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BASIN WATER LEVELS RAISE CONCERNS

By Caitlin Switzer

REGIONAL-February and March tend to be Colorado's snowiest months, but the outlook so far has water watchers concerned. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) [Snotel information site](#), snow water equivalent in the Gunnison River Basin is presently at 58 percent of average, with year-to-date precipitation at 86 percent of average. Flows in the [Uncompahgre River at Colona](#) were 3.52 ft. on Feb. 14, according to the US Geological Survey (USGS) monitoring location. Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association (UVWUA) Executive Director Steve Pope said that water prices have risen to cover maintenance costs. With this year's low snowpack, irrigation season will be a challenge, Pope said. "It's pretty lean," he said. "We're hoping for big changes in the winter season."

Local Farmer and Agricultural Affairs Writer Dr. Lauren Hall Ruddell, PhD

Continued pg 2



The sparse snowpack in the San Juans will impact irrigation and all water users in the Uncompahgre Valley. Water experts are hoping that the typically snowy months of February and March will bring much needed moisture to the valley in the form of precipitation.
Photo by B. Switzer.

SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES \$3.4M FIELD HOUSE PURCHASE, TABLES DECISION ON LEGAL COUNSEL Students Present on Trout in the Classroom Project

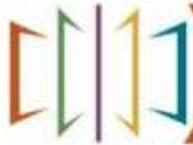


As part of the Consent Agenda on Tuesday, Feb. 10, the RE-1J Board of Education voted to proceed with the purchase of the Fieldhouse property at the price of \$3,400,000 and to extend that contract.
Mirror staff photo.

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-The crowd was large and the meeting was more than three hours long. In the end, after hearing public comment and discussing the matter, the Montrose County School District RE-1J Board of Education voted four to three to continue the selection of new legal counsel for a future meeting. All directors were present for the Tuesday, Feb. 10 Board of Education meeting, including Board President Neisha Balleck; Vice President Ted Valerio; District C Director Scott Scarborough; District E Director Tiffany Vincent; District F Director Jody Hovde; and District G Director Shane Daly. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence, the Board voted to approve the meeting agenda. RE-1J Public Information Office Mikayla Unruh presented the Student Spotlight, Staff Recognition, and Donations.

Continued pg 32



Silent Reading Club

February 19,
6:30-8:00 PM

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BASIN WATER LEVELS RAISE CONCERNS *From pg 1*

shared her thoughts on this year's water outlook as well.

"The situation with the February 14th Compact deadline reminds me of two adversaries using a Chinese finger trap to resolve their differences," Ruddell said. "The more they pull away from each other in anger, the tighter the trap gets and the more they are immobilized."

"It seems to me inevitable that water courts, and possibly, eventually, the Supreme Court, will come along and cut the trap down the center, in a way in which everybody loses," she said. "Water conservation measures work well when there is water to conserve. The elephants in the living room are dams Hoover and Glen Canyon, which may be at deadpool and some amount of destructive cavitation by the end of this year."

Ruddell continued, "Fighting over water is not new, just look at Tehran, and much of South Africa. Here in the American West, it's a time-honored tradition. But in this mega drought, when Day Zero is rapidly approaching for us too, supplying water in a business as usual, over-allocation manner to the Lower Basin states may become both irrelevant and impossible in the face of increasing water access restrictions imposed by climate change."

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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



Fresh news for busy people

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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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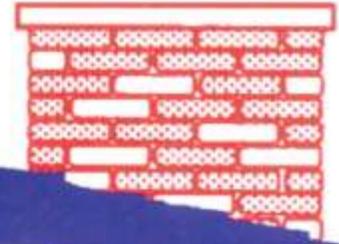
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We welcome community contributions and commentary! Please note, submitted content does not necessarily reflect the views of the Montrose Mirror or its editorial team. In addition to the Online News Association, we hold memberships in the Colorado Press Association and Society for Professional Journalists.



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

THANKS, THANKS AND MORE THANKS!

Montrose Veterans Memorial Coalition has plenty to be thankful for

Editor:

MONTROSE– Well, it is hard to believe that we are past January and into mid-February. Your board of directors of the Montrose Veterans Memorial have been busy seeking in-kind donations, taking care of our non-profit (501c3) and campaigning throughout the Western Slope. It is the busiest we have ever been.

While traveling to Grand Junction recently, I had time to reflect on this effort and realized that although we are busy we need to stop and acknowledge the vast number of citizens and businesses who are supporting us, and recognize our government partners.

I got caught up in the mission to raise additional funds, preparation for signing the Memorandum of Agreement and building the memorial, and neglected those who have helped us along this path.

Now we say thanks

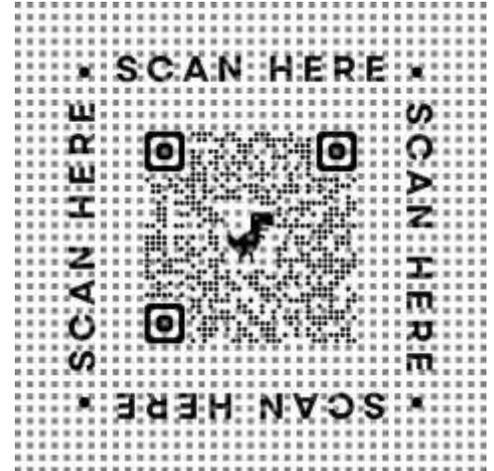
- Thanks to more than 550 folks who have purchased veteran and patriot bricks.
- Thanks to the people who purchased benches and the service seals.
- Thanks to The Home Depot and City of Montrose arborist who helped us clean up the site.
- Thanks for the in-kind donations with recent amounts over \$75,000 and much more in the works.
- Thanks to Stryker and Co. employees who have helped so diligently in estimating costs and gathering in-kind donations.
- Thanks to Montrose County for their cash and in-kind materials.
- Thanks to the City of Montrose for the wonderful location site and their ongoing care of the site forevermore. We are grateful.
- Thanks to the Welcome Home Alliance

for Veterans, director April Heard and volunteer coordinator Amy Eifling. Amy serves as our board secretary and is instrumental in tracking everything.

-Thanks to Sergina Bach for creating our new website, tracking and analyzing the data, and keeping us current with social media...our tech guru.

-And thanks to board members Lance Bach, Troy Meyer, Dave Vergamini, Dave Powers, and founder Mike Trickey, who have jumped in and spent endless hours helping to make this memorial a reality.

*Sincerely on behalf of the BOD,
Les Williams, President*



REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

COST FOR SUBSTANCE USE AND RECOVERY SERVICES NO LONGER A BARRIER THROUGH THE RECOVERY ACCESS FUND

Special to the Mirror

REGIONAL-Tri-County Health Network (TCHNetwork) offers the Recover Access Fund (RAF) to individuals for recovery therapy sessions across Delta, Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel, and the West End of Montrose counties. RAF connects people to vital substance use recovery services and helps individuals get the care they need, when they need it, without cost being an obstacle.

Through RAF, residents in these commu-

nities can receive financial support on up to 12 therapy sessions per year. These sessions are removing the cost barriers in seeking substance use therapy and sobriety.

To better support local providers and expand care options, TCHNetwork has increased their RAF reimbursement rate to \$125 per session. This increase helps ensure providers can offer these services and receive fair compensation per session. Currently, there are 120 providers

that accept RAF, and we are actively accepting new providers.

“By investing directly in providers, we’re investing in healthier individuals, stronger families, and a more resilient community,” says Melanie Wasserman, Co-Executive Director at TCHNetwork.

To learn more about the Recovery Access Fund or how to participate, visit www.tchnetwork.org/raf or contact Tri-County Health Network today at 970.708.7096.

FRIENDSHIP QUILTERS MEETING THURSDAY, FEB. 26, 9AM - AFTERNOON

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Friendship Quilters of Western Colorado will meet Friday, Feb. 26, at Friendship Hall, Montrose County Fairgrounds, 1001 N Second Street in Montrose. The meeting starts at 9am with so-

cial time, followed by a business meeting, program, and show and share. The February meeting will focus on caring quilts and finishing UFO's (UnFinished Objects) for community donations. There will be a sew-in after the guild meeting to make

baby receiving blankets for the Montrose hospital. Fabric has been pre-cut, and the sewing is simple. Bring your sewing machine and basic sewing supplies and help make blankets. It's a great way to serve our community.

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Join us for one of our upcoming Spark Sessions—relaxed, come-as-you-are gatherings where cooperative members can chat face-to-face with senior staff and board leaders. This is your chance to ask questions, share ideas, and get to know the folks powering your wires behind the scenes. Drop in, say hello, and have a refreshment on us.

<p>Tuesday, February 17 7 a.m. - 9 a.m. Montrose Looney Bean Coffee Roasting Co 3480 Wolverine Dr.</p>	<p>Thursday, February 26 7 a.m. - 9 a.m. Delta Rise & Shine Fuel Coffee 520/420 Highway 92</p>
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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS & CARTOONS

LEARN TO SEE THROUGH THE LIES

Editor:

Discernment. Do you accept everything you see, hear and read because it sounds good? Are you able to turn a “deaf ear” to lies that feel true and accept the truth? We are in a time where many people are unable or unwilling to accept truth and facts. With elections coming up it is vital people learn to see through the lies which are perpetrated by those who DO NOT have our best interests at heart. Outside monies are coming in to influence our city and county elections hoping you believe their lies and vote for candidates who are against your values and best interests. This is happening in our state and here in Montrose. Vet the candidates, attend their Meet and Greets with prepared questions and most importantly investigate WHAT THEY HAVE DONE and does it agree with their words and promises. We need educated, well prepared and discerning voters this election and most importantly God’s guidance to vote responsibly. ATTEND THE CAUCUS ON MARCH 5TH TO SUPPORT AND VOTE FOR YOUR CANDIDATES. Go online and register early.

Carol McBride, Montrose



Financial Transparency in Montrose!

Our tax dollars are exploding. The City of Montrose' 2026 budget hit \$168 million, up from just \$49.7 million in 2017. That's a threefold increase in under a decade!

What do we get? **Overpriced alley murals at \$25,000 to \$50,000 each**, when they could cost just 20% of that. A new City Hall for over \$6 million, ignoring a less expensive and more appealing renovation of our historic City Hall which would have cost just half.

Enough waste on pet projects! **We need an independent forensic audit and full transparency** to track OUR Taxpayer dollars and ensure wise spending on real needs like infrastructure and safety. Join the movement for transparency.

In our Republic, we elect our Representatives, but if we don't show up and Vote, we lose our voice!

Join me in building a better, stronger Montrose based on **Common Sense**.



MJB4Montrose.com

Vote: Michael J. Badagliacco, "MJB" For City Council on April 7th

<https://mjb4Montrose.com>

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

USE THE CDE DISTRICT AND SCHOOL DASHBOARD TO VERIFY INFORMATION

Editor:

Michael J Badagliacco spoke during public comment at the February 10 MCSD school board meeting, and made the claim that Montezuma-Cortez schools have improved dramatically after the board hired the Miller, Farmer, Carlson law firm. He cited an improvement of 30 “spots in the ratings”, which piqued my curiosity, so I attempted to verify the statistic.

Later in the meeting, Director Scarborough referenced the citation as compelling. Either in the Montezuma Cortez Journal or on the Colorado Department of Education website it is easy to find information regarding the ranking for Montezuma Cortez schools. The article (October 2025) <https://www.the-journal.com/articles/montezuma-cortez-shows-mixed-results-in-state-ratings-multiple-schools-show-a-decline/> highlights dropping test scores in Cortez, reading proficiency at 35%, and even lower math scores. The Montezuma-Cortez district earned 43.5% of possible points in its most recent 2025 District Performance Framework while MCSD earned 51.2%. With these results it is unclear what point Mr. Badagliacco was trying to make, and why Director Scarborough found it persuasive.

Elsewhere in the state it is even impossible to make any kind of determination on student success and a correlation to the law firm Miller, Farmer, and Carlson Law. ER BOCES, which Brad Miller represents, is a combination of various types of schools that serves 10,312 students.

ER BOCES had only 912 valid scores on CMAS tests and high school tests. (Colorado Politics) With an 11% participation rate, how can the value of the education received there be rated one way or the other? My question for both Mr. Badagliacco and Mr. Scarborough is why they would share information like this, or perhaps where did it come from? In the future, Mr. Badagliacco may want to use the CDE District and School Dashboard to verify information. Every District and School Performance Framework can be accessed at ed.cde.state.co.us/accountability/data-tools/district-and-school-dashboard

Kurt Scriffiny, Cimarron

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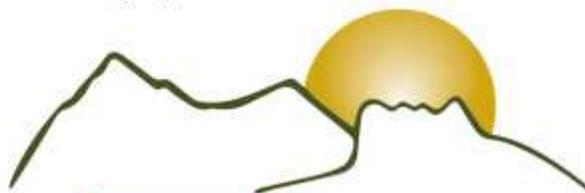
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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

PLEASE MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR OUR DISTRICT

Dear Superintendent Stevenson and the MCSD Board Members,

I am writing to express my strong concerns regarding the potential selection of Brad Miller and Company to represent our school district. My awareness of these issues grew after viewing the documentary *The Librarians*, which examines book banning and the treatment of librarians in public schools. This film is airing tonight, February 9th, at 9:00 PM on PBS's Independent Lens, and I encourage you to watch it. If you are unable to see it then, please note that a local group plans to screen it in Montrose this spring.

I am firmly opposed to the RE1J School District becoming a potential test case for the Supreme Court regarding the creation of religious public schools. It is vital that our district remains focused on its core educational mission rather than engaging in high-stakes litigation on this issue.

I have included several references below that detail the controversies surrounding Brad Miller and Company, including their

involvement in the creation of what has been described as the state's first "public Christian school." These articles outline the legal and financial challenges that followed, and I ask that you review them before making a final decision.

Please make the right choice for our district and decline to hire Brad Miller and Company.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,
Cynthia Harwood

- References:**
- The Miller Files – Colorado Public Education Watch: <https://coloradopubliceducation-watch.substack.com/p/say-no-to-colorado-leaders-for-academic> (<https://coloradopubliceducation-watch.substack.com/p/say-no-to-colorado-leaders-for-academic>)
 - Chalkbeat – School board member resigns amid ‘public Christian school’ con-

- troversy
- CPR – Christian law firm’s search for test case led to religious public school in Colorado
- Chalkbeat – Colorado school district may drop attorney who helped create state’s ‘first public Christian school’: <https://www.chalkbeat.org/colorado/2026/01/27/pueblo-70-district-may-drop-lawyer-brad-miller/> (<https://www.chalkbeat.org/colorado/2026/01/27/pueblo-70-district-may-drop-lawyer-brad-miller/>)
- KOAA – Colorado's 'first public Christian school' faces state funding warning over religious curriculum
- Colorado Sun – Is Colorado’s first “public Christian school” eligible for state funding? State education officials say no.
- Chalkbeat – Colorado’s ‘first public Christian school’ ordered to close building
- Chalkbeat – Lawyers for ‘first public Christian school’ resist building closure order

HOPE SCHEPPELMAN FOR HD 3

Editor:

Ready for change?? Hope is on the horizon!! Hope Scheppelman; candidate for US House District 3 who will fight for our Western Slope Values. Watch for her Meet and Greets and get acquainted.

Carol McBride, Montrose

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MONTROSE REGIONAL CRIME STOPPERS

see something, say something

COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

CITY OFFICES TO CLOSE ON PRESIDENTS' DAY

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— City of Montrose offices will close in observance of Presidents' Day on Monday, Feb. 16.

City Hall, the Downtown Visitor Center, Municipal Court, Animal Shelter, Montrose Pavilion, and Public Works will all close in observance of the holiday.

Police officers will be on duty and responding to calls, however Police Department offices will be closed.

