for all to see. And you don’t have to look that close to notice it.

Rather than regurgitating what many are saying about the Colorado that I once knew and loved, the following excerpts are from a perspective piece written by Wayne Laugesen for the Colorado Springs Gazette newspaper on April 27, 2025. His points and observations are excellent and worth reprinting here. Please visit the Gazette website to view the article in its entirety (https://gazette.com/opinion/perspective-dream-of-californication/article_540bd199-a31e-4c0c-b9a5-634999d05662.html)

“My home state of Colorado used to shine as a western American land of promise — where economic vigor and free-spirit vibes lured diverse transplants from around the globe. Migrants from great coastal cities likened it to a real-life version of Ayn Rand’s fictional, Colorado-based Galt’s Gulch — where industrialists, inventors,

entrepreneurs and artists established themselves to escape a collectivist society that manifest mediocrity and oppression.

Growth in population and wealth was the norm through the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Business leaders and top-ranking executives flocked to Colorado, with the state becoming a permanent home for at least 12 billionaires and 170,223 millionaire households by 2020 — not bad for a state with fewer than 6 million residents. It was an environment in which liberals, conservatives, libertarians, hippies, cowboys, rednecks, hillbillies, artists, tech entrepreneurs and free-spirited people of all philosophical and political persuasions led safe and stable lifestyles in a cultural and economic co-con.

Then came 2018, when the far left won majorities in both chambers of the legislature, and voters elevated Democrats to every statewide office — including Gov. Jared Polis, Secretary of State Jena Griswold and Attorney General Phil Weiser. By 2021, the left held both of Colorado’s U.S. Senate seats and four of the state’s seven House seats at the time (the state gained an eighth district in 2023, first held by a Democrat).

Seven years into this dark blue tsunami, the signs of damage are mounting. **Colorado’s stumbles at first looked eerily like those made notorious by California. Nearing the end of the 2025 legislative session, Colorado has outdone what center-right Coloradans call the “Left Coast.” This year’s legislative agenda — including a countercultural push to rework the state’s Labor Peace Act, tilting the scales toward unions and away from production — hints at more trouble ahead.**

For decades, Coloradans have grumbled about “Californication” — the influx of Californians jacking up home prices and hauling in left-leaning politics. It was one-part jest, another-part gripe, and a nod to the Red Hot Chili Peppers’ riff on cultural creep. “Colofornia” became a term of consternation among natives and others witnessing the influx. But it’s no laughing matter in 2025. **The numbers show a genuine shift, and the fallout — economic strain, cultural friction and a state gener-**

ally losing its footing — is hitting hard. What started as a high tide has turned into a flood, with average Coloradans mired in debris.

First, the good news

Despite a doctrinaire, radicalized legislature, what’s the matter with Colorado is far from intractable. Colorado cities and towns consistently rank among the top 10 for livability, as ranked on lists by U.S. News & World Report, WalletHub and other research organizations.

Colorado has become a draw for the country’s booming aerospace industry. Parks, trails, open spaces, ski slopes and awe-inspiring vistas complement a four-season climate conducive for year-round recreation. A modern proliferation of art venues, museums and concert arenas gives Coloradans cultural amenities more common in major coastal cities.

What we have here is a governmental leadership crisis of one-party control, with rippling consequences of death, homelessness, addiction, despair and growing unemployment — disproportionately burdening the most vulnerable among us.

Economic decline

Pre-2018, Colorado reliably flexed economic muscle no matter which party controlled the famously swingy purple state. **Studies consistently ranked Colorado in the top five for economic performance, and the state shined as a beacon for go-getters. By 2024, the Centennial State slumped to the bottom 10. It is California’s slow bleed redux: regulations pile up, costs soar and growth fizzles. Personal income growth, a bragging right at third nationally pre-2018, crashed to 39th by 2024 — even with Polis and company supporting some of the country’s highest minimum wage mandates, consistently projecting themselves as champions of the state’s dwindling working class.**

Though wage hikes raise some paychecks, jobs thin out, and businesses hesitate to grow or relocate — handing Colorado a growing “income inequality” dilemma like the divide between California’s Silicon Valley/Hollywood crowd and ordinary households.

Housing is referred to as a “crisis” by the mainstream media. **Median prices hit**

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\$541,352 in February, based on Zillow sales and listing data, landing Colorado among the five least affordable states. Apartments.com shows apartments in Denver going for 32% more than the national average.

Inflation across goods and services rose 15.4% since 2021, outpacing the rest of the country. Colorado's new and troubling status as the sixth-most-regulated state raises a growing concern: Will top employers continue doing business in what free-market, supply side defenders view as a freakishly controlling regulatory environment — much less choose Colorado as a good place to start, grow or relocate a business.

The regulatory excess goes beyond wage mandates, expensive requirements to save the planet by forcing the abandonment of natural gas heating, and countless other regulations that are hostile to businesses. The legislature and Polis in April banned the sale of most common handguns, rifles and shotguns except for those with enough free time and money to buy themselves past required training courses and licensure fees.

If that's not enough to discourage doing business in Colorado, the legislature crafted a bill that penalizes parents — with consequences that include losing custody — if they use a child's given name instead of one the child prefers. That proposed law alone has families planning to move, and much of the country rolling its eyes.

Jobs on the line

The workforce is taking hits. Oil and gas, a godsend for smart workers without college degrees, dropped 25% in active rigs by 2023, based on industry tallies. Compliance costs from post-2018 rules — \$590 million a year, as found by the Common Sense Institute — push layoffs and send firms packing.

The proposed 2025 Labor Peace Act overhaul — making it easier to require “closed shops” in Colorado — could jack up costs for employers running on fumes. The bill now on the table at the legislature to scrap the act would make Colorado join the ranks of the minority of states where one simple majority vote is all that's needed to force all employees in a workplace to fork over union dues, like it or not. The net

effect, worried Colorado development recruiters point out, would be to scare off a lot of employers looking to locate in Colorado or expand their operations here. California, under a union chokehold, is the poster child; employers have been fleeing its closed shops for “right to work” states where unions cannot make nonmembers pay fees or dues. Colorado's 3.8% unemployment in late 2024 looked rosy; expect it to rise if this bill becomes law. (Note — Governor Polis vetoed this bill.) Colorado's energy production provides a case study in control creep. Senate Bill 19-181, signed in 2019, flipped the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission from industry booster to eco-enforcer. Industry seats shrank from three to one, swapped for environmentalists. Local governments gained free rein to tighten drilling regulations the state had long prohibited to protect property rights and the country's energy supply. The oil and gas permitting process has become an engineered slog. Permits that took an average of 319 days in 2021 ballooned to 647 days by 2023. A per-barrel fee imposed in 2024 siphons cash for transit and wildlife. Colorado, the country's fourth-largest energy producer, harvests less than in 2019, costing the state high-wage jobs and tax revenues essential to funding schools and infrastructure. In March, Colorado had the second-highest unemployment rate — 4.8% — falling far below Mississippi, West Virginia, and other states that traditionally struggle economically. That compares with 2017, when Colorado tied for the country's second-lowest unemployment rate at 2.7% before the left-wing, uni-party tsunami. In 2017, Colorado's job-growth rate was the envy of the country at 2.4% compared with the national rate of 1.5%. The state's most recent job-growth rate has fallen to 0.17%, compared to the national rate of 1.2% — landing Colorado 43rd in the country for job growth between March 2023 and March 2024, with neighboring Utah and Wyoming in the top 10 for job growth.

Private property rules

Like oil and gas producers, commercial real estate owners feel the squeeze of

excessive regulation. House Bill 1286 (2021) mandates buildings over 50,000 square feet track energy and cut emissions — 7% by 2026 and 20% by 2030. Owners pay for retrofits, and the electrification mandates ban gas furnaces in buildings erected since 2024, with electric swaps due by 2027.

