



ONLINE NEWS
ASSOCIATION



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ANNUAL MONTROSE HOME GARDEN & BUSINESS EXPO RETURNS FOR 21ST YEAR *For local vendors only, 'It's been a great show and very successful'*

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-Come on down to Friendship Hall Jan. 30-31, to escape the winter chill and light up your business prospects!

For those in the know, the 21st Annual Montrose Home, Garden & Business Expo, hosted by Whitey's Home Improvements, is the place to be. Expect food trucks, fun, and prizes, as well as the chance to see friends old and new-- Show hours are Friday 10am-7pm and Saturday 9am-3pm.

"It's a big ole' winter party and a good old happy time, no hustle," Whitey's Owner Norvan Huff told the *Mirror*. "It's a show for local vendors only—it's been a great show and very successful."

Huff said that Whitey's has been in the Home Improvement Business for 79 years, and that he has been involved in Home, Garden & Business shows for more than 40 years.

Whitey's Home Improvement started producing the Expo in 2000; their goal has always been to create a Home Show Expo for local vendors in the Montrose, Delta, and Ridgway area.

"We have always produced the show in late January or the first part of February each



Expo photo courtesy of Whitey's Home Improvements.

Continued pg 2

VISTA CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ASK RE-1J TO POSTPONE DECISION; BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTES 5 - 2 TO RELEASE VISTA CHARTER SCHOOL



Public Information Officer Mikayla Unruh presented the student spotlight at the Board of Education meeting.

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-When the Montrose County School District RE-1J Board of Education gathered for the January regular meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 13, two directors were present virtually, while the others were present in person. The meeting ran for more than four hours, during which time the Board of Education voted to release Vista Charter School to the Colorado Charter School Institute.

The current school board includes Board President Neisha Balleck; Vice President Ted Valerio; District C Director Scott Scarborough (attending virtually); District D Director Tom West; District E Director Tiffany Vincent (attending virtually); District F Director Jody Hovde; and District G Director Shane Daly. Balleck asked for a moment of silence to focus on academic success for students.

The Board voted unanimously

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[Your Brain on Nature!](#)

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[By Cliff Dodge!](#)

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[Column By Gia Pirelli!](#)

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HOME GARDEN & BUSINESS EXPO RETURNS *From pg 1*

year," Huff said. "At that time of year people are looking for things to do because it's winter."

Prior to 2000, other entities produced shows, but they brought in many out-of-area businesses. There wasn't just a local show for local businesses, Huff said.

In 2021 when COVID hit, Whitey's stopped producing the EXPO due to state gathering mandates, but local demand ensured it would return.

"We had many of our local businesses contact us and ask if we would start the Expo up again," Huff said. "Many of the original exhibitors are in the show this year."

And keeping it local is still the name of the game. "It's all local vendors," Huff said. "Garage doors, implement dealers, hot tubs, banks, fencing, carpet, appliances just to name a few—it's a group of local companies showcasing their wares. We're going to have giveaways, and there will be food trucks out front. The grand prize—a Samsung 65" Crystal 4K Ultra HD LED TV—will be given away at 3 PM Saturday. "It's kind of like a family reunion down there," he said. "Whitey's produces it for the community, and it is fun—we don't care if it's snowing. Come on down and say hi!"

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- Erik Edman
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- Marvin Horvitz
- Manuel Vargas
- Guillermo Barba

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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. This rule now includes requests to re-print letters that have already run.

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,

the Montrose Mirror



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Published every Monday in Montrose, Colorado, the Montrose Mirror reaches a readership of more than 35,000 across the region and around the world

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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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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED FOR PLANNING COMMISSION VACANCIES

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— The City of Montrose is accepting applications for one alternate position on the City of Montrose Planning Commission. The appointee will serve through the remainder of the 2026 calendar year.

The Planning Commission evaluates matters related to planning and community development. Members of the Planning Commission serve at the pleasure of the City Council and are appointed for four-year, overlapping terms. Meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 5 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, located at 107 South Cascade Avenue.

Applications are available at City Hall, 400 E. Main Street, on the City of Montrose website at CityofMontrose.org/Application or by calling 970.240.1422.

Applications and letters of interest must be submitted to the City Clerk by 6 p.m. on Thursday, February 5, 2026.

For information about the City of Montrose visit CityofMontrose.org.

BLM OFFERS 1.1 MILLION BOARD FEET OF TIMBER

Special to the Mirror

GUNNISON – Starting Jan. 15, 2026, the Bureau of Land Management will offer a sealed bid timber sale in Gunnison, Colorado, for 1.1 million board feet of timber.

The West Fork Ridgeline Timber Sale primarily includes thinned Douglas fir on 808 acres of forest lands and will directly reduce wildfire threats in the area and improve forest health.

“The BLM is committed to promoting increased timber production and sound forest management by maximizing provisions under our Good Neighbor Authority,” said Rob Potts, the acting Southwest District manager. “Timber production also supports forest management and wildfire risk reduction projects can save lives and communities.”

Sealed bids must be received by Forester Ken Smothers, Bureau of Land Management, 2500 East New York Avenue, Gunnison, CO 81230, prior to 10 a.m. Mountain Daylight Time on Jan. 29, 2026. Any bid received after 10 a.m. on Jan. 29, 2026, either by mail or in person, will not be accepted.

For more information on sealed bid requirements please visit our [timber sales website](#).

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

OUR SCHOOL BOARD IS MAKING SURE VISTA CHARTER SCHOOL HAS THE GUIDANCE THEY NEED

Editor:

I attended the January 11 MCSD School Board Meeting where a presentation from the Charter School Institute (CSI) was given by the Executive Director, Terry Croy Lewis. She thoroughly went through how CSI supports a charter school. It was extensive and impressive. In addition, several staff from Vista spoke in favor of the change.

This was prompted by the principal of Vista, Luke Siebert, and the majority of the Vista administration to change oversight from the Montrose County School District to CSI. Apparently, the Montrose County School District was not meeting their needs, so they sought another op-

tion. At least two of the School Board Directors had spoken at length to Vista staff and the overall consensus was that a change was needed.

Community members who had spoken against this move in the December meeting were more concerned about the fact that CSI was located in the Front Range, and it would be better if oversight was local, i.e. The District. The reality is that location makes no difference if needs are not being met. The District has so much responsibility already with all of our schools and doesn't have a lot of experience with Charter Schools. It makes more sense if a group that specializes in Charter Schools oversees Vista. You would think

MCSD would be glad to have CSI take over.

The School Board voted 5-2 to give CSI oversight over Vista. It was moved "to approve Resolution 02-2026 Release of Vista Charter School Institute as presented."

The only Directors who voted against this were Jody Hovde and Tom West.

It is encouraging to see the Board help meet the needs of Vista Charter School instead of wanting power and control over them. Kudos to Director Balleck, Ted Valerio, Tiffany Vincent, Scott Scarborough and Shane Daly!

*Respectfully Submitted,
Leah Vandersluis*

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CITY ANNOUNCES DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY CLOSURES

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— The City of Montrose will be closed on Monday, Jan. 19, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. City Hall, the Downtown Visitor Center, Municipal Court, Animal Shelter, Montrose Pavilion, and the City Shop will all be closed.

Police officers will be on duty and responding to calls, but Police Department Offices will be closed.. The Black Canyon Golf Course is closed for the month of January, however, the Pro Shop is open for season pass sales from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Rusty Putter restaurant, located at the golf course, will also be open on Monday, Jan. 19, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Trash and recycling schedules will be adjusted for the holiday. City residential trash customers who would normally receive service on Monday, Jan. 19, will instead be served on Tuesday, Jan. 20, and Wednesday, Jan. 21.

For trash routes normally scheduled for Monday, Jan. 19, residences south of San Juan Avenue and U.S. Highway 50 will receive trash collection services on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

For residences north of San Juan Avenue and U.S. Highway 50, trash pickup will occur on Wednesday, Jan. 21.

Recycling customers who would normally receive collection service on Monday, January 19, will instead be served on Friday, January 23.

Residents with questions about route adjustments are encouraged to call City Hall at 970.240.1400 or visit CityofMontrose.org/Trash

For information about the City of Montrose, visit CityofMontrose.org.

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Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE—On Jan. 21 from 5 to 7 pm at the Montrose Regional Library, Join Peak Academy students and local water leaders for a fun, interactive board game about drought resilience. Test your decision-making as part of a basin roundtable and see if your community can withstand years of low rainfall! Dinner and kids activities provided.



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SHAYE SCHOTTEL ANNOUNCES RUN FOR MONTROSE COUNTY CORONER

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-My name is Shaye Schottel and I am running for Montrose County Coroner.

I moved to Montrose in 2004 while finishing a Bachelor's degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry from Mesa State College with the chance at an internship at CBI. That fell through and I started working as the Pet's Manager at Murdoch's Ranch and Home Supply instead.

I started as an autopsy denier (helping pathologists with autopsies) at Montrose Regional Health in 2005 and took a full time position as a Pathology Technician in 2006. I became a deputy coroner in 2007 when Dr. Canfield became the county coroner. I was deputy coroner for Montrose County until I retired in 2022 for personal reasons.

I became a certified Histotechnologist in 2012 and went to work for Community Hospital. I was a deputy coroner for Dr Dean Havlik for Mesa County for almost five years, while still working for Montrose County. I came back to Montrose Regional Health as the Histology Supervisor, where I am currently, in 2018. I recently came back as a deputy coroner for Montrose County. In summary, I have 16 years' experience as a Deputy Coroner and autopsy denier. If anyone has any questions, I can be reached at shayeforcoroner@gmail.com



Shaye Schottel. Courtesy photo.

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RED HAWK BOYS SPLIT A PAIR

Red Hawks 49, Grand Junction Central 24

By Cliff Dodge

MONTROSE-The holiday layoff usually produces some rust and dust for sports teams in all sports. Not so the Montrose Red Hawks Boys Basketball Team. The Red Hawks smoked the Central Warriors 49 to 24 on Tuesday evening at the Warriors home court.

As per usual the Red Hawks jumped out to a comfortable lead in the first quarter leading 13 to 7. Things got considerably worse as the Red Hawks scored in double figures in all three quarters while the Warriors managed 6, 6 and 5 points the rest of the way.

Sophomore Bodhi Schafer led the Red Hawks in scoring, knocking down 13 points while Freshman Cache Obert added a dozen points to the Red Hawks total. Junior Josh Hawks and Senior C. J. Rocco accounted for 8 and 7 points respectfully. In the rebounding department C. J. Rocco and Lane Pressler each contributed 8 caroms to the Red Hawks' total. The Red Hawks managed 17 assists, 7 steals and turned the basketball over 12 times.

The Red Hawks hit on 5 of 11 shots from Downtown while hitting 6 of 8 attempts from the Free Throw Line. The Red Hawks shot 14 of 20 from the two-point line for a 70 percent shooting average.



Red Hawks clear the glass. Photo by Cliff Dodge.

FRUITA-MONUMENT 59, RED HAWKS 35

The Fruita-Monument Wildcats, sporting a 12-2 record and a ton of confidence, took the measure of the Montrose Red Hawks boys basketball team by the score of 59-35 at the fieldhouse in front of a sell-out crowd.

The Red Hawks played the Wildcats even-steven through the first quarter of action and actually led after 8 minutes by the score of 12-11. Things got progressively more difficult from that point forward. The second quarter saw things got out of hand very quickly as the Wildcats poured in 22 points as compared with just 6 points for the Red Hawks.

The second half of the contest proved to be more of the same as the Wildcats slapped on a press that the Red Hawks had difficulty in solving, and saw the Wildcats outscore the Red Hawks 26 to 17 down the stretch thus preserving the win for the Wildcats.

The Red Hawks were led in the scoring column by Junior Ryan Pankey who scored a dozen points while Cache Obert, a freshman, notched 10 points. Senior Josh Hawks had 5 points while Senior Lane Pressler added 4 to the Red Hawks mix.

The Red Hawks hit the road for their next couple of games, first with Montezuma-Cortez High School on Tuesday and then another road trip to Durango on Friday to take on the Demons.



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RED HAWK GIRLS REMAIN UNDEFEATED

Red Hawks 62, Grand Junction Central 9



Fighting for possession under the basket. Photo by Cliff Dodge.

By Cliff Dodge

MONTROSE-The Montrose Girls Basketball team returned from their holiday break and traveled to Grand Junction and totally smoked the Central Warriors ladies 62 to 9. There usually is a bit of rust and dust following an extended layoff. No so with the Red Hawks.

The initial quarter set the tone for the rest of the match as the Red Hawks piled up 22 points while giving up only 6 points. As a matter of fact, the Red Hawks gave up only 3 points through the final three quarters to account for the 53-point drubbing. The Red Hawks scored 15, 16 and 9

points to settle the outcome virtually before the contest started.

The Red Hawks had nine players hit the scoring column led by Mayce Oberg who poured in 15 points. Another Senior Kendall Johnson, added 9 points to the total. Senior Lilly Nelson led the Red Hawks with four rebounds while seven Red Hawks added to the rebound totals.

The Red Hawks passed out 14 assists, had 14 steals and only turned the basketball over six times. The Red Hawks shot 63 percent from the field while the team sank 8 of 15 attempts from the charity stripe, a 53 percent scoring clip.

RED HAWKS 47, FRUITA-MONUMENT 39

The Montrose Red Hawks continued their winning ways with a Friday night tilt at the Fieldhouse as the Wildcats of Fruita-Monument came calling. The Wildcats and the Red Hawks battled through the first two quarters of action and saw the Wildcats take a 5-point lead at the half-way point. Things changed dramatically as the third quarter opened up. The Red Hawks offense got untracked as the home team outscored the Wildcats 15 to 2 and took a commanding 8-point lead heading into the final canto. Both teams scored 9 points in the final frame to make the final score the Red Hawks 47, the Wildcats 39.

Seven Red Hawks scored points in this contest. The scoring was bunched and showed a total team effort. Landree Johnson led all scorers with 10 points, followed closely by Mayce Oberg and Lilly Nelson with 8 points, Maggie Legg with 7 points, London Schafer and Ava Godbe with 6 points and Zuri Balleck with a deuce. The Red Hawks tightened up their defenses in the second half to match the offensive output and the result was a satisfying team victory..

The win improved the Red Hawks record to 14 wins and 0 losses overall, and a 2-0 record in league play. Next up for the Red Hawks will be a road trip to the Four Corners and a game vs the Montezuma-Cortez high school on Tuesday evening.



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MONTROSE REGIONAL HEALTH ADDS AUTOMATED CPR SYSTEM TO ADVANCE CARDIAC EMERGENCY CARE *New technology allows uninterrupted, hands-free CPR during lifesaving procedures*

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— Montrose Regional Health (MRH) has added the ZOLL AutoPulse NXT Resuscitation System to its cardiology services, expanding its ability to deliver consistent, high-quality CPR to patients experiencing cardiac arrest. The automated device provides continu-



Brittney with the Autopulse NXT Resuscitation System. Courtesy photo.

ous, hands-free chest compressions that adjust to a patient's body, helping maintain blood flow to the brain and heart while caregivers focus on advanced lifesaving care. The purchase was made possible through grant funding that covered 75 percent of the cost of the device. Support included funding from the Mabel Y. Hughes Charitable Trust and the Western Regional EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (WRETAC). WRETAC works to strengthen emergency and trauma care across western Colorado through quality improvement, education, and regional coordination. "We are grateful for the partners who help make these critical investments possible," said Robyn Funk, grant writer at Montrose Regional Health. "Support from organizations like these strengthens regional collaboration and helps ensure patients in our community have access to advanced cardiac care when every second matters."

The MRH cardiology team will use the AutoPulse NXT in the catheterization lab during cardiac arrest cases that require advanced imaging and intervention. The device allows CPR to continue without interruption during procedures and helps reduce radiation exposure for clinical staff.