The Black Canyon Golf Course will remain open, depending on favorable weather, and the Pro Shop will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Rusty Putter restaurant will be open 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, Feb. 16, will instead be served on Tuesday, Feb. 17, and Wednesday, Feb. 18.

For trash routes normally scheduled for Monday, Feb. 16, residences south of San Juan Avenue and U.S. Highway 50 will receive trash collection services on Tuesday, Feb. 17.

For residences north of San Juan Avenue and U.S. Highway 50, trash pickup will occur on Wednesday, Feb. 18.

Recycling customers who would normally receive collection service on Monday, Feb. 16, will instead be served on Friday, Feb. 20.

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

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CRIME STOPPERS ALERT: CLUSTER OF MAILBOXES STOLEN

Montrose Regional Crime Stoppers

MONTROSE-Sometime between February 6 and 7, an entire cluster of mailboxes (similar to the photo) was stolen after the supporting base/leg was cut off.

This occurred in the area of Hillside Rd @ 5650 Rd.

If anyone in the area saw or heard anything unusual (vehicles stopping, grinding, sawing, tools clanging, late-night noise, etc.), or has camera footage that might have caught something, please call WestCO Dispatch at 970-249-9110.

Anyone with information about this crime or the identity of the perpetrator(s) or any other crimes may call Crime Stoppers anonymously at:

-(970)249-8500,

-use the app P3 Tips,

-or provide information via P3Tips.com.

Crimes Stoppers wants your information, not your identity.

If the Tip results in an arrest, the Tipster may receive a cash award. For additional information, please view our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/montroseregionalcrimestoppers.

Crime Prevention and crime solution are everyone's responsibility.

Montrose Regional Crime Stoppers would like to remind everyone that all persons of interest depicted in our alerts, by photo or not, or by any other means, are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



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ON MONDAY,
FEBRUARY 16





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NO Covenants! This property is located at the north end of the Log Hill Village. It is approx. 4.73 acres with views of the Cimarron Mountains and overlooks a small valley to the west that yields some spectacular sunsets. This lot is abundant with mature ponderosa pines, which offers excellent privacy and a woody feel. It also backs up to Log Hill Village open space making it feel much larger and provides ease of access to the Log Hill Village trail system. MLS # 820133



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

PRESSURES ON AGRICULTURE: CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY WANTS TO HELP

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE- CCLMontrose has become acutely aware of some of the pressures on agricultural operations in the Uncompahgre Valley.

Agriculture is both a key economic driver and part of the identity of the Western Slope of Colorado.

It drives jobs, supports local businesses, shapes the landscape, and is part of why people choose to live in the region. Agriculture supports 9,123 total jobs in a 5 county region with the majority in pastureland 62.6%, cropland at 18.6% and woodland at 12.9%.

Since 2002 total farmland has dropped by 15–30%. Across the region, 35–44% of producers are over age 65, raising long-term agricultural succession concerns. A

little more than half (57.6%) have diversified income streams (e.g., agritourism and secondary crops). But the bottom line is producers do not have a positive outlook regarding the future.

A big contributor to the (-) outlook to the future is 71.8% of producers have been directly impacted by drought in the past three years leading to **reduced forage, smaller herds, higher feed costs, overhead costs, poorer crop quality, shortened grazing seasons, and in some cases complete water unavailability, with some operations producing only 40% of normal hay yields.**

CCL Montrose would like to work with the agricultural community by working with partners to increase agricultural Efficiency & Resilience through:

-Efficient irrigation and water-saving technologies
-Agrivoltaics with On

-farm renewable energy for crops pumps and operations
-Soil-health practices that improve drought tolerance

We look forward as a partner in identifying ways our agricultural community can continue to thrive, expand and maintain a strong economic component in the Uncompahgre Valley in light of increasing heat and drought.



Photo by Amanda Clements



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Amazon Senior Manager,
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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

REGARDING THE DECISION TO EXTERMINATE PRAIRIE DOGS ON PUBLIC LAND AT THE TOP OF THE PINES

Dear Ouray County Commissioners,

My name is Dan Chancellor. I have lived in the area for 43 years.

As Commissioners you are occasionally asked to separate facts from irrational fears and unfounded prejudice. Such is the case regarding the Gunnison's prairie dogs at the Top Of The Pines. As reported in Steve Boyles management report, the US has recorded only 11 deaths from **Bubonic Plague** in the 16 years between 2005 and 2021. Most of those were not associated with Prairie dogs. There have been no human cases of Plague in Ouray County in modern times. Clearly, the extremely rare cases of plague in humans, easily treated with antibiotics, do not warrant the extermination of a threatened species.

Many people have a narrow view of nature, thinking that prairie dog burrows are ugly and that rodents who dwell in the dirt are unworthy of consideration. But, nature in its magnificent beauty is not a painting, rendered to please the eye. It's a very complex interconnected eco-system, where one species depends on another for their survival. Gunnison's Prairie Dogs benefit over 150 species. They aerate the soil. They clip tall grass, rendering more nutritious grazing for deer and elk. They provide food and shelter for foxes, coy-

otes, badgers, owls and a wide variety of raptors. If a wedding ceremony at TOP is blessed with the good omen of an eagle circling overhead, they should thank the prairie dogs. I am certain that those people who choose to be united in the wonder of nature, more than most, understand its true beauty. Given a choice, they would prefer what some consider unsightly burrows, to the wholesale slaughter of a keystone species. Wearing appropriate footwear and watching your steps are small concessions, to ensure the survival of a thriving eco-system.

Those who are unfamiliar with prairie dogs, view a large colony and assume that they are over populating. Several mechanisms including, biological restrictions, coterie structure, resource limits and habitat engineering, naturally limit population growth. Absent of human intervention, the number of predators (other wonders of nature) will increase and limit population.

Gunnison's Prairie dogs are very intelligent. They have the most sophisticated non-human language decoded to date, with over a hundred alarm calls that differentiate between animals such as hawks, badgers, coyotes and humans. They incorporate information including color, size and rate of travel (google Biolo-

gist Con Slobodchikoff). This threatened species has declined by 98% in the past century. Rather than demonizing them, these unique creatures, integral to their surrounding eco-system, should be celebrated and protected. The presence of these endearing animals could be used as a marketing tool, targeted to those who truly appreciate nature and it's wonders. The diminishing of small colonies contributes to extinction of this and other species. Prairie dogs scurried about these mountains long before the heavy footprint of human civilization.

The actions of local government should serve the needs of entire community, not a few misguided customers who may be offended by the realities of a thriving eco-system.

There are non-lethal solutions such as hay bales or removable skirting that have only a small visual impact. Those who choose to be wed in the splendor of nature should be willing to make a small compromise to visual perfection to protect the many living creatures that call this place home.

Please reconsider your decision to allow Top of The Pines to exterminate a vital keystone species to cater to the whim of a few uninformed customers
Dan Chancellor, Placerville

A SIGNIFICANT BOON FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

To the editor,

While the topic has faded from public discussion, the threat remains of another pandemic, à la COVID-19, spreading around the globe and leaving devastation in its wake. To help prevent this possibility, our political leaders should support state and federal funding of cultivated-meat research. The new protein is grown from livestock cells, without slaughter. Animal agriculture is a frequent cause of zoonotic diseases making the jump to humans.

While growing cultivated meat is now technologically feasible, it's too expensive to mass produce. Further study will fix this.

Let's build facilities like the Tufts University Center for Cellular Agriculture at schools across the country. I have no doubt that, working together, researchers can overcome the remaining scientific barriers to making cheap, slaughter-free meat. Among other things, this will be a significant boon for public health.

Jon Hochschartner, Granby CT

OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

INTIMIDATION AND MISINFORMATION RULED AT MONTROSE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Editor:

The opposition to hire the Miller Farmer Law Firm (specifically Brad Miller) showed up in numbers to the February 10 meeting, not to mention several anti-Miller op-eds in the *Montrose Mirror*. The Board was not required to bring this before the public, but President Balleck explained to us that the Board wanted to be transparent, so they interviewed five law firms before allowing public comment. One person after another spoke about the “havoc” Mr. Miller wreaked on other school districts. They gave him credit for the decisions school boards made as though they weren’t able to think for themselves.

The “facts” they presented were not facts. The sources of information were, for the most part, left-leaning and the preferred narratives were spun to make Mr. Miller into a monster who apparently, in their minds, has persuasive powers to make school boards do his will. This is insulting to them. Afterwards, President Balleck addressed the misinformation that saturated public speaking time. The motion was made to hire the Miller Farmer Law Firm, but it was voted down and tabled for a future vote.

I believe that this is not about Brad Miller, but the fact he is a Conservative and a Christian apparently. Also, he has been accused of being able to hire and fire people in school districts among other things. The truth is he has no power to do any of those things, and that was made apparent in the interviews with the law firms at the meeting. Only the school boards he has served have made those decisions.

If anything, Brad Miller’s advisory position has improved student outcomes and rankings. This has been a one-sided narrative by those who have ignored the facts. He has been painted as disruptive without any real evidence. The lawsuit he was accused of causing was, in fact, due to the ACLU.

I encourage the Board to not be intimidated by loud voices, red shirts, and misinformation, but hire a lawyer who will meet the needs of this Board. Repeating lies and misinformation was the technique of Adolf Hitler who said, “If you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed.”

Indivisible and the opponents of the new Board Directors employed in and outside the District need to allow the new Board members to function without harassment and intimidation. Again, Montrose County voters voted for change and the opposition is trying to prevent it.

Leah Vandersluis, Montrose



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13 and over age category



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EMMA BRAATEN \$500 2nd place winner
JOSHUA SKARKA \$1,000 grand prize winner



Congratulations to all of the acts!

12▼; Front Row: Marybeth Skarka; Harper, Reagan & Joelle Canady; Brielle Cisneros; Brianna Skarka; Wren Malloy; Sienna Comstock; Ka're Folklorico Dance Group;
 13▲; Back Row: Kaysan Carlton; Kayla Braaten; Jeremy Brailsford; Joshua Skarka; Emma Braaten; Audrieanna Sisneros; Dylan Box

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

GMUG ANNOUNCES SEASONAL HIRING FOR UPCOMING RECREATION SEASON

Special to the Mirror

DELTA-The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests are hiring seasonal employees for the upcoming recreation season and is encouraging local residents to apply. Positions are expected to be posted on Feb. 20 at USAJOBS.gov.

“Seasonal employees help make summer recreation possible,” said Chad Stewart, GMUG forest supervisor. “From campgrounds to trails, they keep our sites safe and welcoming. It’s meaningful work that gives people a chance to support their local public lands while gaining valuable experience.”

The GMUG is recruiting for a variety of roles throughout GMUG’s five districts, including:

- Recreation and visitor services
- Trail and facility maintenance
- Active resource management

These positions are in addition to seasonal fire hire events, already underway. Bringing on seasonal employees will help improve trails, campgrounds and facilities for safer, reliable and enjoyable recreation experiences for all.

“Working a seasonal job with us means spending your summer outdoors while making a real impact,” said Chad Stewart, GMUG Forest Supervisor. “It’s a chance to learn new skills, contribute to public lands and be part of a team that cares about these places.”

How to Apply

Applicants can view open job announcements and submit applications through USAJOBS.gov. Application periods, qualifications and start dates vary by position. Applicants are encouraged to review job announcements carefully for deadlines and required materials.

Additional information about seasonal hiring will be available at fs.usda.gov/r02/gmug/working-with-us/careers.

Working for the Forest Service

To learn more about Forest Service careers, benefits and upcoming hiring events, visit fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/careers.

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has, for more than 100 years, brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation. Grounded in world-class science and technology — and rooted in communities — the Forest Service connects people to nature and to each other. The Forest Service cares for shared natural resources in ways that promote lasting economic, ecological, and social vitality.

The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. The Forest Service also has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 900 million forested acres within the U.S., of which over 130 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.



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Dr. Chris Harmon, MD, PHD



Dr. Augustine Lee, MD, FACS, FASCRS



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CITY COUNCIL: CANDIDATE BIOS

KENDALL CRAMER: At-Large Candidate

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Kendall Cramer was born in Danville, Illinois and raised in nearby Westville. He has always been interested in civic engagement and public service. He holds a B.S. in Mass Communication from Olivet Nazarene University and an M.P.A. from the University of Illinois at Springfield. His early career in Illinois focused on authoring community planning documents, securing grants for rural public infrastructure, and volunteering.

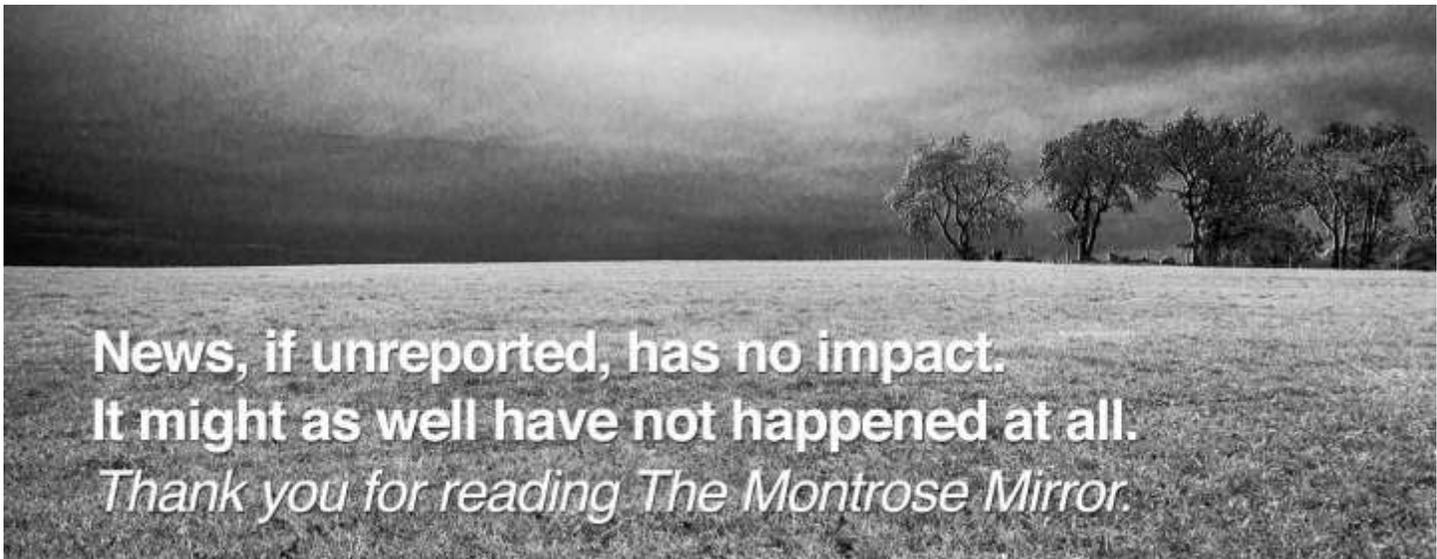
Kendall moved to Montrose in 2017, serving first as the city’s grant coordinator and then as community program manager (overseeing Main Street and DART). During his five years with the city, he secured over \$8 million in grants for public and community projects. These included the restoration of the Uncompahgre River, construction of the Columbine Middle School playground, revitalization of the historic Montrose Potato Growers Association building, and several Community Development Block Grants for local non-profits that expanded childcare services, senior housing, and mental health services. He received the 2019 City Manager’s Excellence in Service Award.

In 2022, Kendall joined the Colorado Broadband Office where he oversaw grant compliance efforts. He also developed a program to prepare local governments for federal broadband funding. In August 2025, Kendall started a grant services business, Kendall Summit Co., LLC, which he continues to own and operate.

