



ONLINE NEWS ASSOCIATION



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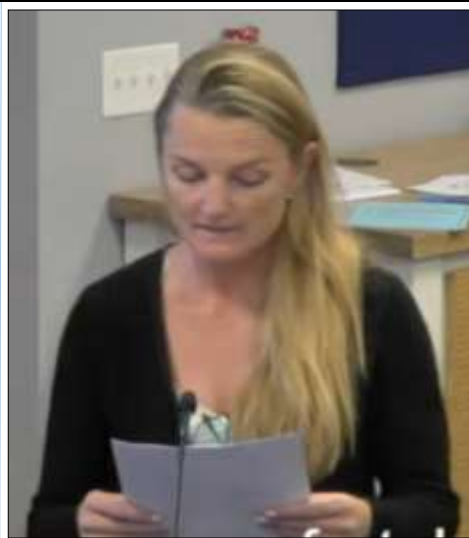


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SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVES BEST GRANT FOR ECC



Above, Csilla Rodriguez read a prepared statement at the RE-1J Board of Education meeting on June 9, based on her perspective as a parent of students in the local schools and on her childhood in Communist Hungary.

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-With a significant crowd in attendance, the Montrose County School District RE-1J Board of Education convened for their regular meeting on Tuesday, June 9.

All directors were present, including Board President Neisha Balleck; Vice President Ted Valerio; District C Director Scott Scarborough; District D Director Tom West; District E Director Tiffany Vincent; District F Director Jody Hovde; and District G Director Shane Daly.

Board President Neisha Balleck called the meeting to order. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence the Board voted to approve the meeting agenda.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND STAFF RECOGNITION

RE-1J Public Information Officer Mikayla Unruh presented Community Partnerships and Staff Recognition, including City of Montrose in-kind support for the 2026 Montrose High School musical theater production of Grease. The city contributed \$26,500 worth of in-kind support to the production, as well as two evenings of training from City Staff during dress rehearsals.

Unruh also said that the Western Colorado

[Continued pg 40](#)

31 YEARS AND COUNTING!

Black Canyon Classics Car Club's 31st Annual Car Show – An Unqualified Success for this Montrose Institution

By David White

This past weekend marked the 31st Annual Colorful Colorado Car, Truck and Rod Show, a fund raiser event for the Black Canyon Classics Car Club. The show and associated events spanned three (3) days and involved almost 200 vehicles of all types throughout the weekend. Not all vehicles attended the activities over the three days as some came from neighboring communities for one or another of the events but added to the count of vehicles in attendance.

As a car nut myself, I enjoy attending as well as participating in shows like this one. In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Pontiac brand and its predecessor company (Oakland), the Black Canyon Classics Car Club chose Pontiac as the featured brand for this year's show. Well-known Pontiac models like the Firebird,



Day One of the 31st Annual Colorful Colorado Car, Truck and Rod Show. Photo by David White.

[Continued pg 23](#)

[Gia Pirelli Column: The Satisfied Self!](#)

[D. Lauren Hall Ruddell, PhD: Your Brain on Nature!](#)

[Moose, Owl, Quail, Thief! By Poet Wendy Videlock!](#)

[Area Church Directory! Local Events Calendar!](#)



Ethnobotany and Art

Saturday, June 20
9 a.m.—12 p.m.
Ute Indian Museum
Ethnobotany Garden



Join us at the Ute Museum's Ethnobotany Garden, where participants will learn about the garden's cultural significance and have time to sketch with instruction provided by a local artist. A short film about ethnobotany will also be shown. Sketching materials provided. Registration is required and will begin on June 1. Email Christine at ctharp@montroselibrary.org for more info.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CITY ATTORNEY AT FORUM

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-On Wednesday, June 17, 8-9am, join us at The Forum to hear the story of Chris's journey from Long Island, New York to Arizona and the Arizona Attorney General's Office, to Montrose. He even continues to have a special bond with the Arizona AG's staff in the way of running a desert marathon annually!

Chris will discuss:

- how the City Attorney's Office operates;
- its role within the City, and
- the legal challenges that the City of Montrose is currently facing.

We hope to see you on Wednesday, June 17, 8am for this very informative presentation.

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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,
Montrose Mirror Editor*

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
 Editor: Caitlin Switzer
 Publisher: Harry Switzer
 Of Counsel: B. Switzer, Esq.

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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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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

SMPA ELECTION: YONDER, SZWARC ELECTED

Special to the Mirror

RIDGWAY-Last week, San Miguel Power Association held its 87th Annual Meeting at its office in Nucla, CO. The meeting concluded with the reading of results for its board director elections in District #3, which covers parts of Montrose, San Miguel, Ouray, Dolores and San Juan Counties including Dunton, Norwood, Placerville, Trout Lake, Rico and Sawpit, and District #6, which covers part of Ouray County, including Ridgway and much of Log Hill Mesa.

In District #3, 406 validated ballots were received. 228 votes were for challenger, Joanna Yonder. Incumbent Director, David Alexander received 178. Joanna Yonder was declared the winner of the District #3 board election.

In District #6, 350 validated ballots were received. 171 votes were for challenger, Tricia Savage. Incumbent Director, Valentine Szwarc received 179. Val Szwarc was declared the winner of the District #6 board election.

San Miguel Power Association board members are elected from the membership, by the membership. Members elect their board of directors by secret ballot at the Annual Meeting held each summer or by online or mail-in vote. They are chosen from seven different districts within SMPA's service territory. Each district contains approximately 1,500 members and votes for their specific director representative. SMPA's board members serve four-year terms.

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This 5-Bedroom, 2-Bath, 3-Car garage home is located in the desirable Raven's Crest Subdivision. The home was recently painted, and sits on a corner lot. The home is very open. The kitchen opens into the large living room with sliding glass doors to the private backyard. There is a lot of tile throughout the home, on the floors, baths and showers. There are 5 bedrooms making for a great family home. The kitchen is very open with lots of space and cabinets. There is a wood-burning stove in the living room that heats the whole home. The main Bedroom is large with walk-in closets, and the bath has a large soaker tub. The location is about as good as it gets, close to schools and shopping. The backyard is very private for those fun get-togethers and bar-be-ques.

Information deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.



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you can access the large wrap-around deck for entertaining, bar-be-ques, or relaxing and enjoying the views and outdoors. The primary bedroom has a spacious walk-in closet with 2 entrances and larger picture windows facing the park and mountain views. The bathroom features a large, tiled, walk-in tiled shower, and his and hers tiled counters with double sinks. 2 certified chair lifts on the staircases. Located just 3 miles to the Black Canyon National Monument entrance. Outside features include wrap-around Trek decking and railing. Bring your animals! Horses, cows, or 4-H projects make it the perfect place for your animals. Wildlife is phenomenal! There are days when you can see hundreds of elk and deer grazing the park meadows. It can't be emphasized enough that this location, with its views, is one of the most sought after in Western Colorado. Excellent horse property. Totally furnished with 2 washers and dryers, and newer refrigerator.



REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

ROAD CLOSURE SCHEDULED ON JIG ROAD BEGINNING JUNE 16, 2026

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— Beginning June 16, Montrose County Public Works will begin a paving project that will restore the roadway from gravel to asphalt on Jig Road 1220 feet east of 5850 Road. This project will require a temporary road closure Tuesday, June 16 through Wednesday, June 17.

Drivers are encouraged to plan alternate routes and follow posted signage during this period. For more information, please contact Rich Rivera at 970-252-7009.



MONTROSE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION FORMALLY ACCEPTS BEST GRANT FOR NEW EARLY CHILDHOOD FACILITY

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— At their June 9 regular meeting, the Montrose County School District Board of Education formally accepted a \$6,192,542.48 Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) grant from the Colorado Department of Education, allowing the district to move forward with plans to renovate the Montrose Field House property at 25 Colorado Avenue into a new early childhood facility.

Combined with a district match of \$6,445,299.30, the project represents a total investment of approximately \$12.6 million in early childhood education and facilities. The new facility will provide dedicated learning spaces and expanded access to services and resources for pre-school-aged children and their families. "Accepting this grant is an important step forward for our district and our community," said Shane Daly, MCSD Board of Education member. "It's exciting to see the impact this investment will have on children and families across our district. We're grateful for the partnership with the state and proud to move this important project forward."

BEST grants are highly competitive statewide awards that support school

construction and facility improvement projects through partnerships between the State of Colorado and local school districts. MCSD's early childhood facility proposal ranked fifth among the 17 projects selected for funding from 55 applications reviewed statewide.

At the local level, the future Early Childhood Center was identified as the Board of Education's top facility priority through the district's community-driven Master Capital Plan.

"Since the Master Capital Plan was adopted, we've remained focused on making this project a reality," said Jody Hovde, MCSD Board of Education member. "This milestone reflects years of planning, partnership, and commitment from our community, and it's exciting to see that work continue moving forward."

"This project reflects a vision that was shaped by our community," said Matt Smith, MCSD Director of Facilities and Security. "With the Board's acceptance of the BEST grant, we're excited to begin planning and design. We look forward to engaging staff, families, and community members as we create a facility that reflects the priorities and needs of our community."



Courtesy photo MCSD RE-1J.

With the grant now formally accepted, the district will begin the next phase of planning and design for the future Early Childhood Center. Additional project updates, timelines, and opportunities for community involvement will be shared as work progresses.

The Board's action marks an important milestone in a project years in the making. What began as a community vision is now moving into its next chapter, and the district looks forward to working alongside staff, families, and community members as the design for the future Early Childhood Center takes shape.



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

A REMINDER TO MAYOR BADAGLIACCO

Editor:

A reminder to Mayor Badagliacco,
You won by 21 votes. That means there
are a whole lot of people who did NOT

want you to be mayor.

My suggestion is that you and the council
pay attention to ALL of the voters in the
City of Montrose.

You might want to reconsider a citizen
committee before you push to change the
charter.

Jo Clugg, Montrose

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

TO THE MONTROSE COMMUNITY

To the Montrose Community,

I want to begin by expressing my appreciation for our elected school board members. They were chosen by the voters to represent our community, and I believe they are doing the job they were elected to do.

The people of this community voted for change. Change is not always comfortable, and it is rarely easy. But meaningful change requires accountability, transparency, and a willingness to ask difficult questions.

The superintendent is currently on paid administrative leave while an independent investigation takes place. That process exists to protect everyone involved and preserve the integrity of the investigation.

If the superintendent has done nothing wrong, the investigation will show that. If serious mistakes were made, the investigation will show that as well. Either way, the community deserves the truth.

As a parent and community member, my greatest concern is not politics.

It is our children.

Over the past few years, I have spoken with many students, teachers, and parents about their experiences in our schools, classrooms, and athletic programs and what they would like to see improved.

Some students are thriving. But I have also heard concerns from many others. I have heard students talk about low morale, negative atmospheres, feeling unwelcome, and sometimes not feeling safe. I have heard students say they would rather learn online than return to certain

school environments.