"The AutoPulse allows us to maintain consistent circulation during some of the most critical moments of care," said Jennifer Funk, service line director for cardiology services. "It gives our team the time and stability needed to address the underlying cause of cardiac arrest and improves the chances of survival and recovery."

Montrose Regional Health continues to invest in advanced technology that strengthens emergency cardiac care for patients in Montrose and surrounding communities. To learn more about cardiology services at MRH, call 970-252-2950 or visit montrosehealth.com/cardiology.

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With Mixed Bag Jazz

Concert proceeds benefit the Montrose Regional Health Foundation and the MRH Cardiology Department.

When: Saturday, Feb 14 2026

Pre-Concert Dinner: 5:30 p.m.

Concert: 7:30 p.m.

Where: Montrose Pavilion, 1800 Pavilion Dr.
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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

LUNATICS NOW RUNNING THE DEMOCRATS' ASYLUM

Editor:

I wrote last week about the Democrat party being enamored with “the warmth of collectivism,” and NYC’s new communist administration talking about property ownership being a weapon of white supremacy. The Peoples’ Republic of California is doing its best to keep up with the lunacy. They are now trying to put a 5% wealth tax on the ballot. The tax is not just a tax on income or real estate. It is a tax on everything you own – stocks, cash, savings – your entire life’s accumulation. It is billed as a “billionaires” tax, but the real target is the assets owned by the middle class. Think about your retired grandparents who are living on Social Security, maybe a small pension, and whatever they’ve managed to save over a lifetime of work. They own their own home, the value of which has inflated over the decades far above what they paid for it. They have a car, furniture, and maybe a few investments. They don’t have much cash but, mainly due to the appreciation on their house, their net worth might approach \$1,000,000. At a 5% wealth tax, California would have them pay \$50,000 yearly until their assets are depleted. They can then join the ranks of those totally dependent on the government, which is the goal. Billionaires will simply leave the state, but most middle-class retirees won’t be able to. Democrat Bernie Sanders has the solution. He has promoted a federal version of the wealth tax that applies to the entire country, thus making it impossible for anyone to simply move to avoid losing their life’s work. This has nothing to do with fairness or billionaires. This is about turning ownership into a liability and making everyone totally dependent upon the government.

The evidence is overwhelming that the Democrat party is now the party of Marxist/socialist elites and their various designated victim groups who don’t want to provide for themselves. Only a remnant of their historic base – those turning a blind eye to the Marxist takeover of their party – remains with the party. Democrats have alienated the bulk of their base and turned to unrestricted mass illegal immigration to offset the loss. Minnesota governor Walz burned through a \$19 billion state surplus, raised taxes by \$9 billion, increased spending by 40%, and his state now has a \$6 billion debt. Simultaneously, and not coincidentally, Somalis are stealing \$9 billion+ of taxpayer

money, and Walz does nothing to stop it. On the contrary, Walz, the Minneapolis mayor, and other Minnesota “leaders” encourage and coddle unruly leftist mobs and obstruct federal law enforcement, while ignoring and denying the billion-dollar fraud. It doesn’t take a genius to understand the reason they are aiding and abetting the mobs: They want the chaos to deflect from their own failures and crimes. They are unable to discuss or explain how so many of their politicians end up with a net worth in the tens of millions in a few short years while making \$175,000 per year. Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar is a poster child for Democrat corruption. From marrying her brother to defraud the immigration system, to filing fraudulent tax returns, and siphoning campaign cash into her husband’s bank account, her record is a testament to systemic corruption. The mental gymnastics these deranged liberals go through to explain things to us dummies is awe inspiring. To avoid talking about her family’s net worth jumping to \$30 million in one year from practically nothing, while her state is awash in billions of dollars in Somali fraud, Omar says she is “exhausted” by how much taxpayer money is funding Somali fraud investigations. This is the same Omar who just tried to slip a million dollar funding provision into a spending bill, which was directly linked to organizations currently under federal investigation for fraud – a brazen attempt to bail out the same corrupt networks stealing taxpayer money.

The whole Renee Good scenario is the most recent example of the mental gymnastics the left is going through to explain themselves. Good was a trained lesbian activist who lost her life attacking ICE agents who were in Minneapolis to deport Somalian fraudsters – fraudsters who came from a country where being LGBTQ is literally punishable by death. The liberals’ whole narrative can be summarized as follows: “Oh my gosh! Americans are now living in fear that they could be killed just for hitting ICE agents with their cars!” I just reviewed a long list of some of the worst illegals ICE has detained in the sanctuary state of Minnesota, and it is disturbing to say the least. I’ll only mention a few: A Laotian illegal convicted of sexual assault and sodomy of a girl under age 13 and procuring a child for prostitution with a deportation order going back to 2012. A Mexican illegal convicted of sexual assault of a child and DUI with a deporta-

tion order since 2016. A Salvadoran illegal convicted of three counts of homicide with a deportation order since 2025. An illegal from Sierra Leone convicted of two counts of homicide with a deportation order since 2022. To Governor Walz, attempts to remove these murderers and rapists constitute an “attack on Minnesota,” that is “endangering Minnesotans.” These sickos were roaming freely on the streets of Minnesota prior to their arrest, but Democrats want you to believe they are just your friendly “neighbors.”

Democrats twisting themselves into pretzels to remove Renee Good’s responsibility for her own death at the hands of ICE agents responding in self-defense is just one example of why Democrats are no longer taken seriously.

Actual innocent women and mothers are killed every day in this country by lawless thugs with 20+ prior arrests who are still walking the streets because some woke judge has more compassion for violent animals than for law abiding citizens. The radicals portraying Good as an innocent victim never say a word about those victims. They also said nothing when Laken Riley and multiple other young women were raped and murdered by illegal thugs. Ashli Babbitt was unarmed on January 6th and was shot dead by a capitol police officer, and the Left celebrated. Iran is now gunning down unarmed civilians and the Left is totally silent. Worse yet, in Washington, white liberal women protesters who support Hamas are clashing with anti-Khamenei Iranians who want to overthrow the Ayatollah. Democrats are working overtime to alienate not only their base, but the rest of the country as well – defending criminal illegals from deportation, opposing the arrest of a narco-terrorist dictator who illegitimately took office (all while ironically being on the “no kings” bandwagon), and trying to protect drug runners for the cartels. hilariously, they are now trying to spin what’s happening in Venezuela, which will soon mean more oil on the market and lower energy costs. Democrats are now explaining to us dummies why abundant oil and lower energy prices are bad for America. Oh, and Ilhan Omar wants us to know Elon Musk is “one of the dumbest people on earth.” Do you need further evidence that the lunatics are now running the Democrats’ asylum?

Ed Henrie, Montrose

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MASLOW ACADEMY OF APPLIED LEARNING NAMES LEANN DISTEL AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Leann Distel .
Courtesy photo.

Special to the Mirror
MONTROSE – January 15, 2026— The Board of Directors of the non-profit Maslow Academy of Applied Learning early childhood care and education centers is pleased to announce the appointment of Leann Distel as Executive Director, effective

January 1, 2026. Distel was selected following a comprehensive recruiting process that attracted strong candidates from across Colorado. Distel has been with Maslow Academy since 2010, demonstrating exceptional leadership and growth throughout her career with the organization. She has progressed from classroom educator to administrative roles and most recently served as Site Director for Maslow Academy on Hillcrest, a position she has held since 2022. Her deep understanding of the organization, combined with hands-on experience in both educational and operational capacities, positioned her as the ideal candidate to lead Maslow Academy into its next chapter.

"We were fortunate to see tremendous interest from highly qualified candidates during our Executive Director search," said DoriAnn Adragna, Board President.

"Leann was the unanimous choice of the board due to her proven experience, deep commitment to children and families, and vision for the future of Maslow and Bright Beginnings. Her deep understanding of our programs, steady leadership, and dedication to children, families, and staff position her exceptionally well to guide our organization forward. We are confident her leadership will provide both continuity and thoughtful growth in this next chapter."

Distel holds an Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education from Colorado Northwestern Community College and is Montessori trained. Her educational background, paired with extensive

practical experience across both of Maslow Academy's sites, provides a strong foundation for her new role. "What makes Maslow Academy special is our people—the educators who show up every day with passion and dedication, and the families who trust us with their children," said Distel. "My goal is to support our team, deepen our community partnerships, and stay true to our mission of empowering children to reach their full potential through exceptional early learn-

ing experiences." She succeeds Chrissy Simmons, who led the organization for 15 years and oversaw the strategic expansion from one site to two, including the addition of Bright Beginnings at Colorado Outdoors in January 2023. Simmons has transitioned to a role at Colorado Mesa University Montrose Campus, where she serves as the Lead IRIS advisor and continues to teach early childhood education classes for the region, helping to expand the pipeline of early childhood educators.



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Whether the year ahead includes a move, a new beginning, or simply staying informed about the market, I'm always here as a trusted resource.

*Warmest wishes for a healthy, happy,
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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MONTROSE AARP TAX-AIDE SITE TO OPEN FEB. 3-APRIL 10

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-The Montrose AARP Tax-aide site will be in operation from Feb. 3 through April 10 at the Senior Center in the Montrose Pavilion, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9am – 2pm. **Reservations required** – Make reservations at 970-252-4889 Monday – Thursday 9am – 2pm.



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

MY RESPONSE TO DAVE STOCKTON: Unaffiliated Voters and the Illusion of Independence

Editor:

As the author of the January 5 Montrose Mirror piece titled *"There is No Such thing as 'Non-Partisan'"*, I appreciate Dave Stockton's letter challenging my views on unaffiliated voters, it has helped me to clarify my thoughts and possibly my position concerning the topic for others out there who may not have fully understood what I was trying to put across.

However, after considerable thought, ***I believe his claims reinforce my point***: declaring oneself "unaffiliated" does not constitute true "free thinking." It often avoids committing to principles aligned with a party and one's own core values. Party membership does not demand or even expect blind agreement. It means supporting foundational ideals while allowing disagreement on specifics. Let's unpack this with evidence.

The Myth of True Independents

Stockton portrays unaffiliated status as liberation from "party extremism" since 2008. Yet, data shows ***most independents are not neutral***. They lean toward one major party. A 2019 Pew Research study found 81 percent of independents lean Republican or Democratic. Gallup's 2026 poll reports a record ***45 percent identify as independents, but equal shares (27% each) affiliate with Democrats or Republicans*** when pressed.

In Congress, "independents" reveal this lean. ***The two current independent senators***, Angus King (Maine) and Bernie Sanders (Vermont), ***both caucus with Democrats***, aligning on votes and committees. ***No independents serve in the House of Representatives***, underscoring that true neutrality is rare. ***This is not independent thinking. It is partisan alignment without the label.*** A Pennsylvania State University poll identifies three ***independent types: disguised partisans, cultural independents, and thinking independents***. Most fall into the first, ***hiding biases***.

Benefits of Party Affiliation

Party membership pools resources for collective impact, not blind loyalty. It enables fundraising, organizing, and policy advancement aligned with shared principles. Protect Democracy notes parties are essential for democracy, coordinating voters and holding leaders accountable. The U.S. Embassy's educational resources explain parties streamline elections by nominating candidates reflecting core values, like limited government or social welfare.

Unaffiliated voters can still vote freely, but affiliation amplifies influence in primaries and conventions. A Third Way analysis debunks the ***"myth of the independent voter"***, showing ***leaners consistently support one side*** without contributing to its infrastructure. Stockton's family divide, Democrats for aid, Republicans for military, illustrates how parties embody principles without requiring total agreement.

Addressing Stockton's Claims

Stockton left the Democrats in 2008, citing 'extremism', then wrote in a Republican in 2024. This is not impactful free thinking. It is ineffective, as write-ins rarely win without ballot access. His vote, while cast, lacked strategic weight in a plurality system. He claims unaffiliated seek "middle ground," but ***core values always surface*** in votes, making non-partisanship illusory. Pew's 2024 data shows ***49 percent lean Democratic, 48 percent Republican***, hardly a neutral bloc.

His invitation to "break chains" misses that ***free thinking thrives within parties***. Disagree on candidates? Vote accordingly. But dodging affiliation avoids building principled coalitions.

Free Thinking vs. Virtue Signaling

Free thinking is a virtue. It involves critical evaluation. However, claiming "unaffiliated" often ***signals virtue without substance***, appearing above the fray while ***leaning partisan***. Unite America's research shows independents are growing but critical in swing states ***due to leans, not purity***. True integrity means recognizing alignments and contributing.

In Montrose, where community values like self-reliance matter, unaffiliated status may feel empowering. But as my original article stated, ***non-partisan is a myth. Core values guide votes***, regardless of label.

Passion for America and the Constitution unites us. But let's commit to principles through affiliation, not evasion. That builds a stronger nation and is the intellectually honest position.

Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"

Michael is a father of five, grandfather of three, United States Air Force veteran, international recording artist, and Editor-in-Chief of the [Colorado DOGE Report](#). He is passionate about the United States of America and the founders' genius in crafting the Constitution.



Montrose County Sheriff's Posse, Inc

P.O. Box 717

Montrose, CO 81402

2026 ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

Dear Montrose Neighbor,

Have you ever noticed that emergencies never arrive at a good time?

That is why the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse is a group of volunteers that not only give their time in the community where you have seen them helping with things like parades and the flu shot clinic, but are also on call 24-7, ready to aid in an emergency. You may ask "What does that look like?" To be ready our members are trained in many specialties such as first aid, CPR & AED, wild land firefighting, rope & water rescue, ATV safety, tracking, GPS, radio communications and survival skills. We are ready, in good weather and bad, to enter some of the roughest terrain Montrose County has to offer to bring people home.

But we need your help:

- **\$10** could help provide food and water for grueling outdoor searches.
- **\$50** could provide critical medical gear.
- **\$250** could provide replacement safety equipment.

Your donation will help us keep up to date with our training, maintenance, and help us purchase the equipment we need. You never know when it is someone you know that needs help. A friend, neighbor, loved one, or even yourself. With your backing we can be ready when that emergency happens and bring people home safely. You can proudly be a Posse supporter!

To be a posse supporter, simply mail your donation in the enclosed envelope or if you prefer, scan the QR code or enter the Posse website link below and click donate. While you're there, check us out. The brave men and women pictured are your friends and neighbors, here for you!

Thank you for your support.

Montrose County Sheriff's Posse



<https://www.mcspi.org/>

'Celebrating 60 years of serving our community'

The Ute Indian Museum Presents

ORELAND C. JOE SR.

*A Multi-Award Winning Ute/Navajo Artist speaking on
Ute/Cheyenne Warrior "Yellow Nose"*

In 1889, a Mennonite missionary acquired a ledger book filled with depictions of early Cheyenne life. The drawings, made by Yellow Nose, presented dramatic scenes of the plains, including the Battle of Little Big Horn, of which Yellow Nose played an important role.

Yellow Nose was a warrior of Ute/Cheyenne heritage, and Oreland Joe is of Ute/Navajo heritage. It's that Ute connection that would lead Oreland on a great adventure of his own, deep into the heart of ledger art as he studied many of these historic works around the country and then used those examples to create his own interpretations for his ledger-inspired oil paintings.

Ute/Navajo Artist: Oreland C. Joe Sr.

FREE PUBLIC EVENT

Date: Monday, February 2, 2025

Location: Ute Indian Museum

Time: 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Doors Open: 6:30 PM

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

DO THE RIGHT THING BY RESIGNING YOUR BOCC SEAT

Sean,

Wanted to congratulate you on stepping up to run for the United States Senate to replace Hickenlooper.