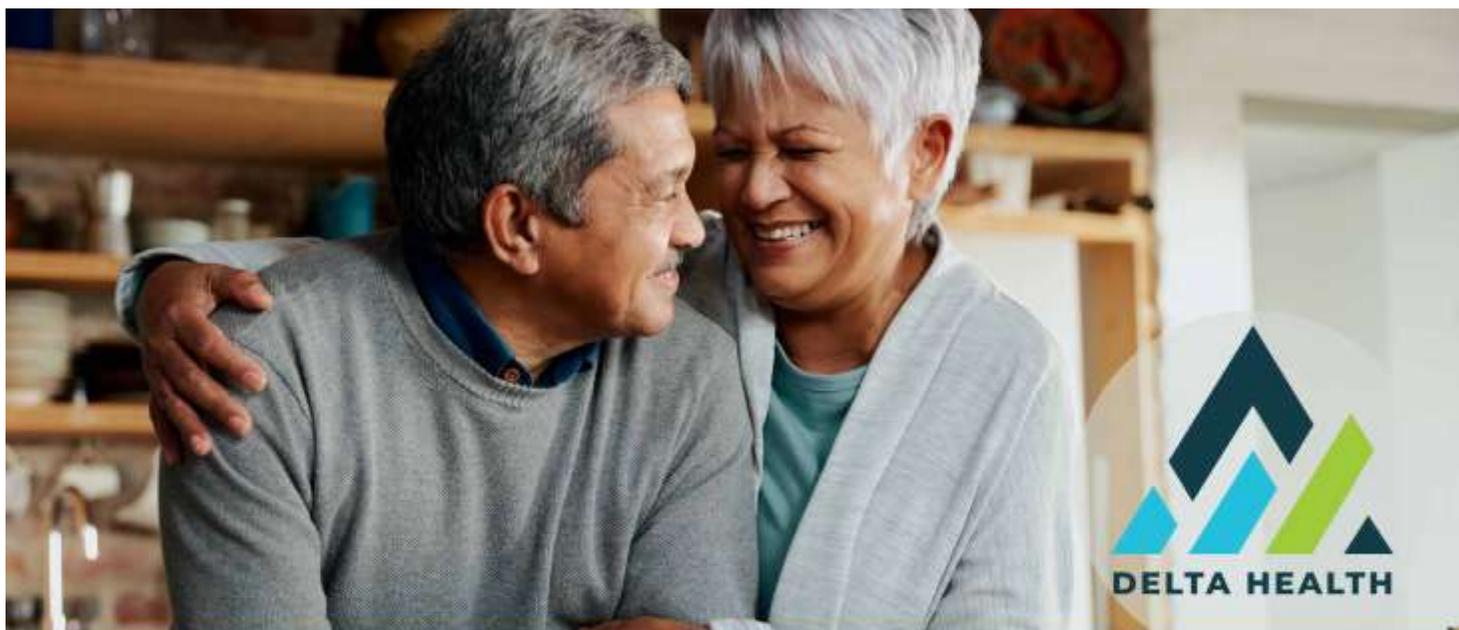
Kendall has on the ground experience working for the City of Montrose, a successful track record of facilitating community projects, and knows how the city can work better for you. As a city councilor, he will focus on initiatives that diversify and grow the local economy, invest in public infrastructure, and address workforce housing and childcare shortages. He will strive to ensure Montrose is a safe and vibrant community, and one that respects our historical and natural resources. Kendall is committed to building civic trust through transparency and encouraging public engagement with our local government. Kendall and his fiancé are committed Montrose residents who enjoy everything Montrose has to offer, and love adventuring in the San Juans. Kendall volunteers for his neighborhood HOA and for the Uncompahgre Nordic Association. He is committed to honoring Montrose’s heritage while planning for continued growth, envisioning a vibrant Montrose where all have the opportunity to succeed.



Kendall Cramer. Courtesy photo.



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*Thank you for reading The Montrose Mirror.***



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MONTROSE REGIONAL HEALTH NAMED 2026 TOP 100 RURAL & COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Recognition from the Chartis Center for Rural Health reflects high performance in quality, outcomes, and financial stability

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— Montrose Regional Health (MRH) has been recognized as a 2026 Top 100 Rural & Community Hospital by the Chartis Center for Rural Health, an annual, data-driven ranking that highlights the highest-performing rural hospitals in the United States.

The Top 100 designation is based on results from the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX®, the industry’s most comprehensive and objective assessment of rural hospital performance. The INDEX evaluates hospitals using publicly availa-

ble data across key areas including quality, patient outcomes, patient experience, operational performance, and financial sustainability.

Now in its 16th year, the INDEX is used nationwide by rural hospitals, health systems, hospital associations, and state offices of rural health to benchmark and improve performance.

For Montrose and the surrounding Western Slope, this designation signals more than an award. It reflects the strength and stability of a local hospital delivering high-quality care close to home, reducing the



Montrose Regional Health named a Top 100 Rural & Community Hospital by the Chartis Center for Rural Health. Courtesy image.

need to travel long distances for advanced services.

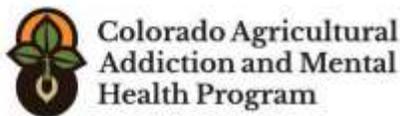
“This distinction carries real weight for hospitals like ours,” said Jeff Mengenhausen, MRH’s CEO. “Across the country, rural hospitals are closing or scaling back services. Being named a Top 100 Rural & Community Hospital demonstrates that Montrose Regional Health is not only stable, but performing at a high level in quality, patient experience, and financial stewardship. Families here deserve strong, reliable care close to home, and this honor affirms that we are delivering on that promise.”

“The delivery of care within rural communities is perhaps more complex today than at any point in recent memory. This year’s Top 100 Rural & Community Hospitals have emerged as true leaders, committed to their mission through a powerful combination of resilience, dedication, and innovation,” said Michael Topchik, executive director of the Chartis Center for Rural Health. “We’re delighted to recognize this year’s winners and celebrate their Top 100 status.”

Montrose Regional Health continues to invest in quality, safety, and long-term sustainability to ensure access to care for communities across the Western Slope. To view recent awards, visit montrose-health.com/awards.

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THE POWER OF ONE



Photos courtesy of Sieglinde Carpenter.

By Sieglinde Carpenter, Freelance Writer
"For the Love of the Story" in support of
local nonprofit organizations

MONTROSE—Everyone has the power to make an impact, but do we really believe that? Giving truly is the ultimate gift in life and makes the greatest impact in our society. You don't need money or special skills to do it; you simply show up and take action. On Feb. 6 and 7, over 600 hundred like-minded and kindhearted people from Montrose County showed up once again in a big way at Friendship Hall for the MobilePack Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) event. Glenn and Happy Vlass of Montrose were the lead hosts to bring FMSC, a Christian nonprofit organization, to Montrose. Through their dedicated efforts, they gathered a host team that bonded seamlessly together to make the work feel effortless and action began. With teamwork and financial support from Grace Community Church, Hartman Brothers, Maxfield-Peterson P.C., Turner Automotive, and numerous private sponsors, the momentum began. The plan further unfolded with a tremendous response from 680 registered volunteers along with ground support from great Alpine Bank,

Sharing Ministries Food Bank and the Food Security Work Group, a committee of MPR (Montrose Prepared Response), an outreach program of the Montrose County Sheriff's Department.

Volunteers ranging from ages 4 to 94 were designated as scoopers, baggers, weighers, labelers, and packers. At the end of the MannaPack event, 115,992 meals were packed within four shifts in two days that will feed 316 kids around the world for a year and provide Montrose with 7,776 meals. With all packs filled, only one cup of rice was left at the end. The gift of being present was a shared moment that left everyone feeling that their time and efforts will make a difference to a child who is suffering from hunger. If you were there, you know what I'm talking about. The two-hour shift went by quickly as we sang, danced and worked together as a community; the experience was a shared moment and a gift we gave to ourselves.

We were all given the opportunity to sample the MannaPack meal which consisted of vitamins, veggie, soy and rice and though many said, "they prefer their Momma's cooking," we agreed it was

tasty. These meals were developed by food science and nutrition professionals to supplement nutritional needs and reduce problems of malnutrition. Nutrition allows children to grow, thrive, and develop to their full potential.

Most of us have experienced hunger and it's usually resolved rather quickly by eating something. We hear ourselves or our children and say, "I'm starving," which usually means we're extremely hungry, but how many of us have actually experienced "true" starvation? Starvation is a chronic, life-threatening condition of malnutrition that causes severe weakness, dizziness, organ failure and eventually, death mostly among children under the age of five.

Since 2009, FMSC has sent food to 110 countries. FMSC works with food distribution partners that stay with communities for the long haul, empowering them to move from relief to development. In 2026, Hunger is the world's biggest solvable problem. Glenn, Happy, and their host team are already setting plans for 2027. Food is Hope and hope brings about change. To learn more about Feed My Starving Children, go to fmsc.org

OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

THE URGENT NEED FOR FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY IN MONTROSE

Editor:

Fellow Montrose residents, our city's budget has skyrocketed in recent years, demanding our attention as taxpayers and voters. **For 2026, the City of Montrose has proposed a staggering \$168 million budget.** That figure alone should give us pause for a town of our size.

Budget Growth Over the Years

Just look at the trend: **In 2017, the budget stood at \$49.7 million.** By 2018, it climbed to \$56.2 million, dipped slightly to \$54.4 million in 2019, then surged to \$78.1 million in 2020. The growth continued relentlessly: \$78.2 million in 2021, \$86.9 million in 2022, \$94.8 million in 2023, \$103.1 million in 2024, and \$111 million in 2025. Now, we face more than a threefold increase in under a decade.

While some of this includes structured debt that must be allocated annually, the sheer scale raises questions.

Questionable Spending Decisions

Where exactly is our hard-earned tax money going? We've seen investments in **alleyway murals costing \$25,000 to \$50,000 each**, when similar projects could be completed for just 20% of that amount. Then there's **the new city hall, at a cost of over \$6 million**, despite options to renovate our historic building for half the cost. These examples highlight potential waste on pet projects and frivolous expenditures, rather than essential services that benefit our community.

The Case for an Independent Forensic Audit

As voters, we have the right to know. Our City Council must scrutinize every dime, ensuring expenditures align with our priorities like infrastructure, public safety, and economic growth. **An independent forensic audit** would provide the clarity we need, uncovering inefficiencies and

restoring trust in how our dollars are managed.

A Call to Action for Montrose Voters

Montrose is a vibrant, tight-knit community. We work hard, value our heritage, and expect fiscal responsibility from our leaders. Let's demand accountability. Contact your council members today and push for this audit. Together, we can ensure a brighter, more efficient future for Montrose. Your voice matters in shaping a city that truly serves its people.

Just one man's humble opinion.

Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"

Michael is a father of 5, grandfather of 3, USAF Veteran, recording artist, entrepreneur, Editor of USA Liberty Report, passionate about Freedom, Liberty, the founders' genius of the Constitution and current Candidate for Montrose City Council (mjb4Montrose.com).



SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES \$3.4M FIELD HOUSE PURCHASE, TABLES DECISION ON LEGAL COUNSEL *From pg 1*



All directors were present for the meeting, including Board President Neisha Balleck; Vice President Ted Valerio; District C Director Scott Scarborough; District E Director Tiffany Vincent; District F Director Jody Hovde; and District G Director Shane Daly. Photo by David White.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

The Student Spotlight featured students from the Trout in the Classroom program at the Outer Range Campus. Taking part in the project were Outer Range Middle Schoolers Garrett Quilter; Julian Stalvey; Jason Cooper; and Krew Tobler. The students raised the trout in their classroom; the trout will be released on March 25 from 8-11am at Riverbottom Park; the students are collecting donations to help continue the Trout in the Classroom Project.

STAFF RECOGNITION

The February Altrusa International of Montrose Apple Award Winner was Allyson Crosby of Oak Grove Elementary School.

The January KREX5 FOX4 Golden Apple Award Winner was James Hindman of Montrose High School.

DONATIONS

The School District received the following donations:

- The Edecker Family (Brett & Brooke) collected and donated six large bags of hats, scarfs, gloves, mitten/hat sets, handmade purses and socks to distribute to students (Pk-5). This is the 27th year they have made this generous donation, which is valued at more than \$1,000.
- The San Juan Healthcare Foundation do-

ated \$1,190 to offer the Virtual New Me Puberty Program through the Denver Museum of Nature & Science to 5th grade students.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The board had agreed to hear comments from the public before voting on the choice of one law firm as the Board of Education's comprehensive legal counsel; RE-1J Board President Neisha Balleck discussed time limits for the meeting, including limiting members of the public to one minute as there were so many constituents present. Balleck reminded those present that "the constituents spoke with their votes."

"It is our meeting and we are inviting everyone."

COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL COUNSEL PRESENTATIONS

With three minutes allotted to each presentation, Law firms that had submitted a response to RE-1J's Request for Proposals included the following:

- Caplan & Earnest LLC - Melissa Barber
- Hoskin, Farina, & Kampf - Drew Kraniak
- Lyons Gaddis - Cathy Tallerico
- Miller, Farmer, Carlson Law - Bryan Carlson
- Semple, Farrington, Everall & Case, P.C - Darryl Farrington

In addition, firms were asked whether

they took direction from the Board of Education or vice versa, and whether they would file a lawsuit if not chosen. President Balleck also asked about experience with charter schools.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Many community members spoke; a number of them expressed animosity to one of the law firms that had submitted a response to the RFP--Miller, Farmer, Carlson Law. Below are some of the comments: Speaker Linda Gann said that Attorney Brad Miller has publicly referred to himself as "a board whisperer."

"...suggesting that he can connive, be secretive, and plan things...we elected you to do our work, we do not need a board whisperer..."

Speaker Michael Badagliacco said that he found many of the comments he heard before he stepped up to speak to be absolutely disrespectful. "...We are here for the children and them alone... You have your time to say your piece here; the facts are that scores in every instance where Brad Miller and his firm have been associated have jumped significantly, and we have been failing our children to this point. Only a third of them are at proficiency ratings...and in Cortez they jumped 30 positions because of the Miller law firm...there is nothing an attorney can do without the approval of the board..."

Speaker Nick Crider said that he himself has worked as a lawyer in Montrose for nine years and has served some of the most underserved members of the community. Crider said that Attorney Brad Miller serves "what is probably described as the conservative legal movement."

"...His representation has astronomically driven up the legal expenditures of school boards such as Woodland Park...It would be unconscionable for this board to ask the taxpayers of Montrose County to foot the bill and mortgage their children's futures for this type of naked partisan political advocacy..."

Speaker Alice Murphy thanked directors Jody Hovde and Tom West for fighting for the authorization of Vista Charter School as a part of the district. "...when you gave

SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES \$3.4M FIELD HOUSE PURCHASE, TABLES DECISION ON LEGAL COUNSEL *From previous pg*

away the authorization of Vista Charter School you gave away a local school that was created by the people of Montrose..."

Murphy thanked those who showed up for the meeting. "All of these voices need to be listened to...when you think about it, everybody in this room are your boss, because they are the ones that are above you..."

Marge Morgenstern, who taught English at Montrose High School for 22 years, said that whoever is hired, the District should first check with the English teachers. "...Please don't ban books. That's a parent's job..."

Speaker Ryan Hyle said that public education is not a laboratory, and "...Our Kids are not test subjects...you still have a choice tonight; this community forced transparency back into this process. It did not happen because it was offered willingly, it happened because people refused to be ignored...there is no longer any confusion, there is not longer any plausible deniability...the community is watching...what happens next belongs to you."

Adam Woodden said that the new board members won the election by more than 50 percent. "You have the confidence, you were already vetted during the election...we voted for you guys, and you guys will do a great job...you have my full support and confidence."

Ron Meacham said that he is the parent of a transgender student. "My child was raised here and it was living hell here for them in this high school. No child should ever have to live in fear because of hatred. No child should have a school board or lawyers or teachers that are not 100 percent behind all the students and teaching acceptance of all students.