And I believe these students are not a small minority.

The students who struggle, who feel disconnected, who do not fit neatly into the system, who are quietly hurting, may very well represent the majority of students.

Some of those students are my own children.

They simply do not have the confidence, support, or opportunity to stand at a microphone and tell us their stories.

I am not speaking only for the AP students, scholarship winners, or natural entrepreneurs who seem destined for success.

I am speaking for the students whose voices are rarely heard.

Their experiences matter too.

That is why accountability matters. That is why leadership matters. And that is why I believe we must have the courage to examine what is working, what is not working, and what needs to change.

Part of why I care so deeply comes from my own background. I grew up in Hungary under communism. I know what it looks like when people are expected to think a certain way, speak a certain way, and agree with things that do not make sense simply because authority says so.

My father was told that despite earning some of the highest scores on his college entrance exams, opportunities would be denied because his family would not join the Communist Party. My parents married in a church at midnight with only a priest and two witnesses because openly practicing their faith could negatively affect

their careers and their children's futures. Those experiences shaped me.

They taught me the importance of truth, integrity, faith, family, education, and freedom.

And yes, I believe the United States is the last truly free country on Earth. I also believe Montrose is one of the best places in the world to raise a family. That is exactly why I care so much about what happens here.

I believe our children deserve schools where they feel welcomed, valued, challenged, and safe. I believe our teachers deserve support. I believe our administrators deserve accountability. And I believe our board is fulfilling its responsibility to ask difficult questions and pursue the truth wherever it leads.

I would like to ask our community to engage one another with respect, even when we disagree.

I would also like to invite anyone who wishes to join me this Friday in a day of prayer and fasting for our school district, our leadership, our teachers, our staff, our board members, our superintendent, and most importantly, our children.

I am asking for prayer not because we all think alike, but because we all care about our children.

The children who are hurting deserve to be heard.

That future is possible if we choose to build it together.

Thank you.

Csilla Rodriguez

*Parent and Community Member
Montrose, Colorado*



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

SELF SERVING IDENTITY GROUPS ARE DIVISIVE

Editor:

Let's jump right into it.

Pride Week is narcissistic and self-serving. There, I've said it.

Pride Week only serves a narrow bandwidth of any community. Our current list of holidays serve the entire fabric of our culture. According to a Gallup Poll dated 20 February 2025:

-85.7% heterosexual

-5.2% bisexual

-2.0% gay

-1.4% lesbian

-1.3% trans

The mayor is quite pleasant and inclusive when he states proclamations should serve all citizens. I applaud this posture. As an American who served in the Armed Forces, we have to get over these self-serving identity groups because it contributes little to our society. Additionally, the hyphenated racial categories is divisive. I am not an hispanic-American. I am an American.

Let's celebrate American week and include all citizens

Robert Franco, Montrose County

MAYOR MIKE'S MISINTERPRETATION OF CITIZEN ADVISORIES AND HIS CONSTITUTIONAL ANALOGY

Editor:

On citizen committees specifically: An advisory citizen committee to review and recommend charter changes isn't replacing the council's decision-making — it's informing it. Legislators at every level of government, including Congress, routinely use advisory committees, public hearings, commissions, and expert panels before acting. That's not abdicating responsibility;

it's due diligence. The council would still decide what to put on the ballot.

On the constitutional analogy: The Mayor's comparison to how "we do constitutional amendments in this country" actually cuts against him. Article V of the U.S. Constitution requires ratification by three-fourths of state legislatures or state conventions — meaning the people's representatives, or the people themselves in

convention.

Many states require voter ratification of constitutional amendments. Colorado's own constitution requires voter approval of charter amendments.

So the American constitutional tradition explicitly includes direct citizen participation in foundational governance documents.

Kim Spangrude, Montrose

LEAH VANDERSLUIJ LETTER WELL WORTH READING

Editor:

Thanks to Leah Vandersluis for the very informative piece [Montrose Mirror #693, June 8, 2026, p18] "Understanding Standard Practice: the June 4 MCSD Board Meeting and What it Means." It avoided whatever may be the underlying issues of the current controversy, but provided an explanation of the process related to investigating those. Bottom line, placing a government official on paid, non-punitive administrative leave during an investigation is a correct action without pre-determining outcomes. Understanding the process and the reasons for it is helpful in toning down the rhetoric and replacing emotion with due consideration and understanding that a fair and unbiased resolution requires separation of parties during an investigation. The article is well worth reading.

Richard Wojciechowski, Ouray County

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MD, DABFM, MBChB,
MRCGP (2012), DRCOG



M: 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Tu: 12:00 PM – 7:00 PM
W: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Th: 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM
F: By appointment only

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MAKE SEAT BELT USE A HABIT

Special to the Mirror

COLORADO – Making it a routine to buckle up before starting the car helps instill the seatbelt habit in young drivers. Leading by example is crucial; so, the Colorado State Patrol urges parents to become familiar with Colorado’s Child Restraint and Graduated Drivers’ Licensing law regarding seat belts. “It is a primary offense for children under 18 to be without a seatbelt or improperly restrained in a vehicle,” explains Trooper Kent Trimbach, Colorado Child Passenger Safety Program Coordinator. “This means you can be pulled over without committing any other traffic infraction because the bottom line is kids are relying on you!”

In addition, teen drivers can also be pulled over if they or any of their passengers are seen without a seatbelt. In 2025, the Colorado State Patrol issued 886 seat

belt citations to drivers aged 16 - 21.

“Putting on a seatbelt can become a ‘non-issue’ if your family consistently uses seat belts from day one,” stated Trooper Trimbach, Colorado State Patrol. “Make it a rule that the car doesn’t move until all belts are on.”

COLORADO’S SEAT BELT LAWS FOR YOUTH

-Teens — Colorado’s Graduated Drivers Licensing (GDL) law requires all drivers under 18 and their passengers, regardless of age, to be properly restrained. This is a primary enforcement, meaning teens can be pulled over simply for not wearing a seat belt or having passengers without seat belts.

-Children— Colorado’s Child Passenger Safety law is a primary enforcement, meaning the driver can be stopped and ticketed if an officer sees an unrestrained

or improperly restrained child under the age of 18 in the vehicle.

Colorado’s child restraint law requires children 17 years old and younger riding in a vehicle to be properly restrained regardless of seating position..

Colorado Child Restraint Requirements

Every drive or ride should start with a click! If wearing a seat belt is all your child or young driver has ever known, you have increased your child’s chances of survival by 65% in the event of a crash. Nice work, Mom and Dad!

The Colorado State Patrol is launching a multi-month “The Sound that Saves” campaign to increase seat belt awareness and use by teens across Colorado. This campaign targets the youngest and newest drivers to close the gap between the 92% national seat belt use rate and Colorado’s 90.7% seat belt use rate.

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

MY LETTER TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

Dear Editor,

This is the letter I sent to each of our Board of Directors after putting the Superintendent on leave.

Dear Directors, 6/4/26

First of all, I once again thank you for your volunteer time and energy you put into being on the School Board. It is a daunting task these days, so stressful, so divisive. Thank you for drawing attention to the plight of our public schools today and engaging lots of community participation. There was another record crowd tonight watching you, in person and on-line.

To be clear about putting a Superintendent on Non-punitive leave; there is NO SUCH THING as "non-punitive leave" to a career educator who has put her time, skills and heart into this district. You don't think her reputation, her peace, her livelihood has been punished? Many of you Directors unfortunately, have no idea what it is to be a lifelong public school educator.

No, Director Valerio, in education, people do not have a "second" that can step in and do "their jobs". You can't imagine what a teacher/principal/secretary/paraprofessional/superintendent does every single day. Sure, if someone is sick, they get a sub for the day. Of course, the employee has to leave detailed plans for a substitute for the "mechanics" but the EDUCATION of our KIDS comes from our hearts. **Public Education is relationship and communication that form paths to life-long learning.** You can't have someone fill in for that! To be absent during a very busy Central Office Planning, Reporting Season and expect Dr. Kalb to just step in is unreasonable. Who will do Dr. Kalb's job?

Directors West and Hovde, you were educators, you understand communication. Thank you for coming as prepared as possible and asking for clarification and reasoning.

Questioning the whys and hows which seem to be missing from leadership. How much more \$\$ will the district need to compensate Dr. Kalb? How much will the investigator cost? \$\$ and now...How much for the mitigation between the Board and Dr. Stephenson? It is incredible that the name and contact information of "the investigator" was not on the last minute handout all Directors received concerning the investigation. Thank you, Director Hovde for digging deep to see what was happening. Also for stepping up to be the liaison between the Board and Dr. Stephenson.

Director Daly, I've known you since you were a small child and you are truly a good guy and you care about kids and parents and opportunities for learning. You are the first to admit you "know very little about public education" but, you are engaged, open, researching and coming prepared even though you have a big family and job. I know you want the community's trust and I have high hopes you will see things through for the good of the kids.

WILL WE EVER GET TO START PLANNING THE BETTERMENT OF RE-1J PUBLIC SCHOOLS and quit messing around with "legal" and controversies?

Director Balleck, How many times have you contacted legal \$\$ since they were hired? What has been the cost of those consultations? You are hard-working and intelligent therefore you want advice on every small point. Reducing the number of

controversial decisions will reduce our legal fees \$\$\$. Maybe you and the tax payers could split the bill for your constant legal advice. **Education is relationship and communication with the goal of life-long learning.**

You are lacking communication skills between you and the Superintendent and you and fellow Directors. First, clarity; what is your goal in putting Dr. Stephenson on leave initially? Legal Council on the big screen ("pay no attention to the man behind the curtain") and Directors Vincent and Daly stated this for you, "it was for all parties' protection during the investigation." Hopefully, that is all, not another step in a plan. Secondly, timeliness; emergency meetings in 24 hours? How you expect your Board to be prepared and the public NOT to be alarmed? Thirdly, thoroughness, why aren't the other members of the Board consulted, informed about details and their input? You're free to email each other correct? Lastly, communication is a two way street.

Director Scarborough, I hope you're ok, you seemed groggy and unable to follow the details in the meeting. I thought you had actually voted in a way that showed understanding and compassion but then, we had to "ask legal counsel" (\$\$) if you could change your vote because you misspoke.

I hope Dr. Stephenson has a well-deserved rest from all the current stress and strain during her leave. I'm certain she will keep in touch and do what she can "from afar" because she understands **Education is relationship and communication with the goal of life-long learning.**

We are all still learning.

Zoe Werden, Montrose



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

ONLY AMERICAN CITIZENS SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE BENEFITS PLUNDERED FROM AMERICAN WALLETS

Editor:

Let's talk fraud for a minute.

As working Americans, our revenue stream (wages) are plundered by insensitive bureaucrats and self-serving politicians by extracting taxes and then distributing to certain demographics.