Less than a year ago now, you stepped up and accepted an appointment to The Montrose County BOCC to represent all of the citizens of Montrose County. I understand that prior to your announcement to run for the US Senate you have traveled statewide establishing a base for your campaign. That in itself has taken you away from your primary job here in Montrose, but after your official announcement even more of your time will be required away from your primary duty in Montrose. It concerns me that given those facts you have not offered your resignation from the BOCC to adequately pursue your statewide campaign goals. It seems to me that ethics and integrity would demand that resignation. Pursuing that statewide campaign absent such resignation essentially short changes the taxpayers of Montrose County who continue to pay your commissioner salary. Continuing to accept that salary while you pursue your bid for the US Senate means that Montrose taxpayers are in essence subsidizing your run for state office and that certainly does not seem to be appropriate.

Hopefully, you will reconsider your position and do the right thing by resigning your BOCC seat.

Dee Laird, Montrose

ABOUT MLK DAY MONTROSE INITIATIVE

A Collaborative Effort - www.MLKDayMontrose.com

We're glad you joined us for the 2nd Annual MLK Day Montrose! This exciting initiative is a collaborative effort, bringing together local civic and business leaders, media representatives, area non-profits, and passionate community members. It's a fantastic opportunity to honor the Rev. Dr. King's legacy while fostering unity and service in our own community!

OPENING CEREMONY 9AM - 10:00 AM | THE ASSOCIATION



"The time is always right to do what is right." - DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

OPENING CEREMONY & FREE COMMUNITY BREAKFAST
THE ASSOCIATION, 39 W MAIN ST, MONTROSE
DOORS OPEN AT 8:15 AM

8:30 am Etienne Tolno, professional musician from Guinea, West Africa
9:00 am Welcome/Opening - Tonya Maddox, Our Town Matters
9:05 am National Anthem - Bailey Downing
9:10 am Invocation - Rev. Wendy Kidd, Hillcrest Congregational UCC and Community Spirit Church UCC
9:15 am MLK Remarks - Sue Hansen, Montrose County Commissioner
9:20 am MLK Remarks - Dave Frank, City of Montrose Mayor
9:30 am Kenny LaJoy, Business Owner, Buckaroos Pizza
9:35 am Nichole Guest, Director of Resource Development at Haven House
9:40 am Tonya Maddox, Our Town Matters
9:45 am Community Awards - Presented by Civic Leaders Phoebe Benziger & Mary Loncar
9:55 am Closing Remarks - Tonya Maddox

MLK DAY MONTROSE ACTIVITIES

10:15 am What has Dr. King Asked of Us?
The Association, 39 W Main St, Montrose
Dr. King's most poignant beliefs and the moral demands he placed on the nation centered on several key principles. Join a community discussion on a listing of Dr. King's most poignant beliefs. Today we remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. not only for his words, but for the moral demands he placed on this nation. The principles you are about to hear are not relics of history. They are unfinished work.

11:00 am MLK Day March
The march down Main Street will step off at The Association, 39 W Main St, with the parade route marching from The Association down Main Street to Centennial Plaza. This is a positive and family fun march with Montrose Police Department escorts leading the procession and following up the rear. There will be preprinted signs of Dr. King's beliefs and American flags available for participants to carry and display.

11:00 am Kindness & Community Story Time
Our Town Matters, 501 E. Main St.
Bring the kiddos to story time and coloring fun. We will have snacks, coloring pages and age appropriate stories read aloud.

12:00 pm Film Screening: King in the Wilderness
Colorado Mesa University, Cascade Hall (S. 3rd and Cascade Street)
King in the Wilderness is an American documentary film about Martin Luther King Jr. that premiered on April 2, 2018, on HBO, focusing on the final two years of his life leading up to his assassination on April 4, 1968. There will be popcorn, snacks and drinks provided for free during the movie.

12:30 pm Children's Film Screening: My Friend Martin
Montrose Regional Library Community Room, 320 S 2nd St.
Our Friend, Martin is a 1999 American direct-to-video animated children's educational film about Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. There will be popcorn, snacks and drinks provided for free during the movie.

1:00-3:00 pm Community Service Projects
Locations TBD

COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

COLORADO BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION INVESTIGATES IN-CUSTODY DEATH IN SUMMIT COUNTY

Colorado Bureau of Investigation

January 13, 2026 – CBI – Summit County–

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is investigating the death of a 43-year-old male that occurred Monday afternoon following an encounter with the Dillon Keystone Police Department in Summit County. The preliminary facts of the incident are as follows:

-On the morning of Sunday, January 11, Dillon Keystone Police attempted a traffic stop on a vehicle being driven without a license plate. When asked for a driver's license and registration, the driver, a 43-year-old male, fled the scene in his vehicle. Officers did not pursue the vehicle.

-On Monday, January 12, police located the suspect's vehicle parked at the Keystone Ski Resort. Officers were awaiting the opportunity to arrest the suspect, who had three outstanding warrants (two felo-

ny and one misdemeanor) in addition to the charge of eluding police from the previous morning.

-The suspect was seen leaving the ski resort, subsequently abandoning the vehicle near Keystone employee housing.

-The suspect was seen in the area of Employee Housing Apartment Complex "Sunrise" (65 Tennis Club Road (opens in new window), approximately half a mile south, and was visually tracked by a police drone camera.

-A police officer located the suspect hiding inside a random pick-up truck. At approximately 1:14:08 PM, officers ordered the suspect to exit the vehicle and surrender.

-The suspect complied with the order and was subsequently placed into handcuffs.

-When asked at 1:15:33 PM if he had any injuries or needed medical attention, the suspect stated he did not.

-Despite the denial, officers requested an ambulance due to the visible signs of medical distress. Officers also administered a dose of Narcan due to the belief the suspect may have been experiencing a drug overdose.

-No physical force was used by officers against the suspect during the arrest.

-The suspect was transported by ambulance to Common Spirit/St. Anthony Summit Hospital in Frisco, where he was later pronounced deceased by medical staff at 2:16 PM. An autopsy will be performed by the Summit County Coroner's Office to determine the cause and manner of death. The CBI investigation is active and ongoing. No additional information, including the identity of the deceased, will be released at this time. Information will be made available as the investigation progresses.

2026 Community Award Winners

The Shepherd's Hand

The Shepherd's Hand is dedicated to meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of people experiencing homelessness and economic hardship. Since becoming an official nonprofit in 2011, The Shepherd's Hand has been a steadfast force in our community. In the face of recent staff and board transitions, new leaders have assumed their roles with fresh energy and dedication. Over the past year, Shepherd's Hand has served nearly 17,000 hot meals on-site, partnered with Region 10 to deliver almost 10,000 meals to shut-ins, provided hot showers to 1,850 unshowered individuals, and helped secure housing for 18 individuals and families. In fall 2025, Shepherd's Hand assumed management of the Montrose Lighthouse, overseeing the seasonal overnight shelter for the unshowered—a significant and crucial undertaking. Their vital work is grounded in compassion, dignity, and perseverance.

In the spirit of Dr. King's call to serve "the least of these," The Shepherd's Hand reminds us that justice begins with compassion—and that a beloved community is built when no one is left unseen or unheard.

Ricardo Perez, Hispanic Affairs Project

Ricardo Perez, originally from El Salvador, is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Hispanic Affairs Project (HAP), a nonprofit organization that has been supporting immigrant communities throughout Western Colorado for the past 20 years. Under Ricardo's leadership, HAP has promoted integration through developing crucial direct services, leadership development opportunities, and advocacy that tangibly improve the lives of immigrants. Their efforts include championing the rights of agricultural workers, advocating for local, state, and federal policies that protect immigrants, and advancing integration, safety, and inclusion through community-based programming. Ricardo's work in policy change and community engagement reflects a deep commitment to justice and empowerment, aligning with our community's core values.

In these challenging times for immigrants and refugees, HAP plays a crucial role in supporting vulnerable community members. Through advocacy, education, and courageous leadership, Ricardo Perez advances Dr. King's vision that justice, freedom, and dignity are not favors to be granted, but rights already owed to every person.

Montrose County Sheriff's Posse

The Montrose County Sheriff's Posse has proudly served our community for over 60 years. The Posse offers voluntary, independent support to the Montrose County Sheriff's Office in search and rescue, wildfire suppression, security, and community service. In July 2025, they worked tirelessly alongside the Sheriff's Office, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management during the South Rim Fire in the Black Canyon. With about 20 volunteers in both the east and west ends of the county, this dedicated group always comes together to get the job done. Volunteers are on call for emergencies 24/7 and provide all their own equipment. In 2024 alone, the Posse volunteered 5,522 hours. Additionally, Posse members share "Tips from the Posse" articles and guides to help people better prepare for time in the wild. Their challenge coin reads, "Until they are home, we will not rest"—a motto they truly embody.

The Posse is clearly an essential asset to our community. By placing service above self and commitment above comfort, the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse exemplifies Dr. King's belief that true leadership is found in those who stand watch over their neighbors until everyone is safely home.

Rachael Zelazny, Living on a Prayer Co.

Rachael Zelazny is the Executive Director and Founder of Living on a Prayer Co., an organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of chronic homelessness, addiction, and incarceration. The organization empowers people with support, resources, and rehabilitation to help them rebuild their lives. Rachael and her team are actively fundraising and writing grants to build a 15-bed rehabilitation facility, designed to serve those who are often most difficult to treat. They anticipate breaking ground in early 2027, bringing hope and healing where it is needed most.

By facing some of our community's most complex challenges with hope and determination, Rachael Zelazny and Living on a Prayer Co. embody Dr. King's vision of redemption, restoration, and the transformative power of love in action.



RICHAEL ZELAZNY - LIVING ON A PRAYER CO.

RICARDO PEREZ - HISPANIC AFFAIRS PROJECT

MONTROSE COUNTY SHERIFF'S POSSE

RICHAEL ZELAZNY - LIVING ON A PRAYER CO.

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MLK DAY
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COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

START YOUR DAY WITH A CUP OF JAVA, NOT A CRASH

Troopers respond to most speed-caused crashes during morning rush

Special to the Mirror

COLORADO—It's that time of day when traffic volume peaks, as grumpy and groggy drivers head off on their commute to work. The morning rush hour, from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., can be filled with challenges, including sun glare, distractions, heavy traffic and the unexpected traffic snarl.



Looking at six years of data (2020-2025) from crashes investigated by Colorado State troopers, we found that the morning rush hour was the peak time of day for speeding-caused crashes. The next most common time was the "off hour" immediately after the morning rush hour (9 – 10 a.m.).

"The psychology behind this trend isn't fully known, but we can make some guesses based on statements made by the people we've met during morning speed crashes. Often these drivers are rushing to work, many of them feeling thrown off schedule by kids, getting themselves ready, traffic volume or weather," stated Col. Matthew C. Packard, chief of the Colorado State Patrol.

A secondary component of many of these speed-related crashes involves distraction. Whether the mental load of planning the day is impairing the driver's focus or the driver is eating breakfast on the go, this lack of attention while speeding increases the risk on the road.

Strategies to Avoid a Rush Hour Crash

- **Plan Ahead** – extra time lets you start your day calmly. You can even give yourself an additional 10–15 minutes to drive within the speed limit on your commute, or below it if weather or traffic conditions require it.
- **Limit Distractions** – removing distractions by setting your navigation and music before you start. Eat breakfast before you drive or keep it until you reach your workplace. Give your full attention to the road and your speed.
- **Know Your Route** – do you know the speed limit on your daily commute? Familiarize yourself with the changes in speed limit, reduced speed zones, construction and more.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

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Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE — Montrose County Commissioner Sean Pond has announced his candidacy for the United States Senate, launching a statewide campaign focused on restoring accountability, strengthening the economy, and bridging the growing divide between urban and rural communities.

"For too long, too many communities across our state have felt ignored by Washington," Pond said. "Whether you live in a city neighborhood, on the Western Slope, or in a rural town, you deserve a Senator who understands your challenges and shows up to listen."

As a County Commissioner, Pond said he has seen firsthand how federal decisions impact local communities—often without local voices being heard. His campaign will prioritize practical, solutions-driven leadership focused on economic opportunity, public safety, infrastructure, and protecting individual freedoms.

"Urban communities drive innovation and growth. Rural communities feed, power, and sustain our nation," Pond added. "When one is left out of the conversation, the entire state suffers. This campaign is about bringing the whole state to the table."

Pond's campaign will emphasize direct voter engagement through grassroots outreach, community meetings, and town halls across the state, with a focus on accountability, common sense, and service over politics.

Sean Pond's candidacy marks the beginning of a statewide effort to restore trust in public service and ensure that every community—urban and rural alike—has a voice in Washington.

For more information or to get involved, visit www.seanpond.com.



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

SUPERINTENDENT STEPHENSON'S TACTICS: SABOTAGING THE NEW RE-1J BOARD?

Editor:

In the wake of Vista Charter School's release to the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) on January 13, 2026, questions linger about Montrose County School District (RE-1J) Superintendent Dr. Carrie Stephenson's role in the district's challenges. A recent board meeting highlighted behaviors that seem unprofessional and possibly aimed at undermining the new school board. Drawing from Vista's executive director Luke Siebert's analogy, one might question if Stephenson is creating "cracks" for the board to fall through, prioritizing her position over efficient governance and student needs.

Vista Charter School's Departure

Vista's decision to leave RE-1J stemmed from frustrations with the district's structure and support, as reported in a prior Press article. **Siebert described RE-1J as an entity that lets charters "fall through the cracks" rather than helping them avoid obstacles.** He pointed to issues like flawed policy guidance, inadequate technical support, funding scrutiny, and a lack of financial integrity, including withheld special education funds.

Vista had earlier requested a move to CSI but withdrew it to remain with the district. Late last year, the charter revived the request due to a more sympathetic board favoring self-direction over control. After tabling it in December, the RE-1J board approved the release on January 13 with a 5-2 vote. Board member Scott Scarborough summed up the majority view: "So, they want to leave... Let 'em leave". Dissenting member Jody Hovde called it "a sad day."

RE-1J historically oversaw Vista, handling fund passthrough and data collection. Superintendent Stephenson claimed challenges in obtaining accurate information from Vista on enrollment, attendance, and graduation rates. She noted these in a letter to board members, leading to re-

duced funding. Siebert countered that the district withheld funds unjustly.

Before the vote, the board heard a CSI presentation on its mission. CSI manages 47 schools, including four in Grand Junction. Vista staff, including Siebert, advocated for the switch, emphasizing CSI's focus on charter success. **"I want it to be more robust, I want it to be stronger, I want to have more guidance, I want more accurate guidance.** I want more closeness in a relationship that keeps us in track and keeps us in tune and I think that's certainly what we can attain moving to CSI, looking for a stronger partnership in education," Siebert said. "I believe their systems and their structure is simply set up for the success of charter schools."

Vista board member Leslie Quon urged a delay for more discussion. Siebert dismissed critics, noting their missed meetings. Board Vice President **Ted Valerio** supported the release, arguing Vista's board represented true local control: **"You guys are the local control. The board, the executive director, the teachers, the families, that's the local control..."**

Siebert emphasized the move was structural, not personal: **"I think that CSI, their structures, they're organized more for our success."** He praised CSI for warning about cracks, unlike RE-1J. This analogy extends to the board meeting, where Stephenson's actions seemed to prolong proceedings and frustrate the new board's agenda.

Issues at the Board Meeting

The Unified Improvement Plans presentations were unusually lengthy and deviated from standards. This drawn-out session appeared to delay votes on key items, including appointing comprehensive legal counsel. Such counsel could boost accountability, fueling speculation about Stephenson's concerns over job security amid board changes.

Stephenson's superintending report lasted over two hours, far exceeding typical up-

dates. This tested the board's patience, potentially portraying new members as disorganized to the public. Extending Siebert's analogy, **Stephenson may be steering the board toward pitfalls by inflating meeting times, hindering timely support for schools like Vista.** Prolonged meetings could block addressing district issues.