"Brad Miller's law firm is everything against that. We cannot allow anybody to come into this school district with views like that. My daughter and many of my family members and friends live in fear because of people like Brad Miller. Because they know that they're going to be targeted, and they know that they're not going to be accepted. And we must have a school system set on acceptance..."

Kevin Murray said that he let his two daughters who went through local schools read pretty much whatever they wanted to. "...Coz I'm not afraid of that...Brad Miller, from what I've read and know, is going to cost the school district a lot of money. If he's going to be confrontational, why doesn't he just go somewhere else and stay there...my question to the conservative members of this board...what part of the truth are you afraid of...we need to have the school stay open to LGBTQ, anybody that's got opposing views to what you guys think...we can do better..."

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda Item 5, "Accept the Colorado Department of Education BEST Security Upgrade grant in the amount of \$793,053.45 and approve related expenditures" was pulled briefly for discussion. The remaining Consent Agenda items, including Personnel Report and authorization of the Superintendent or designee to proceed with the purchase of the Field-house property at the price of \$3,400,000 and to extend that contract, were approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

The Board considered Consent Agenda Item 5. District F Director Jody Hovde recused from the discussion as she currently serves on the BEST board; the remaining board members voted unanimously to approve Consent Agenda Item 5.

Directors considered New Business Item No. 2, Recommendation to hire a law firm as the district's sole comprehensive legal counsel.

Board Vice President Ted Valerio moved to hire the law firm of Miller, Farmer, Carlson. The motion received a second; the board spent time in discussion.

Valerio said that he appreciated those who attended the meeting to share their points of view. He said that he received a lot of emails and read every one. The emails seemed to fall in line with a structured, organized set of ideas, system, and format, he said. He said that allegedly there may have been political organizing

on contract time by staff, "which is pretty disheartening..."

"One of the things that I heard...teachers were told that the Miller Firm was currently hiring teachers from out of country to replace our teachers...that's ridiculous..."

Regarding allegations that the Miller Firm supports charter schools, Valerio pointed out that the State of Colorado supports charter schools as well, and that the previous board's decision to deny a charter school was overturned at the state level. He also commented on the allegations that Miller does not support DEI or Critical Race Theory, saying that the District has claimed that it does not engage in DEI or Critical Race Theory.

District D Director Tom West asked whether the board was moving too fast and asked whether they should consider the matter in work session.

District F Director Jody Hovde asked about evaluation criteria. "...We're making a decision without evaluation criteria...we're just making it based on our own personal subjectivity...by choosing the new lawyer firm what problems are we trying to solve...we should have shared goals as a board...public trust is fragile, and once it's lost it's hard to regain..."

District C Director Scott Scarborough said, "There's quite a few people here but not the whole town...There's a lot of people that voted for us, gave us a mandate of conservative, classical education for our children. Our biggest problem right now is not who we're gonna hire, it's getting these kids educated...I'm looking for us to get started...we've got to keep that first and foremost in our mind, a conservative classical education for our kids, and if this lawyer is part of that let's do it."

District G Director Shane Daly said he agreed with Scarborough that it's about the kids and agreed with Hovde that trust is very important, "...There is a lot of fear and a lot of concern that's valid...I personally would like to do a second round of interviews...I think that we have a great relationship with the teachers' union..."

SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES \$3.4M FIELD HOUSE PURCHASE, TABLES DECISION ON LEGAL COUNSEL From previous pg

District E Director Tiffany Vincent said that no matter who is hired, no law firm makes decisions on behalf of the school board. She said that she has read all of the emails that she has received. Vincent said that she would never be in favor of a teacher salary freeze and that she supports the master contract and hopes the board follows the law.

Costs have increased, she noted. "I do agree with Shane that this does feel rushed and we should definitely be speaking more...I'm very much on the fence...I'm still listening to my voters too."

District D Director Tom West said that more discussion is needed. "...The thing is, it's going too fast, we need to slow down..."

Board President Neisha Balleck said she is grateful for those who have showed up and said she has listened and spoken with many people. "...I saw some very concerning things on Facebook...a lot of the stuff that was posted is not accurate...the legal firm is going to represent the board, whoever the legal firm is...I keep hearing things that are inaccurate and I am not going to base my decision off inaccurate information and I am also not going to base my decision off of fear..."

Balleck said that a longtime friend asked her by text not to ever contact her again after last Wednesday's UVEA meeting.

"I didn't know what exactly was said at that meeting, but it was so disheartening to me and so sad to me that this was how this was handled," Balleck said. "...it's concerning to me that so many people get riled up about information that's not true..."

Also, the Union here has benefited teachers, she said. "...I support the master contract...I value teachers..."

Following further discussion, Board Vice President Ted Valerio said that he had even received an email calling the board Fascists. "We are not Fascists...how are we Fascists as a board? We have the authority to...make good decisions, and to have an attorney that we feel that we can trust..."

Following the discussion the board took a vote on Valerio's motion to hire the law firm of Miller, Farmer, Carlson. The motion failed in a vote of four to three, with only Valerio, Balleck, and Scarborough voting in support.

Vincent moved to table the decision. "I do feel rushed."

The board voted to approve Vincent's motion to table the recommendation to hire a law firm as the district's sole legal counsel. The motion passed in a four to three vote with Vincent, Daly, West, and Hovde voting to approve.

Following a five-minute recess, the Board of Education then moved through the remainder of the meeting agenda, with the Unified Improvement plan update postponed due to it being past 9pm and staff being dismissed.

The Board heard Board comments and Advisory Committee Updates.

Student and Family engagement Coordinator Allie Friesmuth led a presentation on [The Rocky Mountain Family Engagement Coalition](#).

Finance Director Emily Imus presented Quarterly Financials by [Fund](#) and by [Investment](#).

Imus also presented the [Enrollment Report](#). Current Enrollment is 5,837, which is one student lower than the previous month and 106 down from last May. The decline is primarily in the Pre-K and Elementary grades, Imus said.

Following a brief Board Planning Discussion the board voted unanimously to adjourn.



The Student Spotlight featured students from the [Trout in the Classroom](#) program at the Outer Range Campus. The students raised trout in their classroom; the trout will be released on March 25 from 8-11am at Riverbottom Park. Meeting Screenshot.





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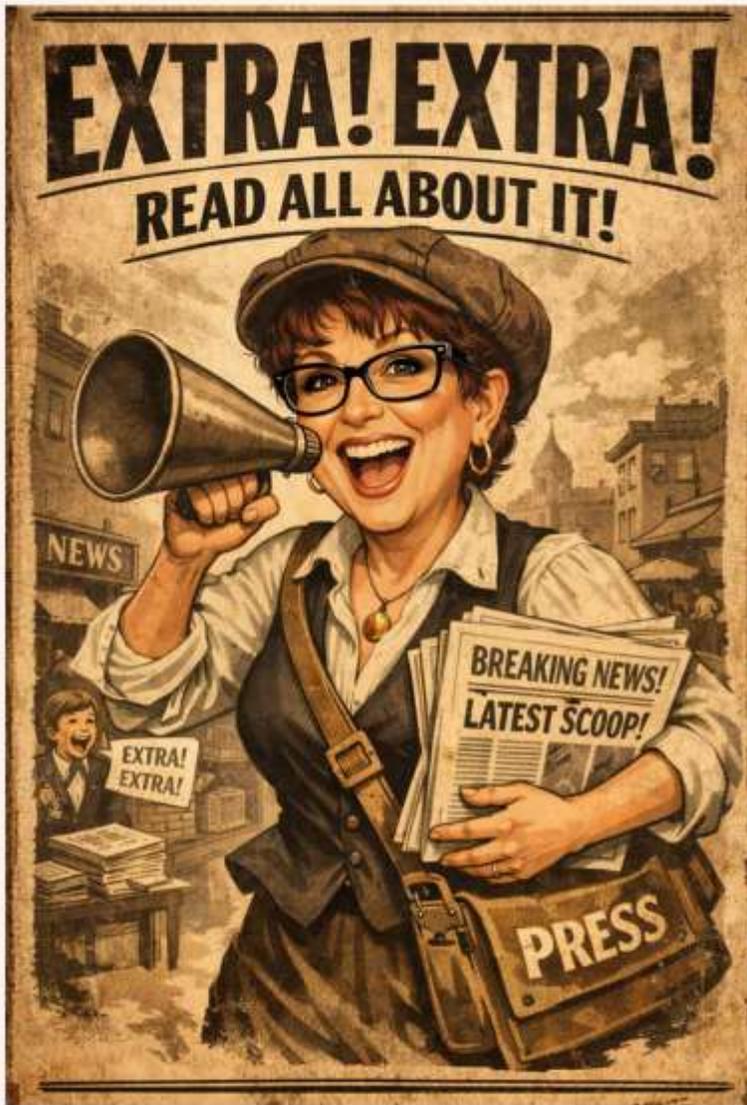
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Federal law will require certain real estate transactions purchased with cash to be reported to the United States Treasury Department, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. FlinCEN's real estate Report. If there is a chance this will effect you, learn the details. I'm here to help.

OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

ONCE AGAIN, THE NEED TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Editor:

Montrose residents deserve the truth, not twisted narratives from a certain "publisher". His recent article misrepresents my statements and overlooks key facts about our school district's challenges. His tactic is to **attack the messenger** rather than actual content. **His approach is to rant against whoever disagrees with either himself or the usual suspects he chooses to defend.** For the past year and a half, I have raised my voice for accountability in Montrose, not because I want to stir the pot, but because it is a necessary component of a thriving Republic to hold our government officials' feet to the fire. **Government should be accountable to "We the People".**

The "Disgusting" Behavior

He claims I **"lectured the audience"** without context. I did call out the actions of those who displayed **"disgusting"** and blatant disrespect shown toward the representative, Mr. Carlson from Miller, Farmer, and Carlson law. That behavior was indeed unacceptable and disrespectful. Montrose values civil discourse and ignoring this context paints a false picture. Like many, I exercise my right to speak out, as anyone is entitled. But I also listen respectfully to opposing views in my attempt to understand their position. **My issue was with the childish behavior of supposed adults, most of whom are teaching our children, not the point of view they hold.** Everyone is entitled to their opinion, even when rooted in misinformation. I had a great conversation with someone Wednesday morning who is on the polar opposite end of the political spectrum. **We both listened to each other's point of view, found some common**

ground, and agreed to disagree on other matters. Then we agreed to sit down again at a later date for another chat, which I am very much looking forward to. This is the type of discussion that needs to occur more often in Montrose.

Clarifying the Montezuma (Cortez) School District Data

He accuses me of "fuzzy math" with a supposed 30% improvement in test scores for Montezuma (Cortez) schools. It was a 30-position jump in rankings, not a percentage increase. **If I made that error, I will own it,** but I will need to review the tape to verify. Comparisons to Montrose's position are irrelevant here. The point stands that **Miller's firm provided sound guidance leading to real progress.** Results speak louder than spin.

Hypocrisy in Action

He dismisses my concerns about Superintendent Carrie Stephenson's pinch of job security as mere speculation yet hypocritically asserts "she has no worries." **If speculation is the issue, he should look in the mirror.** But let's not let logic get in the way of an attack piece, like Rahm Emanuel said, "never let a good crisis go to waste." And let's be clear, for him this is an existential threat to the powerbase that has run roughshod over Montrose for the past eight years. **The "axis" of power in Montrose politics is now being disrupted, and he does not like it.** People of Montrose are tired of having their core values attacked and the reason we are seeing change at the ballot box.

His Outsider Perspective and Selective Blindness

While he did live in Montrose for a time, he lives in Delta, not Montrose. For those of us who grew up here, we know there is

a difference. However, he positions himself as our editorial savior while targeting this author and anyone else who he or his chosen few disagree with. **His real issue? Being a lapdog for figures like Superintendent Carrie Stephenson, City Manager Bill Bell, and County Commissioner "Saint" Sue Hansen.** He ignores clear Colorado [Measures of Academic Success \(CMAS\)](#) results showing just 37.7% proficiency of our students, meaning nearly two-thirds of our students do not meet standards, a substandard outcome from failed policies in favor of something people with common sense can see clearly, needed change. No amount of denial changes that our kids deserve better. **This passive attitude is why voters elected the current board, to drive that change.**

Agreement on the Law Firms purpose

I agree with him on one thing: **No law firm runs the board; they serve it.** However, Miller's track record demonstrates sound legal advice that empowers boards to make effective decisions, ultimately helping raise student scores. Those who oppose Miller's firm provided claims that were riddled with inaccuracies and outright fabrications. Montrose needs facts, not fearmongering. **Let's focus on progress and support voices that fight for our kids rather than the status quo.**

Just one man's humble opinion.

Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"

Michael is a father of 5, grandfather of 3, USAF Veteran, recording artist, entrepreneur, Editor of [USA Liberty Report](#), passionate about Freedom, Liberty, the founders' genius of the Constitution and current Candidate for Montrose City Council ([mjb4Montrose.com](#)).



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CALL *CSP WHEN ENCOUNTERING A COLORADO ROAD CHEETAH

Special to the Mirror

COLORADO – Since the *CSP (*277) program was implemented in July 1998, Colorado motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians have reported thousands of “real-time” aggressive drivers and suspected DUI drivers. Last year, the Colorado State Patrol’s *CSP calls for aggressive drivers surpassed calls regarding suspected impairment.



In 2025, the Colorado State Patrol’s dedicated *277 line saw a notable increase in public engagement, with emergency dispatchers answering 58,117 total *CSP calls from motorists reporting real-time roadway hazards. This represents a nearly 6% increase over the 54,956 calls received in 2024. Most significantly, 57.3% of these reports were specifically related to road rage or aggressive driving (33,387). While total call volume for the *277 program has grown, the percentage of reports involving aggressive behavior has also continued to climb, rising from 54% in 2023 to 56% in 2024 and 57.3% last year.

“When a fellow motorist cuts you off, tailgates, or makes a rude gesture, you may be tempted to respond in kind, but don’t. Anger can quickly turn to violence,” stated Chief Matthew C. Packard, Colorado State Patrol. “Your best response is to keep your cool, let the aggressive driver move on, and do not engage. It’s simply not worth your energy or the risk.”

While there are many behaviors that indicate aggressive driving or a road rage situation, some of the most notable behaviors include:

- Excessive Speeding
- Tailgating
- Honking in anger
- Making angry gestures
- Passing on the right
- Showing a weapon
- Weaving in and out of traffic
- Getting out of the vehicle to confront another driver

If you see a driver engaging in these behaviors or trying to block another vehicle from changing lanes, this is another extremely dangerous situation. If you see these behaviors, you are encouraged to find a safe spot to pull over and call *CSP with a description and location of the vehicle.

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

WHY SHOULDN'T WE BE ENRAGED AT COUNTLESS INNOCENT VICTIMS MURDERED BY CRIMINALS WITH VIOLENT RAP SHEETS A MILE LONG

Editor:

Democrats are clutching pearls over someone in the Trump organization posting a meme video mocking Michelle and Barack Obama. Former CIA Director Brennan is now lamenting how much he misses the “decency and integrity” of the Obama era. Ah, yes. The decency and integrity of running a hoax to take down an incoming president. Obama had an unprecedented opportunity to finalize decades of racial healing, but instead chose to use his presidency to exacerbate racial hatred. If you listen to Michelle, it is hard to fathom how she ever survived those eight years when she was celebrated by every media outlet in the country and honored by its citizens. The former first lady can't seem to let a day go by without expressing her deep dismay about all of the ways America has let her down. Along with complaining about all the trials and tribulations of living in the White House, she even whines about her own children. We will just have to hope that her four homes, including the ones in Hawaii and Martha's Vineyard, can help her manage all the oppression that America keeps heaping upon her.