A 2024 rule tacks on gender-neutral restrooms and baby-diaper changing stations by 2026, raising construction costs even more. Polis pitches sustainability and fairness, but for business leaders it is the importation of California-style regulatory excess they can choose to reject by moving operations next door to Utah, or to any of the other less-regulated states surrounding Colorado.

Sanctuary state

Since 2019, Polis has backed policies like House Bill 19-1124, tying the hands of state and local law enforcement when asked to cooperate with federal holds requested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. By 2025, more than 40,000 unvetted immigrants had poured in, landing in a state of 5.8 million permanent residents. Most have no jobs, cash or prospects for employment and long-term housing.

The economy creaks under the weight of what Denver Mayor Mike Johnston gleefully calls “new arrivals.” It is a view from the perch an Ivy League politician who grew up in Vail — where the median home price hovers around \$2 million. Before the immigrant invasion, housing was a pipe dream for the young, and now these taxpayers shell out big to care for immigrants. Denver dropped \$36 million on shelters in 2023, based on city budget data. Culturally, it's a jolt, as schools strain under language gaps, and neighborhoods grapple with a new population of homeless people on top of scarcities in health care, social services and housing that were problematic before the immigrant insurge dramatically increased demand. Illegal immigrant prison gangs, most notable the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, have notoriously spread from Denver. They have taken over apartment complexes in Aurora, and several of their victims told a member of The Gazette's editorial board that the problem is far worse and

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more widespread than the public has been told.

Similarly, California's open-door experiment tanked affordability and stretched resources. For a state with seven times fewer residents than the Golden State, 40,000-plus "new arrivals" are a wave too high for the public to surf. Polis might call it compassion, but it amounts to a bill the average Joe and Jane Six Pack can't afford.

Free-range criminals

Crime, especially violent crime, was for Coloradans a problem mostly found in distant coastal and Midwest cities throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. People lived here to avoid crime. Then the left-wing cabal decriminalized every illicit drug — on the heels of voters enacting full legalization of marijuana — and indulged a "criminal justice reform" agenda that eased penalties for nearly every crime. The ideology said criminals need reform, but the result has been criminals flocking to Colorado — including Tren de Aragua gangsters, who made Colorado their North American headquarters.

The Common Sense Institute pegged Colorado's 2022 monthly crime rate at 530 offenses per 100,000 residents — up 7.3% from 2019 and 20% from 2008. Car thefts jumped 13.6% that year, hitting 40,000-plus and topping the nation. Violent crime is at 423 per 100,000 since 2018, above average, with homicides and assaults creeping up. Walking the streets of Denver alone at night — where one risks life and limb in Washington Park, on Capitol Hill or in other traditionally safe neighborhoods — makes little more sense than walking the streets of south-central Los Angeles.

The left's soft-on-crime policies culminated in national notoriety when U.S. News & World Report ranked Colorado the third most dangerous state in 2024.

Schools that fail children

Most of Colorado's 1,927 public schools are faltering, California style. Post-2020 Colorado Measures of Academic Success found math proficiency at 27.4% of the student population (down from 32.7%) and literacy at 43% (from 44.5%).

The scores reveal a dilemma nearly iden-

tical to California's 2022 slump to 33% proficiency in math and 47% in English. Gaps for minorities, low-income children, and special education students widened after 2018 gains faded. More funding is the cry, but experience proves it doesn't buy results.

A diminished brand

The state slid from a top-10 state for legal in-migration for three decades to the bottom 10 by 2025, perhaps the result of high living costs, crime and a one-size-fits all intolerant political climate incapable of inter-party cooperation. Homelessness festers in Colorado's metropolitan areas, linked to housing woes and limp policies. Tents and shanties make Denver streets and parks look similar than those in San Francisco and LA.

In the wake of hard-drug decriminalization and full-scale cannabis legalization, fentanyl deaths soared 101.3% from 2019 to 2022. Illegal pot trafficking persists. A federal forest official years ago told The Gazette's editorial board of large plantations hiding in some of Colorado's 11 national forests, complete with makeshift buildings and armed guards.

It turns out Latin American cartels prefer producing the drug in a state where illegal products meld right in with their licensed and legal counterparts. So much for the belief that legalizing pot would kill the black market.

Drug problems

Colorado's anything-goes drug orgy — with the second-highest teen fentanyl overdose rate — has fueled a booming drug rehab sector that has elders liquidating retirement funds to pay the costs of saving their children and grandchildren from substance abuse.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reported 413 substance abuse treatment facilities in Colorado in 2020, up from 382 in 2016. By 2022, its National Directory listed 448 facilities, suggesting an ongoing uptick in corporations feeding on a growing addiction epidemic.

Though numbers tell the rehab story, for the public it is palpable. Consider the Tri-Lakes region of mountain villages north of Colorado Springs. There, a former Ramada Inn hotel and two luxury mountain resorts

have transitioned into rehab centers. The community's former bowling alley and family fun center houses a large cannabis grow operation and recreational marijuana store.

California transplants

The California-to-Colorado pipeline has been flowing for years, with estimates showing tens of thousands of California transplants annually for the past three decades.

Though diminishing, the California influx brings Left Coast policies and more. Because of Colorado's relatively small population of 5.8 million, the demand created by deep-pocketed Californians contributes to housing prices rising so sharply that retirees struggle with property tax bills that rival old mortgage payments.

Politically, Californication has tilted Denver, Boulder, and Fort Collins leftward, while eating away at the consistently conservative tendencies of Colorado Springs — the veritable Orange County of Colorado, mimicking shifting political trajectories in south Los Angeles suburbs and San Diego.

Nonconductive to young life

In a state with living costs and crime approaching levels endured in California, bringing up children becomes increasingly challenging for many and a near impossibility for the working class.

Birth rates signal the growing unease.

Polis, a married parent of two children, frequently champions what he calls family-friendly legislation and insists the state could use more children. Yet, births in his state fell from 62,949 in 2021 to 61,494 in 2023, based on the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and March of Dimes data.

Fertility has fallen as low as 50.2 in recent years for every 1,000 women aged 15-44 — nearly a 25% fall since 2010, and the steepest decline nationwide. Fertility is at 1.48, which falls below the replacement rate. A slate of new laws — including a tweak to the state's Medicaid program — encourages and subsidizes terminations of unborn children. The Colorado Department of Health and Environment reports abortions increased from 8,873 in 2017 to 14,691 in 2023 (latest available) — a 65.5% increase.

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Public sentiment

The 2024 Colorado Political Climate Survey from CU-Boulder shows 33% approving of the state's economy, with a 52% buy-in from Democrats and 16% from Republicans. The gap resembles California's, where wealthy tech executives and celebrities don't typically know or care about the struggles of those living on or below the state's \$96,000 median household income.

Although Colorado's median household income mirrors California's, a recent study found that a household of four needs an income of \$108,000 in 2025 dollars just to scrape by. In Denver proper, the median household income is \$94,157 — nearly \$14,000 short of affording a modest family lifestyle.

Similar factors, throughout Colorado's metropolitan areas, render the state comfortably livable only for those with solid six-figure wages, high net worths, or what frustrated Boulder residents commonly refer to as "trust funders" or "trustafarians" — residents gifted with inherited wealth.

At the cliff's edge

When my wife and I moved to her native Colorado from Washington, D.C., in 1993, the state was indisputably America's playground — a magnet for workers, young professionals starting families, and free spirits of all sociopolitical and cultural

backgrounds. Today, not so much.

Colorado's new economic strains, high crime rates, and the sanctuary misstep have tested Colorado's historic grit. High costs, red tape and policy pivots since 2018 echo California's stumbles, hitting a smaller state harder and faster. Workers and families feel it as homes slip away, jobs dwindle, and sidewalks and other public spaces head toward blight.