The proficiency scales presentation ignored input from parent Amy Stahlin, who spoke at the meeting. Stahlin's points went unaddressed by the Superintendent, suggesting a dismissal of community voices that borders on unprofessional. Combined with the extended agenda, this indicates a focus on control by the superintendent rather than collaboration.

No board president would halt staff from sharing school pride, but it bypasses formal evaluations. Some see this as a calculated move by Stephenson to sabotage the new board, assuming it might hesitate to act.

Potential Motives and Concerns

As Montrose residents observe, the board must prioritize students over internal power plays. If Stephenson believes new members will overlook this, she may underestimate their resolve. The board appears focused on what's right for students and ready to confront a self-focused superintendent.

The community deserves transparency and efficiency, not prolonged meetings and unanswered questions. By addressing these concerns, the board can ensure governance serves students effectively.

Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"

Michael is a father of five, grandfather of three, United States Air Force veteran, international recording artist, and Editor-in-Chief of the Colorado DOGE Report. He is passionate about the United States of America and the founders' genius in crafting the Constitution.



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DELTA HEALTH WELCOMES ATHLETIC TRAINER TO SERVE DELTA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES

Special to the Mirror

DELTA— Delta Health is excited to announce the addition of a certified Athletic Trainer, Shane Phillips, who will work directly with student-athletes at Delta High School. This new partnership represents a significant step forward in providing high-level sports medicine, injury prevention, and performance support to local athletes, and reflects Delta Health's commitment to strengthening health and safety across area schools.

"We are incredibly excited to partner with Delta High School and support its student-athletes through this tremendous opportunity," said Manuel Delgado, Director of Outpatient Therapies and Sports Performance at Delta Health. "Having an Athletic Trainer on site ensures athletes receive expert care, education, and preventative support, and we hope this collaboration becomes a model we can expand to other high schools throughout Delta County."

The newly added Athletic Trainer brings extensive experience, deep Colorado roots, and a passion for supporting young athletes. Originally, from Grand Junction, Phillips attended Fruita Middle School and Fruita Monument High School, where he played football before pursuing a career in sports medicine.

"I grew up on the Western Slope and knew early on I wanted to stay involved in sports while challenging myself mentally," Phillips said.

"I earned my undergraduate degree in Kinesiology and became a certified Athletic Trainer at the University of Colorado Boulder, where I also completed two pre-season internships with the Denver Broncos."

Phillips went on to earn a Master's degree in Sports Administration from the University of Miami, Florida, while working as a Graduate Assistant Athletic Trainer. After returning to Boulder, he spent 19 years working there, always hoping to one-day return to western Colorado. Most recently, he served 1.5 years in Anchorage, Alaska, as Lead Athletic Trainer and civilian contractor for the U.S. Army's Holistic Health and Fitness program.

Phillips's motivation for working with high school athletes is deeply personal.

"I struggled with nagging injuries during my own high school sports career and never really had good support," Phillips explained. "Now it's incredibly rewarding to provide high-level injury care and prevention to student-athletes who are in the same position I once was, so they can enjoy their sports and perform at their best." Looking ahead, Phillips shared his excitement



Shane Phillips. Courtesy photo.

about becoming part of the Delta community. "I'm most looking forward to being part of the sports teams, helping student-athletes achieve their best, and being a positive influence on the character of future generations," he said.

Outside of work, he remains passionate about health, fitness, and nutrition, and enjoys fly-fishing and spending time outdoors appreciating nature.

Delta Health is proud to support Delta High School through this partnership and looks forward to continuing to invest in the health, performance, and well-being of student-athletes across the region.



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MONTROSE REGIONAL HEALTH FOUNDATION TO HOST VALENTINE'S DAY BENEFIT CONCERT *Proceeds support the Foundation and Montrose Regional Health Cardiology Clinic*

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE – The Montrose Regional Health Foundation will host A Celebration of the Heart Concert on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026, at the Montrose Pavilion, 1800 Pavilion Drive. Proceeds from the Valentine's Day event will benefit the Foundation and support cardiac care services at Montrose Regional Health.

The evening will begin with an optional pre-concert dinner at 5:30 p.m., followed by the concert at 7:30 p.m. The event is the second in an ongoing Foundation concert series designed to bring exceptional musical performances to the community while supporting patient care close to home.

"Music has a unique ability to bring people together, and this concert does just that while supporting lifesaving cardiac care in our community," said Kelly Anderson, executive director of the Montrose Regional Health Foundation. "Funds raised through this event will help strengthen cardiology services at Montrose Regional Health, ensuring patients can receive high-quality heart care without traveling far from home."

A Celebration of the Heart Concert will feature a diverse lineup of performers, including soprano Amy Owens, baritone Vasil Garvanliev, and Montrose-based ensemble Mixed Bag Jazz. The program will include selections from the Great American Songbook, opera, musical theater, and jazz. The event is sponsored by the City of Montrose.

Owens is known for her expressive artistry and engaging stage presence. She has performed with leading regional and national organizations, including Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and the National Symphony Orchestra, and regularly participates in benefit concerts and community-focused performances.

Garvanliev is an internationally recognized baritone with a career spanning opera, concert, and popular music. He has performed on major international stages



Vasil Garvanliev and Amy Owens will headline the Celebration of the Heart Concert on Feb. 14. Courtesy photos.

and represented North Macedonia at the Eurovision Song Contest. He is known for

his versatility, musical intelligence, and compelling storytelling.

The concert is part of the Foundation's ongoing efforts to engage the community through arts-based fundraising, with additional events planned in the future.

Tickets are \$25 per person for the concert only or \$75 per person for the pre-concert dinner and concert. For tickets or more information, call the Mont-

rose Regional Health Foundation at 970-240-7396 or visit MRHFoundation.org.

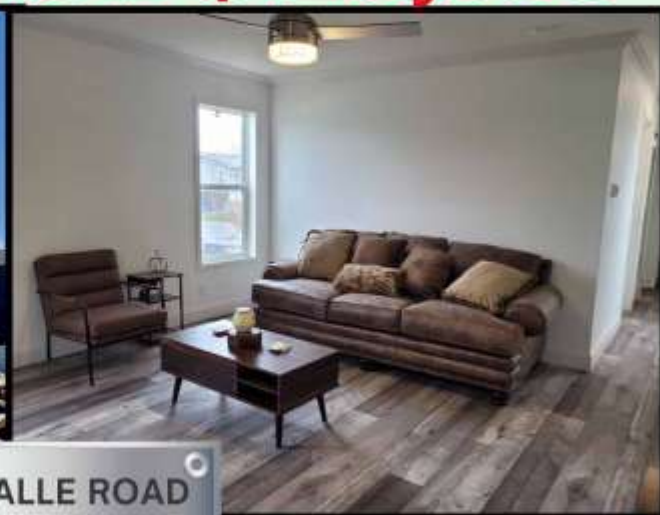
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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

SAN MIGUEL POWER ASSOCIATION'S TEMPORARY HARDSHIP PROGRAM CAN SUPPORT MEMBERS FACING UNEXPECTED FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Special to the Mirror

RIDGWAY-San Miguel Power Association (SMPA), a member-owned electric cooperative serving communities across the Western Slope, has announced the availability of its Temporary Hardship Program for members experiencing economic difficulty due to unforeseen circumstances.

As a cooperative, SMPA is governed by and exists for its members. When events place strain on local economies and community households, the cooperative recognizes the challenges many families and businesses may face.

"During times of adversity, we understand that financial burdens can arrive suddenly and unexpectedly," the announcement states. "We want our members to know that they are not alone. We are here to help."

Under the Temporary Hardship Program, members who believe they may have difficulty paying their upcoming power bill due to a recent financial hardship are encouraged to contact SMPA during regular business hours. Cooperative staff will work directly with members to create payment arrangements designed to provide flexibility and help keep electric service uninterrupted.

The 2025–2026 winter season has already proven difficult for many across the Western Slope. To the greatest extent possible, SMPA will work to ensure that electric service is not another source of worry for members during challenging times.

Members needing assistance may call: (970) 864-7311.

Members-in-need are also encouraged to connect with programs that can help. Please see the list below for assistance program contact information:

-The Telluride Foundation Good Neighbor Fund

<https://tchnetwork.org/gnf-application/>

-Energy Outreach Colorado

<https://energyoutreach.org/>

-Tri-County Health Network

<https://tchnetwork.org/>

-Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)

<https://cdhs.colorado.gov/leap>

-Colorado Peak

<https://co.colorado.gov/colorado-peak>

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VISTA CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ASK RE-1J TO POSTPONE DECISION; BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTES 5 - 2 TO RELEASE VISTA CHARTER SCHOOL From pg 1

to approve the meeting agenda.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Re-1J Public Information Officer Mikayla Unruh presented the student spotlight: -Students and Teachers from the Peak Virtual Academy Environmental Science Class gave a presentation of their work on projects addressing air quality, drought, and water policy as they work toward earning the Colorado High School Seal of Climate Literacy. As noted in the meeting Agenda, "Students are monitoring air quality with indoor and outdoor sensors, developing strategies to improve local conditions, and collaborating with partners including the University of Colorado, the Montrose Department of Public Health, and Anglican Senior High School in Ghana. They will also share information about a community event they are hosting on Jan. 21 at the Montrose Regional Library, focused on drought modeling and water policy."

Peak students and teachers were present to discuss their efforts.

Unruh also presented donations and recent grants:

Donations:

-Montrose High School received a donation from Montrose Youth Boys Basketball Association for the Boys basketball team in the amount of \$5,000;
-Careers in Construction awarded MHS \$4,000 designated for the purpose of purchasing consumable materials and personal protective equipment for students during the 2025-2026 school year.
-Peak Academy families and community members raise money annually to support both Peak students and a few families at Northside during the holidays. They raised \$2005, two brand new bikes, as well as grocery gift cards that supported more than 20 families.

"A special thank you to these donors for their generous donations as well: Hot Water Productions \$500, Piatt Services \$200, and an anonymous donation of \$1000."

Grants:

-Literacy Mini Grant from the Altru-

sa Literacy Committee to Olathe Middle School in the amount of \$300 to purchase literature to support the ever-changing world of adolescents;

-DAFgiving360 / Natalie & Barton Skalla Fund awarded Northside Elementary School a \$1,500 grant designated for use where it is needed most;

-The University of Denver awarded a Career's Project School-Based Mental Health Grant in the amount of \$10,000 to Leah Appling and Brienne Jewkes.

RELEASE OF VISTA CHARTER SCHOOL TO CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE- PRESENTATION

Colorado Charter School Institute Executive Director Dr. Terry Croy-Lewis spoke. She brought slides and information and spoke until 7:13 about the Institute and the requested release of Vista Charter School to the Charter School Institute.

Following Croy-Lewis, other speakers included Vista Executive Director Luke Siebert and several Vista teachers and staff members, as well as Trisha Bush who serves on the Vista Board of Directors.

LENGTH OF BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Education spent time discussing the length of board meetings and the possibility of rolling unfinished agenda items over to the next meeting when appropriate.

CONSTITUENT INTERACTION

A brief discussion of constituent interaction also ensued, as some board members acknowledged feeling threatened by some recent constituent behavior. As board members shared their concerns, Board President Balleck noted, "...If you ever feel threatened by a constituent you can always go to law enforcement..."

Board Vice President Ted Valerio said that while public scrutiny is to be expected, "We are public figures." Valerio also acknowledged that it could get to the point where it constitutes harassment. "In general, we do have to deal with a lot, but that's kind of what we're here for."

BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEES

District F Director Jody Hovde and District D Director Tom West serve on the Facili-

ties Committee. Hovde discussed furniture, which is part of the deferred maintenance budget. New furniture is being tried out and considered. "...I retired after 35 years and I still had some of the same chairs and furniture...", Hovde noted. Furniture options are being vetted over the next year.

West introduced Facilities and Security Director Matt Smith to speak about potholes throughout the district. The parking lots at Montrose High School, which have potholes, would require excavation and analysis of drainage and would include compaction, hauling material away, and civil engineering work, Smith said.

"...Any attempt to ameliorate a problem temporarily isn't going to suit us...that could be an incredibly costly endeavor...those are always high on our mind to make repairs on...we did not budget for a full-scale parking lot replacement anywhere in the district for this year..."

Phase Two of the district-wide Security Camera update is underway, Hovde said. The District Accountability Committee will meet on Jan. 20 at 6pm.

Board President Neisha Balleck discussed committees and asked if new board members would like to serve on the Finance and Facilities committees. Hovde discussed the possibility of a District Personnel Performance Committee.

Hovde mentioned the recent Vista Charter School graduation and an Olathe Middle-High School Spark event, which Balleck also attended. "...it was really fascinating to see these eight students do pitches for two minutes on their entrepreneurial ideas...it was a really great time to see these young entrepreneurs present their ideas..."

Some students received seed money for their ideas.

Hovde asked for a future discussion of Board Policy EEAA.

West said that Olathe Elementary is proud of their new paint job and the fixing of a sewer issue.

There is an administration change at Olathe Middle-High School, West said.

BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTES 5 - 2 TO RELEASE VISTA CHARTER SCHOOL *From previous pg*

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Executive Director of Academic Services Jessica Kalb presented the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) Report. Kalb was joined by representatives from Johnson Elementary School; Montrose High School; Olathe Middle/High School and Columbine Middle School, who discussed their schools' UIP's, as well as parents. The full report can be [accessed here](#). Superintendent Carrie Stephenson and John Steele presented on [Proficiency Scales and Grading](#).

Following the presentations, Board President Neisha Balleck said that it was past 10pm., and there were a number of items remaining on the Agenda. She said that the Board must hear Community Input and Old Business prior to adjournment; Finance Director Emily Imus said that the Budget must be approved as well. District C Director Scott Scarborough said that he is on Eastern time and it was already past midnight where he was.

ENROLLMENT REPORT

Finance Director Emily Imus said that [enrollment](#) is nine students lower than last month (current enrollment is 5,836).

COMMUNITY INPUT

Community Input, held inconsiderately late, was then heard.

Balleck read the rules for Community Input.

Leslie Quon spoke. "I am on the Vista Charter School Board...there's been no process of discussion...the Vista Charter Board did not get that presentation..." She asked the board to postpone the decision until February or March to allow the board to discuss the process, saying that there has been no recent discussion among the Vista board. She was not able to attend the December Vista board meeting, at which the board discussed the matter.

"...We haven't been really given any information on the implications of this going forward at all, this has just been brought up in December...this is an important decision...this is the first presentation I've ever seen from CSI..."

Linda Gann also spoke about the decision to release Vista Charter. "This is a signifi-

cant decision...that needs to continue to be postponed...I would encourage a measured approach, take time to review the materials carefully, consider engaging a neutral third-party facilitator..."

Christine Sorenson, a member of the Vista Charter School Board, also asked the Board of Education to postpone the decision to release Vista Charter School.

"This is a huge, significant decision...I don't feel like I have strong enough information and would ask for extended time to review materials, contracts, etc. This will impact many in the community, especially the students of Vista, who I believe in very, very much."

The CSI presentation earlier in the meeting was amazing, but it was the first time she had heard anything about what CSI was, what its purpose is, and what it entails to be a part of it, Sorenson said.

Next to speak was Amy Stahlin, who said she is the Director of Development at the Black Canyon Boys and Girls Club, a former high level English instructor, and the parent of two district students. "I want to be clear that as an academic, I believe in standards-based grading. But I'm here tonight because the proficiency-based grading system is causing current, measurable harm to our high achieving students, and the district cannot or will not tell us the scope of the problem. The board has my written correspondence documenting the fundamental contradiction," she said. "Parents were told this was a district-wide implementation. But when I requested data, I have now been told that it's not yet district wide, and only some teachers are piloting it.