The meme pictured various Democrat politicians with faces from the Lion King. A more appropriate depiction of the Obamas would have been as animals smaller than a horse, but with long ears – like their party symbol. Of course, Democrats are using the meme to revive their worn-out accusations of racism. Both sides have problems. The Left tears fully formed children from the womb, sexually mutilates children, can't define what a woman is, torches cities, celebrates lawlessness, taxes families into subjugation, and won't stand up for a mother whose 12-year-old daughter was brutally murdered by an illegal. The Right, on the other hand, hires staffers who post insensitive memes. As to the phony charge of racism, here's a little history lesson. Democrats owned slaves. The Republican party was founded to stop the Democrats from expanding slavery across America. Democrats created the Confederacy. Republicans freed the slaves. Democrats founded the KKK, perpetrated lynchings, and enforced segregation. Democrats enacted Jim Crow laws to prevent blacks from voting. Republicans abolished Jim Crow laws. Democrats filibustered civil rights legislation and opposed

the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th Amendments. Republicans wrote and passed that legislation. Yesterday's Jim Crow racists considered blacks incapable of voting. Today's “woke” Democrat racists think blacks are incapable of getting an I.D. to vote. They also think women are too stupid to get an I.D. Imagine being a political movement that feels it cannot win if voter I.D. is required. The majority of illegals in America come from eight countries south of the border. Every one of those countries requires an I.D. to vote in their own elections. Ironically, Somalia just passed a law requiring an I.D. to vote. White liberals just kicked off Black History Month by hurling racial slurs and the “N” word at a black ICE agent. It's hilarious how racist lefties become when minorities don't agree with them. It's not newsworthy to Democrats when 150 black people are shot in Chicago in one month, but they have a conniption when two white people are justifiably shot by ICE. The term “racist” now means absolutely nothing, other than someone is disagreeing with a leftist.

Imagine being a political party that has to resort to importing an entirely new set of voters because they have lost the citizens' confidence and vote. Imagine having to continually lie in a feeble attempt to cover up that invasion. This week's lie came from CBS when they claimed that “less than 14% of nearly 400,000 individuals arrested by ICE had violent criminal records.” For starters, even if that were true, CBS is not sharp enough to realize that perhaps removing 56,000 dangerous criminals might be a good thing.

The whole story falls apart when you take a cursory look at what they ingeniously define as “non-violent.” Horrendous crimes such as distribution of child pornography, drug trafficking, burglary, and human smuggling are conveniently left out. Solicitation of a minor? Nope. Being a known terrorist or being a Tren de Aragua gang member? Nope. MS-13 gang member Edward Hernandez committed five savage murders back in El Salvador, but has no convictions in the U.S., so he is on CBS's list of OK people. We know how fond Democrats are of fraud, so naturally fraud is on the list of “non-violent” crimes that illegals should not be deported over. The penalty for illegal entry in Singapore is 6 months in prison; Russia, 2 years in prison; India; 8 years in prison; North Korea, the death penalty. In the U.S. its free

housing, free healthcare, free education, free food, free phones, and the adulation of the Democrat party.

I've noticed local liberal writers spend all their time bashing Trump, but never post what they love about their own party. Maybe they should spend some time helping us understand how higher taxes are good, how Obamacare is working, or how there are really more than two genders.

Help us dummies understand how it is acceptable for men to set NCAA women's swimming records or beat the snot out of a female boxer in the Olympics?

Explain to us why we shouldn't be enraged at countless innocent victims murdered by criminals with violent rap sheets a mile long. Convince us that, during the pudding-brained reign of Biden, Dems purposely opening the floodgates for millions of unvetted illegals was not intended to destroy this country. If you just want to talk about Trump, explain why Trump creating the largest one-year homicide drop in history, his brokered peace deals around the world, his record energy production, his attracting over \$10 trillion in reshored investments, the largest middle-class tax cut in history, his dismantling the administrative state, and halving fentanyl trafficking are all bad things. Democrats might also want to help us understand Bill Clinton achieving record high black imprisonment and Obama achieving a record high number of blacks on welfare, while Trump achieved record high black employment.

None of the above will happen, of course. Democrats will continue to embarrass themselves by making up stories about Trump.

They will naturally ignore the revelation last week that President Trump was the celebrity who turned Epstein into the police and started his downfall.

Trump was sounding the alarm on Epstein as far back as 2006 when he was just a businessman. He was among the first to call police about Epstein, and also pointed investigators straight at Ghislaine Maxwell, calling her “evil” and telling them to “focus on her.”

On a lighter note, the NFL just announced that next year's super bowl halftime show will feature Iranian imams marching and chanting “Death To America.” Democrats would be thrilled.

Ed Henrie, Montrose

OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS NOT A VEHICLE FOR IDEOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTATION

To the Editor,

If anyone is still confused about why people showed up in force on February 10, here's the simplest explanation: Montrose residents recognized a familiar maneuver — compress the public's role, accelerate a controversial decision, then scold everyone for noticing.

Start with the basics. A public board meeting is not a private gathering the community is "invited" into. It's public business conducted under public obligations. Yet the tone from the dais leaned hard into pageantry and control — reminders about who may speak, how to address the chair, and when the public would be "recognized." That might feel very grand to the people holding the gavel. To the rest of us, it read like a subtle rebranding of accountability as a privilege.

Then there's the part that should not be forgotten: public comment was not even going to happen until after the board voted on legal counsel. That wasn't a rumor. That was the agenda. It changed only because the community pushed back before the meeting. So no — the board didn't "offer" transparency. Montrose demanded it.

Even after that correction, public comment was limited to one minute per speaker during a decision that could reshape the district's legal posture and public trust. If your process only works when the public is timed like an auctioneer, you don't have a communication problem — you have a governance problem.

Now the substance. Five law firms presented. Each had minutes to explain their fit, and the board had access to written materials the public did not. Multiple firms emphasized the same core principle: the board sets direction, counsel advises. Fine. The issue isn't that firms presented. The issue is what happened next.

Without much preliminary discussion, Vice President Ted Valerio made a motion to hire Miller Farmer Carlson as sole comprehensive legal counsel effective immediately. That was the "tell." You don't move that fast unless you came in already leaning that way.

From there, the meeting became a live

demonstration of rhetorical shape-shifting. We were told the board needed an attorney it could "trust." Then the discussion drifted toward student outcomes and even test scores. Then we were reminded that attorneys "just interpret law" and don't drive policy. Those explanations are not interchangeable. If legal counsel merely interprets statute, it does not improve test scores. If legal counsel is part of advancing a philosophical agenda, then we're not talking about neutral interpretation anymore — we're talking about direction.

Director Scott Scarborough was explicit about that direction, repeatedly invoking a mandate for a "conservative, classical education." Whatever one thinks of that as a personal preference, a school board is not a philosophy department. It governs a public institution. Montrose schools serve families across political, religious, and cultural lines — not just the slice of the electorate that wants government to function like a worldview enforcement mechanism.

Meanwhile, the community concerns weren't pulled from thin air. People referenced publicly reported controversies and litigation in other districts, and reporting related to Pueblo 70 and Riverstone Academy and the legal fight over public funding and religion. Those are verifiable issues. Labeling scrutiny as "misinformation" without engaging it point-by-point is not leadership; it's a dismissal strategy.

And yes, it matters that the district has had longstanding counsel for years — and yet no clear, public-facing explanation has been offered for what problem is being solved, what success looks like, or what evaluation criteria were used before attempting to replace counsel with a firm that comes with a statewide political footprint. A decision that large should not be built on vibes, defensiveness, or impatience.

Credit where it is due: Directors Shane Daly, Tiffany Vincent, Tom West, and Jody Hovde voted to table the decision. That was the first moment all night that looked like governance instead of velocity. They

spoke about trust, about criteria, about stewardship, and about not rushing into a decision the community had credible reasons to scrutinize. That wasn't weakness. That was restraint — and restraint is what public trust runs on.

Now, the letters to the editor. Mr. Badagliacco and Ms. VanderJuis have tried to reframe community concern as overreaction — as though a full room of teachers, parents, and taxpayers must be "worked up" rather than simply informed. Apparently, if citizens read reporting, compare histories, and show up with similar conclusions, it's suspicious. If they stay home, it's apathy. The standard seems to be: participate quietly, briefly, and only in ways that don't slow anything down.

Mr. Badagliacco is also running for City Council — another nonpartisan body. His posture should concern voters. Nonpartisan government does not mean "don't question us." It means officials represent the whole community, not a faction. Authority flows upward from citizens; it does not descend from a dais. A ballot victory is not a coronation. It's a contract.

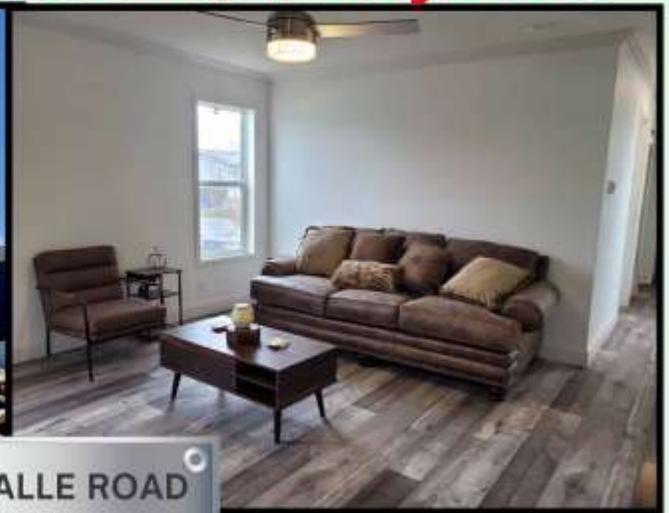
Then there's the funding context that polite conversations keep tiptoeing around. KVNF reported — citing Colorado's TRACER campaign finance system — that Ready Colorado spent over \$12,200 on campaign mailers supporting certain Montrose school board candidates in October 2023, including Neisha Balleck and Ted Valerio. There is no public documentation that Brad Miller personally funded those expenditures, and precision matters. But so does sequence: outside political spending enters a nonpartisan race, then some members move quickly to hire a firm associated with statewide culture-war legal battles. Citizens are not irrational for examining that alignment. Pattern recognition is not paranoia.

Public education is not a vehicle for ideological experimentation. It is a public trust. Trust, once strained, does not quietly repair itself. Montrose deserves steady leadership grounded in transparency, restraint, and respect for the whole community.

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COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

PEER PRESSURE CAN BE GOOD

Trooper Hunter Mathews

COLORADO – What’s the one thing or person that influenced you as a teenager to do something you probably shouldn’t have, got you in trouble, and made you say, “wow, I won’t do that again”?

The most significant influence on a teenager is the people surrounding them. Whether it’s a family member or a best friend, there’s someone who will persuade you to “jump off a cliff, because they would too?” (another popular saying from all of our parents). Most people have heard the saying, “Don’t succumb to peer pressure.” However, not all peer pressure is created equal. Some peer pressure can be used for good.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), being properly restrained reduces your risk for injury by 50% and death by up to 65%. This information exposes the level of risk people take when they choose not to buckle up in a vehicle, and teenagers have the lowest seat belt use of any other age group. So who can persuade them to make a different choice? You. The number one influence is their parents, because kids model behavior after caregivers.

In Colorado, the Graduated Driver’s License (GDL) that your teenager receives requires all drivers under the age of 18 and their passengers, regardless of age, to wear a seat belt. This is a primary enforcement law, meaning teens can be pulled over simply for not wearing a seat belt or having a passenger unrestrained.

Set the example for your teenager, and “Peer Pressure” them into wearing a seat belt. Influence them to set a standard for themselves and their friends, because it may just save their lives.

TROOPER TIPS

Author Trooper Hunter Mathews is a trooper with the Colorado State Patrol, currently assigned to the Public Affairs Unit. He began his career as a Trooper in Troop 3A - Greeley, before transferring to the Public Information Officer position in June 2025. Trooper Tips is a proactive monthly column intended to provide awareness and educational information to the public. These columns will highlight safety tips, changes to the law, or general information that can be important to roadway users' everyday lives.

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Montrose City Council

OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

Editor:

Well, well, well. It just so happens that **"Saint" Sue Hansen** has again changed her affiliation. This time back **from "Unaffiliated" to "Republican"**. She did it just slightly before the deadline, apparently so she could participate in the Republican Caucus on March 5th, along with her husband Kay Heinschel, who claimed he would **"never again darken the door of the Montrose County Republican Central Committee"**, yet showed up this past Thursday doing exactly that. Apparently, they both had a change of heart.

Hmmm. I distinctly remember reading something in the Montrose Mirror not long ago by a certain regular contributor to the Montrose Mirror op-ed pages. That writer predicted "Saint Sue Hansen" would, along with her friends, pull exactly this stunt to ensure they disrupted the Republican Caucus. **Oh wait, that was me who said that.**

So, it appears as though my prediction has come true. Literally just before the deadline, "Saint" Sue Hansen has indeed done so, beating the cutoff by a day or so to spare. **How convenient.** One minute she's unaffiliated, basking in that glorious **"lighter shade of red"** she loves so much.

The next, **poof, she's back in the GOP fold**, ready to mingle with the very crowd she silently ditched less than a year ago without so much as a courtesy note to party officials.

This is classic behavior from **"Saint" Sue Hansen, The "Queen Bee"** herself, who benefited from Republican support for years, got appointed, got elected twice unopposed on their dime, then she **bailed when it suited her**, so she would not face censure by the party for actions detrimental over the past year. Now, with the caucus looming and her term winding down, she flips back in the nick of time. Pure timing. Pure strategy. **Pure disruption.**

The timing is, as always, impeccable. Not months ahead when such a move might look somewhat principled. Not after the caucus when it would be too late to meddle. No, she waits until the last possible moment, slips in under the wire, and positions herself to influence the outcome alongside like-minded "newcomers" who share her **"sudden enthusiasm for Republican proceedings"**. No, these are typical slimy tactics, designed by unprincipled people who are looking to undermine traditional values because they lost sup-

port of the principled party members.

Her loyal chorus will call it pragmatism. The rest of us call it exactly what it is: gaming the system. To be clear, this was predicted. Why? Because we know that **"Saint" Sue Hansen** has never been more than **an opportunist**, when it suited her aspirations. But hey, why let pesky party loyalty or voter expectations get in the way when you can waltz in at the last second and steer the ship your way?

Some might call this political opportunism. The left-wing press will come to her defense and paint the move out to be principled and her exercising her right of association. Others might call it exactly what I predicted in the Montrose Mirror. Either way, the caucus just got a little more interesting, and my crystal ball owes me nothing. **"Saint" Sue Hansen has arrived right on schedule.**

Just one man's humble opinion.

Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"
Michael is a father of 5, grandfather of 3, USAF Veteran, recording artist, entrepreneur, Editor of USA Liberty Report, passionate about Freedom, Liberty, the founders' genius of the Constitution and current Candidate for Montrose City Council (mjb4Montrose.com).



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR 2027 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Special to the Mirror

DENVER -- The Colorado Department of Education invites community members to recognize exceptional teachers by nominating a Colorado educator for the state's 2027 Teacher of the Year. The Teacher of the Year program recognizes educators who demonstrate excellence in teaching and positively impact their students, communities and schools.

The nomination process is open to anyone in Colorado and nominators can submit more than one teacher for this award. Once the nomination window closes on March 20, nominees will be invited to begin the 2027 Teacher of the Year application process. The application will be open on March 2 and close on April 13, and the department will again host virtual office hours to support applicants.

The department will announce its 2027 Teacher of the Year semi-finalists on May 22, finalists in early September, and the winner will be announced in the fall.

Eligible nominees must be public school teachers working in state-accredited K-12 schools and plan to continue teaching throughout the 2027-28 school year.