Recently, I shopped at a local mercado. I love the store. A young customer, with her infant child, was annoyed that she had to pay cash for a certain item and why SNAP could not be used. I was in line behind the young lady and I proceeded to inquire why should I, as a taxpayer, subsidy her. Frankly, I was taken back with her sense of entitlement. She said the government paid for SNAP and that she deserved to have SNAP benefits. My retort was that only American citizens should have access to the benefits plundered from American wallets.

She paid and left fuming and the cashier was bewildered.

The fraud is not just with non-citizens.

My point is how was it that easy to get qualified for certain benefits? I am challenging Montrose County to be held accountable and review their process of social benefit applications and how they deem the applicant to be eligible.

Robert Franco

Montrose County

Wakulla County

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT OR NOT

Dear Editor:

Two weeks ago, on June 1st, Mayor Badagliacco agreed with Councilor Reed it would be appropriate to form a Citizen Advisory Committee to weigh proposed changes to the City Charter, our local Constitution. Within a week, our mayor decided to renege on that agreement citing an advisory committee is not appropriate within our form of government. His words to me in an email exchange were, "I reached the conclusion that forming a separate citizens commission to develop charter amendments would shift the core legislative responsibility from your elected representatives to an unelected and unaccountable body and the reason for the change in my position. That is not how our constitutional representative republic is designed to function. We are not a democracy, we are a Republic and the designation is important." True, we are a Republic form of government; keep in mind, a Republic is a democracy guided by a constitution. So, in essence, the will of the people does come into play within a Republic.

I have to question his veracity in his belief of representative government. I believe he thinks a representative government only comes into being if an elected body is aligned with his belief system. In his letter to the editor of the Montrose Mirror, April 14th 2025, he called on the President of the United States and the Attorney General, Pam Bondi, to arrest the governor and legislative body of Colorado for passing restrictive gun legislation. He rejects that Polis and the State Legislature are a form of Representative government even though they were put into office by the people of Colorado.

Badagliacco and Woodden, were elected with 40% or less of votes cast. That means 60% of voters chose someone else. Does that equate to representative government? By law, yes. However, with such a wide disparity in votes I think it would be wise of Council to take the pulse of their entire constituency, not just the Montrose Republican Central Committee.

Form the Charter Committee, evaluate their recommendations and then present them to the public in form of a ballot initiative. We the people will ultimately decide if change is needed. Personally, I don't think it is. As the saying goes, if it's not broke, don't fix it.

Dave Stockton - Montrose

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DMEA INVITES MEMBERS TO ACTIVATE THEIR SUPERPOWERS AT ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 18

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE—Delta-Montrose Electric Association (DMEA) invites members to attend its 2026 Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 18, at Olathe High School.

The annual meeting is an opportunity for members to connect with their cooperative, learn about the past year's accomplishments, participate in cooperative governance, and enjoy an evening of family-friendly activities, food, music, prizes, and community celebration.

"The annual meeting is one of the most important ways members engage with their cooperative," said DMEA CEO Jack Johnston. "As a member-owned organization, your voice matters. We encourage every member to attend, learn more about their cooperative, and help shape our future."

This year's theme, "**Activate Your Superpowers**," highlights the unique role every member plays in strengthening the cooperative and the communities DMEA serves.

Beginning at 4:30 p.m., members can embark on a "hero journey" through six interactive stations showcasing the powers cooperative members bring to DMEA every day. Members who complete all six stations will be entered to win one of five grand prizes.

Registration and in-person voting will be open from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Members will have the opportunity to vote on a proposed amendment to DMEA's Articles of Incorporation regarding director term limits. Mail-in and online ballots must be received by Tuesday, June 16.

The business meeting will include updates on DMEA's financial performance, system reliability, broadband expansion, and key initiatives that support the cooperative's mission of serving members and strengthening local communities.

This year, Nickelodeon's beloved character, Dora the Explorer, will be on hand to greet fans at select times throughout the event.

Annual Meeting Details

Thursday, June 18, 2026

4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Olathe High School

410 U.S. Highway 50, Olathe, Colorado

For additional information about the annual meeting and election materials, visit

dmea.com/elections.

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31 YEARS AND COUNTING —BLACK CANYON CLASSICS CAR CLUB From pg 1



Beginning at 6:30PM (after the car show), Pam Friend and her staff at the Star Drive-In Theater hosted a "Back to the '60's Night" that featured front row parking for the Black Canyon Classics Car Club. Photo by David White.

LeMans, Catalina and others were represented over the course of the events. Here's a recap by day:

Day One (Friday, June 12th): Club members met at The Fairfield Inn and Suites at 9AM to greet folks that had pre-registered for the annual show to and provide them with their registration documents as well as folks that came to town to attend the show and needed to register their vehicles ahead of the Saturday show.

The kickoff event was the Community Night on Main Street where classics were on display from Townsend Avenue to Park Avenue in downtown Montrose. Dozens of vehicles were there between 4PM and approximately 7:30PM. The event drew food vendors to downtown along with crowds of folks who came to see these classic vehicles on display and provide downtown merchants with foot traffic and accompanying sales.

Day Two (Saturday, June 13th): Cars, trucks, rods, motorcycles and other vehicles began arriving at the show site in Cerise Park before 8AM. Day of show registration took place until 10AM.

It was stated by the Club's President, Shane Brown, that there were 176 vehicles present at the Saturday show. The

number of attendees in the form of vehicles and the public was up by roughly 35% from a year ago. The show of support by participants and the public is very much appreciated especially since all of the net proceeds of the event go to a designated non-profit organization as well as into a scholarship fund for students entering a trade school or college.

This year's recipient of the non-profit donation is the Montrose Veterans Memorial Coalition. This group of veterans is building the new veterans memorial just to the south of the Montrose Pavilion.

The show concluded with an awards presentation to the winners of the judging contests by show judges who chose the winners in several categories ranging from the age of the vehicle to the type of vehicle to awards such as the City's Choice Award for best in show.

Beginning at 6:30PM (after the car show), Pam Friend and her staff at the Star Drive-In Theater hosted a "Back to the '60's Night" that featured front row parking for the Black Canyon Classics Car Club members and show participants to enjoy an evening of fun and entertainment in the form of the thematic era of the night as seen in the movies American Graffiti and

Grease. The evening included trophies presented by Ms. Friend on behalf of the Star Drive-In to the top three owners of classic vehicles in attendance. Jeannie Durall won the trophy for best of show for her mid '60's Ford Falcon Futura. A great time was had by all.

Day Three, June 14, 2026: The festivities concluded with a Club Cruise open to all. This year, participants met at Culver's Restaurant in Montrose and made the 70+ mile round trip to Box Canyon Falls in Ouray, CO where they toured the site and got to see a spectacular natural canyon and associated waterfalls. After the tour of the falls, a late breakfast was had at Cassidy's Café. Thus concluded the 2026 show.

Special thanks goes to the City of Montrose for their assistance with providing the venues for the various events as well as the manpower to prepare the site for the show. Also of note are the many volunteers that made this special community event possible. Black Canyon Classics Car Club President Shane Brown; Car Show Committee Chair Joel Evans and his team and many others too numerous to list did a fantastic job this year to make the show a community success. All are looking forward to an even better show in June of 2027. Stay tuned for more information.

If you have any kind of classic car or truck (through the 1990's or limited production newer vehicles), please consider joining the club. Follow this link for more information on membership. Cost is a reasonable \$15.00 per year...<https://www.blackcanyonclassics.org/membership/>

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

YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE: BRAIN DANCE PART II



By Dr. Lauren Hall Ruddell, PhD

Greetings Mirrorites!

Regular readers of this column will recall that the last installment discussed the scientific debate on mindfulness. I took a stance in opposition to a commentator whom I respect and admire. He insists that the TPN (task positive network) is more important for mindfulness and being fully in the present than the default mode network (DMN), which is the brain system for attention restoration and mood improvement that I endorse. I felt that a subject this tricky needed two contributions to fully unpack. I have written extensively in this publication about the DMN, so I won't review that here. But as a brief refresher on the other system of interest...the TPN is a network of brain regions that is activated when an individual is engaged in tasks that require focused attention and deliberate cognitive effort.

Both of these networks behaving in synchrony are critical for fully functioning cognition and human thriving. I agreed with [Dr. Nate Hagens](#) that the TPN does keep us in the present and that the DMN doesn't always guarantee perfect rest and relaxation. However, I propose that this is the exception to the rule, and that perfect mindfulness *in nature*, that is, in restorative environments, is a superb dance between both systems, with the DMN getting just a bit more headspace.

The DMN is not merely a "resting" network; it contributes to creative ideation and internal simulation, especially when the brain draws on memory and associative thought. Recent work has argued that better interaction among the DMN,



Courtesy photo.

and salience systems (the switchboard operator between the two) can support creativity by allowing the mind to move fluidly between spontaneous idea generation and task-internal simulation, especially when the brain draws on memory and associative thought. Recent work has argued that better interaction among the DMN, TPN, and salience systems (the switchboard operator between the two) can support creativity by allowing the mind to move fluidly between spontaneous idea generation and task-oriented evaluation. I have personal and consistent experience with this phenomenon when gazing at the Uncompahgre Valley from an elevation or watching king birds harassing ravens over my backyard.

It's true that too much time in the DMN can lead to rumination and anxiety, however, too much rigid task-control activity may reduce reflective thought, creativity, and the ability to integrate internal information into decisions. I propose that time in restorative environments that includes a sense of soft fascination with natural surroundings and the actions of wild things prevents the dark side of the DMN from setting up shop.

There is evidence for my stance in recent

research. For instance, a group of Chinese researchers found that mindfulness practice conducted in more restorative environments led to significantly greater improvements in mindfulness levels and positive affect as compared to participants practicing mindfulness meditation indoors ([Dong et al., 2025](#).)

Further, a Swedish researcher found similar results. Important to my stance on this matter, the researcher writes "...restoration works bottom-up, from supportive environmental features, while mindfulness meditation works top-down, through effortful training." [Lyneus, 2019](#). He found that a five-week course of mindfulness training for attentional problems conducted in an arboretum as opposed to a classroom revealed that students "with higher initial ratings of attention problems subsequently completed more homework practice during the course. Homework practice in turn explained part of the improvement in dispositional mindfulness and attention problems." Not solid proof that the DMN activation while in a restorative environment is automatically better than time spent in the TPN 'being present', but a strong indicator that setting matters.

Targeted research has been performed on this topic, thank goodness. Using fMRI brain scans, it has been found that natural scenes increase functional *connectivity* between the DMN and TPN nodes. This enhanced coupling suggests that nature helps integrate internal reflection with outward-directed attention, rather than allowing the brain to get stuck in rigid, isolated modes ([National Institutes of Health, 2025](#)).