Polis, a well-intentioned optimist, anticipates a brighter tomorrow. **Yet, data portend a future that could make California look stable and equitable by comparison. Colorado is far from hopeless — the climate, awe-inspiring terrain and entertainment amenities will outlive trends, and even humanity's existence — but the culture and economy tell a cautionary tale of a far-left, central planning agenda gone mad.** As the Chili Peppers tell it, "Born and raised by those who praise control of population — **its Californication.**"

In closing, I hope that you have taken the opportunity to have read this well-written piece by Mr. Laugesen carefully. Elections have consequences. The social, moral, economic and regulatory policies of the political left have taken Colorado from being one of the most looked up to states with a vibrant economy and highly educated population to now among the lowest.

How did it happen? The plan was well devised and implemented by Governor Polis and some of his millionaire/billionaire friends and the Democratic Party who brought about grassroots changes to everything from "non-partisan" boards and commissions (City Councils, library and school boards, recreation districts and so many more) and used them as training and breeding grounds for the policies that are now law.

Watch the 45-minute documentary "**Rocky Mountain Heist**" if you want to learn more and understand why we're here today in what has become one of the most liberal and expensive states that you can live in. You can and must get involved if you want to stop our slide into the cesspool of liberalism that we're about to drown in.

<https://youtu.be/wlv-rvja7Sc?si=cpmEXVnM5KlpwsDJ>

Mr. White is an active citizen & community leader as well as a business owner, entrepreneur, former Colorado Springs City Councilor and Montrose City Councilor as well as Montrose Mayor. He was a two-term Montrose County Commissioner and has served on many boards and commissions during his career. He & his wife are the parents of six children and have 10 grandchildren & one great grandchild.

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

COLORFUL TASK AT THE MUSEUM OF THE MOUNTAIN WEST

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— On Thursday, May 8, representatives of local Keller Williams Southwest Associates took part in a painting project at the Museum of the Mountain West as part of Kw RED Day, wherein nationwide Keller Williams offices take part in community projects. The Keller Williams Southwest Associates selected the Museum's 1890 Schoolhouse as their local project. Museum Executive Director Richard Fike said, "the school hasn't been painted in years so this is a welcome endeavor to maintain the integrity of the structure." Museum volunteers have been busy scraping old paint, power washing, and priming the building to prepare it for painting.

On Saturday, May 10, Montrose Scout Troop 491 took up the mantle to complete the schoolhouse painting task as well as paint the steps at the 1913 German Lutheran Church. Scouts are earning their community service hours for an Eagle Scout honor or merit badge award. Scouts participate in citizenship and eight hours of community service projects as part of the scouting program. Troop members attended a Montrose City Council meeting to fulfill the citizenship requirement. Troop 491 consists of boys and girls from sixth grade into high school. Scouts will also be selling their camp discount cards for \$5, which helps the scouts earn money towards summer camp in Wyoming.



On Thursday, May 8, representatives of local Keller Williams Southwest Associates took part in a painting project at the Museum of the Mountain West. Courtesy photo.

The Jutten School was built in 1889 and opened in 1890 with 20+ students in grades one through eight – all in one room. Originally located south of the City of Montrose near Uncompahgre Road, the bell tower and bell were moved to the Museum property for restoration. Most of the original structure had fallen in disrepair therefore another structure in similar size to the one room schoolhouse with matching siding was moved to the Muse-

um property and combined with the tower to restore to the schoolhouse exhibited today. Boys and girls interested in joining local Scouting America programs, can search online at scouting.org.

Step back in time at the Museum of the Mountain West "Where History Comes Alive" at 68169 Miami Road, Montrose, Colorado. For additional details, visit www.museumofthemountainwest.org or call 970-240-3400.

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COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

BETTY JEAN (GORMAN) ROBERTS *July 21, 1931 — October 25, 2024*



BETTY JEAN (GORMAN) ROBERTS of Montrose passed away on October 25, 2024, at Elk Ridge Health and Rehabilitation in Montrose, CO at the age of 93. Betty was born July 21,

1931, to Andrew Gorman and Hatty (Adam) Gorman in Clayton, NM. Betty married Delbert K. Roberts on June 12, 1949, in Granby, CO. Prior to moving to Montrose, Betty and Delbert lived in Fraser, CO for 52 years where they had worked and raised their two children.

Her granddaughter, Jennifer, has so many special memories. As a child, she loved spending a week with her grandparents, walking with her grandma to the local post office to pick up the mail and walking to the small-town library to get books to

read for the week. While living in Glenwood Springs in her mid-20s, Jennifer enjoyed spending the weekend up in Fraser playing Scrabble and Yahtzee with her grandma. Later Jennifer and her daughters would make special memories when coming to Montrose for a visit; having a girls' day in Ouray, Telluride, or Crested Butte.

Her grandson, Matt, has fond memories of spending a week each summer in Fraser with Grandma and Grandpa. Matt loved when they would come to Montrose in May for a week. They would take and pick him up from school instead of him riding his bike. He also remembers the hikes that the family would take in the Black Canyon with Grandma and Grandpa when they came for their annual visit.

Her great-grandsons remember Great-grandma as kind and generous person.

Her great-granddaughters have fond memories of playing miniature golf with Gigi in Ouray and feeding the fish in the

pond. They loved visiting the toy store next door to the miniature golf course and visiting with the owner.

Betty is survived by her daughter Cheryl (Joseph) Yergler of Montrose, CO; son Clint Roberts of Happy Camp, CA; granddaughter Jennifer (Robert) Powers of Manhattan, MT; grandson Matthew (Janie) Yergler of Goodyear, AZ; great-grandsons Kyler (Shailoh) Yergler and Zackery Yergler of Queen Creek, AZ; great-granddaughters Madalen Powers and Payton Powers of Manhattan, MT; and her older sister Lorene Hamilton of Agoura Hills, CA. Betty was preceded in death by Delbert K. Roberts, her parents and her brothers Loy Gorman and Roy Gorman.

Services will be May 17, 2 pm, at Crippin Funeral home, 802 E. Main St in Montrose, CO.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Touch of Care Hospice, 1100 E. Main St, Ste B, Montrose, CO 81401.

News, if unreported, has no impact.
It might as well have not happened at all.
Thank you for reading The Montrose Mirror.

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

ION DAN SPOR

November 25, 1950 — March 19, 2025

ION DAN SPOR, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, pastor, and counselor, passed peacefully into the presence of the Lord on March 19, 2025, at the age of 74. Ion was born on November 25, 1950, in Telluride, Colorado, to Earnest Spor and Annie Proper. He was raised in the Montrose and Colona area alongside his older sister, Doretta, and older brother, Raymond ("Ray").

After graduating from high school, Ion pursued a diploma in Biblical Education from the Western Bible Institute in Morrison, Colorado. It was there he met his beloved wife, Delores Ann Emert. The two were married on May 22, 1971, and together they built a life rooted in faith, love, and service. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2021—a milestone that reflected their deep commitment to one another and God.

Ion and Delores made their home near Olathe, Colorado, where they raised their two children, Robin and Benjamin. Ion was a loving father and a proud grandfather to Zachary Neelley and the late Hunter Neelley, who passed away on October 12, 2014, after a courageous battle with cancer. Delores preceded Ion in death on April 8, 2022.

Throughout his life, Ion was passionate about teaching, preaching, and counseling. He served faithfully in ministry for decades and was ordained in 1983. He ministered throughout the Uncompahgre Valley as both a guest speaker and interim pastor, offering wisdom, compassion, and spiritual guidance to many.

Ion also worked for 30 years at Tri-County Waters, where he fondly referred to his work site as "The pile of dirt," known more formally as the Ridgway Dam. His dedication to his work mirrored his commitment to helping others.

Ion's academic achievements included a Master of Science in Counseling Psychology from Carolina Christian University (1990) and a Doctor of Philosophy in Temperament Therapy from Emmanuel Baptist University (1990). He received certification as a Licensed Clinical Pastoral Counselor from the National Christian Counselors Association in 1993. His passion for learning and sharing knowledge never diminished. Ion will be remembered for his deep faith, unwavering kindness, gentle spirit, and the wisdom he so freely gave. His life was a reflection of Christ's love, and his absence is deeply felt by all who knew him.