"Colorado's teachers make an extraordinary difference in classrooms and communities every day," said Education Commissioner Dr. Susana Córdova. "Building on last year's strong engagement, we are excited to open nominations and invite Coloradans to recognize the educators making a difference across our state."

"Being selected as Colorado's Teacher of the Year has been a tremendous honor," said 2026 Teacher of the Year Stephen Paulson. "The experience has challenged and uplifted me in meaningful ways, and I encourage educators to take part in the process and celebrate the difference they make in their students' lives and in their communities."

"We are proud to partner in the Colorado Teacher of the Year program and lift up the extraordinary commitment of educators across our state," said Boettcher Foundation Vice President of Grants & Programs Tiffany Anderson. "Teachers have a profound impact on students and communities, and this program is an important way to honor that work. We encourage Coloradans to nominate a teacher who has made a meaningful difference."

The Colorado Teacher of the Year program is sponsored by the Boettcher Foundation and supported by the Colorado Education Association, Adams State University, Blue Bell Ice Cream, and Colorado PTA.

To learn more or submit a nomination, go to the Colorado Teacher of the Year webpage.

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RED HAWK GIRLS CONTINUE DREAM SEASON

By Cliff Dodge

MONTROSE-The Montrose Red Hawk Girls Basketball Team continues its undefeated march to the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) state tournament this past week as two foes fell by the wayside. The Red Hawks traveled to Grand Junction and Palisade to improve their overall season record to a gaudy 21 wins and 0 losses. The Red Hawks are also undefeated in league play as they sport an 8-0 league record.

RED HAWKS 54, G. J. TIGERS 32

The Red Hawks wasted little time in establishing the tone of the contest with the Tigers. The Red Hawks quickly established an 11-point lead, 19-8, in the opening frame. The running offense of the

Red Hawks gave the Tigers little room to re-group and mount any kind of a challenge to the Red Hawks. While the offense was in high gear the Red Hawks defense did its work and disrupted any offensive rhythm the Tigers attempted. The 22-point victory spoke volumes as to the quality and caliber of the Red Hawks regardless of which players Head Coach Steve Skiff inserted into the contest.

Freshman Landree Johnson led the Red Hawks in the scoring parade as she netted 21 points. Senior Mayce Oberg contributed a dozen points and Senior Maggie Leg added 10 points to the Red Hawks total. Oberg led the way on the glass as she captured six rebounds, while Senior Maliah Leiba scooped up five rebounds and senior Lilly Nelson added four caroms to the Red Hawks total. The Red Hawks continued to play outstanding team basketball as they passed out 15 assists, had a dozen steals and blocked three of the opponents' shots. In the shooting department the Red Hawks nailed five of fourteen shots from behind the 3-point line and shot 76 percent from the charity stripe.

RED HAWKS 52, PALISADE BULLDOGS 34

The Red Hawks 21st victory came at the expense of the Palisade Bulldogs as the Montrose girls traveled to Palisade and took the measure of the Bulldogs by the score of 52 to 34. The Red Hawks tapped the gas pedal immediately and zoomed out to a 12 point lead in the first quarter, 19 to 7. Things got no better as the Red Hawks outscored the Bulldogs 13 to 5 in the second quarter.

Senior Mayce Oberg led all Red Hawk scorers as she netted 18 points. Other Red Hawk scorers included Senior Maggie Legg with 12 points, Freshman Landree Johnson had 8 points, senior London Schafer chipped in 7 points and senior Lilly Nelson had 6. Lilly Nelson became an individual wrecking crew on the glass. She had 15 rebounds including half a dozen on the offensive board. Eight other players combined for the other 17 rebounds grabbed by the Red Hawks.

The Red Hawks team play continued to stand up as the Red Hawks passed out 16 assists and the team came up with 10 steals while turning the basketball over 12 times. In the shooting department the Red Hawks managed only 4 3-point baskets and shot only 33 percent from the free throw line. The Red Hawks hit 18 of 36 shots from 2-point range.

Next up for the Red Hawks will be a trip to Fruita-Monument on Tuesday and then the final regulars season game on Friday when the Durango Demons come to call.



Both teams scramble for a loose ball. Photo by Cliff Dodge.

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MONTROSE REGIONAL
CRIME STOPPERS

RED HAWK BOYS DROP TWO ROAD GAMES

By Cliff Dodge

MONTROSE-The Montrose Red Hawks Boys' Basketball Team hit the road for a pair of tough games whether at home or on the road. The Red Hawks hosted both the Tigers and the Bulldogs at the Fieldhouse during the final week of January and were unsuccessful, losing both games.

This road trip saw similar results as the Red Hawks saw their overall record fall to 12 wins and 9 losses with two games to play. The team travels to Fruita-Monument on Tuesday and then has a visit from the Durango Demons on Friday. The state playoffs loom after the regular season comes to a close.

G. J. TIGERS 39, RED HAWKS 27

The Montrose Red Hawks Boys Basketball Team traveled to Fruita-Monument last Tuesday and took on the Wildcats of Fruita-Monument High School. Neither the Tigers nor the Red Hawks were able to sustain much of an offensive rhythm, judging by the fairly low scoring in the game. The Red Hawks jumped out to a 4-point lead in the initial period, leading 10-6.

The second period seemed to energize the Wildcats as they outscored the Red Hawks 14 to 6. The scoring advantage for the Wildcats continued throughout the second half and wound up with the Wildcats winning by 12 points, 39 to 27.

The Red Hawks scoring was very balanced but there simply wasn't enough of it. The Wildcats pressing defense disrupted the



Both teams fight for a loose ball. Photo by Cliff Dodge.

offensive efforts of the Red Hawks, and in all likelihood affected their shooting as well. Senior C. J. Rocco led all scorers with 8 points. Freshman Cache Oberg and Junior Ryan Pankey each contributed 6 points to the total, while Sophomore Bodhi Schafer added 5. Cache Oberg led the rebounding parade for the Red Hawks with 5 caroms while Rocco, Pressler, and Pankey each had 3 rebounds. The Red Hawks combined for 7 assists and 6 steals while turning the basketball over 11 times.

PALISADE BULLDOGS 49, RED HAWKS 44

The Palisade Bulldogs, currently standing at 18 wins and just two losses, welcomed the Red Hawks to their gymnasium last Friday evening and defeated the visitors 49 to 44. This game was much closer than

the 15-point victory the Bulldogs extracted in Montrose.

The Red Hawks scoring parade was led by Sophomore Bodhi Schafer with a dozen points. Freshman Cache Oberg followed closely with 11 points.

Junior Josh Hawks and Senior Lane Pressler each contributed 6 points while Junior Ryan Pankey added 5 to the mix.

The Red Hawk rebounding was led by Cache Oberg with 7 rebounds while Pressler added 4. The Red Hawks passed out 11 assists and came up with 4 steals

The Red Hawks seemed to find their long-range shooting ability as they sank 6 of 14, thus shooting at a 43-percent clip.

The Red Hawks hit 10 of 14 shots from the free throw line but managed on 29 percent shooting from the 2-point area.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

AG HERITAGE DAY AND CHUCKWAGON COMMUNITY SUPPER MARCH 21

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE - The Montrose community is invited to Ag Heritage Day and the Chuckwagon Community Supper on Saturday, March 21. Ag Heritage Day is a free community celebration honoring local agriculture, Western heritage, and the people who have shaped Montrose County. The Chuckwagon Community Supper is a ticketed event featuring a hearty chuckwagon-style chili meal. Both events are being held in recognition of two historic milestones: America’s 250th anniversary and Colorado’s 150th anniversary, offering a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the past while celebrating the future.

“Anniversaries like America 250 and Colorado 150 give us a chance to pause and recognize the values that built this country and this state,” said Montrose County Commissioner Sue Hansen. “Here in Montrose County, those values are rooted in agriculture, hard work, and community, and this event is a great way to honor that legacy while bringing people together.”

Ag Heritage Day begins at 10:30 a.m. at the Montrose County Event Center with a full day of family-friendly activities, including a Stock Dog Demonstration by Diamond J Stockdogs and a free hamburger lunch provided by the Uncompahgre Cattlemen’s Association (while supplies last). Starting at 1:00 p.m., games will kick off featuring the Pioneer Pull Tug of War Challenge, where teams of eight compete for bragging rights, along with kids’ foot races, kids’ egg races, and more. Participation in the tug of war is limited to eight teams, and community members are encouraged to sign up early at montrosecountyeventcenter.com, as registration closes on March 5.

The Ag Heritage Day celebration will conclude with a ticketed Chuckwagon Community Supper at 5 p.m., featuring a hearty chuckwagon-style chili meal served by the Montrose Cattlewomen, live music by Jeneve Rose Mitchell, a seasoned, award-winning Western musician and former American Idol Season 15 finalist known for her one-woman-band performances, and authentic cowboy poetry performed by three accomplished poets whose work reflects the heart of the American West. Seating is limited and dinner tickets are required for entry, with tickets available at montrosecountyeventcenter.com for \$15 per adult and \$8 per child (12 and under).

Featured performers during the Chuckwagon Community Dinner include Terry Nash, a four-time Top Five finalist for the Western Music Association’s Male Cowboy Poet of the Year. Raised on a farm and cow/calf operation near Idalia, Colorado, he now ranches near Loma with his wife Kathy and shares original poetry and classic cowboy verses that reflect rural life across the High Plains and the West. Also appearing is Floyd Beard, who ranches with his wife Valerie near Kim, Colorado, and has written and performed cowboy poetry for more than 40 years. A four-time International Western Music Association Male Poet of the Year, Beard also received the 2021 IWMA Cowboy Poetry CD of the Year award for *Horse Tales and Cow Trails*, making this a special evening of storytelling and Western tradition. Valerie Beard is a teacher, writer, and award-winning cowboy poet who ranches with her husband Floyd in southeast Colorado, where she’s been writing poetry for over a decade, released her debut CD *No Better Life* in 2022, appeared in *Four Aces and a Queen*, and earned International Western Music Association Female Poet of the Year honors in 2022 and 2023. As communities across the nation commemorate 250 years since America’s founding and 150 years since Colorado joined the Union, this event offers Montrose County residents a chance to honor the agricultural roots, perseverance, and Western way of life that continue to define the Western Slope. All community members are invited to attend and take part in this celebration of history, heritage, and community. For more event information and to purchase dinner tickets, visit montrosecountyeventcenter.com.



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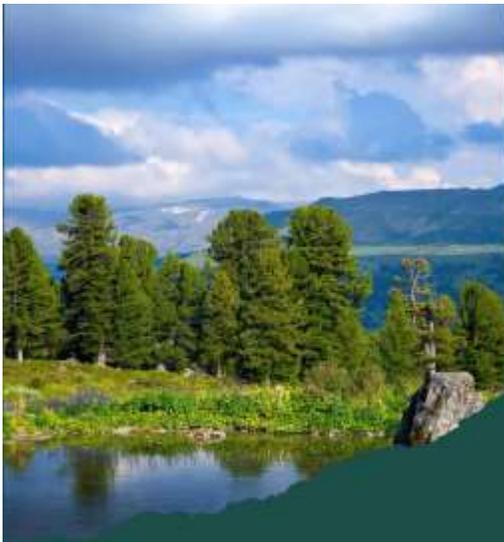


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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

ED LAFFERTY ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY FOR MONTROSE COUNTY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 3

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE—Ed Lafferty has officially entered the race for Montrose County Commissioner, District 3, bringing a specialized skill set that distinguishes him from the field. A lifelong Republican, fiscal and social conservative, and fifth-generation Coloradan, Lafferty views himself as a builder rather than a politician. After years on the Front Range, Ed and his wife chose Montrose as their permanent home, purchasing a lot in 2017. They began construction in 2020 during the height of the pandemic, navigating the era's unique challenges to move into their home full-time by 2021.

Lafferty's professional trajectory is rooted in a proven track record of success. After earning a B.S. in Construction Management from Colorado State University, he began his career with a national contractor. As a Senior Project Manager, he oversaw multimillion-dollar projects, managing \$100 million plus contracts with hundreds of employees, subcontractors, and suppliers. In this high-stakes environment, he ensured that projects were consistently completed on time, within budget, and to the satisfaction of the owners.

Later, Lafferty was recruited to help grow a smaller Front Range construction firm. During his twenty-year tenure, he rose to the position of President and grew the company's annual revenue from \$15 million to \$75 million. His leadership was marked by a 75% client retention rate, a testament to his integrity and his consistent ability to deliver results.

Throughout his career, Lafferty held a Class A Building License across multiple states and became an expert in diverse contract methods, including Design-Build, Guaranteed Maximum Price, and Firm-Fixed Price agreements. He routinely negotiated and/or drafted owner contracts for private owners, water boards, and government entities as well as professional agreements, subcontracts and supplier agreements. His expertise allowed him to oversee both design and budget through-

out a project's lifecycle. Many clients relied on Ed's expertise to oversee both design and budget throughout a project's lifecycle. In Design-Build contracts, the contractor helps ensure the design aligns with the budget from the outset. While designers and engineers may account for only 5% of a project's cost, their design decisions influence 95% of total expenses. By managing design details early, Ed ensured costs were controlled before construction began, delivering maximum value and fiscal discipline. This experience uniquely qualifies him to manage the county's complex financial and legal obligations.

One of Lafferty's most vital qualifications is his direct experience with civil infrastructure, which is the primary responsibility of the Montrose County Road and Bridge Department. With a projected 2026 budget of approximately \$21 million, taxpayers deserve a commissioner who can analyze every line item with a professional eye. Lafferty knows how to determine the best value for every dollar, and he isn't afraid to ask the tough questions regarding whether the county should bid work out or self-perform, the cost-effectiveness of owning versus leasing heavy equipment, and the optimal time to rotate the fleet to maximize resale value. Beyond infrastructure, Lafferty understands that Montrose's agricultural and ranching heritage is under constant threat. Through years of working with water boards and state agencies, he has developed a sophisticated understanding of Colorado Water Resources. This experience is critical to defending local water rights against Front Range interests and outside interference, ensuring the preservation of the heritage essential to Montrose County. Furthermore, his background in large-scale land development—working alongside planners, engineers, and municipal staff to turn raw land into buildable infrastructure—gives him the foresight needed for smart, controlled growth. He believes long-term planning is the most

important factor in maintaining the quality of life that residents value today and for future generations.

Lafferty sees clear parallels between running a construction firm and

serving as a County Commissioner. In both roles, success depends on the efficient communication of information from various departments to a central office. This structure allows commissioners to focus their attention where oversight is needed most while giving high-performing departments the flexibility to continue their work. As with any large organization, he believes disciplined project management and accountability are essential to avoiding waste and overspending.

Lafferty's leadership style is defined by a calm demeanor that brings a level head to potentially divisive situations. He utilizes a common-sense approach that prioritizes practical solutions over political grandstanding. Above all, he believes in total accountability, utilizing tried-and-true project management methods to prevent overspending while remembering that tax dollars belong to the taxpayers, not the government.

Ed Lafferty offers Montrose County more than just a vote; he offers a blueprint for a more efficient, financially accountable, and prosperous future. Now retired, he is prepared to dedicate 100 percent of his time, energy, and experience to serving the residents of Montrose County.

To Learn more about Ed Lafferty and his campaign for County Commissioner District # 3, contact edlafferty4mont-



Ed Lafferty, photo credit: Cyllia Lynn Photography

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HELEN JOYCE DOUGLASS

September 8, 1936 – February 9, 2026



Helen was born on September 8, 1936 in San Antonio, Texas to Charles and Zula Morello. She joined a family of one brother and five sisters. Helen was the product

of a large loving family with many connections to the vast local military community. Graduating from Thomas Jefferson HS she entered the commercial world of employment and later joined Civil Service at Lackland Air Force Base. It was there she met her future husband, Gary Douglass. They were married in the base chapel in 1956. The couple following of 31 years began with subsequent duty stations in Corpus Christi and San Antonio, TX, Sacramento, CA, Kansas City, Mo and Tuscaloosa and Maxwell, AL. At each location the associated military and civilian communities recognized her gracious contributions.