OK, so the research is clear. Mindfulness practice indoors may indeed require a person to continually check in with their TPN in order to stay in the present and not wander into negative self-examination and distracting 'time travel' (reviewing the past and speculating on the future). It appears to be true, however, that attention in restorative natural environments doesn't need to be consciously manipulated. The aesthetics of nature encourage the human brain to play more sweetly with its various parts and processes.

YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE: BRAIN DANCE PART II From pg 1

Monkey mind can, of course, happen in these settings. I know this from abundant personal experience. But after a while, about 15 to 20 minutes, those mental primates settle down for a much-needed nap, and more beneficial, creative, and truly insightful thoughts are allowed to emerge.

Personally, I never practice mindfulness meditation indoors. It just does not serve the purpose for cognitive rescue and spiritual reflection that I require. It might be very beneficial for those without nature handy just outside the door, like here in rural Colorado. I do practice it frequently, sometimes even deliberately, when strolling along the ditch road elevated high above the Uncompahgre Valley floor. So, Dr. Hagans, remember that it's not just breathing exercises that benefit us and keep us in the present. Nature is way better and far older than all of the touted ancient practices for mindfulness. For folks like me, it is both church and sanctuary, art gallery and gymnasium, yoga studio and comedy shop. And my DMN would very much like to thank you, Nate, for your excellent commentaries and remind you to enjoy your dogs and ducks in nature while luxuriating in your own DMN and don't worry about harnessing the TPN too much until you go back indoors!

Best regards from my DMN to yours,

The Mindful Naturalist



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For more information and tour schedule updates, please call 970-249-3098 or visit the Ute Indian Museum Facebook page.

OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

AVERAGE ILLEGAL “REFUGEE” GETS \$3,874 PER MONTH

Editor:

Democrats crack me up. It's a pretty safe bet that the lion's share of our \$36 trillion national deficit is in the pockets of Democrats because of their theft of taxpayer dollars.

This week the CEO of the Democrat's fundraising behemoth ActBlue declined to answer questions from House members about their illegal foreign donations. Representative Jim Jordan: “How much fraud is too much fraud?” “How many foreign contributions?” “How much from Russia?” “Why did your legal team quit?” ActBlue CEO: Pleads the fifth ... multiple times. When they hide behind the 5th on basic questions about fraud and foreign money, you know the answer – they're hiding their crimes. It's a sure bet that thirty million people in this country are here illegally because of Democrats. After working and paying into Social Security for 40+ years, the average SS recipient gets \$1800 per month. After being in America for a couple of days, the average illegal “refugee” gets \$3874 per month. And please don't try to compare our migrant ancestors to the illegal invaders of today. Our ancestors settled an undeveloped land and built a civilization. They didn't just waltz in and demand welfare. They didn't try to substitute the dysfunctional culture of their countries of origin, but instead built a culture with American values – freedom, individual rights, rule of law, and self-reliance. It's also a safe bet that elections are corrupted across America by Democrats. In case you are like me and are still wondering how an incompetent Joe Biden got 81 million votes in 2020, just check out what's going on in California right now.

Republicans actually have a platform: free enterprise, secure borders, honest elections, real journalism, an ethical judiciary, civil rights, moral standards, personal liberty, and last but not least, keeping Iran from destroying our cities with nuclear weapons. The only thing on the Democrat party platform is to hate Trump. They have only one plan: Hope Trump fails. That's it. Their only plan back to power is betting

against America's success. No vision. No sane leadership. Just working and waiting for the country – their country – to fail. Trump's beautification of Washington, D.C. perfectly illustrates the Democrats' utter disregard for the welfare of the American people. Democrats held power for decades in Washington and went on a spending spree, which, among other things, raised the Interior Department's budget 40%. Ironically, they nevertheless managed to turn D.C. – a city whose land is mostly owned by the federal government – and its famed monuments into a complete shambles. It is somewhat of a metaphor for how Democrats feel about America. Trump made the nation's capital beautiful again. In the last 14 months, the administration has repaired an astounding 22 fountains, cleaned 28 statues, removed graffiti, cleared homeless encampments, restored ponds across the city, and even rat-proofed the city's trash cans. The Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool is once again a wonder to behold. That's all in addition to Trump taking decisive action to address the capital city's crime problem. The Democrats' response? They are infuriated, and reduced to theatrics when their lawsuits failed to put the brakes on the cleanup. Decline was a Democrat choice. They did nothing to maintain the capital they lived in, even with a supercharged federal budget. They couldn't slow their theft of taxpayer money long enough to keep the capital from looking like a third-world refugee camp. With relatively minor spending and effort, everyone now gets to enjoy our capital – versus something just benefiting some NGO or Democrat special interest group.

The beautification project of our nation's capital is just the most recent, and probably the least important illustration of how Democrats are betting against America's success. More importantly, Democrats defunded the police in cities they control, installed Soros-funded radical prosecutors who created a revolving door for dangerous criminals, decriminalized shoplifting and anything else they could, and tried to

empty our prisons. They then acted shocked when crime skyrocketed and the cities under their control became unlivable. And of course, they pointed fingers at everyone but themselves. Duh. In addition to choosing criminals over police, they have chosen Israel's enemies over Israel, socialism over democracy, communism over capitalism, illegal aliens over citizens, and Muslim America haters over Americans. Even more sinister, history will remember Barack Obama as the most divisive president who deliberately weakened and damaged America. Events the past couple of weeks reveal how successful Obama and Democrats have been in destroying race relations in this country. Karmelo Anthony, 19, was found guilty of murdering 17-year-old Austin Metcalf at a Texas high school track meet in 2025, and was sentenced to 35 years in prison. Anthony is black. Metcalf was white. The facts of the case are indisputable: Anthony is a murderer and no sane society would claim otherwise. To defend him, one has to be so far outside of reality that they can no longer tell up from down. Prior to Obama, people in positions of power and influence would do everything possible to lower the temperature and not fan the flames of racial hatred by proving they don't know anything about the case except the races of the victim and his killer. Not so for today's Democrats. I would like to believe that the group irrationally defending Anthony was just a limited fringe of radicals, but the show of support and utter delusion of many black politicians, celebrities, and activists proves that wrong. Years of Democrat lies have convinced at least some black Americans that they are somehow victims when a black kid stabs a white kid and is convicted of murder. Congratulations Democrats. You have succeeded in convincing a segment of our black population to celebrate the tragic death of a white kid while at the same time ignoring the preponderance of black-on-black killings. That's a key step in your goal to destroy America.

Ed Henrie, Montrose

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

June is Men's Health Month Focus on Your Swing, Not Your Prostate

The Bridges Golf & Country Club

Thursday, June 18

Doors open at 4:30 PM

Presentation Begins at 5:00 PM

Join MRH Urology physicians Dr. Craig Peterson and Dr. Michael S. Tonzi for a free community event focused on common urinary and bladder health concerns affecting men as they age. Complimentary appetizers provided.

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- Weak urine stream • Bladder/bowel dysfunction
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For more information, contact:

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MontroseHealth.com/Urology

RULISON TO WEST RIFLE RESURFACING PROJECT REQUIRES I-70 LANE CLOSURES

Special to the Mirror

GARFIELD COUNTY — The Colorado Department of Transportation project of resurfacing Interstate 70 from Rulison, Mile Point 83.5, to West Rifle, MP 87, will require the closure of both I-70 westbound lanes, detouring commuters onto US 6 from Sunday, June 14, to Monday, June 15. The closure will take place from 9 p.m. Sunday with a reopening at 7 a.m. Monday and allows crews to remove barriers and conduct paint striping along this portion of the highway.

The I-70 Rulison to West Rifle Resurfacing project improves approximately five miles of I-70 where crews are conducting travel lane asphalt leveling and overlay, guardrail replacement, bridge repairs and paint striping. They are also performing settlement repairs on the eastbound and westbound travel lanes near West Rifle.

Crews are anticipating continued westbound road work for the next few weeks before shifting to the eastbound lanes for the same work in those lanes.

The project began May 4 and is anticipated to be completed in mid-September.



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

THANK THE NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS FOR PERSEVERING

Editor:

I have watched attack after attack be thrown towards this brand new School Board, for bias and “vendettas”, by the same loud group since January 2026 (when the newly elected School Board members were sworn in). These attacks have been for the very reason that Montrose voters elected them...they’re making a CHANGE! Montrose voters showed up on an “off election year” to elect NEW people that would listen to the concerns they’ve been raising for years!

Superintendent Stephenson’s fear-mongering of teachers and staff, the push for unwanted programs in our schools such as the TLA program - leading to parent and student frustration, spending an obscene amount of money on the proposed design plans of an outlandish high school rebuild, the lack of accountability and discipline for teachers that have overstepped parent/student boundaries, and as of late, the survey that was sent out to seemingly scare teachers, staff, parents, students and community members of a possible school closure, are just a few of the reasons why community members are in support of this board’s decision for a 3rd party investigation. Besides these more recent concerns, there were over 1,000 parent signatures that were blatantly IGNORED by the previous board, swept under the rug and basically told “You don’t matter and we don’t care”! Let’s be clear on this...the previous board consisted of Sarah Fishing, Alice Murphy, Tom West and yes, Jody Hovde! All these people gave Stephenson a green light to run wild, free, and unchecked. Hence the reason we continue to have a mess in our district!

I was so thankful for the board members who voted in FAVOR of placing Superintendent Stephenson on leave and to investigate the many concerns teachers, staff, parents, students and community members have been begging the board to look into for YEARS! Again, these concerns and complaints are NOT new, like the loud recall agitators want the community to believe. Our community wouldn’t be here if the PREVIOUS board would have had a backbone to hold the Superintendent accountable years ago.

Finally, I’d like to put it out there, that while a school board is an elected group of individuals rather than a private corporation, both produce similar responsibilities, such as holding administrative leadership accountable, protecting employees and the community, and ensuring that allegations of misconduct are addressed through fair and impartial processes. In both, it is common practice for an employee to be placed on paid leave while a 3rd party investigation is conducted, in order to preserve the integrity

of the process, eliminate accusations of misconduct or intimidation, and to maintain public confidence. In addition to placing the Superintendent on leave, this freely allows for any additional issues, and/or concerns from teachers, staff, parents and students to come forward without feeling intimidated with possible repercussions.

I wholeheartedly thank the new School Board members for persevering through the scrutiny and criticism. I appreciate your commitment to this community, which has demonstrated years of concern for our school district. I respectfully encourage you to remain steadfast, continue advocating for our students, and stay focused on the positive changes that will benefit their future

Lacy Sanchez, Montrose


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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IS AN INVESTMENT IN OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY

To the Editor:

With all the controversy surrounding our school district, we must look at the positive aspects. Our focus should always be student centered. Tuesday evening, we hope our school board will accept the Colorado Department of Education BEST Grant for the Early Childhood program for nearly \$6.2 million dollars. It is my understanding this will be matched nearly dollar for dollar out of our Capital Reserve Fund. A great deal of gratitude goes to Penny Harris who has scrimped, saved, planned, and developed an amazing staff. It has been a long time coming. Also praise for Emily Ploussard and her phenomenal team.