Memorial donations may be made to:



House of Promise / 180 Ministries / Teen Challenge 7750 6025 Road Olathe, CO 81425

This ministry held a special place in Ion's heart. The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to all who have shared their prayers, love, and support.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we also believe that God will bring with Jesus those who died while believing in him." — 1 Thessalonians 4:14 (TPT)

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**MONTROSE REGIONAL
CRIME STOPPERS**

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

ROBERT BALERIO

November 25, 1944 — April 30, 2025

BOB BALERIO, 80, passed away at Montrose Regional Hospital on April 30, 2025. Bob was born in Mexico and was the oldest of five children. He moved to Sedgwick, Ks. when he was 8 years old. After high school, he attended Southwestern College in Winfield, Ks. where he met his future wife, Sandy. They would have celebrated 55 years of marriage this May.

Before Bob could even begin his teaching career, he was drafted into the Army and was sent to Vietnam. After his return, he married and both he and Sandy moved to Yates Center, Ks. where he began his teaching career in the 5th grade and also coached high school track. He was also responsible for starting the Lady Wildcat basketball program there in 1972. In two years, he led his team to the state tournament.

After leaving Yates Center he and Sandy moved to Montrose where they made their home since 1975. Bob began his teaching career again at the Uncompahgre Elementary school as teacher and principal. He moved to the old Morgan school as principal and then to Johnson Elementary. Soon after, he went to Montrose High School as an assistant girls basketball coach alongside John Mraule. After

his son was born, Bob became an assistant principal at Montrose High School and then the Athletic Director. His last principalship was at Cottonwood Elementary which ended in 2001 with his retirement.

Once a coach, always a coach. After retirement, he spent two years being an assistant basketball coach with Vic Kintz in the Ridgway girls basketball program.

Bob loved going fishing, camping and golfing.

He and Sandy had wonderful trips to Mexico, Costa Rica and Spain. He loved traveling by train to the East coast and to the West coast. and of course he loved the casinos.

He was most proud of his family, his son Brian and his family and grandkids who affectionately called him "Baba." He will always be remembered for his dedication to education, his teachers, and his students and for his big smile and the stories he would tell.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Ysidra, his sister-in-law, Sue and his brother Martin. Bob is survived by his wife Sandy; son Brian; daughter in law Rachael; grandchildren Jayda and Cameron; sister Carmen (Joe)



Bribiesca; brothers Bernie, and Andy along with several nieces and nephews. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at Saint Mary's Catholic Church, 1855 Saint Mary's Dr., Montrose, CO on Monday, May 12, 2025, at 10am.

A Committal Service and Military Honors will follow at Grand View Cemetery, Montrose, CO.

Contributions may be made to Sharing Ministries in Montrose or the ASPCA.

Now more than ever...

Thank you for reading

THE MONTROSE MIRROR

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

SANDRA LEE GLASPELL

December 18, 1939 — April 30, 2025

SANDRA LEE GLASPELL of Montrose Colorado passed away peacefully on April 30, 2025 at the age of 85 after a 10-year battle with renal cell carcinoma. Sandra Lee Smith was born in Blackwell, Oklahoma in 1939. She graduated from Denver East High School in 1957. Following graduation from high school she attended the University of Colorado in Boulder.

It was during her college years that Sandra met Doug Glaspell on a blind date. After only eight dates, they became engaged and six months later, on June 4, 1960, they were married. They moved to Denver and grew their family with the addition of their daughter Pamela, followed three years later by the birth of their son Michael. When Doug began working at the new IBM plant in Boulder, the family relocated to Gunbarrel Estates in Longmont, Colorado where they raised their children. Sandra was dedicated to

ensuring Pam and Mike had the most incredible childhoods filled with wonderful family memories to share throughout future generations. When the kids were out of elementary school, she began her career with IBM in Boulder. The IBM connection moved them from Longmont to Tucson and then to Dallas. They returned home to Colorado, retiring in Montrose where they spent more than 20 wonderful years together.

Sandra was preceded in death by her parents, Cregg and Ressie Smith, and her sister Jeanie Heller. She is survived by her husband, Doug, of Montrose along with their daughter, Pam Carroll (Bill) of Marietta, Georgia and son Mike Glaspell (Chris) of North Richland Hills, Texas. She is also survived by granddaughter, Christy Johnson (Jeffery) and grandson, Bryan Carroll (Lauren), and four great-grandchildren, Harper Johnson, Maxwell Johnson, Lan-



don Carroll, and Logan Carroll all from Georgia. She is additionally survived by her sister, Karen Vacca (Don) of Montrose and sister-in-law, Joyce Busch of Omaha.

JOE QUINTANA

December 12, 1935 — April 21, 2025



~A Life Long Lived~

JOE QUINTANA, a beloved father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and cherished friend passed away peacefully of natural causes at the age of 89. A native of Colorado, Joe lived a full and vibrant life.

Born and raised in Colorado, Joe had a deep connection with the land. He spent his early years working for the Forest Service and exploring the great outdoors, developing a lifelong passion for adventure. He enjoyed pushing the cattle up to high ground when working on the ranch. He loved to snowmobile and go 4-wheeling while taking friends out for trail rides. He knew the Grand Mesa like the back of his hands. Joe was also known for his mechanical skills, which gave him a fulfilling career as a mechanic, he had the ingenuity to fix anything that had an engine.

In Joe's retirement years, he could not sit still so he started his lawn care business where he took immense pride in taking care of his clients' yards. He was very meticulous and had an unwavering work ethic. During retirement Joe was fortunate to vacation with friends and family. He enjoyed square dancing and going to the Denver Bronco games.

Joe's life was enriched by the love and companionship of three wives, each of whom held a special place in his heart. He is survived by his three daughters, who carry forward his values of kindness and resilience. Joe is also survived by his six siblings who all appreciate the importance of family. Joe was a proud grandfather of six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, who brought joy and laughter to his life. Throughout his long life, Joe touched the lives of many people with his warm smile and humor. He had numerous friends and did not go anywhere without knowing someone and saying "hello." His presence will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Rest in peace, Joe Quintana. You will be forever remembered and dearly missed.

Per Joe's request, there will not be any services.

ISSUE 521 May 12, 2025

ART & SOL

YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE — GRIEF AND RESILIENCE



By Dr. Lauren Hall Ruddell, PhD

Greetings Mirrorites

OLATHE-Recent beautiful spring weather, including some much-needed rain, has helped to lift my spirits from a source of stress that I am confronting daily. A beloved pet is dying of cancer. This 17-year-old cat has been my companion for her entire life, and now that life is coming to an end and my grief is profound and difficult to cope with. My emotions are all over the place and my daily short-term memory has become jangled. Walking with the goats and/or gardening helps my morning dysphoria to mellow out by mid-afternoon, but then it's back the next day. Curious as to why there seemed to be so little in the way of lasting effects from time in nature, I dug into the research and found some answers that I will share here.