Two children were the product of this marriage, Michelle Cameron of Crawford, CO and Scott Douglass of Fayetteville, NC. Four grandchildren subsequently joined the family: Jade Jorgenson and Leif Cole of Tuscaloosa, AL along with Jessica Quinlan of Oklahoma City, OK and Jeremy Douglass of Olympia, WA. Six great grandchildren

followed.

After the military retirement of Gary a move to Hotchkiss, CO introduced Helen to many new activities and friendships. Active throughout her life she thrived on church and community endeavors. In 2004 the couple moved to Montrose.

Following a brief illness Helen crossed the Rubicon on February 9th surrounded by her husband, children and grand children. Unfortunately the illness was beyond the wonderful care of the Montrose Hospital and Hope West Hospice for which Helen and family were eternally grateful.

The attributes of a loving life included being a wonderful partner, home maker, cook/baker, counselor, decorator and gardener.

Her like shall not soon pass this way again. There will be internment at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of the Western Slope in Grand Junction.

Now more than ever...

Thank you for reading

THE MONTROSE MIRROR

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

KELLY YEAGER

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of Kelly Hal Yeager of Olathe, Colorado. He was born on the Ides of March in 1950, in Longmont, Colorado to Hal and Helen Yeager.

He graduated from Colorado State University in 1972 with a degree in Animal Science. He married Sheryl Yeager on April 6th, 1974 and over the next 52 years they lived in Colorado, Idaho, California, Montana, Washington and the last thirty here on the Western Slope. He spent many years working for both Rio Grande and Delta counties. Kelly loved to spend his free time working sheep, irrigating, and fixing fence.

He is preceded in death by both his parents, Hal and Helen Yeager and his sister Mary Swanson.

He is survived by his wife, Sheryl Yeager; sons Hal, Jason, and Brad; daughters-in-laws Tarma (McKinley), Sarah (Weaver) and Stephanie (Miles); grandchildren, Moise, Wynn, Micah, Calum, Caleb, Joshua, Anna, Alexis, Madison, Margot, and Lukas; great grandchild, Calvin.



PAULA MARIE BUCKMEIER *July 11, 1967 — February 9, 2026*



PAULA MARIE BUCKMEIER, passed away February 9th, 2026 at Montrose Regional Hospital at the age of 58. Born on July 11th, 1967, in San Diego, California, to Betty and Jerry Marchbanks, Paula lived most of her life in Montrose. When she wasn't working, Paula loved spending time with family, going camping, fishing or to the movies and living life with her soul dog Bubbles. She is survived by three sons: Jessica Eide of Bremerton WA, Andrew (Kim) Williamson of Angola IN, Kyle (Ashley) Marchbanks of Montrose, CO, a bonus son Marc Mix of Montrose and five grandchildren. Two brothers, Shannon Marchbanks and Brian Barr, two sisters, Jacqueline Davis and Allison Duncan. She is also lovingly remembered by a bonus sister and her best friend Pam Toalson. A celebration of life will take place in July. Memorial contributions may be made to the family.

CELEBRATING LOCAL BEAUTY.



montrosemirror.com

ISSUE 561 Feb. 16, 2026

ART & SOL

YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE – THE DIRT ON DIRT



By Dr. Lauren Hall Ruddell, PhD.

Greetings Mirrorites!

OLATHE-Rain at last! It may not have been much, but enough to make the winter garden smell awesome, even at this time of year. And it's been so warm that working compost into the not-frozen beds has been possible. Providing those soil nutrients to my garden beds makes me feel good. Not sure what they think about it.

Soil needs plenty of major, minor, and micronutrients. So does the human brain. There are some fascinating similarities between a healthy, living, soil and the human brain.

The human cortex is comprised of six layers, less than 5mm deep. This outer "crust" of the human brain is what makes the person who they are. It is essentially the topsoil of the human brain.

As with the brain, in actual topsoil, there is an incredible, almost unbelievable amount of activity taking place. Within a teaspoon of healthy soil one can find 4-8 billion bacteria, 20 million actinomycetes, 1 million fungi, 200,000 algae, and 2,500 linear feet of fungal hyphae (transporters of nutrients). These species make up the soil food chain, which is critical for plant growth, among other benefits to humanity and the planet. It's humbling to realize that we actually walk on the roof of the world when we tread a well-nourished soil, where in that same teaspoon of soil abide as many as 50,000 species of bacteria. Species, not just individuals. I find this mind-blowing every time I think about it.

In the same amount of brain matter, there are about 100,000 million neurons. There is also a "food chain" of sorts. Some larger neurons exert more influence than and contribute more 'loudly' to functional processes. So maybe a pecking order is a better analogy. We can nourish these guys in surprisingly ancient yet ubiquitous ways.



Continued next pg

YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE – THE DIRT ON DIRT From previous pg

The benefits of getting our hands dirty in healthy soil are getting a great deal of healthy press these days. We have known for nearly two decades that *Mycobacterium vaccae*, which was first discovered in African cow dung, is a bacterium that lives in the soil and can now be bought in supplement form as an antidepressant. Or, you can keep your wallet in your pocket and stick your hands in well-composted soil to improve your mood, since this beneficial wee beastie is found worldwide and not just in African bovines.

Before we even bend down and dig in, the garden begins to give back to us through our nostrils. Few things smell as good as a garden after a rainstorm. And those deep breaths we take aren't just pleasant and often full of nostalgia and childhood memories, but are physically good for you. The pleasing aroma is largely due to geosmin, a compound produced by soil organisms when they break down organic matter. Geosmin is an organic compound produced by soil-dwelling bacteria (*Streptomyces*).

The active ingredient in this experience is known as *petrichor*, which occurs after rain. How nice that we evolved to react in this manner and that the earth evolved to offer it to us freely. Those scent molecules from the soil can reach the brain through the olfactory bulb, influencing the limbic system, which is associated with emotions and memory.

The limbic system's connections with areas of the brain are responsible for controlling mood and behavior, which is why inhaling soil-derived compounds can activate pathways involved in reducing anxiety and enhancing mood. Inhalation of geosmin is associated with a reduction in brain waves associated with stress, such as beta, low-beta, and gamma waves, while also increasing serotonin. Further, the excellent morning breath of *Streptomyces rimosus* can inhibit neuroinflammation and prevent damage to synapses in the brain. As if that wasn't benefit

enough, snorting geosmin-rich air can lower heart rate, fostering relaxation.

Awesome... and let's pray that Mother Nature offers Colorado plenty of opportunities to do this in 2026. One can always hope.

But if she doesn't cooperate with plenty of rain this spring, a person can always plunge ungloved hands into the soil for a hit of all sorts of beneficial tiny helpers. There is even emerging evidence that certain soil-borne organisms may influence the development of Alzheimer's in the right direction. [One study](#) suggests that the microorganisms found in our soil could affect the production of certain proteins, which in turn affect how our brain ages, potentially reducing neurodegeneration by limiting beta amyloid production. Amyloid beta deposition results from infection and inflammation, and those deposits can trap bacteria. They therefore serve a protective function but only form when there is a need to engage these troops.

No infection or inflammation...no need for those proteins to be deployed in the first place, much less hang around where they are not wanted. The fewer deposits, the less the risk of certain types of dementia.

This is bleeding-edge research and much more work needs to be done. But a great deal of helpful guidance has been produced by Colorado's own Integrative Physiology researcher at UC Boulder on *Mycobacterium v.* He's a pretty dirty guy himself, by all accounts. [A fun article](#) in CUCuriosity digs up the dirt on this guy: *Professor Chris Lowry explains, there's a more scientific explanation for why getting dirty makes you feel so good. That dirt is often rich with beneficial bacteria which can slip into our bodies via our mouths, lungs or the plants we eat, dampening inflammation that can fuel illness—including mental illness.*

"These bacteria we co-evolved with have a trick up their sleeve," explains Lowry, kneeling in front of a pile of dusty, freshly-

dug potatoes in his Boulder garden...

When they get taken up by our immune cells, some of these microorganisms release fat molecules that bind to our cell receptors and shut off this inflammatory cascade." (Lisa Marshall, 2024)

This mechanism, his lab discovered, is just one of many ways our "old friends," can improve our health. His research has shown they also activate brain cells that produce the feel-good chemical serotonin. The trouble, says Lowry, is that we aren't getting dirty often enough.

According to the Old Friends Hypothesis, the more we remove ourselves from these microbes—via urbanization and replacement of fresh fruits and vegetables with ultra-processed food—the more vulnerable we become to inflammatory diseases and food allergies.

For instance, we know that farm kids have better immune systems than city kids. Lowry and colleagues recently confirmed that children who grew up in rural areas, surrounded by animals, gardens, and plenty of dirt, had a healthier immune response to stress in adulthood.

For additional support for the wisdom of getting dirty, Lowry would like to direct more attention to a [different kind of garden study](#). Researchers had one group of people sow seeds into soil rich with beneficial bacteria and another into inert dirt. Meanwhile, the scientists measured electrical activity in the gardeners' brains. "You could tell within 10 minutes which group was which," Lowry says. Yep, the rich soil group were thinking more than the plain dirt group, for reasons that are as yet unclear, but I can't wait for answers to be offered.

The moral of the story is, don't be inert yourself this spring.

Make or find an awesome garden, or frequently visit a natural forested area to fortify your olfactory bulb and dig around to expose yourself to some tiny, anti-inflammatory good guys.

*Happy scooping,
The Mindful Naturalist*

The Satisfied Self

LEARNING HOW TO REST — SOUND, SCENT & THE RETURN TO THE BODY



By Gia Pirelli

Rest has become strangely complicated. We collapse onto the couch, scroll until we're numb, pour a glass of wine, or lose ourselves in another series—and yet, many of us wake the next morning still tired. The body feels heavy. The mind feels

cluttered. True restoration seems elusive, even when we technically “took a break.” The problem is that much of what we call rest isn't actually restorative. It's distraction, which offers little more than a numbing and temporary escape.

Deep rest, the kind that recalibrates the nervous system, happens differently. It happens when the body feels safe enough to let go of vigilance. When muscles soften, breath deepens, and the mind no longer feels responsible for holding everything together. And that kind of rest isn't accessed through “effort.” It's accessed through *sensation*.

Many women move through life in a constant state of subtle alertness. Even when sitting still, part of the nervous system remains on duty. We constantly track responsibilities, anticipate needs, replay conversations, plan [tomorrow](#). This ongoing mental activity keeps the body from fully settling. The nervous system doesn't receive the signal it can power down. That's why lying still doesn't feel restful. For many people, meditation can even feel frustrating at first. The mind keeps moving because the body hasn't yet learned how to slow down. This is where sensory-based practices become powerful.

Because the nervous system doesn't respond primarily to thought. It responds to *experience*. In my opinion, one of the simplest ways to access a deep state of relaxation, without forcing stillness, is sound healing. At its most practical level, sound is a physical vibration. When instruments

like crystal or Tibetan singing bowls, gongs, or chimes are played, they produce resonant frequencies that travel through the air and into the body. Since the human body is largely composed of water, these vibrations move through tissue and fluid in subtle but measurable ways. They can adjust energetic field and brain waves simultaneously, and in a way that human hands or machines cannot.

More importantly, steady, harmonious sound patterns help the brain shift from busy, analytical states into slower rhythms associated with relaxation and restoration. Particularly when the sounds are random—meaning the mind can't predict the next note.

This process is often called entrainment, the tendency of the brain and nervous system to synchronize with external rhythms. In simpler terms, when the sound is calm and steady, the body begins to match it. Breathing slows. Muscles soften. The jaw unclenches. Thoughts become quieter. Many people drift into a dream like state between waking and sleep—deeply relaxed, but still aware.

For women accustomed to holding everything together, this kind of experience can feel profoundly relieving. Because nothing is required. You simply receive. And when you get out of its way, the body remembers how to rest.

What makes sound-based practices powerful is that they bypass mental effort. You don't need to concentrate or “perform” relaxation. The body remembers how to settle when it receives the right cues.

This is also why practices like gentle yoga, breath-led movement, or somatic stretching feel so different than traditional exercise. Instead of pushing the body, they invite it to release stored tension. The nervous system shifts out of fight-or-flight mode and into repair mode. Digestion improves. Sleep deepens. Emotional reactivity softens. This isn't indulgence. It's biological regulation.

Another gateway into regulation that is

often overlooked is scent. The olfactory system (our sense of smell) connects directly to the limbic system, the area of the brain responsible for memory and emotion. Often scent is the fastest and most direct pathway to that system. Certain scents can quickly signal safety and familiarity, helping the body move toward relaxation. Think about your favorite childhood scent, and how quickly you can be transported back in time when you randomly catch it somewhere. Cinnamon rolls, cut grass, sawdust, puppy breath—these are some of mine. Lavender, sandalwood, frankincense, citrus, or even the scent of a favorite place or season can become anchors for calm. Over time, pairing specific scents with rest practices trains the nervous system to soften more quickly. You're creating felt experience in the body. A candle lit before evening stretching. Essential oil applied before meditation. A familiar scent diffused during bedtime routines. Small sensory rituals create powerful associations of safety and calm.

Much of modern self-improvement focuses on changing thoughts or mindset. But lasting change often happens through felt experience. It happens in the body. When the body experiences calm, even briefly, it learns that relaxation is possible. That memory becomes easier to access the next time. Over weeks and months, the baseline shifts.

This is why short, consistent practices matter more than dramatic resets. Five minutes of breath. Ten minutes of gentle movement. Time spent immersed in sound. Moments of stillness paired with a familiar or comforting scent. These experiences accumulate. Eventually, calm becomes familiar instead of foreign.

The next evolution of self-care isn't about optimizing routines or adding more to already full lives. It's about remembering how to listen inward.

Practices like sound healing, somatic movement, breath work, and sensory rituals don't demand

Continued next pg

LEARNING HOW TO REST – SOUND, SCENT & THE RETURN TO THE BODY FROM PREVIOUS PG

performance. They simply invite participation. They allow the nervous system to settle so clarity, energy, and resilience can return naturally.

Because deep rest isn't something we earn.

It's something we remember. And when we remember, and allow, the body shifts into a state that fosters deeper creativity, weight loss or optimized metabolic function, improved focus, and higher performance, because we're no longer biologically prioritizing "survival."

In the coming weeks we'll explore how regulation shapes not only rest and movement, but communication, presence, creativity, and the way we show up in our lives.

For now, consider this an invitation: instead of trying harder to relax, try allowing yourself to feel supported instead. Sometimes the most powerful shift is simply giving the body permission to soften.

Byline

Gia Pirelli is a yoga and Pilates teacher and sound healing 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. She offers private sound healing sessions, and group restorative sound journeys. Learn more about the online programs at <https://www.theembodiedself.co> For more about her in-person classes or workshops, visit: <https://www.giapirelli.com> Follow her on socials: https://www.instagram.com/gia_pirelli or <https://www.facebook.com/giapirelli>

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

GIVE US YOUR BEST SHOT – A LOOK THROUGH THE LENS EXHIBIT

Special to Art & Sol

MONTROSE-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 at the upcoming *Give Us Your Best Shot* exhibit at Montrose Center for Arts. The exhibit will run from Feb. 17 – March 27 with the kickoff reception taking place March 12 from 5 – 7 p.m.

The exhibit is sponsored by Tim Frates of MegaPixel who says, “MegaPixel is all things framing. Preserve your memories for a lifetime in a creatively designed custom picture frame or shadowbox. Bring your memories to light, out of the darkness of your closet in an inspired frame proudly displayed on your wall. I am delighted to sponsor the arts and, in particular, this exhibit, as it meshes so well with my business.” MegaPixel also provides large format image printing on a number of different materials.