"So which is it? Because if the district doesn't know which teachers are using the system, how many students are affected, or what the impact has been on grades, than our children are guinea pigs in an uncontrolled experiment.

"These impacts are devastating, at least in my household," Stahlin said. "My son scores in the top one to two percent nationally on all standardized assessments, but he maintained a 'D' in ELA for months. My daughter scores in the top three to five percent nationally in reading, but she

kept a 'B,' a low one, in writing.

"When students in the top percentiles nationally cannot maintain 'A's in corresponding courses, the grading system is not measuring proficiency, it is obscuring it. I have documented dozens of concerns from families across grades seven through 12 at all schools...I have also received reports directly from District staff that teachers were directed not to achieve proficiency scores of four and not to use .5 increments. This creates a mathematical impossibility...this system has also failed elsewhere. Maine implemented it statewide in 2012 and scrapped it completely by 2018 due to community backlash and an inability to define proficiency consistently.

"San Diego called their implementation a complete mess...research has also showed high school students saying the proficient three isn't good enough for college. I formally requested comparative data to understand the impact on our students, and I was told that it does not currently exist in a meaningful form..."

Stahlin was told that her time was up.

Next, Leanna Spadafora spoke. "Thank you for your time tonight. I don't know why you want to serve on this board and stay so late into the evening but thank you..."

"I was an employee of Montrose County School District and Vista for 30 years," she said. "...20 years ago, Vista had just transitioned from Vista Adult High School, a Montrose County School District program, to a stand-alone new charter school with a bright, unlimited future.

"A consultant named Claudia from Colorado League of Charter Schools sat with the staff in the tiny little main classroom of our dilapidated castoff trailers.

"Claudia told us that what we had was special. We were out of the box thinkers, serving students...that the other schools didn't want, serving adults who had missed out and come back for their diploma, serving pregnant and parenting teens, serving kids in trouble with the courts, kids in trouble with their health.

"...Claudia warned us, she said that people would want a part of this school because

BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTES 5 - 2 TO RELEASE VISTA CHARTER SCHOOL *From previous pg*

it was special. New administrators would want to come make it their own, leave their mark if you will. And as a result, the school would change. She asked us to work hard to see this didn't happen..."

Spadafora asked the school board to take more time to consider carefully and thoughtfully what is at stake. "...what's the rush. Almost half of you are new to your position and haven't even had time to learn the crazy acronyms of the education world, let alone sort through the giant binders of school law and board policy. The learning curve is no joke. I urge you to sit on this decision until you've had time to study it. You already have a five-year contract with Vista; there is no rush...please give yourself and Vista students the time a decision of this magnitude deserves...please be the hero and stand up for these kids..."

Bob Nicholson spoke to remind all that he has been on the City Council, is a former Mayor of Montrose, and owns a small business on the Front Range with a great staff. "I had a whole thing I wanted to talk to you about, I'm gonna drop it in the interest of getting out of here for you guys, I think that's a good thing...You guys have an exemplary staff, I've never seen the energy, the kind of thoughts, these people are really top notch.....you have a great responsibility, you'll have a great time working with them because they're good people..." Nicholson said.

OLD BUSINESS

There was one [old business item](#), a recommendation to approve Resolution 02-2026, Release of Vista Charter School to Charter School Institute.

District F Director Jody Hovde moved to postpone Resolution 02-2026. District D Director Tom West seconded Hovde's motion, which failed in a five to two vote.

"I think it's a sad day," Hovde said.

Also in a vote of five to two, the Board of Education approved a resolution proposed by Board Vice President Ted Valerio to approve Resolution 02-2026, Release of Vista Charter School to Charter School Institute. Hove and West voted to oppose the resolution.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda, including [Personnel Report](#), was approved as presented.

Due to the late hour, the Board of Education then voted to adjourn, with the remaining agenda items to be considered at the next meeting of Jan. 27.

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

COE HOME ELECTRIFICATION AND APPLIANCE REBATES

By Tony Hoag

MONTROSE-CCL Montrose wants to let you know of an opportunity to upgrade your homes appliances through the Colorado Office of Energy's HEAR Program.

<https://energyoffice.colorado.gov/home-energy-rebates>

The HEAR Program will be available to low- and moderate-income households for high-efficiency electric appliances and other upgrades in a single-family home, apartment, condo, or manufactured/mobile home. Owners and operators of multifamily buildings smaller than 50,000 square feet may also qualify for per-unit HEAR rebates. Rebate amounts will be based on your household income relative to your county's Area Median Income (AMI).

Colorado Incentives

Heat pump water heater	\$1,750
Cold climate heat pump for space heating and cooling	\$8,000
Heat pump for space heating and cooling	\$3,000
Electric stove, cooktop, range, or oven	\$ 840
Electric load service center (also known as electric panel)	\$4,000
Insulation, air sealing, and ventilation	\$1,600
Electric wiring	\$2,500
Total maximum rebate for Colorado	\$14,000

Steps for the HEAR Program

Step 1 Check Eligibility

Step 2 Contact a registered Program Contractor

Step 3 Apply For Your Household

Step 4. Complete a home assessment and select upgrades.

Step 5. Install improvements.

CCL Montrose would be happy to help any interested person in answering questions about the HEAR Program or if we can't answer your question than we could refer you to the Colorado Office of Energy that administers the program. CCL Montrose can be reached at Capclimate@Gmail.com

CORRECTIONS TO WHAT IS A CAUCUS AND WHY YOU SHOULD BE PART OF IT

There is the Caucus, then the County Assembly followed by the State Assembly.

March 5 is the County Assembly, not the Precinct Caucus. At the Caucus each precinct assembles to choose two Republican Representatives for their area called PCP's or Precinct Committee Persons. PCP's must be officially registered Republicans and represent you.

1. At the County Assembly the candidates will be determined for our County, and Delegates are elected for the Congressional District Assembly and the State Republican Assembly.
2. At the State Assembly, a candidate can be voted onto the ballot with a minimum of 30% of the votes, but a candidate can also get on the ballot by petition.

Leah Vandersluis, Montrose



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

TRUMP DERANGEMENT SYNDROME

Dear Editor:

Let me ask you this: would you befriend someone that has an excessive focus on himself or has a lack of humility? Would you truly support someone who acts overly self-important, believing they are more important or knowledgeable than they really are? I would not, and for the life of me cannot understand how someone who won less than 50% of total votes cast in 2024 is sitting in the White House.

For the past year I have been simmering in a pool of extreme displeasure with Donald Trump. He is the only person that has ever darkened my heart. I do not like using the word hate. But what else would you call it when you look forward to reading a news article announcing the death of someone? I am not advocating anything nefarious, just stating a fact that we are all going to die.

I realize I just triggered some on the far-right. Their minds are in defense mode; they want to lash out at me by tearing me down. They will accuse me of being a radical leftist, a terrorist, or a libtard. My favorite now days is you are suffering from TDS, Trump Derangement Syndrome.

Why do I have such disdain for Trump? Following are a few areas of concern.

I hate that he rejects things I value. He has no empathy or sympathy toward immigrants, or those suffering from economic hardships he brought about. He is destroying the fragile bonds between families, between communities, between people of all sorts. He attempts to impose oppressive restrictions on the way we, as individuals, live, speak, and act. His tendency to denigrate those that challenge him, in particular the press, is symbolic of authoritarianism. He has no loyalty to anyone.

I find it repulsive he is destroying the fabric of our democracy. We are no longer that beacon of hope, liberty, and justice. His drive toward isolationism and imperialism has spawned fear of the United States. The United States is no longer respected. Instead, other nations approach us with apprehension, they question whether we can be trusted.

If having TDS is defined by the things I cite then not only am I afflicted by it, I embrace it.

Dave Stockton, Montrose

CULTIVATED MEAT HAS POTENTIAL TO DO SO MUCH GOOD

To the editor,

The scale of violence we inflict on our fellow creatures is hard to comprehend. Humans kill more than a trillion aquatic and land animals for food every year. To put that in a little perspective, according to the Population Reference Bureau, only about 117 billion humans have ever lived. In my view, the commercialization of cultivated meat represents one of the most promising means of reducing animal suffering and premature death. For those who aren't aware, the new protein is grown from livestock cells, without slaughter.

While the private sector has done an admirable job advancing the field of cellular agriculture, significant public investment is needed to overcome the remaining technological hurdles. Compassionate politicians should support government funding for cultivated-meat research at the state and federal level. Let's build facilities like the Tufts University Center for Cellular Agriculture at schools across the country. Cultivated meat that is cheaper than and identical to slaughtered offerings has the potential to do so much good.

Jon Hochschartner, Granby, CT



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURE ON WESTERN COLORADO

Special to the Mirror

MESA COUNTY— In a partnership with CMU, The Business Incubator Center (BIC) through its AgriWest initiative, will host a series of public presentations to release “The Economic Impact of Agriculture on Western Colorado,” a first-of-its-kind regional agriculture economic impact report covering Mesa, Delta, Montrose, Garfield, and Rio Blanco Counties. This study was commissioned by the Business Incubator Center as part of the AgriWest initiative and conducted by Dr. Nathan Perry, Ph.D., Professor of Economics at Colorado Mesa University. It brings together agricultural census trends, producer survey feedback, and economic contribution modeling to help communities better understand the role of agriculture as a major economic driver on the Western Slope. The study is one of the most comprehensive, region-wide economic assessment of Agriculture in the Western Slope conducted to date.

WHAT: Public release and presentations of The Economic Impact of Agriculture on Western Colorado — a regional economic impact report and in-depth data-driven study of agriculture’s role in Western Colorado’s economy.

WHO: Hosted by: the Business Incubator Center (BIC) in partnership with Colorado Mesa University

Study conducted by: Dr. Nathan Perry, Ph.D., Professor of Economics at Colorado Mesa University.

Attendees encouraged: producers, civic leaders, policymakers, economic development partners, educators, and community members.

WHEN/WHERE:

Mesa County Launch Presentation

Date: Monday, January 19, 2026

Time: 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Business Incubator Center

2591 Legacy Way, Grand Junction, CO 81503

Meal Sponsored by Mesa County Farm Bureau

Garfield & Rio Blanco Counties Presentation

Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026

Time: 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Garfield Fairgrounds and Event Center

001 Railroad Ave, Rifle, CO 81650

Meal Sponsored by Garfield County Farm Bureau

Delta & Montrose Counties Presentation

Date: Friday, January 30, 2026

Time: 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: 1036 N, 7th St. Montrose CO, 81404

Meal Sponsored by Montrose County

To register for attendance visit: <https://gjincubator.org/economic-impact-of-ag-on-western-co/>



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COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

ELDON L. MARKUS *March 14, 1946 - January 10, 2026*



ELDON L. MARKUS was born on March 14, 1946, to parents Jacob Lowell Markus and Lula Mae (Barnes) Markus in Valentine, NE. He graduated from Montrose High School class of 1964 and received a BA in Physical Education from Pasadena Nazarene College in 1971. He joined the U.S. Army 6/15/1975 until his Honorable discharge of 8/12/1977. Went to work for Colorado Ute Electric, which is now Tri-State G&T, he worked there for 36 years

before retiring in 2014. Eldon loved buying, fixing and selling antiques as a hobby. Eldon really enjoyed yard sales and all the friendships he made at them. Eldon and Dee played tennis for 35 years before discovering pickleball in 2015. Making so many friendships, even when Eldon could no longer play, he loved watching and visiting with everyone that were so kind to come up to the van window for a visit. He loved the game and loved all of you.

Preceded in death by his parents Lowell Jacob Markus and Lula Mae (Barnes) Markus.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years Deanna 'Dee' Lyn (Cullum) Markus. Brother-in-law Bill D. Cullum and Lorie of Grand Junction, CO. Brothers, Loren Don Markus and Barbara of Volcano, HI and Darrell Gene Markus of Montrose, CO. Sisters, Laurene (Markus) Emery of Mission, SD Marilyn Mae (Markus) Winders and Greg of Holly Springs, MS. Nieces and Nephews; Donny Markus of Olathe, CO, Lowell 'Patch' Markus and Becky of Grand Junction, CO, DJ Markus and Tamara of Clarksville, TX. Shawnalei Kahalehua, 'Sami' (Markus) Bowman and Tim. Also grandnephews Austin and Kyle of Montrose, CO, Laurie (Markus) Lizarraga and

son Markus of Lihue, Kauai, HI. Jeb Markus and Cori of Keyport, WA, Rachel (Winders) Carroll and Jacob of Kalispell, MT. Charity (Winders) Williams and Josh of Memphis, TN. Nieces nephews and grands too numerous to mention.

Eldon had no children of his own but had a big hand in raising his nieces and nephews which he so enjoyed and truly loved each and every one of them.

"Thank you" to Sami (Markus) Bowman and Tim for all their loving care during their Uncle Eldon's illness and to her family for sharing.

"Thank you" to Donny Markus for all your help, loving care and being there for your Uncle Eldon during his illness.

"Thank you" Marilyn for all your advice and nursing skills during your brother's illness. Your Aunt Dee so appreciated everyone's help during this difficult time.

Thanks to MRH, Hope West Hospice and Crippin Funeral Home for your care and concern.

From your wife Dee- "Eldon you are the love of my life. God now has one of the Best Angels Ever!!! Rest in peace my dear love, your pain is gone" In my heart forever, every single night, "I love you," "I love you more."

Now more than ever...

Thank you for reading

THE MONTROSE MIRROR

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

JAMES F. BERNATIS

June 19, 1943 — January 11, 2026

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Jim Bernatis on January 11, 2026 at HopeWest in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Jim died peacefully surrounded by his wife Pauline of 62 years, his beloved daughters and cherished grandchildren.

Jim was born on June 19, 1943 to Thomas and Ruth (Watson) Bernatis in Denver Colorado. The family moved to Rock Springs Wyoming where Jim was raised.

After graduating from high school, Jim attended the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. After the Academy Jim began his 37-year government career with the Bureau of Reclamation in Fontenelle, Wyoming. Jim met the love of his life Pauline and they were married in Kemmerer Wyoming on May 18, 1963. Jim was offered a job in Denver where he and Pauline began their life together.

Jim was an avid outdoorsman spending his free time fly fishing, playing golf, hunting, cycling. He wouldn't miss watching his grandchildren participate in their events from debate to baseball and golf. He always looked forward to his annual fishing trips with friends in Salmon, Idaho.

Jim is survived by his wife Pauline, daughters Paula Bernatis (Montrose) and Joanie Bernatis (Montrose) Grandsons Christopher Bernatis (Denver) and Seth (Lyndzee Echave) Barker (Grand Junction) and Granddaughter Kendyll Bernatis (Montrose).

Survived by his siblings Jean (Tim) VanderRiet (Parker, Colorado) John (Ellen) Bernatis (Green River, Wyoming) David (Denise) Bernatis (Rock Springs, Wyoming) Tom (Kathy) Bernatis (Rock Springs, Wyoming) and brother-in-law Don Larsen (Kemmerer, Wyoming) along with many nieces and nephews.

Words cannot express the loss we feel. Jim (Dad) (Grandpa) was our rock and gave us unwavering support. He set an example for us all on how to be a kind, compassionate and a loving human being.

At Jim's request cremation will be held and there will be a private family service at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations to HopeWest in Jim's memory would be appreciated.



LACRICIA LOUISE KRAMER

December 19, 1940 – January 6, 2026



LACRICIA LOUISE KRAMER, age 85 of Montrose CO, passed away peacefully at Montrose Hospital January 6, 2026, surrounded by family.

Lacricia was born on December 19, 1940, in Delta CO, to Harold & Irene (Taylor) Stryker; she spent her childhood years in, Cle Elum Washington, Crawford Co, and Nucla CO. Lacricia met Ernie Kramer at the dance hall in Nucla. She Married Ernie Kramer June 22, 1958, in Delta CO. She was a homemaker, and Ernie was a truck driver for his Dad, and he worked in the Uranium mine.