I spend a lot of time in nature for about nine months out of the year. I had read that regular exposure to nature has a



Mindful grieving, remembrance and reflection outdoors can help with the healing process. Courtesy photo.

moderating effect on stress under adversity. So why am I taking this family member's passing so badly? I knew that research had indicated that the amount of nature in and around the home was found to lessen the acute effects of stressful life events on *children's* psychological distress. Similarly, the amount of nature near a child's school was also found to buffer the impact of stressful life events on a child's perceived stress. In addition, in adults, having a view of nature (i.e., trees, plants, foliage) from one's office was found to moderate the negative impacts of job stress on one's intention to quit their job. But when it comes to general

well-being, it doesn't matter as much initially. Yes, adults who had experienced a stressful life event, and who lived within three km of lots of green space reported fewer health complaints and better general health, than individuals who lived within a more hardscaped 'grayscale.' This was not news to me. The surprise for me, and possibly the answer to my question, was that for adults, the amount of nature near the home—at either 1 km or 3 km—was found not to affect the initial perceived severity of effects of stressful life events on mental health. Apparently, there is a difference between adults and children in how hard adversity hits and

Continued next pg

YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE – GRIEF AND RESILIENCE From previous pg

how much nature can help from the get go. This makes a certain weird amount of sense when viewed from an evolutionary standpoint. Strong emotions help to ensure appropriate responses to external situations, threats, and stimuli. As one paper from 2015 rather grossly states, "The activation of two conflicting adaptations may lead to maladaptive behavior: indecision, or perhaps intermittent approach and avoidance. For example, a first glance at an attractive potential mate might motivate approach, but up close, infected sores might become unmistakably apparent." Nice imagery. But the take-home point is that emotions tell us immediately how to respond to pretty much every sitch in a way that promotes our safety and reproductive success. Fear is super obvious, but anger, jealousy, envy, lust, greed, and so forth all have a part to play. Our remote ancestors were immersed in nature every day, and if such immersion blunted immediate responses, then survival might have been compromised. That pouncing saber-tooth tiger or club swinging sexual rival really is a big deal and should be treated as such. Feeling those emotions intensely from the outset is actually a good thing, if unbearably painful in the moment. Even grief serves an evolutionary purpose.

The purpose of grief seems to be a mechanism for promotion and retention of social cohesion. If you lose someone precious to you and you just don't care, well,

was that person really precious after all? And if they aren't valued deeply, then is there any point in fighting to protect them from harm? Of course not, would be the sensible answer. Adult grief has been shown to help cement future attachments, when grief is properly processed over time.

Modern techniques in neuroscience allow us to see grief in real time. In MRI scans, a brain region called the nucleus accumbens, which lights up when we talk fondly of our loved ones, also glows at our grief at losing them. As one researcher stated in a short but well-written article in [The Conversation](#)... "reward centres in our brain that make us happy together, keep us bonded by making us sad when we are apart. In this sense, evolutionary biologists have suggested the protest phase of grief lasts long enough for us to search for our loved one, yet is short enough to detach when hope is lost." The protest phase is the refusal to believe that the loved one is actually gone forever. It is the initial response and is normal and natural before entering the despair (depression) phase.

This same part of the brain is involved with reward and motivation impulses through the production of dopamine and is stimulated through time in restorative natural environments. Time in nature can help with grief processing, if not with the initial pain of adversity or loss. The researchers in the study I mentioned above [from 2019](#) expected that frequent group

walking in nature would 'buffer' the initial severity of emotions associated with the stress of loss. Alas, their hypothesis on that score was not supported. But what they did find was that after the initial shock had been experienced and was being processed, that time in nature was significantly helpful, in their words, for 'undoing' the stress and intensity of response to the loss. In other words, after the shock has begun to pass, time in restorative natural environments begins to promote emotional healing and resilience. This human need is also dictated by the evolutionary reality of effective recovery in order to survive (or maximize) social and environmental events still on the horizon.

Finding this out has helped me to gird my loins for the inevitable and encouraged me to make extra room for time in nature during the despair phase. I know from the experiences of a friend who was depressed for two years after the death of a beloved dog that this phase is potent and needs to be tackled head-on.

I hope this narrative is helpful to those in the throes of grief, or like me, in anticipation of upcoming loss, and encourages you to tackle the grief process head on as well by taking time with friends and loved ones outdoors, and spending plenty of time appreciating the cycles of nature, including both births and deaths.

Best wishes,

The Mindful Naturalist



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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

CELEBRATE ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY WITH MONTROSE SCREENING OF FILM ON COLORADO WOLF REINTRODUCTION, FACE PAINTING, AND CONVERSATION

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Celebrate Endangered Species Day with a free film screening of *Welcome Home*, face painting, and conversation with local wolf-livestock conflict prevention expert Matt Barnes on Friday, May 16, 6-8pm at San Juan Brews in Montrose (512 E Main St).

The Endangered Species Coalition will be celebrating Endangered Species Day with a free screening of their award-winning short film "Welcome Home." Directed by Alan Lacy, the film celebrates the historic reintroduction of wolves to Colorado. Along with the film there will be free endangered species face painting and a conversation with Matt Barnes, a local livestock-wolf conflict reduction specialist.

"Welcome Home" was filmed in Colorado with several scenes filmed right here in Montrose. The film offers a hopeful and realistic perspective on what the historic wolf reintroduction means for Colorado, the gray wolf, and wildlife conservation.

Endangered Species Day was first celebrated in 2006. The founders, David Robinson and the Endangered Species Coalition, created the holiday to encourage learning about, and taking action to protect threatened and endangered species. Since 2006, events have been held around the United States each year. 2025 is an important year as there are unprecedented attacks on the Endangered Species Act in Congress.

This event is open to the public, family friendly, and free of charge. To learn more about the event and the film visit endangered.org/welcomehome.



PLANTING A SPIRITUAL GARDEN

By Rev. Dr. Arlyn Macdonald

MONTROSE-The yellow wisteria, tulips and daffodils, flowering fruit trees, green leaves appearing everywhere, all tell us it is time to plant our gardens. I am looking forward to planting my garden in my new raised garden beds, a gift of love from my son and his wife who came from California to Colorado to build them for me.

As I thought about what seeds and plants I wanted to fill those new garden beds, I thought about the gracious gifts of the Divine Spirit, the Creator, who causes the miracles of spring and enlivens the seeds to grow.

I began to see the earthly garden as a model for a spiritual garden. Our consciousness is the rich soil of our spiritual garden and the perfect place to plant spiritual seeds. What kinds of spiritual seeds do we want to grow into our lives? I choose to grow seeds of Love, Compassion, Kindness, Abundance, Tolerance, and Peace.

Seeds are also prayers. As I plant peas, beans, carrots, corn, squash, tomatoes and peppers, I will pray for and bless each seed and each plant as they go gently but firmly into the ground. These seeds represent all the spiritual seeds I am planting in my spiritual garden.

Before I plant anything though, I must prepare the soil by removing all the weeds and rocks. Weeds and rocks that need to be removed from the spiritual soil of our consciousness are all those thoughts of discord, dissent, and hurt feelings. We've had a plethora of these kinds of weeds and rocks lately. I don't want them to grow in my garden. I want to make sure I pull out and discard them into the spiritual compost pile, even the tiniest of weeds, so they can be transformed into love and then returned to my

garden as nourishment instead of decay.

After the seeds and starter plants are gently placed in the ground, I will spray them with a fine mist of water, soaking them lightly with Love and Blessings and good energy.

My earthly garden and my spiritual garden need watering and my daily attention. I will continue to guide my thinking to positive thoughts and remove any negative "weeds" that come into my consciousness as I pull up any earthly weeds I find. I will speak positive affirmations about my garden and my life. The garden is a good place to pray.

Every evening before I go to sleep, I give thanks that both my gardens are growing into a lavish harvest. I envision them with strong plants and bearing good fruits. There is nothing more delicious than eating straight from your own garden and as I envision the seeds growing into healthy plants, I also envision myself biting into a luscious tomato or nibbling on fresh peas. This way I strengthen my faith that my gardens will be abundant.

One of the best parts of growing an earthly, and a spiritual garden, is to watch the seeds appear out of the soil and reach for the sun. I always wanted to have time enough to just sit and watch the carrots grow. I get excited when I see those first tender leaves poking up through the soil and through my soul. And I get excited when I realize I have made a new choice to act from love and kindness.

I recently taught a class on the importance of symbols and part of the class was to explore the Art of Floriography – the meaning of flowers. I want to plant some meaningful flowers in my two gardens, ones that help keep the bugs away and are good to eat and ones that symbolize spiritual ideals. For example, mari-



Cosmos represent the Universe. Mirror file photo.

golds are a symbol of celebration and are good at keeping the bugs at bay. Nasturtiums symbolize "abundance coming your way" and also repel garden pests and attract beneficial insects. Other edible flowers are violas, strawberry and squash blossoms, pea flowers, pansies, chive blossoms, and many others. It is always best to doublecheck your resources before eating any flower to make sure it is edible and safe.