When we talk about the future of our community, we often focus on economic development, workforce needs, and educational achievement.

Yet one of the most important investments we can make begins long before a child enters kindergarten. As a teacher who has participated in kindergarten intakes over the years, I have nothing but deep respect for these angels dealing with

a horde of little ones from different walks of lives.

High-quality early childhood education provides young children with the foundation they need to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

During the first five years of life, children's brains develop at a remarkable pace. Early learning programs help build critical language, literacy, problem-solving, and social skills that support success throughout their school years and beyond.

In communities like Montrose, early childhood education also serves working families by providing safe, nurturing environments where children can learn and grow while parents contribute to our local economy. These programs help identify developmental delays and learning challenges early, allowing children to receive support when it can make the greatest difference.

The benefits extend far beyond individual children and families. Research consistently shows that investments in early childhood education lead to higher gradu-

ation rates, stronger workforces, and healthier communities. Every dollar invested in quality early learning can yield significant long-term returns through improved educational outcomes and reduced social costs.

Our Early Childhood Center and pre-school programs are not simply childcare services; they are educational opportunities that prepare our youngest learners for a successful start in school and in life. They help ensure that every child, regardless of background or circumstance, has the opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

As a community, we should continue to support and value early childhood education. The children benefiting from these programs today will become the students, workers, leaders, and citizens who shape Montrose tomorrow.

Investing in our youngest learners is one of the smartest and most meaningful investments we can make.

*Sincerely,
Ellen Angeles
Montrose, CO*



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OPINION /EDITORIAL: LETTERS

STRIKING A NERVE

Editor:

It appears as though I “kicked the hornet’s nest” with my op-ed of June 1, 2026, when I claimed that our mayor was disingenuous at best with his refusal to support a proclamation in support of Pride here in Montrose. I stand by every word that I said.

As far as being disingenuous, consider that R.L. Michaels accused me of making assumptions about our mayor, while at the same time assuming that I must be part of the “far left propaganda machine” and a “liberal leftist”. He did exactly what he complained about me doing.

In college, I majored in History and Political Science, and in law school I took courses in Constitutional Law. My law school thesis concerned Constitutional Law as well. I do have some knowledge of the subject that I spoke about.

Let’s look at the facts. Our current council has issued proclamations for both National Correctional Officers Week and for National Law Enforcement Week. In that light, refusing to recognize a large part of our community (which outnumbers both our law enforcement and correctional officers here in Montrose combined) when they have respectfully requested said recognition can legitimately be viewed or perceived as discriminatory. Let’s wait and see if our mayor and the other two “vetted conservatives” follow through and issue no further proclamations of any kind. Any proclamation issued from this point forward will only serve to prove my point.

Rather than deny the proclamation and divide our community, wouldn’t it have been simpler and less divisive to just issue the proclamation? As I stated earlier, perception is everything, and the perception to many in our Pride community is that they are not cared about here. We can and should do better.

Ron Sobieck, Montrose, CO

ANSWER TO DAVE STOCKTON’S COMMENT

Editor:

The choice of making Montrose a sanctuary or non sanctuary community is strictly about federal law breakers. Our state and a large number of our cities and towns in Colorado are embracing those people who have entered our country illegally. I’ve said this before that the original intent of a sanctuary city goes back to biblical times when a person who was accused of a crime and felt he was innocent had a place to go. The sanctuary city was that place where the accused could retreat and build his defense, not hide! Our state and many other states have declared to be sanctuary states are blatantly offering sanctuary to fugitives and criminals who have violated federal law. That means that they are aiding and abetting fugitives from justice and become just as guilty as those who violated the immigration laws. Because there has become such a huge impact of illegals into our state and our state wasn’t equipped to handle this population influx taking funds from our taxpayers and citizens and used to fully support these violators reducing the benefits promised to our citizens, the taxpayers. Also, it has been discussed that enforcing the law is preventing or prohibiting immigration. Legal immigration is still very active and is available to anyone wanting to immigrate legally into America. It’s all about following the law or ignoring the law. You don’t need an all inclusive support system for illegals who have violated federal law. If a community makes a statement to the effect that people who have entered our community illegally are not wanted that is like saying that bank robbers, murders, child molesters are not welcomed in our midst because they violate the law. My understanding is that our state has prohibited our law enforcement from communicating and working with federal agencies. That alone is against the supremacy act which requires state and local law enforcement personnel to cooperate with federal law enforcement. I don’t know about you but I prefer to be surrounded by law abiding citizens.

John Brown, Montrose





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OPINION/EDITORIAL: COMMENTARY



WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?

City Council encourages public engagement and discussion. While previously work sessions public comment/discussion was not allowed, recently why we have opened up the dialogue for work sessions.

No formal action will be taken during the work sessions. This time is intended for members of the public to gain understanding of the items on the "discussion items" list while we have city staff available. If additional time is needed, we do ask that members of the public who need more information to request a conference to discuss in greater detail.

Please refrain from any personal attacks and disagreements, personnel and employment matters, the use of profanity or ethnic, racial, or gender-oriented slurs as they may be considered "disorderly conduct" which violates state or local law.

***Work Session**

Monday June 15, 2026, 10:00 AM

- DART Budget
- Potential Charter Commission

*As per policy, public input during work sessions is limited to those items in the "Discussion items" only. This is an opportunity for the public to ask questions and comment on the items within this scope and not an open forum for non-discussion items.

Council Meeting

Tuesday June 16, 2026, 6:00 PM

- Liquor License application:
Star Cajun Seafood
- Sewer Line Replacement Project
San Juan Bypass / East Main
- Precious Metal Sales Tax Revision

Work Session: June 15th 10:00 am

Council meeting: June 16th 6:00 PM

Location: City Council Chambers

107 S. Cascade

Montrose, CO 81401

Thank you,

Michael J. Badagliacco, "MJB"

Mayor – Montrose, CO

mjb@cityofmontrose.org



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

VALLEY MANOR CARE CENTER WELCOMES MISSION-DRIVEN LEADER AS NEW ADMINISTRATOR

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— Valley Manor Care Center, a long-term care skilled nursing and short-term rehabilitation community managed by Volunteers of America National Services (VOANS), is pleased to announce the appointment of Justin Blumenthal, LNHA as its new administrator. Before entering healthcare administration, Blumenthal spent eight years as a paramedic in St. Petersburg and Clearwater, Florida. Those experiences helped shape a passion for improving the lives of older adults and inspired a transition into long-term care leadership.

"I spent years responding to calls in nursing homes and saw firsthand the gap between the care resi-



Justin Blumenthal, LNHA. Courtesy photo.

dents deserved and what they were receiving," said Blumenthal. "That experience stayed with me. I believed I could do better, and I made it my career to try."

VOANS Regional Operations Director, Ronda Jones said, "Justin brings extensive healthcare leadership experience and a deep commitment to mission-driven service. We are excited to support his goals and expectations for compassionate aging services at Valley Manor."

Blumenthal's initial focus will be listening to residents, families and team members to better understand their needs, celebrate the strengths of the Valley Manor team and identify opportunities for growth.

"From there, the direction will be on building a stable and engaged team, strengthening our quality outcomes, and making sure Valley Manor is a place where residents feel dignified and cared for and staff feel proud to come to work. In a VOANS community, that is not just an operational goal. It is an expression of the mission."

Blumenthal holds a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration from Trident University International, graduating magna cum laude, and earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Florida. He is a licensed nursing home administrator (LNHA).

Outside of work, Blumenthal enjoys spending time outdoors, camping, skiing and exploring Colorado's natural beauty. A lifelong interest in astronomy and the outdoors made Western Colorado a natural fit.

"I chose this work and this community on purpose," he said. "Colorado already feels like home. I bring that same sense of curiosity, presence and genuine interest in the world around me into everything I do at Valley Manor."

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

UNCOMPAHGRE FIELD OFFICE ENACTS STAGE 1 FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Stage 1 fire restrictions take effect Friday, June 12 within the Uncompahgre Field Office, including portions of Montrose, Delta, Mesa, Gunnison, Ouray, and San Miguel counties.

In addition to year-round wildfire prevention rules, the following are restricted under stage

- Campfires:** You may only have a campfire in agency-provided fire grates located in developed campgrounds and recreation sites. You can use stoves that use gas, jellied petroleum, or pressurized liquid fuel. Fire pans and rock campfire rings are not acceptable.
- Smoking:** Do not smoke unless you are inside a vehicle or building, at a developed recreation site, or in an outdoor area cleared of flammable materials (at least a 3-foot-wide barren spot).
- Explosives / Exploding Targets:** Do not use exploding targets or other explosive materials.
- Torch or Welding Work:** Do not use a welder (gas or arc) or operate a torch with an open flame unless you have a pressurized fire extinguisher (minimum 8 ounces) and work in a cleared area that is at least 10 feet in diameter.
- Spark Arrestors Required:** You may only use chainsaws with a working USDA or SAE-approved spark arrestor. You must also have a chemical fire extinguisher (at least 8 ounces) and a round point shovel (at least 36 inches long) nearby. No operation of any internal combustion engine without a spark arresting device properly installed and in working order.

For the full restriction announcement, boundary map, and official fire prevention order: <https://ow.ly/tu4N50ZazNs>

More about fire restrictions across the BLM Southwest District: <https://ow.ly/YnPP50ZazPF>



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SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVES BEST GRANT FOR ECC *From pg 1*

Community Foundation Anonymous fund awarded a grant in the amount of \$3,000 to the Centennial Middle School Band Program.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Board of Education discussed District Advisory Committees. District D Director Tom West gave an update on the Facilities Committee, and the work to be done during the summer months on district campuses. The Committee toured the ECC Building, West said, and saw what it was like over there. "...Trying to help motivate ourselves into accepting this BEST grant tonight, it's in bad shape over there." No mice ran over their feet during the tour, West said, but mice had bothered children at the ECC while they were asleep.

District F Director Jody Hovde, who is also on the facilities committee, said she appreciated the change of format that now entails the committee visiting district facilities.

Directors also discussed Board Engagement. President Balleck talked about going to district graduation ceremonies and how moving it had been to attend those. "It's very uplifting to me to see the students and hear their stories..."

District E Director Tiffany Vincent said that she attended most of the graduation ceremonies, including the ECC.

District F Director Jody Hovde said that she had done something that "...impacts us as a board and as a community." Hovde had traveled with her granddaughter to the State FFA Convention in Pueblo. Over 2,000 high school students were involved, Hovde said, and she ran into kids from Western Colorado schools. "And I think what I took away from that was their professionalism, their knowledge, their respect for one another, their ability to conduct business through parliamentary procedure was impressive beyond impressive. And while we don't use parliamentary procedure, we use Robert's Rules, it's still the principles of order, respect, effective governance and all of those things...it made me reflect on our work here as a board.