In 1961 they moved to Montrose CO, continued with Kramer Trucking business, which is still operating today. Lacricia was a terrific Mother and wife, she taught her children and grandchildren how to do many different kinds of crafts, later in her life she became the bookkeeper for the trucking business. She will be greatly missed. She had the sweetest personality, she had to keep Ernie in line, he is a great jokester, they had lot of fun with friends and family, they loved to camp, and go four wheeling, fishing, and occasionally went gambling.

Lacricia is survived by her husband Ernie Kramer, Brother Leslie (Connie) Stryker Daughter Brenda Muhr (Bryan Muhr), Son Jim Kramer and seven Grandchildren, Franz (Melissa) Muhr, Andrew (Lori) Muhr, Kevin Kramer, Jared Kramer, Kyler (A.J.) Kramer, Gloria (Josh) Briggs, Dakota (Mandy) Welch, and eight Great Grandchildren, Holden Muhr, Stella Muhr, Teagan

Muhr, Isla Muhr, Ellie Scarrow, Isabella Welch, Camielle Welch, Elias Welch. Lacricia was preceded in death by her parents, Harold and Irene Stryker, and Son Mike Kramer.

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

WILMA JEAN BEARDSLEE KROSCHER

June 11, 1936 — January 11, 2026



It is with heavy hearts that we, her family, announce that Wilma Jean Beardslee Kroschel has passed. She was an active and beloved member of the community for many years acting as the President of the local American Legion and active member of the VFW. She spent years following her son's and helping with Cub and Boy Scouts, loved gardening and canning, and spent endless hours keeping track of the Kroschel and Beardslee family trees.

Wilma is preceded in Death by the love of her life Norman Kroschel, and her youngest of four sons Jerry Kroschel. She was surrounded by her family as she peacefully passed at the Colorow Care Center. She is survived by sons Steven Kroschel of Vernal Utah, Alan and his wife Wan who live in Bangkok Thailand, and Barry and his wife Carrie from Arizona. Her grandchildren Justin, Michael, Heather, and Matthew, as well as several great-grandchildren and spouses also mourn her passing.

Wilma married Norman in September 1954 and followed him to military posts both internationally and throughout the U.S. but always returned to her roots in the Montrose Valley where she loved best.

Please no flowers but cards of remembrance can be mailed to 80394 Avenue 48, Lot 27, Indio CA 92201. Wilma's family wishes to thank all her friends for thinking of her, and for the helpful and kind staff of Colorow Care Center for making the last of days as comfortable as possible.

GARRICK ANTHONY QUINTANA

March 28, 1984 - January 10, 2026



and countless cousins.

From an early age, Garrick showed a strong creative spirit. He loved lowrider bikes and spent much of his free time painting and customizing them to show quality. He also had a lifelong passion for cars, especially late 1960s and early 1970s Impalas, and enjoyed building and collecting detailed models over the years. Music was another constant in his life—he appreciated nearly all genres, and there was rarely a moment without music playing in the background.

As a teenager, Garrick moved to Montrose, Colorado, with his mother and sister to be closer to his maternal grandmother. On February 14, 2003, he married Tiara Simons. Together they welcomed a daughter on October 24, 2004. Although Garrick and Tiara divorced in 2009, they remained amicable and devoted to raising their daughter.

Family was everything to Garrick. He was known for his big heart, his willingness to

help anyone in need, and his ability to make others smile with his silly jokes. Over the years, he made many meaningful friendships, many of whom became family.

Garrick gained his wings on January 10, 2026, surrounded by love and family. He is survived by his mother, Kathy Lopez of Montrose, Colorado; his sister, Tania Manzanares of Montrose, Colorado; his daughter, Octavia Quintana of Montrose, Colorado; his grandmother, Mary Barba of Montrose, Colorado; and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends who will forever cherish his memory.

"Family was his greatest treasure, and love was the legacy he left behind."

A service honoring Garrick's life will be held on February 7, 2026, at 11 a.m. at Crippen Funeral Home, 802 E Main St, Montrose, Colorado 81401. A luncheon will follow at 1 p.m. at the Montrose Elks Lodge, 801 S. Hillcrest Drive, Montrose, Colorado 81401.

GARRICK ANTHONY QUINTANA was born on March 28, 1984, in Alamosa, Colorado, to Kathy Lopez (Manzanares). He spent his childhood in Monte Vista, Colorado, surrounded by a large and loving family that included his grandparents, aunts, uncles,

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

KATIE HILDEBRAND

April 30, 1976 — January 7, 2026

In Loving Memory of Katie Hildebrand

With profound sadness, we share that Katie Hildebrand passed away unexpectedly on January 7, 2026. Born on April 30, 1976, Katie's life was defined by warmth, generosity, and an effortless ability to turn strangers into friends. She greeted new people as potential companions rather than unknowns, and countless lives were brightened by her welcoming smile and genuine interest in others.

Katie's compassion was active and unwavering. She devoted herself to feeding neighbors experiencing homelessness—never just offering a meal, but also sitting to chat, listen, and affirm their dignity. Professionally, she found purpose in home health, where caring for others was more than work; it was a calling. Outside of work, Katie delighted in playing with her grandchildren, spending unhurried time with her daughters, cheering at school and sporting events, and jeeping on Colorado trails with her partner. She stood shoulder to shoulder with friends and acquaintances

facing medical challenges, terminal illnesses, and crises—often becoming friends in the process. Katie was also a steadfast ally to LGBTQ+ communities and passionate HIV advocate, lending her voice, time, and heart wherever support was needed.

Katie is lovingly survived by her partner, Josh Smith; her parents, Joan & Mark Nelson; her daughters (who she loved “to the moon and back”), Madison Mumaw (28) and Kassie Soto (32); and Kassie's husband, Andy Soto; her sister, Marni Lyons (nieces Mackenzie & Kaileigh Lyons). She was the adoring Grandma to Sophia and Greyson, whose laughter and milestones brought her endless joy.

Those who knew Katie will remember her for the way she made you feel—seen, included, and at home. Her legacy lives on in the communities she nurtured, the friends she welcomed, and the family she cherished beyond measure.

Memorial & Donations

In honoring Katie's wishes, no flowers, please. If you feel moved to give, donations may be made to MADA

commissary kitchen (17 N 6th St, Montrose, CO 81401 719-293-5044) or to Oak Grove Elementary School Farm (62100 Oak Grove Rd, Montrose CO 81401 970-249-6867). She assisted in the work party to get the farm up and going and her grandchildren love to participate in it. A celebration of Katie's life will be held in the upcoming months and announcements will be made at that time.



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

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

PATRICIA MAY DICKINSON **September 4, 1936 — January 7, 2026**

On the morning of January 7, 2026, Montrose lost an amazing community advocate and remarkable woman when Patricia Dickinson died peacefully at her home at the age of 89.

Tricia was born on September 4, 1936, on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada to May (Babcock) and Jack Whittaker. Her childhood was spent in a small British Columbia lumber mill town with three older brothers.

Tricia earned a nursing degree in Vancouver where she met and married Dr. Ted Dickinson in 1958. They were married for 53 years. They began their family and Ted's surgical practice in Denver and later moved to Montrose in 1971 where they flourished. Realizing they could build the kind of community they wanted to live in, they generously contributed their time and energy to important projects and encouraged others to be civically engaged.

Tricia was incredibly involved in her community. Her political career began as a community member of the City Sign Commission. She found she loved the intricacies of local government. She was elected to the Montrose City Council, served as mayor three times, and represented Montrose in Colorado's Municipal League for several years. Tricia's exuberance and savvy made her a life-long community influencer and doer.

Tricia adored music and theatre. Her energy and enthusiasm played a major role in the resurgence and growth of the Mag-

ic Circle Players. She acted, directed, supported and served on the Board of Directors. Her passion for community theater and her belief in the actors and herself had her directing crowd favorites and challenging pieces alike. She was a force and that made her a great director.

Tricia was also a compassionate nurse and enjoyed interacting with patients and their families.

She served as Montrose County's Public Health Nurse for many years until starting a private home health care business with partner, Carolyn Goller. They later sold the business to Montrose Memorial Hospital. She also worked for Community Options and was a beloved advocate for its clients.

Tricia had a dynamic personality and used her charm and tenacity to raise funds and build support for positive community actions such as All America City designation, creation of the recycling center, approval to build The Pavilion, construction of the Magic Circle Players theater, Ute Museum renovation, etc.

She was on the board of directors of numerous local organizations including Montrose Memorial Hospital, Valley Symphony, Montrose Arts Council, Magic Circle Players, Colorado Mesa University's Montrose Campus, Colorado Council on the Arts and much more.

Tricia was preceded in death by her husband, her mother and father, and her three brothers. She is survived by her



daughters Heather Dickinson Exby of New Castle, Jennie Tidwell (Don) of Montrose, and Karen Dickinson Waldon of Montrose, and grandchildren Patrick Tidwell, Liz Tidwell (Tyler Brandt), Anna Exby, Ian Exby, Jennie Waldon, and Eleanor Waldon, as well as nieces and nephews in the US and Canada.

A celebration of Tricia's life will take place on Saturday, January 24, 1:00 PM at the Magic Circle Theatre, 420 S. 12th Street, Montrose. Light reception to follow. Giving your time and talents to activities that positively impact your community, as well as contributing to any of the organizations that she supported, would be an excellent way to honor her legacy.

Thank you for reading
THE MONTROSE MIRROR

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

JOYCE DEAN (GILLEY) GORDON *April 6, 1938 — December 27, 2025*

JOYCE DEAN (GILLEY) GORDON, age 87, of Montrose, Colorado, passed away early Saturday morning, December 27, 2025, at the home of her daughter, Vicki Herbig. During the previous evening, many caring family members and dear friends visited Joyce, sharing their feelings of love, gratitude, and admiration.

Joyce was born April 6, 1938, to Elmer Gilley and Esther Mae (De Shazo) Gilley in Jackson County, Florida. She spent her early years in Florida and later attended school in Mulberry, Arkansas. It was at Mulberry High School where she met her forever sweetheart, William Roger Gordon. Joyce and Bill eloped to California and were married on June 16, 1955, in Dinuba.

The couple shared 55 wonderful years together, eventually moving from Oklahoma to Colorado, where they made their home until William's death in 2010.

Joyce's father passed away when she was a toddler, and her younger years were defined by hard work, leaving little time for a carefree childhood. Despite this, she possessed an indomitable spirit and rose above those hardships, purposefully choosing to concentrate on the positive aspects of life. While her physical beauty was evident to all, Joyce's loved ones knew she was even more beautiful on the inside.

A woman of both a sharp mind and a kind heart, Joyce recorded in her Bible that she

renewed her commitment to God and Jesus by accepting Christ as her Savior on August 26, 1982. Her hand-written notes share that she was baptized on October 2, 1982.

She deeply loved and adored her family, including her children, their spouses, and an ever-growing number of grandchildren. Joyce and Bill were also long-time, committed foster parents, supporting over one hundred youth in their home and embracing them all as family.

She enjoyed many hobbies, such as gardening and caring for animals, but in later years she often shared how much she longed for her sweetheart, Bill. She dearly missed his presence in her life. They are finally together again; a reunion that is bittersweet only for the living. We love and miss them both.

Survivors who feel blessed to have shared their lives with Joyce include her sons: Roger (Eileen) Gordon of Grove, Oklahoma; Kevin (Christie) Gordon of Tulsa, Okla.; and Brian Gordon of Arizona. Her daughters include Vicki Herbig of Montrose; Lisa (Ed) Bryson of Montrose; Mary (Jody) Eli of Denver, Colo.; Daisha (Allen) Darby of Grand Junction, Colo.; and Sharon (David) Dodson and Karen (Don) Harness, both of Tulsa, Okla. She is also survived by her brother, Lawrence Curtis Gilley; 27 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren; and 8 great-great-grandchildren. Joyce and Bill shared many



special nieces and nephews.

Joyce was preceded in death by her husband, William; her mother, Esther Mae; her father, Elmer; sister, Juanita Odessa; son, David; daughter, Patty; grandsons, Sheldon and Nicholas; and great-grandson, Elisha.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions be made to HopeWest in memory of Joyce Gordon. Donations may be made online at hopewestco.org/donate or mailed to HopeWest, 725 S. 4th Street, Montrose, CO 81401. Arrangements are under the direction of Crippin Funeral Home, Montrose.

CELEBRATING LOCAL BEAUTY.

#montrosemirror

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

LINDA B. HARDY

November 8, 1945 — January 4, 2026



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Linda B. Hardy, who departed this life on January 4, 2026, at the age of 80 from natural causes at home in Montrose, Colorado. Linda Hardy was born on November 8, 1945, in Springhill, Louisiana, and throughout her years, touched the lives of many with kindness,

warmth, and generosity.

Life and Legacy

Linda was known for her unwavering love for family and friends. She spent her life nurturing relationships, offering support, and sharing joy wherever she lived. As is quite common with the boomer generation, Linda moved from place to place until she found the mountains of Colorado and the towns of Aspen and Telluride. It was there she put down roots, raised her family, and built a warm, welcoming home.

Linda worked in many jobs. She was an excellent secretary, and office manager at Le Chefs, and a property manager at Silver King Apartment complex in Aspen for years. In Telluride, she worked for CGY Architects and Mountain Village Construction, each for 4 years, earning the respect and admiration of colleagues and clients alike. Linda found fulfillment in reading and her children. Her passion was the many pets she owned throughout her life, which brought her humor, patience, love, and sadness.

Family

Linda is survived by her husband of 41 years, James Hardy; her children, Tiffany Osborne, Tara Kramling, James Bakehouse, Tammy Bateman, Skyler Bateman, and grandchildren Brennan and Emily Kramling, John Patrick and Ava Osborne, Asher Bateman, and Dakota Ferguson, and current dogs Cooper and Monty, who will cherish the memories, lessons, and treats she shared. She was preceded in death by her parents, Lloyd and Ruth Houck.

Remembering Linda B. Hardy

Linda asked that there be no formal service. She wanted her ashes scattered by family in the mountains above Telluride, Colorado — a place she loved with all her heart. All who knew Linda, and those who did not, are invited to honor her by pausing to smile and to appreciate the mountains, grateful for the life she lived. Though Linda is gone, her kindness and quiet strength remain with us in the memories we share and the lives she shaped.

RONALD JAMES ASHER

March 7, 1935 — January 5, 2026

It is with deep sadness that we share that Ron Asher passed away at home on Monday, January 5th, 2026.

Ron is survived by his wife Mitsy Asher, his daughter Ronee Bartosz, his sons, Steve Asher, John Asher, Scott O'Donnell, Sean O'Donnell and his brother Dick Moore. Ron also had 17 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

Ron was born in Alamosa Co and spent much of his childhood in Montrose, Co and chose to return to Montrose upon his retirement.

Ron loved the outdoors and exploring the beautiful Colorado mountains on his quad with his riding buddies. His previous adventures included snowmobiling, riding motorcycles, golfing, boating, and camping.

Ron retired from being an electrician after 30 years in the career and was a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

Ron lived a life worth living and will be truly missed.



ISSUE 557 Jan. 19, 2026

ART & SOL

YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE – SILENCE



By Dr. Lauren Hall Ruddell, PhD.

Greetings Mirrorites!

OLATHE-A few years ago, I wrote an article for *Earth Island Journal* titled “Losing Quiet Spaces”. It described the increasing intrusion of noise from anthropogenic (human-caused) sources such as air and ground traffic, emergency signaling, loud music from neighbors, and that sort of thing. This article addressed the disappearance of natural spaces free from people noise that allow us to be immersed in a quiet peace, and even a pleasant boredom from which an enormous amount of creativity can spring. I did not discuss the effects of constant bombardment of sounds that we ourselves generate on our mental health.