I look forward to the flowers blooming in my spiritual garden: Dianthus – the Flower of God; Blue Iris – faith; Jasmine – eternal love; Cosmos – the Universe; Rose – love; Sunflower – lofty thoughts and happiness.

May you plant two gardens this year and may both of them be filled with delicious food to eat, wonderful opportunities to come closer to the Divine, and joy and wonder at the amazing process of Life. Happy gardening!

Rev. Dr. Arlyn Macdonald is the Senior Minister of the Spiritual Awareness Center in Montrose and Dean of the Spiritual Development Institute. She also teaches Spiritual Discovery Classes. More information at www.spiritaware.org



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MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY

ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH

Address: 2057 S. Townsend, Montrose, CO 81401.

Office Hours: By appointment.

Contact Information: (970) 249-2451
<https://www.allsaintsmontrose.org/> Rec-
 tor: The Rev Preston Gordon, [pgor-
 don@allsaintsmontrose.org](mailto:pgor-

 don@allsaintsmontrose.org)

Worship Service Times: Sundays 9AM,

Sunday Worship. Wednesdays 11AM, Mid-
 week prayer and communion, Wednes-
 day, Noon, Multi-denominational Commu-
 nity Prayer Hour.

All Saints Anglican Church is an Evangelical
 Anglican Church committed to the minis-
 try of Word, Sacrament, and Spirit. Our
 music is a combination of traditional
 hymns, contemporary, and modern songs.

We invite kids preschool and up to join
 our kids worship time during the 9am Sun-
 day service. We would love to welcome
 you here. Following the service, join us for
 snacks and conversation. On the third Sun-
 day of the month we celebrate a potluck
 meal together.

Vision: We see Jesus Christ restoring
 hope: in us and in our world.

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH

Independent Baptist
 112Main St.
 P.O. Box 262

Olathe, Co 81425

Tuesday-Friday Phone: 970-808-1021
www.biblebaptistchurcholathe.com

Pastor Gabe Skillo

Sunday School 9:15 a.m.

Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Sunday 6 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Study/Prayer 7 p.m.

CELEBRATION CHURCH

Denomination: Southern Baptist Church
 (SBC – Southern Baptist Convention)

Address: 2900 Sunnyside Road, Mont-
 rose, CO 81401

Office Hours: By appointment

Phone: (970) 497-4925

Email: celebrationmontrose@gmail.com

Website: [https://
 celebrationmontrose.org/](https://celebrationmontrose.org/)

Worship Service Times: 9am and 10:45am

Senior Pastor:

Pastor Brandon Mathis

Church Description/Mission: Celebration
 Church makes disciples that make disci-
 ples. Our core values include the Scrip-

ture, discipleship, community, service,
 prayer, love, and unity.

Demographics: Multi-generational

Celebration Kids: (age birth to 5th grade)
 programs offered both services.

Student (middle & high school) at 9am.

Adult -Discipleship classes 8am and
 10:45am.

CHRIST'S CHURCH OF THE VALLEY

Name of Church: Christ's Church of the
 Valley

Denomination Affiliation: Non-
 denominational Christian Church/Church
 of Christ

Address: 10 Hillcrest Plaza Way. Mont-
 rose, CO 81401

Office hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 9am-
 noon and by appointment.

Contact information:

Phone: 970-249-0530

Email: CCVMontroseCO10@gmail.com

Website: ccvmontrose.org

Name of current Senior Pastor: Ken Law-
 rence

Worship service times: 10:30 a.m.

Mission: Christ's Church of the Valley is a
 loving and welcoming church whose pur-
 pose is to help people to know and grow

in our Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of
 God.

Description: CCV is a multi-generational
 church family. While we are currently pre-
 dominately seniors, we are becoming
 more multi-generational.

Sunday School & Childcare: CCV has
 adult Sunday School at 9 a.m. and Youth
 Church during the 10:30 a.m. worship
 service.

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Denomination: Christ Lutheran Montrose

Affiliation: Lutheran Church Missouri Syn-
 od

Address: 1980 N. Townsend Ave., Mont-
 rose, CO 81401

Contact: 970-633-0226

Website: www.montroselutheran.org

Email: montroselutheran@gmail.com

Pastor: Tim Onnen

Worship: Sundays at 9 AM

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class at
 10:15 AM; Women's Bible Study Fridays at
 9 AM. At Christ Lutheran Montrose you will

find friendly people gathered in a welcom-
 ing environment being comforted and en-
 couraged by the forgiveness and love of
 Jesus, and sharing that with one another.

We are a small congregation of seniors
 and middle-aged, sprinkled with young
 children and teenagers.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT CHURCH

United Church of Christ (UCC)

Address: 504 N. 1st Street (HAP Building)

Office hours: Call or text for appointment

Phone: 970-765-7070

Email: spirit@communityspiritucc.org

Website: communityspiritucc.org

Current Pastor: Rev. Wendy Kidd

Worship service: Sundays at 11am

Mission: Our commitment to a more inclu-
 sive and accepting world is steadfast, and
 we will continue to work towards a future

where everyone can live freely and au-
 thentically.

Demographics: We are a small congrega-
 tion of mostly adults and seniors, however,
 we are always ready to welcome families
 and children.

COVENANT HEBRAIC FELLOWSHIP

Denomination affiliation. No affiliation

Address Office hours N/A

Contact: 720-951-9941,
office@ccfmontrose.net,
www.ccfmontrose.net

Name of current Senior Pastor. Led by
 elders

Worship service times. Noon on Satur-
 days. Children's Church will be offered as
 needed.

Covenant is a Hebraic roots community

that studies the Torah as well as the rest of
 Scripture. We learn about the Hebrew
 roots of the language and believe that the
 Lord's feasts are for today. We are pre-
 dominantly made up of older folks, but
 have some young blood, too.

MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY *From previous pg*

FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Denomination: Church of the Nazarene

Address: 705 South 12th Street

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9 am-Noon and by Appointment

Contact Information: Office Phone 970 249-9213, mncfirst@gmail.com, www.montrosenazarenechurch.org

Pastor: Buddy Cook

Services Sunday: Worship 10 AM, Adult Bible Study 11:30 AM Worship includes age-appropriate children's ministry during adult worship.

Wednesday: Prayer Boot Camp - 7 PM

Mission Statement: *Montrose First Church of the Nazarene exists to make Christlike*

disciples in Montrose Colorado and around the world.

Demographics: Our church consists of older and younger people. We have younger families with children and young teens and older adults as well. We also support the work of Calvary Ranch Colorado and its addiction recovery ministry.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MONTROSE

Affiliation: Presbyterian

Address: 1840 E Niagara Rd. Montrose CO. 81401 **Office Hours:** M-Thu 9AM - 12PM

Contact: 970-249-4732, info@fpcmontrose.com, www.fpcmontrose.com

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jesse G. Mabanglo

Worship Service times: 9:30AM, *We strive to encourage, challenge and*

support one another through spiritual growth, worship, and service in our community, country, and world. We also encourage children and youth to grow their relationship with Christ through our children and student ministries.

HILLCREST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Denomination affiliation: United Church of Christ

Address: 611 South Hillcrest Drive, Montrose, CO 81401

Office hours: By appointment

Contact information:

Phone number: (970) 249-9047

Email address: office@montroseucc.org

Website: montroseucc.org

Current Pastor: Rev. Wendy Kidd

Worship service times: Sunday, 10 a.m.

Hillcrest Congregational UCC is a welcoming, open and affirming church, open to all no matter who you are or where you are

on life's journey.

Church demographics: HCUCC welcomes all ages to worship with us. (predominately family, youth, seniors, singles)

We offer inter-generational worship with a children's "prayer-ground" and activity packets. A cry room is also available.

MONTROSE MISSION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

Affiliation: Orthodox

Meets: 2057 S. Townsend, Montrose, CO

81401 and Cimarron Creek Clubhouse.