"...I think we should continuously evaluate how effectively we conduct our meetings, how we are carrying out our

responsibilities as elected officials. Good governance to me requires preparation, a strong understanding of meeting procedures, just an ongoing commitment of learning. I've been on this board now two and a half-ish years, I'm still learning...I feel like in the last month or so we've moved from board governance to board operations, and I think we need to reflect on that...is it in the best interests of students or not in the best interests of students.

"Are we losing sight of what we are elected to do...to me they (FFA kids) demonstrated really great leadership..."

Looking at Balleck as she spoke, Hovde asked the board to reflect on what they want to see happen in the Montrose County School District; "what we want to see our kids achieve, and that we are ultimately running these board meetings with true governance with education and achievement in the forefront for our children, because they deserve better than what we've been doing...we have a lot to learn from those kids."

President Balleck thanked Hovde and opened the floor to Community Input.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Constituents took to the podium to offer input; some asked that the board approve the BEST grant for the ECC. (The grant was listed on the meeting's Consent Agenda-- "Accept the Colorado Department of Education BEST Grant in the amount of \$6,192,542.48 for the Early Childhood program and approve related expenditures." Consent Agenda items are generally approved without discussion unless a board member asks to pull the item for further discussion.)

Constituents also spoke about other topics.

Csilla Rodriguez spoke. "I want to begin by expressing my appreciation for the elected school board members," Rodriguez said. "They were elected by the voters to represent our community, and I believe they are doing the job they were elected to do. The people of this community voted for change. Change is not always comfortable and it's rarely easy."

Meaningful change requires transparency and a willingness to ask good questions,

Rodriguez said, noting that the Superintendent is currently on leave pending the results of an independent investigation.

"That process exists to protect everyone involved and preserve the integrity of the investigation. If the Superintendent has done nothing the investigation will show that. If serious mistakes were made, the investigation will show that as well. Either way the community deserves the truth. As a parent and community member my biggest concern is not politics, it is our children. Over the past few years, I have spoken with many students, teachers, parents about their experiences in our schools, classrooms, and athletic programs, and what they would like to see improve.

Some students are thriving, but I have also heard concerns from many others. I have heard students talk about low morale, negative atmospheres, feeling unwelcome and sometimes not feeling safe. I have heard students say they would rather learn online than return to their certain school environments. And I believe these students are not a small minority. The students who struggle, who feel disconnected, who do not fit neatly into the system, who are quietly hurting may very well represent the majority of the students. Some of those students are my own children. They simply do not have the confidence to stand at a microphone and tell us their own stories.

"I am not speaking only for the AP students, scholarship winners, or natural entrepreneurs who seem destined for success. I am speaking for the students whose voices are rarely heard.

"Their experiences matter too. That is why accountability matters. That is why leadership matters. That is why I believe we must have the courage to examine what is working, what is not working, and what needs to change."

Rodriguez said that she cares so deeply because of her own background. She grew up in Hungary under Communism. "I know what it looks like when people are expected to think a certain way, speak a certain way, and agree with things that do not make sense simply because authority says so."

She said that her father earned some of

SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVES BEST GRANT FOR ECC *From previous pg*

the highest marks on his college entrance exam but was nevertheless denied because his family would not join the Communist party. "My parents married in a church at midnight with only a priest and two witnesses, because openly practicing their faith could affect their careers and their children's futures.

"Those experiences shaped me," Rodriguez said. "They taught me the importance of truth, integrity, faith, family, education, and freedom.

"And yes, I believe the United States is the last truly free country on Earth," she said. "I also believe Montrose is one of the best places in the world to raise a family. That is exactly why I care so much about what happens here. I believe all children deserve schools where they feel welcome, valued, challenged, and safe. I believe our teachers deserve support. I believe administrators deserve accountability. And I believe our board is fulfilling its responsibility to ask difficult questions and pursue the truth wherever it leads."

Rodriguez invited all who chose to join her on the following Friday "for a day of prayer and fasting for the school district, leadership, teachers, staff, board members, Superintendent, and most importantly "our children...that future is possible if we choose to build it together."

Next, Chrissy Simmons spoke in support of the BEST grant.

Sue Zanol spoke about the investigation into the Superintendent. "I was at last week's special meeting, which was a test of self-discipline." She said that Superintendent Stephenson "calmly and with dignity and with her act totally together" gave a statement with "well documented examples of harassment and clear violations of board policies and state law.

"After a formal grievance package was literally placed on the table, I thought surely the board will vote to end this meeting," Zanol said. "Nope. I want to thank the three board members who voted against placing Dr. Stephenson on leave, in particular Ms. Hovde for being the voice of sanity throughout the meeting. The investigation needs to be carefully monitored by the entire board. There's already suspicion about how the

investigator was selected. It is certainly not a whole board member selection. What role did the Brad Miller law firm play?

"This appears to be a 'figures don't lie, liars figure,'" Zanol said. "All relevant persons should be interviewed, not just those recommended by two board members. As for my personal opinion, without naming names, I would like to see several board members resign...It would be better for students, staff, and the community at large. I know this first-hand having been a building teacher/Association Representative with a divided staff and with the key role in the removal of an administrator. That school board functioned with honor and as a body, following policies and the law. There was no perception of foul play, and healing did follow. In short, it was not a clown show..."

Linda Gann spoke about the meeting agenda, and about the importance of accepting the BEST grant. She acknowledged Superintendent Stephenson and the administration team. Gann said that the motion approved by the board to select an investigator into the circumstances at Olathe Elementary was appropriate, "Staff grievances should be investigated," but noted that the investigator should have been hired through an open process rather than by the board president.

Gann said, "...the contract I obtained through CORA shows that the Board President and legal counsel went way beyond. The motion did not authorize a two-year contract. The motion did not authorize unlimited spending. The motion did not authorize scope changes by email. The motion did not authorize one board member to act as a district client representative. And most importantly, the motion did not authorize the legal counsel to sign a financially binding contract for the Montrose County School District...right now it looks less like board governance and more like one person and one attorney making all the decisions..."

Zoe Werden spoke about money and financial accountability, the importance of accepting the BEST grant for the Early Childhood Center, and the importance of tightening belts in tough economic times.

Werden asked the Board of Education to consider money before calling on legal and before "starting all sorts of outside investigations."

Next to speak was Penny Harris, the former 26-year Early Childhood Center Director. Noting that a new ECC has been a priority for several decades, Harris asked the Board of Education to accept the BEST grant.

Julie Yarnell spoke, saying that she had grave concerns about the special board meeting that was held on June 2. "It was poorly planned and hastily organized," Yarnell said. "Reflecting a significant need for improvement in leadership, communication, and transparency within the board administration and the community. I am alarmed by President Balleck's overstep into personnel issues at Olathe Elementary School, based on hearsay, which led to the suspension of Dr. Stephenson. Such matters should be handled by the HR Department and the independent investigator without the president's involvement. The President's request for legal advice 17 times during the June 2 meeting suggests a lack of preparation and leadership while incurring increasing legal fees for the district..."

Leah Vandersluis spoke, noting that no board meeting is scheduled in July and asked, "...Why shouldn't there be a board meeting in July—I strongly think this is necessary...the grievance letter that Dr. Stephenson read against Ms. Balleck contained many false accusations regarding not following Montrose County School District Policies. Ms. Balleck is not a perfect person and she has said many times she has been learning the ropes of being a board president since January, and has admitted that she is still learning, just as Ms. Hovde said. She has been kind and gracious to board directors, to the superintendent, and to opposition, in spite of being mistreated in person and on social media. She has consistently acted professionally. After reading through the Montrose County school district code of ethics for board members, I found that Ms. Balleck had upheld the law. The personal ill treatment of President Balleck is not warranted. The way people are ignoring

SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVES BEST GRANT FOR ECC From previous pg

decorum at the meetings is shameful and should not be allowed.

"Let the Investigation be completed and let the chips fall where they may."

Early Childhood Center Teacher Stacy Trickel spoke, describing the horrific conditions that the district's youngest students and their educators must endure each day. She described the overwhelming smell of mold, bathrooms that don't work, the sewer smell, a window that won't open, the floor that looks like the middle is rising, but in fact the sides are sinking. The only working phone outlet is in a closet. The metal ramp is so slippery that children had to be taught to walk like penguins to avoid slipping.

Trickel also thanked the committee for the BEST grant and those who have taken time to visit the ECC facility, and expressed hope that the BEST grant would be approved.

Don Coram spoke about his accomplishments and the importance of institutional knowledge. He said he didn't like marijuana and urged the board to take advantage of the opportunities the marijuana tax provides.

City Councilor Adam Woodden spoke about issues relating to the rising numbers of e-bikes, and suggested that the City, the School District, Police Department and the public work together to come up with creative ideas and best practices to promote safety. "I think it's something we could all come together on and get a good solution going."

Lynett Yolian spoke next. Yolian said that she has children who attend the Outer Range school. She said that she attended the special meeting on June 2, and that it was "complete chaos, it was so embarrassing...it was clear to me that even members of the board did not have all the information they should have had...if the board is not being transparent among themselves how can we as the public know that you're being transparent with us and giving us all the information that we are owed.

"...In the rush to pause the Superintendent, you had a very capable person listed as a replacement, but there was no thought as to what the Superintendent actually did on a day-to-day basis, and that was extremely concerning to me. That someone could just step in, and you know, carry on. I feel like this board is not helping our students, staff, or community. I feel like this board is creating chaos, and that's not good for our students.

"Also, I started stress baking, and I made chocolate chip cookies. They're in the overflow room. Thank you for your time."

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda Items 3 and 10 were moved to New Business for further discussion.

Board Vice President Ted Valerio commented, "We had a lot of community members coming and talking about the BEST grant, and to approve it and all that. Not exactly sure where that came from. I don't think there was opposition to approve that, so maybe people know something that we don't. But it seems like the Board was positive toward it when it was applied for, from the very beginning. So not 100 percent sure, I'm sure someone will enlighten us as to what that was about, I'm sure that was one of those underground rumors that went around.

"As far as I know everybody was obviously supportive of the BEST grant."

District F Director Jody Hovde said, "Maybe it's because they've always felt like they're at the bottom of the feed chain. They've been made a lot of promises over a lot of years, at least two decades that I can think of in my time. Maybe it was just that they wanted to make sure."

District G Director Shane Daly said that there had been some discussion during a recent conversation about school closures, "extreme scenarios of worst-case possible things, that we had the building... we were kind of tied into it being the ECC..."

"It was probably one of those transparency discussions that we were having in pub-

lic," Valerio said. "So I don't think it was ever really on anybody's mind that we were looking to not take care of early childhood...I appreciate everybody showing up for that and supporting it but it definitely wasn't a thing..."

Board President Neisha Balleck said that she is excited about the grant. "The things that are coming for the kids, just wait and see. It's going to be awesome."