What I would like to address is what lecturer and author [Pico Iyer](#) refers to as ‘living silence.’ He’s not referring to stark



and absolute meditation tank silence, but rather one formed of natural sounds, the music of nature, or even the imagined music of the heavenly spheres. After a death in the family that demanded weeks of social obligations from dependent relatives, he was feeling burned out and unable to cope with even one more request or obligation. He escaped and spent two hours in relative silence on an ocean overlook in a secluded area. He reports that this was sufficient to restore calm and balance.

His response was not unique. A 2025 review of 18 controlled trials compared exposure to natural sounds (birds, wind, flowing water) with near-silent natural

settings. Although both conditions reduced stress, the quieter environment did so more rapidly, lowering heart rate and systolic blood pressure by 4 mm Hg within ten minutes. Most importantly for us folks here in the Rockies, the physiological stress reduction effects were 40 % greater in participants tested in remote parks or wilderness areas, where baseline noise levels were below 35 dB(A). Normal conversation sound levels are around 65 dB more or less, and a quiet but audible human whisper is around 30 dB. So in the hills, mountains, and meadows in our region, breezes, plants, and animals whisper us gently into relaxation. This is actually measurable, and not just tree-hugger (me)

Continued next pg

YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE – SILENCE *From previous pg*

anecdotes. For instance, an experimental series published in *Nature Scientific Reports* (2025) placed volunteers in a “forest room” that replicated the acoustic profile of an old-growth woodland at dawn. Thirty minutes of exposure reduced salivary cortisol (a measure of fight or flight stress response) by 21% and improved heart-rate variability, which is a good thing. When the same protocol was run with an urban soundtrack, cortisol rebounded (not a good thing), underscoring how quiet in natural settings can restore mental balance and noise pollution makes it worse.

A 2024 study found that natural soundscapes work the fastest for stress reduction, but nearly complete silence extends that benefit for up to 90 minutes. So in this study, the treatment with some natural sounds worked fast and the silent treatment worked longer. Although there are beneficial effects in all experimental conditions, plainly more research is needed.

Noise pollution sucks, but what Mr. Iyer was experiencing is known as *social fatigue*. When the verbalized demands on one’s time, attention, and talents become overwhelming, the results are nothing to sneer at. Unrelieved social fatigue impacts the brain by causing stress hormone spikes, which can lead to prefrontal cortex shrinkage (impaired focus and memory) and limbic system hyperactivity (increasing anxiety/rage). Brain fog, mental exhaustion, emotional instability, and difficulty with social cognition (the ability to decipher what the humans around you really want and need) can also happen. Ironically, prolonged effects of social fatigue can mirror those of social isolation, potentially accelerating brain aging and increasing dementia risk through inflammation and reduced gray matter.

This effect of too many folks sayin’ too much for too long was hauntingly captured in the lyrics of the Harry Nilsson 1969 theme from *Midnight Cowboy*.

“Everybody’s talkin’ at me. I don’t hear a word they’re sayin’. Only the echoes of my mind.”

That brilliantly sums up social fatigue. Sometimes people have to flee the situation permanently, but usually, a break in restorative environments will solve the problem for a while.

I write this as a voice to counterbalance the current handwringing over the ‘loneliness epidemic’. I agree that it’s a thing, and that some people really, really suffer for it. It can shorten life spans and exacerbate dementia. But too much of the reverse can also be damaging.

Many of you gentle readers will be able to sympathize with this since the winter holiday season is barely past. For my part, after eight hours of phone conversations with relatives in less than 24 hours, I had pretty good social fatigue. The conversations were pleasant and low stress, mostly, but after that much chat...I. Did. Not. Want. To. Talk. ANYMORE! It took me about six days to get over this, and now I am restored enough that I can chat with the best of them.

Time outdoors with my goats helped a ton. They are extraordinarily non-judgmental and mostly silent on most matters. When the weather didn’t allow, I found respite among the rows and rows of cheery and silent microgreens in my germination room. To each their own, of course.

We are in a time where pressure to be around our fellow humans all the time is the fashion, especially after Covid, in line with pressure to have lots more children and destroy natural quiet places for the sake of warehousing more and more of ourselves. There is the possibility of a dystopian future where only the rich can afford the sound of silence.

For instance, The Arctic Hideaway in Norway’s Fleinvær archipelago hosts writers, composers, and visual artists in tiny, car-free islands where the loudest regular sounds are gull cries and waves. Guests extol “the sheer absence of background

hum”. The cost for this is a modest \$250 per night. In Alaska, the Stillpoint Lodge encourages multi-day “digital sunsets,” confiscating devices so that guests can kayak through glacial fjords or sit in a forest clearing for meditation without electronic interruption. Cool, but the cost makes the Norwegian stay seem like the Dollar Store of solitude. The cost for one night at Stillpoint Lodge...\$3,200 *per night* (floatplane transportation included). That is an extreme, but true, example, and mainly included here for shock value.

Often, where money permits, a more normally priced, although still pricey, extended silence break is possible for those who are not billionaires. Mr. Iyer annually attends a retreat at a Catholic facility in California for several days of ‘living silence’. Such experiences generally cost about \$300 per night. The free and peaceful silence of untrammelled wilderness is constantly under assault.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (Minnesota) is a certified Wilderness Quiet Park but is at risk from proposed sulfide-ore copper mining, which threatens acoustic integrity with blasting and machinery noise. In Utah’s West Desert in Delta County (different one) not far from where I used to live, the BLM approved a large-scale solar power plant without a full environmental impact analysis, risking noise from construction, operations, and water hauling in remote wilderness-caliber lands.

These are but two examples of threats to quiet landscapes, the loss of which will eventually impact us individually and collectively. Whether from noise pollution or social fatigue, a place for silent escape is critical for good mental hygiene. My advice is to take full advantage of our local backcountry to soak in the silence like you were lounging in an expensive spa, because one day you may have to pay just as much for that privilege.

Wishing you a bird-filled dawn and a silent night,

The Mindful Naturalist

Upscale Diner-type dining comes to Montrose:

NEW EATERY 66 NORTH IS A WINNER



EATERY 66 NORTH
MONTROSE, COLORADO

By Carole Ann McKelvey

MONTROSE -- A new dining experience has arrived in downtown Montrose and Thursday night it was packed! People didn't take long to discover the charming Eatery 66 North – a spinoff from the one in Ridgway.

Cocktails and American food (with some diversions into other ethnic foods) right on Main Street. Lovely, understated, diner-type décor with original stamped metal ceiling accents. More upscale than locals may be used to with medium-high prices. No booths, but plenty of tables around the wall and in the center (all mostly full tonight with families out enjoying the evening). You can also belly up to the bar if you wish. Take a seat and a waiter will bring you a menu or head to the bar and order – take your number and wait for your meal to magically appear. Considering how full it was there wasn't much of a wait. Drinks came out fast.

My son Ian was kind enough to accompany me to give it a try, and we both enjoyed our meals. The margarita was great!

Ian had a coke from the bottle and ordered the special burger of the evening, Hawaiian. Yep. with all the fixings and a

pineapple slab. So much salad on the top he didn't need an extra. Me, well of course I had to try the house margarita, yummy! And I went for the butternut squash cinnamon spiced soup and salad dish. ½ soup and salad. Now these guys really know their soups. Definitely start with at least a cup of the soup of the night. The chopped salad was also delish, with a creamy sweetish balsamic vinegar-ette.

The menu varies and is developed, they say, “with creative inspiration, seasonal tides, local availability and community desires. There are also daily specials that allow for menu variety and provide a creative and unique experience every day.” Owners Spencer and Katie Graves have been honing their culinary skills across the world. (See sidebar.)

This evening there were a variety of dishes available, including the Hawaiian burger, posole, and a variety of other dishes. WINTER MENU: Below Menu is for lunch, dinner and specials this evening.

SOUPS X SALADS

(Salad Add Ons: Burger 5, Chicken 3.50, Avocado 2, Bacon 2), \$6.42 / \$9.17

Cup or Bowl of Daily Soup, Seasonal Soup Made in house- See Specials Below, \$13.76;

French Onion Crock, Bone Broth, Caramelized Onions, Toasted Blue Grouse Baguette, Melted Gruyere and Swiss

(\$9.17 / \$12.84); **Detox Salad**, Organic Mixed Greens, Raw Beets, Carrots, Shaved Apples, Cauliflower, Pumpkin Seeds, Hemp Seeds, Turmeric-Tahini Vinaigrette. \$13.76;

1/2 Salad and Cup of Soup,

Seasonal and Freshly Made, \$8.25

SAUCES X SIDES

White Bean Hummus, Cannellini Beans, Tahini, Lemon, Parsley, Olive Oil & Naan – (add blackened shrimp 7.34) \$8.25; **PEI Mussels**, in a white wine, garlic and tomato broth served with crostini, \$8.25; **Dipping Sauces**, 66 Sauce, BBQ, Siracha Mayo, Chipotle BBQ, Ranch \$0.46; **Flautas**, Rolled Crispy Tacos with Shredded Chicken in a Smokey Tomato Broth Served with Lettuce, Sour Cream, Queso Fresco, Micro Cilantro, \$13.76; **Side of Fries**, Cajun Spiced/Salted or Truffle Parmesan, \$5.50 / \$7.34

SANDWICHES, BURGERS + TACOS, Sandwiches come with potato chips. Substitutions: Cajun/Salted Fries \$3 Truffle Fries \$4 Side Salad \$4, Soup \$5 Gluten Free Wrap or Bun \$2 Add Ons: Bacon- \$2 Jalapeños-\$1 Avocado \$2, \$15.59; **66 Burger OR Veggie Burger**, Local Grass Fed Beef OR "Beyond Meat", Organic Greens, Tomato, Onion, 66 Sauce, American Cheese, Homemade Pickles on Toasted Brioche Bun, \$12.84; **Keep It Simple**, Grass Fed Beef, American Cheese, Brioche Bun, \$20.17; **Hungryman**, Double Grass Fed Beef Burger, Melted Swiss, Chopped Bacon, Grilled Onions, Bacon, Lettuce, Tomato, Chipotle White BBQ; \$14.67

Pork Belly Bahn Mi, Korean BBQ Pork Belly, Spicy Pickled Veggies, Chopped Cashews, Siracha Mayo on Toasted Amoroso Roll, \$14.67; **Fish Tacos**, Beer Battered Cod, Shaved Cabbage, Pickled Jalapeño and Red Onion, Chipotle Lime Crema, Avocado Purree, Radish and Corn Salsa, \$15.59; **Me and My Uncle**, Crispy hand fried chicken with apple cider slaw, maple Dijon sauce and house made pickles

Continued next pg

NEW EATERY 66 NORTH IS A WINNER From Previous pg

MAINS, \$21.09

Ramen, Miso Bone Broth, Thin Sliced Pork Tenderloin, Noodles, Brassica Veggies, Raw Carrots, Scallions, Hard Boiled Egg, Chopped Cashews, Micro Cilantro, \$16.51; **Shala Love**, Chickpea and Lentil Stew with Sweet Potatoes, Peas, Carrots, Coconut Honey Yogurt Sauce, Chopped Cashews and Warm Naan – (add grilled chicken 3.21); \$19.26; **Chicken Mole Enchiladas**, Shredded Chicken Enchiladas with Home-made Mole Sauce, Shredded Lettuce, Tomato, Red Onion, Queso Fresco and Micro Cilantro, \$19.26

SPECIALS, \$6.72 / \$9.17

Soup of the Day, Mushroom Bisque, \$14.67; **Crab Cake Bites**, With Old bay Aioli

and Corn Salsa, \$7.34; **Deviled eggs**, With hickory smoked bacon and Jalapeño, \$14.67; **Philly**, Shave steak and American cheese on toasted amoroso roll, \$17.62; **Mushroom Swiss Burger**, Local grass fed beef, sautéed mushrooms, melted Swiss, organic greens, tomato, red onion, truffle aioli, \$22.87; **Shepards Pie**, Local grass fed beef with bone broth sauce, carrots, peas, tomatoes and herbs with a puff pastry crust, \$21.09; **Shrimp Fettuccine**, Grilled Shrimp with a Pistachio Cream Sauce served with Toasted Baguettes, \$24.96; **Grilled Salmon**, With mashed potatoes, garlic green beans and balsamic reduction, \$24.98

DESSERTS, \$7.34
Salted Caramel Vanilla Crunch Cake, w/

Berry Compote and Caramel Sauce, \$7.34; **Pumpkin Cheesecake**, with Apple Cinnamon Compote, \$7.34; **Carrot Cake**, Triple Layer with Cream Cheese Frosting, \$7.34
KIDS MENU \$7.34

Burger and Tenders Come with Potato Chips: Sub Fries \$1, Side Salad \$2, GF Bun or Wrap-\$2 Add Avo-\$2 Bacon-\$1, \$7.34; **33 Burger**, Local Grass Feed Beef with American Cheese and Pickles, \$8.25; **Chicken Tenders**, \$9.17; **Mini Ramen**, Broth, Noodles, - add Sliced Pork, \$9.17.

Eatery 66 is located at 232 East Main Street, Montrose, CO. Hours: lunch, 11-2; dinner, 5-8; Happy Hour each evening 7-8 p.m. beginning January 8, 2026.

Closed on Wednesday.

EATERY 66 NORTH IS A FAMILY ENDEAVOR

By Carole A. McKelvey

Montrose Mirror Food Editor

MONTROSE-The new restaurant, Eatery 66 North, in Montrose is run by the husband/wife team Katie and Spencer Graves with a breadth of restaurant experience.

The Graves family says, “Our menu will vary and develop with creative inspiration, seasonal tides, local availability and our community’s desires. We offer daily specials that allow for variety in our menu and provide a creative and unique experience everyday.

“Almost all of our menu is created in house and from scratch which allows for the transformation of the simplest of meals to the most extraordinary. We love reinventing memories- taking food and bringing you to the place in time that evokes nostalgia and a smile. Simple food, from simple ingredients made with love.”

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BY
RACHELLE
REDIGER

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

MONTROSE CENTER FOR ARTS YOUTH ART LOCKER PROGRAM A SUCCESS

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Montrose Center for Arts (MCA) is pleased to announce the success of its Youth Art Locker (YAL) Program.

"One of our major goals is to support local artists at every phase of their artistic journey, from new learner to professional. The Youth Art Locker Program was developed to help art teachers (and dozens of students) in local schools and programs with the mounting costs of art supplies," says MCA Board Treasurer Cathleen Treacy.

Since the program was announced at the beginning of December 2025, MCA received eight applications from local Montrose schools and a total of \$1,241 worth of art supplies were delivered to the participating classrooms to be used in encouraging the exploration of the arts by the youth of our community.

The YAL program will continue in 2026 and will be available to public and private schools as well as agencies that work with youth and can demonstrate a need for art supplies. Requests for MCA YAL monies are limited to \$150 per art educator/program per calendar year via an easy online application. Applications are accepted at any time throughout the year with a minimum request of \$50. Multiple requests at different times are allowed, but all requests will count toward the \$150 per educator or program yearly amount. Applications will be accepted and evaluated on a first come first served basis until the allotted funds are used.

For more information, please contact MCA Treasurer, Cathleen Treacy, at treasurer@mc4arts.com.

Current Exhibitions at MCA

Big Art: The Power of Scale exhibit, sponsored by John Trainor with Canyon Print Frame & Design, will be on display in the Main Gallery from January 16 – February 14. Trainor will be giving a FREE Art Talk



Courtesy photo Montrose Center for Arts.

January 28 at 6 p.m. titled "Tips and Tricks for Framing Artwork."

On February 12 at 6 p.m. at MCA, Artist Jeanette Oslund will share her experience with mural art as well as sharing how to get involved with the City of Montrose's Development and Revitalization Team Mural Grant Program.