Worship Services: The Montrose Mission of the Orthodox Church meets every Saturday night at 7 PM at All Saints Anglican

Church for Vespers, and we currently meet only on the third Sunday of each month for Divine Liturgy in Montrose at 9:30 AM at the Cimarron Creek clubhouse.

MONTROSE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Denomination Affiliation: United Methodist

Address: 19 S. Park Avenue Montrose CO. 81401

Office Hours: M-Thu, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Contact Information: 970-249-3716, office@montroseumc.org, [mont-](http://montroseumc.org)

montroseumc.org

Current Senior Pastor: Rev. Kevin Young

Worship service times:

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual

9:45 a.m. Christian Education & Fellowship

11 a.m. Sanctuary

Montrose UMC is a leader in being fully inclusive, loving, and just servants of

Christ. Our church family welcomes people from various cultural and faith backgrounds: single, married, remarried, with or without children, from diapers to den-tures.

Wherever you are on your spiritual journey we invite you to come discover hope, joy, peace, purpose.

ROSEMONT BAPTIST CHURCH

Affiliation: Southern Baptist

Address: 1598 E. Niagara Road, Montrose, CO 81401

Office Hours: Tues-Thurs, 9am-4pm

Contact information:

Phone: 970.249.4887

website: www.RosemontBaptist.org

email: office@rosemontbaptist.org

Senior Pastor: Rolland Kenneson

Worship Service Times: Our engaging and relevant Sunday Worship Service is at

10:45 AM. We also have Bible Study for All Ages Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM. We provide a professionally-staffed nursery throughout both.

Rosemont Baptist's desire is to passionately bring people face-to-face with the life-changing power of Jesus Christ.

We are a multigenerational church from different walks of life who love Jesus, love each other, and love our community. Everyone comes dressed in whatever is comfortable. We love meeting new people no

matter what stage of life they are in.

Children's services: We have a fun Sunday School for children from four years old through youth. We provide Children's Church during the Sunday Worship Services where children four years old through 9 years can learn to be worshippers of Jesus.

We provide a nursery for children under four years old with paid staff providing excellent care during Sunday Morning Bible Study and Worship Service.

MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY From previous pg

SPIRITUAL AWARENESS CENTER

Denomination affiliation: Independent Spiritual and Interfaith Community
Address: Services at Lions Park Community Building, 602 N. Nevada, Montrose
Office hours: Tues-Fri, 9 am to 4 pm, Home Office – 970-252-0908
Contact information: Rev. Dr. Arlyn Macdonald, 970-252-0908, arlyn@spiritaware.org, www.spiritaware.org
Name of current pastor: Rev. Dr. Arlyn

Macdonald, Senior minister; Rev. Ruby Salaz, Assistant Minister. Spiritual Counseling available.
Worship service times: In-person Sunday Unity Service at 11 a.m., (Social Time begins at 10 a.m.); Quiet Meditation at 10:30 a.m. Virtual Afternoon Service on Zoom at 2:00 p.m., 2nd Sunday of each month; Chai Chats, a Wednesday morning midweek informal spiritual gathering at 10:30 a.m. at Pun Hill Himalayan Restaurant, Mont-

rose; Everyone is welcome. The Spiritual Awareness Center is an interfaith spiritual community welcoming spiritual seekers and people of all faiths, providing a safe place to explore and nurture the individual's unique connection to the Divine through Unity services, classes, family and community projects. People of all ages are welcome.

There are currently no Sunday School or nursery services provided but craft supplies are available for youth.

ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Denomination: Anglican-Reformed Episcopal Church (REC)
Address: 2405 Sunnyside Road, Montrose 970-249-4868
Contact: [ststephensmont-](mailto:ststephensmontrose@yahoo.com)

rose@yahoo.com
www.ststephensmontrose.com
Rev. Dec. Garrett Agajanian
 St. Stephen's is a community of caring Christians rooted in the godly traditions of the past, focused on the challenges of the

present, hopeful for the future, continuing in the Faith once delivered to the saints, using the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.
Sunday: Holy Communion 10 am. Fellowship following service.
 Children's nursery available (unstaffed).

SUMMIT CHURCH OF MONTROSE:

Denomination affiliation: Southern Baptist
 Address: 10977 60.75 Rd. Montrose, CO 81403
 Office hours: Varies
 Contact information:
[email:summitchurchmontrose@gmail.com](mailto:summitchurchmontrose@gmail.com)
 website:

www.summitchurchmontrose.org
 Senior Pastor: Interim Pastor
 Worship service times: Sunday Worship is at 9 a.m. followed by a time of fellowship and snacks. Beginning Feb. 23 we will have a family Bible study, "Lord, Teach Me to Pray," following fellowship from 10:45-11:30 a.m.

All family members are welcome.
 During the Sunday sermon we offer teaching for children ages birth to kindergarten, in a kid-friendly room called Base Camp. We have communion on the first Sunday of each month and meet following services for a potluck brunch.
 Please visit <https://www.summitchurchmontrose.org/events>

VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH OF MONTROSE

Denomination Affiliation: Independent Baptist
Address: 2890 N Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8am-12pm
Contact Information: Phone (970) 249-

6874; email at info@vbcmontrose.org; website: vbcmontrose.org
Current Pastor: Roland Kassales
Worship Service Times: Sunday School at 9:30am, Sunday AM Service at 10:30am, Sunday PM Service at 6pm, Wednesday Night Service at 6:30pm (all services include childcare)

Victory Baptist Church exists to exalt God, edify saints, and evangelize the lost. Demographics: Victory Baptist serves everyone with age-appropriate classes, groups, and activities. Families with children make up the majority of VBC with young adults, singles, middle-aged couples, and seniors comprising the rest.

Church Directory
 Mirror Editorial Staff
 MONTROSE-As a way of serving the faith community in Montrose, the Montrose Mirror is in the process of establishing a Church Directory. If your congregation or fellowship would like to be included in the directory, please supply the following

information to the Montrose Mirror:
 Name of church
 Denomination affiliation
 Address Office hours
 Contact information (phone number, email address, website)
 Name of current Senior Pastor
 Worship service times

Please give a one sentence description of your church and its mission in the Montrose community.
 Brief description of your current church demographics (predominately family, youth, seniors, singles).
 Do your church services include Sunday School and childcare?

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

WATER LINE REPLACEMENT ON OAK GROVE ROAD

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE- Chipeta Water is replacing a water main line on Oak Grove Rd. from 6400 Rd. to 6300 Rd. (approximately 4600') beginning on May 19th. This project is estimated to last through late August. This project will impact traffic to one lane during working hours only. 970 Excavation from Grand Junction will be the contractor doing the work for Chipeta Water.

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The Satisfied Woman

WHY OUR PETS MEAN SO MUCH: THE SCIENCE AND SOUL OF A BEAUTIFUL BOND

There's a certain kind of peace that comes from the thud of paws following you from room to room. A tail wag, a gentle purr, the quiet understanding in a pet's eyes—these moments aren't trivial. They're powerful, deeply felt, and scientifically valid. For many of us, pets are far more than companions; they are family, emotional lifelines, and reflections of our truest selves.

When you curl up with a dog after a long day, or your cat stretches across your lap in perfect trust, your brain responds with a hormonal cocktail that mirrors human bonding. Oxytocin—the “love hormone” is released, flooding your system with a sense of connection, calm, and belonging. This isn't just sentimentality. It's a biological reaction akin to what a mother feels when cradling her child.

Women, often natural caregivers by both socialization and instinct, may feel this bond even more acutely. The act of nurturing—feeding, grooming, cuddling, and talking to a pet—fulfills a deep emotional need to connect and care. And in return, we're met with unfiltered loyalty and affection.

In a culture that often demands perfection, pets love us exactly how we are. They don't care about messy hair, bad days, or unspoken insecurities. They sense moods, offer comfort, and never interrupt when all you want is quiet presence. For those of us juggling careers, relationships, caregiving, and societal expectations, that



*By Gia Pirelli.
Courtesy photo.*

unconditional emotional safety is priceless.