The Board voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda, including acceptance of the Colorado Department of Education BEST Grant in the amount of \$6,192,542.48 for the Early Childhood program and related expenditures, and also the Personnel Report.

NEW BUSINESS

After some discussion, Consent Agenda items Three and ten were approved.

The 2026-2027 Proposed Budget was presented by Finance Director Emily Imus for public hearing and will be presented again at the June 23 meeting for approval. Imus thanked the Finance Team for their efforts and for the work they have been doing.

Also approved was Resolution 08-2026, authorizing the issuance of general obligation refunding bonds for the purpose of refinancing Montrose County School District debt at lower interest rates, providing for the payment of the refunded debt, for the levy of property taxes to pay the refunding bonds, and other details in the connection with the refunding.

The Board voted to approve new MHS courses AP Business & Personal Finance, AP Environmental Science, AP Seminar, OMHS course 7th Grade Agriculture Exploratory and Project Bike Tech at Black Canyon HS for the 2026-2027 school year.

Directors voted to approve the negotiated settlement between MCSD and UVEA for 2026-2027 as well as the negotiated settlement between MCSD and UVEA for 2026-2027.

The board spent time in discussion of future agenda items before voting unanimously to adjourn.

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

MRS. CLAUS FOR A CAUSE PRESENTS THE 4TH ANNUAL ADULT PROM

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Join Mrs. Claus and her crew for the 4th Annual Adult Prom, where all proceeds support Mrs. Claus for a Cause. This event will be on Saturday, August 8, 2026, from 7:00-11:00 p.m. at The Temple (511 E Main St.) in Montrose. Featuring live music by The Dirt, this 80s-themed bash will also include a silent auction, complimentary champagne, an appetizer/dessert bar, a photo booth, and more. Tickets are \$50 per person or two tickets for \$80. Sponsorship tables are also available. For tickets or sponsorships, visit mrsclausforacause.org.

About Mrs. Claus for a Cause: Mrs. Claus for a Cause is a non-profit that annually provides a free Christmas event for the children of Montrose and its surrounding communities. The 2026 event will be at Friendship Hall in Montrose on December 18th & 19th for all children, with December 20th as an event day reserved for children with special needs. For more information on the event or to donate or volunteer, please visit mrsclausforacause.org.

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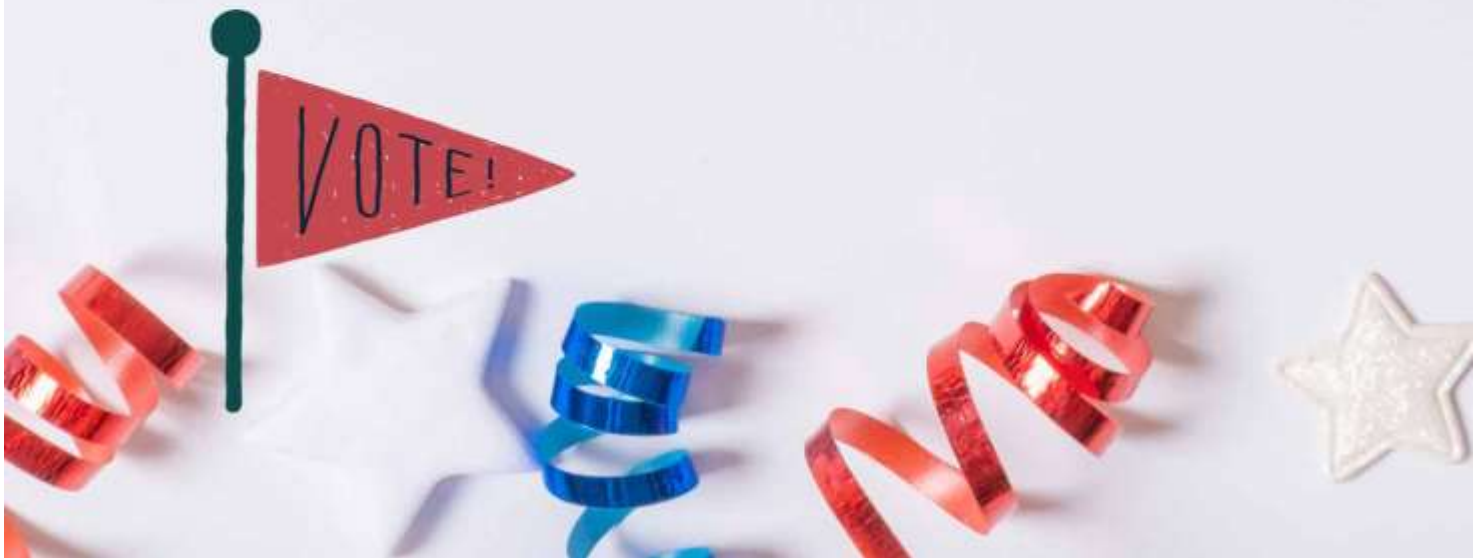
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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DELTA COUNTY IMPLEMENTS STAGE 1 FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Special to the Mirror

DELTA-Due to extreme wildfire risk across Delta County, Sheriff Mark Taylor is implementing **Stage 1 Fire Restrictions effective 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, June 14, 2026.** The decision to implement fire restrictions was reached after consultation with Delta County Emergency Management, Delta County fire protection district chiefs, and state and federal wildfire management partners and a review of current fire indices.

“Delta County is experiencing a severe drought with very dry and hazardous conditions and Stage 1 Fire Restrictions are a necessary and prudent step to help protect residents and personal property from the risk of a human-caused wildfire,” said Sheriff Taylor. “Please take these restrictions seriously to help protect Delta County from a destructive wildfire this summer.”

Delta County is experiencing extremely hot and dry weather patterns following record-low snowpack levels this past winter. The combination of low moisture levels, high temperatures, low humidity and high winds are creating extreme fire weather conditions. The Sheriff’s Office and Emergency Management encourage all residents and visitors to take pro-active steps to mitigate wildfire risk and be extra vigilant with anything that can create a spark this summer.

Stage 1 Fire Restrictions will go into effect on Sunday morning and apply to all unincorporated areas of Delta County including Crawford and Sweitzer Lake State Parks and State Wildlife Areas. Restrictions will also apply within the Town limits of any municipality which elects by appropriate ordinance or resolution to adopt and apply the fire restrictions within their jurisdiction. Residents who live in the City of Delta or Towns of Cedaredge,

Orchard City, Paonia, Hotchkiss or Crawford are encouraged to check with your Town Hall about restrictions in town limits.

Delta County restrictions do not apply to lands managed by the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the National Park Service as restrictions are implemented on those lands by the managing agency. As of Friday, June 12, 2026, BLM lands within the Uncompahgre Field Office, including all BLM lands in Delta County were placed under Stage 1 Fire Restrictions. Residents who are planning recreational activities on federal lands should check the latest fire restrictions on federal lands and neighboring counties by visiting WestSlopeFireInfo.com.

While Stage 1 Fire Restrictions are in effect, camp fires are only allowed in permanent fire pits, rings or BBQ grills at private residences or within a developed recreational site that is completely void of combustible material on the ground. The use of natural gas and other stoves/devices which can be turned on and off with a valve is allowed. Bon-fires and camp-fires on the ground in stone rings are prohibited as is the open burning of trash, debris or agricultural burning. Stage 1 also prohibits the use of explosives or fireworks of any kind as defined in C.R.S. 30-15-401(1)(n.7) to include exploding targets and tracer ammunition. Smoking is restricted to inside a vehicle or outside in an area that is void of any combustible material and it is illegal to throw a cigarette butt out of a vehicle. Activities such as welding and grinding which create sparks should only be conducted in areas void of flammable vegetation at least 10 feet in diameter while in possession of a fire extinguisher. **For full information on**

what is and is not allowed, please visit DeltaCountyCO.gov/FireBan and download the Stage 1 Fire Restriction Order and infographic.

Violation of Stage 1 Fire Restrictions may result in a citation for violation of Delta County Ordinance 2024-02. If a fire burns onto the property of another or starts a wildfire, individuals found responsible may be liable for restitution costs including wildfire suppression expenses, property damage and other associated costs.

Stage 1 Fire Restrictions are implemented to reduce the risk of human-caused wildfires and will remain in effect until weather conditions improve and are rescinded by Order of the Sheriff or weather conditions worsen and Stage 2 fire restrictions are implemented.

Residents, visitors and businesses are encouraged to stay proactive and informed this summer by taking the following steps:

- Sign up for Delta County Alerts – the official emergency alert platform for Delta County by visiting DeltaCountyCO.gov/Alerts
 - Mitigate the wildfire risk to your home by creating defensible space and hardening your home to fire embers. Learn more at the CO State Forest Website at: csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/
 - Now is the time to prepare your home for a wildfire evacuation – Build a Go-Kit, gather important documents and irreplaceable belongings and create detailed inventories of your home contents before smoke is in the air. Learn more about how to Build a Kit and Evacuation plan at Ready.gov/Plan
- Please help us protect the beauty and resources of Delta County by practicing fire safety this summer, adhering to fire restrictions and exercising caution when recreating on public lands!

COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

COLORADO STATE GRAND JURY INDICTS SEVEN INDIVIDUALS IN LARGE DRUG TRAFFICKING OPERATION KNOWN AS THE "MOLLY WONKA" INVESTIGATION

Special to the Mirror

CBI – EAGLE COUNTY–The Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the 5th Judicial District Attorney's Office in conjunction with the Colorado Attorney General's Office today announced a 48-count Colorado State Grand Jury Indictment against seven individuals for operating a sophisticated Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO). The DTO, which ran from at least February 2024, through April 2026, specialized in manufacturing and distributing large quantities of illicit narcotics infused in and marketed as high-end candy and nasal sprays, operating primarily out of a facility in Basalt, Colorado.

The seven defendants indicted on May 21, 2026, include:

John Parker Roe (Leader of the DTO and Genesis Limited Consulting, LLC)

Erica Collins ("Executive Assistant," known distributor, and owner of Lume Lume Lume LLC)

Timothy Caraboolad (DTO Leader and financial partner in the "Alpen Glow" product line)

Pola Oginski ("Head of Production")

Morgan Davis (Key role in production and order fulfillment)

Gregory Shaw (Assistant and distributor)

Frank Akers (Key role in distribution)

The DTO produced and sold products under brand names like "Renaissance" and "Alpen Glow," featuring MDMA (commonly known as "ecstasy," a Schedule I controlled substance), Ketamine (Schedule III), MDA ("sally"), and 2C-B ("pink cocaine") infused into items such as chocolate bars ("Socialistas," "Ritualistas," and "Heart Openers") and nasal sprays ("Alpen Glow"). The narcotics were advertised on custom menus and distributed to customers nationwide.

The indictment, issued by the 2025-2026 Colorado State Grand Jury, includes numerous felony counts of Drug Trafficking, Manufacturing, and Conspiracy involving:

Possession with Intent to Distribute Controlled Substances (MDMA, Ketamine, 2C-B, MDA)

Manufacturing Controlled Substances (MDMA, Ketamine, 2C-B, MDA)

Special Offender status for Controlled Substance Organizer, Conspiracy, Importation into Colorado, and Substantial Source of Income.