During the same period, guests should be sure to explore the Member Rooms (Ponderosa and Cottonwood Galleries) which will be exhibiting *Wild at Heart Colorado*. As Colorado celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2026, MCA invited its member artists to share their vision of what they love about Colorado, particularly the Western Slope. Experience their interpretation beautiful scenery, outdoor sports and adventure, people, places and things that inspired all of us to fall in love with our state.

All art displayed at MCA is original, and unless marked, available for purchase.

Coming Next

The next exhibit is *Give Us Your Best Shot: A Look Through the Lens* that runs from

February 17 – March 27. Every photo tells a story. Every picture opens the doors to another world.

The power of photography lies in its ability to ignite emotions across barriers of language and culture. Journey through the camera lens with some of the best regional photographers on the Western Slope.

About Montrose Center for Arts

MCA is a non-profit organization totally served by volunteers and is always looking for volunteers to help with a wide variety of activities, from hosting at the reception desk, to helping with events and planning and developing the future of the organization. If you are interested in helping bring art to the Western Slope, you can call or email MCA to volunteer. MCA depends upon support from membership, contributions, sponsorships, grant funding and the local community. To support the MCA and local artists on the Western Slope, become an MCA member by stopping by the gallery or visiting our website.



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- ✓ 1,855 sq. ft.

COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

THE WINTER/SPRING SESSION OF THE NEW HORIZONS BAND OF MONTROSE IS JAN. 21 - APRIL 8

Special to Art & Sol

MONTROSE-The Montrose Recreation District 50+ Activities will again offer this 12-week band instrument class. No previous musical experience is required. This concert band is for adults once active in a school music program, as well as an entry point for adults with no prior music experience. Classes are taught by retired band director/music educator Kim Lundgren. Organized in February 2022, the New Horizons Band of Montrose has approximately 25 band members playing a variety of instruments, and looks forward to adding even more new band members.

Classes for the next session be on Wednesday mornings from Jan. 21, 2026 - April 8, 2026 at the Field House in Montrose, 25 Colorado Avenue, 81401. The fee for 12 classes is \$40 for registration and payment is made through the Montrose Recreation District. Information about registration is in the Winter/Spring Recreation District booklet and at the MRD website. Or you may call the Montrose Main Recreation Center at 970-249-7705. Participants will also pay \$15 to the instructor for music and other supplies.

Participants will need to provide their own band instrument and supplies, and can learn to play trumpet, trombone, clarinet, flute, saxophone, or baritone/euphonium.

Email director Kim Lundgren for the rehearsal schedule, and information about finding an appropriate quality instrument and supplies. NHbandMontrose@gmail.com

This concert band program is organized in partnership with the New Horizons International Music Association, founded in 1991 to encourage music making for those 50+. According to NHIMA founder Roy Ernst, "Playing music in groups supports good mental and physical health, besides being an unending source of joy." "Your best is good enough."

Contact:

Ms. Kim Lundgren

New Horizons Band of Montrose

nhbandmontrose@gmail.com



The Satisfied Self

WHY CALM IS THE NEW POWER



By Gia Pirelli.
Courtesy photo.

For years, women have been encouraged to push through fatigue, override their intuition, and rely on “discipline” as the solution to nearly everything. When motivation falters and inconsistency becomes consistent, the solution is to simply try harder. But if being hard on yourself was going to

work? It would have worked by now.

What if the problem isn't lack of effort? What if the problem is too much effort? What if the secret sauce isn't discipline, but rather, calm presence. And not the kind of calm that numbs or retreats from life, but the kind of calm that stabilizes the nervous system and restores internal authority. Because when the body feels perpetually rushed, braced, or overstimulated, everything goes to shit. Meaning, focus scatters, motivation evaporates, health deteriorates, weight increases, and mental and emotional states decline. So calm, in this sense, isn't weakness or avoidance. It's capacity. And capacity is power.

Most women aren't unmotivated. They're overstimulated. Take a hard look at your life, and tell me I'm wrong. Modern life rewards speed, responsiveness, and constant output. We consume more than we create. Over time, this trains the nervous system to maintain a low-level state of emergency—even during rest. One annoying email triggers a cortisol response. When the body lives in that state, it resists consistency, not out of defiance, but out of self-preservation. The mind shuts off creative thought, and you're locked into a state of reactivity. You no longer design your life, you merely manage it. And that sucks.

This is why routines that “should” work often don't. It's why self-care becomes another task to fail at. And it's why January resolutions collapse by February. Change that lasts doesn't begin in the mind, it begins in the body. When the body feels safe, it stops signaling the hormones and all the emergency response systems in the body. It allows you to take control of every

aspect of your life. But that control comes from calm, not chaos.

The first phase of reclaiming calm is not about doing more. It's about orienting differently. Before habits can stick, there needs to be a sense of direction, safety, and rhythm. These four practices establish that foundation.

1. Choose a North Star. Clarity precedes calm. Write a one-sentence identity statement that reflects who you are becoming. (Not who you are “fixing.”) Choose three words you want associated with how you move through the world, and how you want to show up. I do this every year. Print them, write them, place them somewhere visible. Give yourself a constant reminder of your intention and growth. This is what I mean by orientation. It's not wishful thinking, or resolutions, or some lame type of aspirational branding. This is science. When the brain knows where it's headed, decision-making becomes simpler, more consistent, and less draining.

2. Audit your inner dialogue. Defining those words, and then seeing them constantly also steers your internal dialogue. And the most influential voice you'll hear all day is your own. If you can notice even one recurring negative loop, one familiar track your mind plays that undermines steadiness, and then flip it. Replace it with neutrality, or gentle truth that's guided by those three words. This isn't forced positivity or some sort of bullshit ‘just be happy’ messaging. Your brain is smarter than that, and likely your personality is too.

For example: “I'm behind” becomes “I'm adjusting my pace.” Or, “I positively suck at this” becomes “I'm learning how, which takes however long it takes.”

Our words don't just describe our reality, they shape it. And that's because those same words also shape our psychology, which in turn influences our behavior. When self-talk softens, the body follows.

3. Move Your body. When the body is trying to soften, to regulate and release stress it needs to move. You can't think your way out of overthinking. Movement regulates the nervous system when it's rhythmic, intentional, and repeatable. I suggest

choosing two practices that you don't mind doing, and hopefully, even love to do. Yoga, Pilates, walking, or any other low-impact modality is ideal because it doesn't induce a stress response. Aim for short, consistent sessions rather than intensity. Think of movement as calibration, not correction. You're not fixing yourself, or fixing your weight, fixing your lack of flexibility, or fixing your joint problems. You're rewiring the master control. It's not about fitness goals, it's about restoring trust between body and mind.

4. Sit still. If at all possible, adding a meditation practice is ideal. Even if it's only 3 minutes at a time. Establishing the habit and eliminating any fear or discomfort around it is the goal. Stillness doesn't need to be dramatic to be effective. You don't have to be the Buddha.

Commit to 3-5 minutes of daily meditation. Attach it to an existing habit, like after coffee, or during a walk, at the end of your yoga session, or even before bed. The goal is not transcendence or super-galactic oneness; it's familiarity. You're teaching your nervous system that pause is available.

Calm is often mistaken for a type of temperament, or personality. People often think it's either something you have or you don't. In reality, it's a trained state. It requires practice. A regulated nervous system creates resilience, clarity, and joy. From that place, discipline stops feeling brittle and forced. Boundaries become easier. Energy stabilizes. Trust in your own self blooms. Life becomes a place of joy, meaning, and inspiration.

In the weeks ahead, we'll explore how regulation shapes movement, rest, communication, productivity, and presence, not as abstract ideas, but as lived experience. Because calm isn't about slowing your life down. It's about finally having the capacity to live it well.

Gia Pirelli is a yoga and Pilates teacher and sound practitioner specializing in nervous system regulation and embodied well being. She offers short, accessible online practices designed to support calm, strength, and sustainable self-leadership. Learn more at <https://www.theembodiedself.co>

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-](mailto:pgor-don@allsaintsmontrose.org)
don@allsaintsmontrose.org

Worship Service Times: Sundays 9AM,

Sunday Worship. Wednesdays 11AM, Mid-week prayer and communion, Wednesday, Noon, Multi-denominational Community Prayer Hour.

All Saints Anglican Church is an Evangelical Anglican Church committed to the ministry 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 Sunday service. We would love to welcome you here. Following the service, join us for snacks and conversation. On the third Sunday 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
 112 Main 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.

CEDAR CREEK CHURCH

affiliation: Evangelical Free

Address: 222 South Townsend Montrose, CO 81401

Office Hours: 10am-2pm Tuesday- Friday

Contact: 970-252-1163

ccc@cccmontrose.org

Pastor: Curt Mudgett

Sunday worship:

worship Service: September-May at 10:15am **Discipleship Hour** at 9am

Worship Service: June-August at 9:30am
 Nursery available for 0-4 during worship service

Wednesday Prayer: 5:30-6:15pm

Cedar Creek Church is a welcoming and friendly group of people that takes God seriously, but not ourselves.

We enjoy gathering for encouragement, meals, prayer and having fun!

Our mission is to exalt Jesus Christ by being a Word-centered community of believers who are equipped for a life of worship, prayer and service, and to reach our neighbors for Christ.

Please make plans to come check us out soon!

CELEBRATION CHURCH

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

Address: 2900 Sunnyside Road, Montrose, CO 81401

Office Hours: By appointment

Phone: (970) 497-4925

Email: celebrationmontrose@gmail.com

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

celebrationmontrose.org/

Worship Service Times: 9am and 10:45am

Senior Pastor:

Pastor Brandon Mathis

Church Description/Mission: Celebration Church makes disciples that make disciples. 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. Montrose, 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 Lawrence

Worship service times: 10:30 a.m.

Mission: Christ's Church of the Valley is a loving and welcoming church whose purpose 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 predominately 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 Synod

Address: 1980 N. Townsend Ave., Montrose, 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 welcoming environment being comforted and encouraged 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.

MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY From previous pg

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 inclusive and accepting world is steadfast, and we will continue to work towards a future

where everyone can live freely and authentically.

Demographics: We are a small congregation 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 Saturdays. 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 predominantly made up of older folks, but have some young blood, too.

FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Denomination: Church of the Nazarene

Address: 705 South 12th Street

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

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

Pastor: Interim Pastor Ian Hyde

Services Sunday: Worship 10:30

AM, Discipleship Hour: 9:30

AM. Discipleship Hour has classes across all age groups. Nursery for children UNDER 3 is available during Worship.

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 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:

9:15 AM to 10:15 AM: Children's, Youth, and Adult Sunday School; Christian Education & Fellowship.

10:30 AM: Sanctuary & Virtual Worship
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 dentures. 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

ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Denomination: Anglican-Reformed Episcopal Church (REC)

Address: 2405 Sunnyside Road, Montrose 970-249-4868

Contact: [ststephensmont-](mailto:ststephensmont-rose@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).

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?



Premier Sponsor:

Montrose Farmers Market
970-249-0705

Horsefly Brewing
970-249-6889

Jimmer's BBQ,
Burgers & Beer
970-252-1227

Fiesta Guadalajara
Re-Opening 2026
970-249-2460

El Jimador
970-249-8990

Busy Corner White Kitchen
970-323-6215

Delta: CB's Tavern
970-399-3570



Alpen Confections
970-648-0609

Crash Burger
970-249-0825

Coffee Trader
970-249-6295
970-787-9021

Tacos & Beer
970-964-4448

Tacos & Beer on Main
970-964-4999

Pahgre's
970-249-6442



Lighthouse Eatery
970-964-7570

Ray's Corner Cafe
970-417-4340

Rib City
970-249-7427



Stone House
970-240-8899

Sidelines Sports Bar
970-765-0129

Amelias Hacienda Restaurante
970-249-1881

Delta: Pour Ernie's
970-546-0074



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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

ABIGAIL LAMBERT NAMED TO DEAN'S LIST AT CSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES/ANIMAL SCIENCE

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Montrose High School Graduate, Abigail Lambert, class of 2024, has received Dean's List honors for Colorado State University College of Agricultural Sciences/Animal Science for the last three semesters.

The Dean's List recognition is awarded to students who completed 12 or more credits and earned a term grade point average of 3.80 or higher.



Fiesta Guadalajara
Re-Opening 2026
970-249-2460

Alpen Confections
970-648-0609

Pahgre's
970-249-6442

Rib City
970-249-7427

Stone House
970-240-8899

Jimmer's Steak & BBQ
970-252-1227



Beer Barn II
970-249-5550

KALEB FERGUSON NAMED TO WARTBURG COLLEGE FALL TERM DEAN'S LIST

Special to Art & Sol

WAVERLY, IA - Kaleb Ferguson of Olathe was named to the Wartburg College Fall Term Dean's List. The college recognized 570 students for Fall Term.

The list honors students who earned a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above in at least four course credits during the term. Three of the four course credits have to be graded with a traditional letter grade.

Wartburg College is a four-year liberal arts college internationally recognized for community engagement. A college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Wartburg is dedicated to challenging and nurturing students for lives of leadership and service as a spirited expression of their faith and learning. The college is characterized by vigorous academic expectations and community engagement within an environment of strong personal support.



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Justin Covington.....970-275-4189	Britany Butler.....970-209-4388
Nicole Goza.....970-209-2548	Vicki Jones.....970-209-3018
Mark Covington.....970-209-1956	Office.....970-249-6658

1563 Ogden Rd Montrose, CO 81401



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SAVE THE DATE! LOCAL EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING-

ALTRUSA INT'L believes in "Leading to a Better Community" and is always looking for new members. We meet in Montrose on the first three Tuesdays a month at the Field House: 25 Colorado Ave, 12-Noon. Pick a day that works for you & please join us! Through our local Altrusa Club, members unite their varied talents in service to others, achieving as a group what individuals cannot do alone." <https://www.altrusamontrose.org/> P: 970-765-7666 E: Altrusa.Montrose@gmail.com

BLACK CANYON AUDUBON SOCIETY provides a monthly program on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7 pm at the Montrose Field House, 25 Colorado Avenue, Montrose. blackcanyonaudubon.org

Tuesday - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays-Black Canyon Audubon Society hosts monthly birdwatching field trips in the Montrose area on 1st Tuesdays of the month and in the Delta area on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month. Check out the website for field trip details at blackcanyonaudubon.org.

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 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

Jan. 19-National Holiday-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan. 21-From 5 to 7 pm at the Montrose Regional Library, Join Peak Academy students and local water leaders for a fun, interactive board game about drought resilience. Test your decision-making as part of a basin roundtable and see if your community can withstand years of low rainfall! Dinner and kids' activities provided.

Jan. 21-Come hear Zebulon Miracle present "Voyage into geology, archaeology, history and a touch of legend" at our meeting Wednesday 1/21/26 at 7pm at the United Methodist Church 19 S Park Avenue Montrose. Free.

Jan. 22-Come celebrate the new year with Friendship Quilters of Western Colorado at their Thursday meeting, Jan. 22, at Friendship Hall, Montrose County Fairgrounds, 1001 N Second Street in Montrose. The meeting starts at 9am with social time, followed by a business meeting, program, and show and tell. We will be honoring those who joined our group last year with a New Member Tea. New members will share their quilt journey and show some of their work. You are encouraged to bring a tea cup to make the gathering a festive tea party. Call 360.448.0153 for questions.

Feb. 3-April 10-The Montrose AARP Tax-aide site will be in operation from February 3rd through April 10th at the Senior Center in the Montrose Pavilion, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9am – 2pm. **Reservations required** – Make reservations at 970-252-4889 Monday – Thursday 9am – 2pm.

MIRROR IMAGES: OUT & ABOUT



January is National Mentoring Month! Photo by B. Switzer.