Pets become our confidantes, our comfort zones, and, often, the most consistent source of affection in our lives. They're there when friendships shift, when relationships end, when life feels unpredictable. And their loyalty never wavers. There isn't any person who could offer me the level of comfort and solace my dog gave me through my divorce, after the death of my dearest friend, or even during recovery from surgery. He didn't have to say a word. He was just right there, by my side.

The emotional impact of a pet goes beyond feelings—it affects our mental well-being. Research shows that pets can reduce anxiety, soothe symptoms of depression, and even improve heart health. Just the simple act of petting an animal can lower cortisol (the stress hormone) and increase serotonin and dopamine levels, promoting happiness and relaxation.

Pets also give us routine. Feeding, walking, cleaning and playing build a rhythm in our day—something that can feel grounding in times of stress, grief, or transition. When navigating emotional labor or burnout, that structure can be a quiet form of reassurance and support. In some cases, that comfort and structure can give life purpose and meaning.

There's a unique comfort in falling asleep with your animal nearby—the gentle weight of a warm body curled at your feet or by your side, the slow rise and fall of their breath beside you. Or, in my case, the throaty snores that could suck the paint off a ceiling. It's a quiet kind of security, like the world is just a little less sharp with them close. For many women, especially those who live alone or carry the invisible weight of anxiety this presence

creates a sense of ease that's hard to find elsewhere. In that stillness, we're reminded that we're not alone. Their closeness calms the nervous system, offering the kind of peace that doesn't need to be explained—only felt.

For most of us, pets aren't just part of the home—they're also part of our identity. They remind us of our capacity for love, resilience, and empathy. Whether we're single, partnered, mothers, daughters, or caretakers, pets can often reflect our emotional landscape back to us. They keep our heart open. And through them, we learn to soften, be present, and to forgive ourselves. I sometimes wonder what it would be like to see myself through my dog's eyes.

If you ever cried into your pet's fur, felt your heart leap when you come home to them, or grieved them like you would a human loved one—or maybe even more, you are not alone. That emotional depth is real. It's valid. And it's a testament to your capacity to love without conditions. In a world that sometimes questions or trivializes women's emotions, let this truth settle in: your bond with your pet is sacred. It is healing, profound, and beautiful.

So go ahead—post the photos, buy the birthday treats, sing to them, talk to them like they understand (because they probably do). Love them fully and unapologetically. They're not “just animals.” Enjoy every moment with them, and appreciate the great gift they bring to your life.

My mom says, “Our animals are our angels.” I believe that's true. They're steady heartbeats in a noisy world, grounding us in love, offering quiet companionship; they guard and protect us, and ask for nothing but our presence, a gentle hand... and maybe snacks.

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SAVE THE DATE! LOCAL EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING-

COLUMBINE QUILTERS meet at Welcome Home Alliance Warrior Resource Center, 4 Hillcrest Plaza Way Montrose. 1st Saturday except for July at 9 am.

FRIENDSHIP QUILTERS meets at the Montrose County Events Center, 4th Thursday Jan - Oct, 3rd Thursday Nov - Dec, 9am.

HEALING COLLECTIVE OF WESTERN COLORADO-Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 12-1pm the Healing Collective of Western Colorado meets at 220 N Stough Ave. It is open to all wellness providers in the area who would like to collaborate with and learn from other local practitioners.

MONTROSE FARMERS MARKET (970) 249 0705 Centennial Plaza, 433 S. 1st St. Montrose, CO 81401 www.valleyfoodpartnership.org. Year-Round Farmers Market, Saturdays 9am-1pm (Summer), every other Saturday 10am-1pm (Winter). Accepts SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks.

MONTROSE CENTER FOR ARTS FIRST FRIDAY-New Art Exhibit opening with featured artists. 4:30 - 7 pm First Friday of every month. 11 S Park Ave., Montrose. Free Admission. For more information: 970-787-9428 or info@mc4arts.com

MONTROSE ALTRUSA-1st Tuesday of the month Program meeting; 2nd Tuesday of the month committee meeting; 3rd Tuesday of the month Business meeting. Meetings are held at the Field House on the corner of Colorado Avenue and Rio Grande Avenue at Noon.

FREE THINKERS meet 1st Sunday of the month for information call 970 417-4183

BOSOM BUDDIES BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP, Wednesdays noon-12:45, 645 S. 5th Street

MONTROSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY meets 1st Wednesday of the month @ Montrose Events Center, 1036 No 7th Street 7 pm (970) 249-2085 www.montrosehistory.org

MONTROSE AREA WOODTURNERS Montrose Area Woodturners meet second Saturdays 9 am. Chapter of the American Association of Woodturners. For location and information contact: Al Head 970-209-0981 or aheadaviation@outlook.com

NURSE FAMILY PARTNERSHIP-Breastfeeding Support Group on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month. An infant scale will also be available to check your baby's weight. Breastfeeding Support Group (Bring your questions and your family!) Montrose County Event Center (1036 North 7th Street Room 3) 10am - 12pm. Questions? Please call 970-252-5015.

BINGO EVERY FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY at 7pm at the American Legion Post 24 Olathe doors open at 5:30. Sunday Bingo will start at 1:30pm. More info call Tom 970 260 8298.

MONTHLY

May 13--On Tuesday, May 13. SW CO Trafficking Task Force Meeting. Cedar Creek Church, 222 S. Townsend, 6-8 p.m. Come find out about the various kinds of trafficking that are going on in our own area, what to look for, and how you can help keep our community safe. The Beyond Trafficking team from Texas will be presenting.

May 16-Celebrate Endangered Species Day with a free film screening of *Welcome Home*, face painting, and conversation with a local wolf-livestock conflict prevention expert Matt Barnes on Friday, May 16 6-8pm at San Juan Brews in Montrose.

May 16-Montrose Republican Women will host SD5 Senator Marc Catlin for an end of session legislative recap Friday, May 16 at Hampton Inn Montrose from noon - 130p. Social time at 1130a. Please bring a friend. Brown bag lunch. Contact Kerri at 970-209-5170 for information.

May 17-Join Morningstar Therapy Dogs and MAPA (Montrose Animal Protection Agency) as we celebrate the third annual Montrose "Hug Your Dog Day" on Saturday, May 17, from 10 - 2. This event will be held at Chow Down located at 535 S. 1st Street in Montrose. Grab the family and come on down to have your picture taken with you hugging your dog. In addition to the photo op of you hugging your dog, there will be games and prizes. There will even be a free drawing with prizes such as a \$100 grooming certificate. For more information about this event or if you are interested in becoming a therapy dog team, contact Vanessa at 970-729-2528, Sue at 970-596-9343 or Joy at 970-240-1561.

May 18-Montrose High School Class of 2025 Graduation Ceremony will be Sunday, May 18, 2025 @ 3:30, Montrose Football Stadium.

May 18-Olathe High School Class of 2025 Graduation Ceremony will be Sunday, May 18 at 12:30 at Wilson Field.

May 21-Have you ever wondered how archaeologists record, document and visualize the cultural landscape? Please join us to hear Greg Munson (Society of Cultural Astronomy in the American Southwest) discuss the process including dynamic panoramas, 3D modeling, astronomical cycles and much more. May 21 at 7pm at the United Methodist Church 19 S Park Avenue Montrose. Chipeta Archaeological Society. Free.

Sept. 13-14-The highly anticipated Tribute to Aviation, Montrose Regional Airport's signature event, is officially scheduled for Sept. 13-14, 2025. As one of the largest static aircraft displays in the western United States, Tribute to Aviation will showcase both military and civilian aircraft. For more information, please contact Vendla Stockdale at vstockdale@montrosecounty.net or 970-964-2479 or visit www.tributetoaviation.com

OUT AND ABOUT, AND BLENDING IN...



Seen while hiking...at left, a bullsnake is nearly hidden on the trail. At right, a Leopard frog shows his spots, just barely. Photos by Harry Switzer and B. Switzer.

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