“My grandfather gave me a Brownie back in the day,” says Jill Myers. “That sparked my interested in art and composition. But I really got into it after I retired and started to travel.”

“I try to portray the soul of people in my portraits,” says Myers. “Two of the photos I submitted were taken in Jackson Square in New Orleans. There were tons of people hanging around watching the performers. I was watching their faces ... they both had such interesting reactions that I felt really captured the soul of the region. The third photo is of an old tuba. The patina on the tuba combined with the water from the rain on the sidewalk made interesting textures that captured my interest.”

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 of beautiful scenery, outdoor sports and adventure, people, places and things that inspired all of us to fall in love with our state.

The Ponderosa and Cottonwood Galleries are also home to Montrose Center for Arts Marketplace — a showcase for all kinds of exceptional art that makes great gifts — cards, jewelry, pottery, woodwork, fiber arts, paper art and much more.

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

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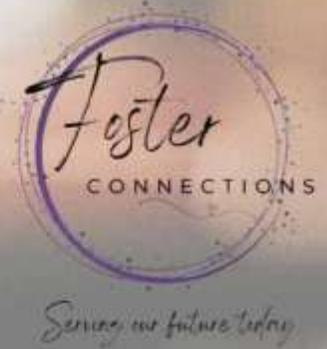
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8TH ANNUAL MONTROSE'S GOT TALENT COMPETITION

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— The Montrose Education Foundation (MEF) hosted its 8th annual Montrose’s Got Talent Competition Fundraiser. Held at the Montrose Pavilion Auditorium. New this year, the competition awarded two \$1,000 grand prize winners in two age categories - 12 and under and 13 and over. To participate in the final competition acts were required to audition on Tuesday, January 20th. The top 7 acts from each age category were selected then to advance to the final competition on February 7th. The competition is for school age performers and all varieties of acts are welcome.

All top 3 acts in each age category receive a cash prize with the grand prize winners receiving \$1,000. The total amount awarded was \$3,500.

The 14 acts and their talents:

12 and under age category:

- 1 Ka’re Folklorico Dance Group•Dance
Ivan Jaramillo, Marie Najar, Xenia Nieto, Jhonathan Ovando, Carmela Ovando, Elizabeth Rivera, Lizeth Rivera, and Allen Zamarripa
- 2 Marybeth Skarka•Piano
- 3 The Canady Sisters•Vocal
Reagan, Harper and Joelle Canady
- 4 Wren Malloy•Dance
- 5 Brielle Cisneros•Vocal
- 6 Sienna Comstock•Contemporary Dance
- 7 Brianna Skarka•Piano: Original Composition

13 and over age category:

- 8 Dylan Box•Rubik’s Cubes/Speed-cubing
- 9 Emma Braaten•Vocal
- 10 Kaysan Carlton•Vocal accompanied by Guitar
- 11 Jeremy Brailsford•Hip Hop Dance
- 12 Audrieanna Sisneros•Vocal
- 13 Joshua Skarka•Piano
- 14 Kayla Braaten•Vocal

All 14 acts performed during the first half of the show on Feb. 7. During intermission the judges deliberated and the audience enjoyed the MCSD student art exhibit in the lobby. At the beginning of the second half of the show, the top 3(6) acts were announced and they performed again. The Waxler Brothers (Zeke and



All 14 acts from the 8th annual Montrose’s Got Talent Competition Fundraiser. Courtesy photo.

Nathaniel) entertained the audience while the judges deliberated the top 3 (in each age category) placement. The scores were very close. All the acts had an amazing performance.

The top acts for 12 and under were:

- 3rd place – Sienna Comstock won \$250
- 2nd place – Wren Malloy won \$500
- 1st place – Brianna Skarka won \$1,000

The top acts for 13 and over were:

- 3rd place – Audrieanna Sisneros won \$250
- 2nd place – Emma Braaten won \$500
- 1st place – Joshua Skarka won \$1,000

This is an 8th annual fundraiser for the Montrose Education Foundation. The money raised by this competition is reinvested in the RE-1J school district's teachers and students. It supports the Teacher of the Year Programs, Appreciation Events and a \$10,000 annual Impact Award that the teachers are eligible to apply for.

The MEF wishes to thank all of the acts who shared their talents to help make the show a success and to all of their generous sponsors. Sponsors: Platinum – City of Montrose, Buck & Marsha Miller, Blythe Group + Co and the Montrose Mirror; Gold – Alpine Bank and DMEA; Silver – CED, Timberline Bank The Montrose Daily Press, Montrose County, DWC CPA

Advisors and the Montrose Business Times; Bronze - Montrose County School District, Mike & Phoebe Benziger, NuVista Credit Union, Scott’s Printing & Design, Deann Balash & John Boughton, Allen & Sandy Head, Montrose Ford Nissan Inc, Hartman Brothers, Stryker & Company, Inc, Alexander Orthodontics, San Juan Mountains Credit Union and Davis Service Center.

The MEF board is composed of community members who want to make a positive impact in the community’s education system.

Their mission statement is: Education is Our Future. The board members are: Sandy Head, President; Deann Balash, Vice President and the Montrose’s Got Talent Producer/Director; Buck Miller, Secretary/Treasurer; Melissa Byrnes; Patricia Cummings; Kathy Flower; Jody Hovde; Alice Murphy; Carrie Stephenson; and Mikayla Unruh.

For more information about the Montrose Education Foundation, the programs they sponsor, become a board member or to make a donation (and a difference), visit MontroseEducationFoundation.org or send an email to montroseeducationfoundation22@gmail.com.

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

ARIA NOUVEAU AT THE DELTA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Special to Art & Sol

MONTROSE-The Delta Montrose Community Concert Association is pleased to present Aria Nouveau at the Delta Performing Arts Center at 822 Grand Avenue in Delta on Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2026 at 7 PM. Doors open at 6 PM.

Aria Nouveau combines the world-class talents of soprano Laura Auer and tenor John Riesen. This duo transports audiences on a journey through crossover hits, Broadway blockbusters, mainstream opera favorites and popular music in an elegant and artful evening perfect for music lovers of all ages.



Aria Nouveau . Courtesy photo.

Laura Auer is known for syndicated music videos on VH1/Lifestyle Network, and multiple symphony appearances. John Riesen is an "America's Got Talent" finalist, Lincoln Center soloist, and has 4+ million Spotify streams.

Single admission tickets will be available at the door on the night of the performance: \$25 for adults and \$5 for students.

For more information please contact Anna Marie at 801-870-8621 or Connie at 970-249-4308 or visit www.deltamontroseconcerts.com.

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

BELLEROSE AND BEER FEATURED AT STORIES & POEMS TUESDAY FEB. 17

Special to Art & Sol
TELLURIDE-Local writer/poet Karen Bellerose will join journalist/musician Bob Beer for the monthly Stories & Poems sharing circle at the Wilkinson Public Library magazine room at 5:15 pm on Tuesday, Feb. 17.

"We moved the series up to 5:15 pm since the library closes at 7 pm," said Talking Gourds director Art Goodtimes. "We want to give all attendees a chance to share a story or poem after the featured performers."

Co-sponsored by the Wilkinson Public Library and the Telluride Institute, the literary event is free and open to the public of all ages. Attendees are encouraged to bring a story or poem of their own, or of someone they like, to read aloud.

"After years in Norwood and Telluride, Karen Bellerose has blossomed as a writer," said Goodtimes. "I love her work. And my friend Bob and I shared the masthead of the old *Telluride Times* back in the '80s – it read 'Beer and Goodtimes.' He writes and performs his own songs."

Karen Bellerose has lived and written in San Miguel County since 1995. In 2024, she launched spruceandsagebrush.com, a blog of essays and poems influenced by living in and exploring the Colorado Plateau and the Southern Rocky Mountains. Her essays also have appeared in *Telluride Magazine*, *Western Colorado Voices: An Anthology of Poetry, Fiction and Essays* and *Writer's Digest* magazine (May/June 2026).

Her writing is rooted in place but raised in modern life and reflects the tension of trying to hold the connection of the natural world and the human one.

"I find in wilderness so many connections to life, even modern life," says Bellerose. "I notice something on the outside that takes me inside to see things in a different way. The natural world is my greatest teacher, and writing is how I understand the lessons."

Bob Beer moved to Telluride in the summer of 1982 to help start up *The San Juan Examiner* newspaper along with Greg and Janet Smith. He knew the Smiths from Kansas, worked with them both at the *Hutchinson News* and was their best man.

After the *Examiner*, he worked as a news reporter for KOTO, then with the old *Telluride Times*, *Daily Planet* and *Norwood Post*. He also served as Club Manager for the Telluride Elks Lodge on three different locations. And, until Covid-19 reared its ugly head, Beer drove for the Telluride Express.

"In all of these jobs," says Beer, "I got to meet interesting people, talk to them about their lives and heard many wonderful and memorable stories."

For those that like prompts, this month's will be "Old Telluride," although stories or poems on any subject are welcome. Next month Mary Hearing of Rico and a surprise guest will be our featured poets at Stories & Poems Telluride on Tuesday March 17 at the Wilkinson Public Library magazine room starting at 5:15 pm. In April Joan Shapiro of Ridgway heads up the evening, and in May Danny Rosen of Fruita.

The West End Stories & Poems series continues at the Naturita Community Library on the second Thursday of each month at 6 pm MST. Writers and reciters are invited to share stories and poems of their own -- or of their favorite poets/authors -- with Leslie Ament and Goodtimes (although on Feb. 12th, Ellen Metrick will step in for Goodtimes who will be out of the state).

The Bardic Trails virtual zoom series continues on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 pm with town support from the Telluride Institute, the Wilkinson Public Library and the Commission for Community Assistance, Arts & Special Events. Participants not on our Bardic Trails mailing list need to visit <<https://www.tellurideinstitute.org/western-slope-calendar>> to get the zoom link each month.



Bob Beer and Karen Bellerose.
Courtesy photos.

MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY

ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH

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

Office Hours: By appointment.

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

 don@allsaintsmontrose.org)

Worship Service Times: Sundays 9AM,

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

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

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

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

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH

Independent Baptist
 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, Mont-
 rose, CO 81401

Office Hours: By appointment

Phone: (970) 497-4925

Email: celebrationmontrose@gmail.com

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

Worship Service Times: 9am and 10:45am
Senior Pastor:

Pastor Brandon Mathis

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

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

Demographics: Multi-generational

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

Student (middle & high school) at 9am.

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

CHRIST'S CHURCH OF THE VALLEY

Name of Church: Christ's Church of the
 Valley

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

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

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

Contact information:

Phone: 970-249-0530

Email: CCVMontroseCO10@gmail.com

Website: ccvmontrose.org

Name of current Senior Pastor: Ken Law-
 rence

Worship service times: 10:30 a.m.

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

in our Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of
 God.

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

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

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Denomination: Christ Lutheran Montrose
Affiliation: Lutheran Church Missouri Syn-
 od

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

Contact: 970-633-0226

Website: www.montroselutheran.org

Email: montroselutheran@gmail.com

Pastor: Tim Onnen

Worship: Sundays at 9 AM

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

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

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

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: 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 UN-

DER 3 is available during Worship and Dis-

cipleship Hour. Youth Night (6-12th

grade): Tuesdays, 6:30 PM. Weeknight

Bible Study: Wednesdays, 6:30

PM. Mission Statement: Montrose First

Church of the Nazarene exists to make Christlike disciples in Montrose Colorado and around the world. Demographics: Our church consists of older and younger people. We have younger families with children and young teens and older adults as well. We also support the work of Calvary Ranch Colorado and its addiction recovery ministry.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MONTROSE

Affiliation: Presbyterian

Address: 1840 E Niagara Rd. Montrose

CO. 81401 **Office Hours:** M-Thu 9AM -

12PM

Contact: 970-249-4732, [in-](mailto:in-form@fpcmontrose.com)

[form@fpcmontrose.com](mailto:in-form@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, Mont-

rose, 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 welcom-

ing, 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, [\[roseumc.org\]\(http://roseumc.org\)](http://mont-</p>
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Current Senior Pastor: Rev. Kevin Young

Worship service times:

9:15 AM to 10:15 AM: Children's, Youth,

and Adult Sunday School; Christian Edu-

cation & 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

youtube.com/@rosemontbaptistchurch

facebook.com/RosemontBaptist

email: office@rosemontbaptist.org

Senior Pastor: Rolland Kenneson

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

10:45 AM.

We also have small groups we call L.I.F.E.

Groups for all ages on Sunday mornings at

9:15 AM.

We strive to have each of our small

groups live L.I.F.E. together.

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 where they are at in life .

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



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

Delta: Pour Ernie's
970-546-0074



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





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MONTROSE COMMUNITY HOLY WEEK SERVICES

March 30 – April 3

7:00 to 7:30 AM



**Monday – St. Stephens Anglican Church
2504 Sunnyside Rd.**

**Tuesday – First Church of the Nazarene
705 S. 12th Street**

**Wednesday – Calvary Chapel
2201 Townsend Ave.**

**Thursday -Montrose Christian Church
2351 Sunnyside Rd.**

**Friday – Celebration Church
2900 Sunnyside Rd.**



Services will be 30 minutes, followed by a continental breakfast.

An Offering will be received for ministries of the AMC

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

Feb. 18-Come hear local Archaeologist Jon Horn present Insights into the Old Spanish Trail 1821-1881. Wednesday Feb. 18 at 7pm at the United Methodist Church 19 S Park Avenue. Chipeta Archaeology Society. Free.

Feb. 21- 21st Annual German Dinner, Montrose Masonic Lodge, 187 Rose Lane, 4-7pm. Reservations preferred. Contact Jacqueline.quint@gmail.com or 970-615-0916.

Feb. 24-Tuesday, Feb. 24 7 pm. Let Ignite Montrose Spark Your Interest! Enjoy an evening of free entertainment as your fellow community members present fast-paced, five-minute presentations on their ideas, hobbies, travels, interests, passions and curiosities. The Association (39 W Main, Montrose). Beverage/food service will be available. Check ignitemontrose.org for a list of topics.

Feb. 25--The Delta Montrose Community Concert Association is pleased to present Aria Nouveau at the Delta Performing Arts Center at 822 Grand Avenue in Delta on Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 7 PM. Doors open at 6 PM. Single admission tickets will be available at the door on the night of the performance: \$25 for adults and \$5 for students. For more information please contact Anna Marie at 801-870-8621 or Connie at 970-249-4308 or visit www.deltamontroseconcerts.com.

Feb. 26--Friendship Quilters of Western Colorado will meet Friday, Feb. 26, 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 share. The February meeting will focus on caring quilts and finishing UFO's (UnFinished Objects) for community donations. There will be a sew-in after the guild meeting to make baby receiving blankets for the Montrose hospital. Fabric has been pre-cut, and the sewing is simple. Bring your sewing machine and basic sewing supplies and help make blankets. It's a great way to serve our community.

March 5-The Black Canyon Audubon Society is honored to host Christopher Preston at Remington's, Bridges Golf and Country Club, 2500 Bridges Ave, Montrose, CO. The event will take place March 5 from 5:-8:30 PM. Dinner will be served followed by Preston's keynote address. The cost is \$50. per person for the event including dinner, and the public is welcome! Advance registration is required by Feb. 25 and can be made at:

<https://www.blackcanyonaudubon.org/news/notices>

MIRROR IMAGES: BLIGHT?

Not pictured in this photo of the City-owned Bullock Power Plant structure, which Mayor Dave Frank says has been "secured," is the carcass of a deer in front of the main gate. City officials purchased the historic power plant several years ago, and have been attempting (so far unsuccessfully) to secure grant funding for improvements. Prior to the purchase by the City, the plant had an on-site caretaker and guard dog, neither of which exists today. Mirror file photo.



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just for Montrose, put together
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