In addition to the drug charges, the indictment includes non-drug related felonies, primarily against John Parker Roe and Erica Collins:

Money Laundering

Tax Evasion

Filing a False Return

Attempt to Influence a Public Servant

Child Abuse

The Investigation

The complex, multi-year investigation was spearheaded by CBI with assistance from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Eagle County Sheriff's Office, Aspen Police, and Basalt Police. It included multiple controlled undercover buys, court-authorized search warrants, and physical surveillance of the Basalt facility. Investigators determined John Parker Roe derived a substantial portion of his income (over 50%) from the organization and that Collins used her business, Lume Lume Lume, to conceal funds disguised as consulting or wellness services. Furthermore, evidence revealed the DTO was importing large quantities of Ketamine into Colorado.

"This investigation has dismantled an organized crime ring that packaged narcotics to appeal to consumers, while intentionally labeling the packaging in a manner to avoid law enforcement attention," said CBI Director Armando Saldate.

Heidi McCollum, District Attorney for the 5th Judicial District, stated, "We are committed to prosecuting cases involving the importation, manufacture, and distribution of illicit substances in our communities. We appreciate the intensive work by the Colorado State Grand Jury and the CBI that culminated in the indictment in this case."

This 5th Judicial case will be prosecuted in Eagle County by the 5th Judicial District Attorney's Office with the continued assistance from the Colorado Attorney General's Office.

The charges in this indictment are merely accusations. All defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: COMMENTARY

CITIZEN COMMISSIONS

Do they Undermine Accountability of our Elected Officials?

by Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"

In our Constitutional Republic, the people elect representatives to carry out the duties of government. Those representatives' campaign on platforms and values. They place their judgment before the voters and receive the people's trust through election. If they fail to deliver, the same citizens can remove them at the next ballot. This accountability is the foundation of representative government.

Appointed citizen commissions function differently. Many who serve are sincere community members who definitely have the best interest of the community at heart. Yet they never stand for election, present platforms for scrutiny, or face direct removal by voters when the voters disagree with their decisions. Elected officials swore an oath to uphold the US and State Constitution, and the law and cannot fairly shift their core responsibilities onto unelected citizens who lack that mandate.

The Founders' Design for Representative Government

The founders created a Republic, not a democracy. In Federalist No. 10, James Madison explained the difference. *A democracy lets citizens assemble and administer government directly and offers no cure for the instability of factions.* A Republic delegates authority to a smaller number of citizens elected by the rest. This representation refines public views and produces more stable decisions.

Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution requires the United States to guarantee every state a republican form of government. Local governments derive their powers from the states. In the early years of the republic, municipal business was conducted by elected mayors, city councils, and town selectmen. These officials answered directly to the voters who chose them. *Citizens participated primarily by electing and holding their representatives accountable.*

The Progressive Era Departure

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the progressive movement changed municipal structures. Reformers, including those under President Woodrow Wilson, sought "*greater efficiency*" in growing cities and advanced commission forms of government and city manager plans. These models emphasized professional experts and appointed administrators. The focus moved toward streamlined processes rather than the deliberate work elected officials were chosen to perform.

Citizen commissions reflect this shift. Elected councils create them to address planning, zoning, parks, and *sometimes* proposals involving charter amendments. This arrangement lets elected leaders delegate difficult or controversial decisions. *It sidesteps the responsibility those officials accepted when they ran for office and took their oaths.*

Accountability and the Proper Roles

Elected representatives must perform the job the people elected them to do. They should not delegate core governing duties to citizens who have never faced the electorate and who operate without the same scrutiny. *In a Republic, the will of the people is executed through officials who stand for election and remain answerable at the ballot box.* Placing unelected commissions in that role moves local government toward elements of direct democracy. *The founders rejected democracy precisely because it lacked the filtering and accountability of representation.*

This position rests on respect for the distinct roles between elected officials and the citizens they serve. *Today many municipalities favor expediency over the original construction of limited representative government.* When governments rely on citizen commissions rather than elected officials, they bypass elected responsibility and weaken the Constitutional Republic the founders designed. Since the progressive era, this pattern has pushed local government away from electoral accountability and toward administrative structures the founders never intended.

The people deserve representatives who do the full work they were elected to do and who stay directly accountable for the results. That is the government our Constitutional design established.

The call for amendments to our charter is not a new idea. Montrose adopted its original charter in 1914. Amendments were proposed for our charter in 1967, 1993, which passed, in 2014, which passed, and in 2025, which failed. ***None of these involved a citizen commission, including the creation of the original charter itself.*** And while a "Citizen petition-initiated" Amendment option authorized by the Charter, there has never been a Citizen petition for a Charter Amendment submitted. So why are some now pushing for a citizen commission? ***In my humble opinion,*** it dilutes our Constitutional Republic in favor of a less accountable democracy-centered form of government that the founders warned against.

Some headlines will try to paint my position as a 180 after initially accepting Councilor Reed's position. This completely ignores my initial position as it actually shows a full 360 by returning to my original position. My consideration of other points of view proves exactly what I have always said. I am always willing to listen and will consider points of view that are not the same as my own for consideration. But at the end of the day, we must all do what our values, convictions and the law dictate according to the rules outlined in the Charter itself.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

SHAVANO CONSERVATION DISTRICT AWARDED MIGHTY ARROW FAMILY FOUNDATION GRANT FOR COMPOST EXTRACTOR

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE — The Shavano Conservation District has been awarded a grant from the Mighty Arrow Family Foundation to purchase a compost extractor from Fungal Link LLC, expanding the District's ability to support soil health and regenerative agricultural practices across the region.

The new compost extractor will allow the District to produce high-quality fungal rich compost extract using Fungal Link's fungal rich compost. Compost extract provides a cost-effective, biology-based alternative that improves soil structure, increases water infiltration and retention, supports deeper root development, and reduces reliance on synthetic inputs. Demand for practical, affordable regenerative solutions continues to grow, particularly among small- and medium-sized producers seeking to maintain productivity with fewer resources. This compost extract is a liquid biological amendment produced from high-quality fungal rich compost and water, containing beneficial fungi and microorganisms that help restore soil biological function. A general application rate is approximately 10 gallons per acre, though the District plans to conduct field trials to evaluate effective rates for both higher and lower application levels. Common application methods include gated pipe and direct soil application through an injector. It can also be applied through sprinkler and center-pivot irrigation systems or broadcast sprayers; however, these methods are generally less effective because sunlight can kill microorganisms before the liquid reaches the soil. With this new equipment, the Shavano Conservation District plans to produce fungal rich compost extract for local producers, providing an accessible tool to build soil biology and improve overall soil function. The District anticipates hosting regular "extract days" throughout the year, giving producers opportunities to purchase compost extract for field application. Field days and workshops will also be offered to provide demonstrations, technical assistance, and application guidance.

The project reflects the District's continued commitment to practical, science-



Shavano Conservation District Board of Directors and employees meet with Fungal Link LLC Co-Owner Dave West for purchase of a liquid compost extractor. Courtesy photo.

based conservation solutions for the agricultural community. The Mighty Arrow Family Foundation is a philanthropic organization that supports projects focused on land stewardship, sustainable agriculture, and the long-term health of working landscapes. Fungal Link LLC is a compost producer in Jaroso, CO specializing in fungal rich, biologically active compost products designed to rebuild soil health and support regenerative farming systems. Their compost is intentionally produced using a modified Johnson-Su method to increase the fungal to bacterial ratio that is missing in most available composts. "We are proud to support projects that strengthen soil health and keep working lands productive," said Jordana Barak, Executive Director of the Mighty Arrow Family Foundation. "Investments like this help provide practical tools that producers can use right away to improve their soils and long-term sustainability." "Fungal rich compost extract is a simple, effective way to put beneficial biology back into the soil," said John West, Co-Owner of Fungal Link LLC. "We're excited to partner with the Shavano Conservation District to make fungal rich compost extract more accessible to producers in the region."

"We are grateful to the Mighty Arrow Family Foundation for their support of soil health and local agriculture," said Sadie Bruning, Shavano Conservation District Conservation Technician. "This grant allows us to expand the services we offer and provide producers with another effective tool to improve their soils and operations." Bruning is one of two Shavano Conservation District employees who prepare the liquid extract by mixing the raw fungal rich compost with water in the new extract machine. The machine agitates the resulting brew and then filters off the compost solids. The liquid is drained off into 5 gallon buckets or 250 gallon totes for sale to gardeners and farmers. Bruning and Zack Simmons, both District Conservation Technicians through a Colorado State Conservation Board matching grant, assist producers with conservation planning and filling orders for the liquid compost extract. The District looks forward to working with farmers, ranchers, and gardeners as the compost extractor comes online and begins producing extract for use throughout the area. For more information about the program or to learn how to access compost extract, please contact the Shavano Conservation District at 970-249-8407.

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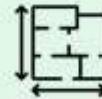
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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

PEAK HOMESCHOOL ACADEMY ANNOUNCES TUITION-FREE HYBRID HOMESCHOOLING MODEL TO EMPOWER FAMILIES

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE — Peak Homeschool Academy is redefining the educational landscape for families with its innovative, tuition-free hybrid homeschool program. Designed to honor homeschool traditions while expanding learning opportunities, the academy provides expert support without compromising the flexibility and freedom that homeschooling families value.

"When you choose a hybrid homeschool option, you don't have to sacrifice the heart of homeschooling to gain extra support," Sherrie Drost-Chacon, Peak Homeschool Academy Principal stated. The academy's hybrid model keeps parents firmly in the driver's seat as the primary educators, while giving them access to expert guidance, structured resources, and enriching experiences that go beyond traditional workbooks.

Recognizing that no two children learn the same way, Peak Homeschool Academy builds individualized learning plans shaped around each child's unique strengths, struggles, interests, and goals. Every student receives a customized learning plan that reflects their family's values and educational vision, ensuring they are never forced into a one-size-fits-all curriculum.

The program also features engaging, optional in-person days, enrichment opportunities, and targeted interventions. These offerings give students the chance to connect with peers, explore new interests, and receive support when they need it most—all while maintaining the core benefits of home-centered learning.

At the same time, a strong partnership between home and school means parents are never on this journey alone. Families have a trusted team walking beside them, celebrating their child's wins and helping them navigate educational challenges with confidence and clarity.

This is what the future of homeschooling looks like: a thoughtful balance of home-centered learning and expertly designed support that is completely tuition-free. Peak Homeschool Academy invites families to give their children the tools for success with an educational experience built just for them.

Enroll today and watch your child thrive. For more information or to begin the enrollment process, please visit mcsd.org/PeakHomeschoolAcademy.

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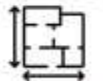
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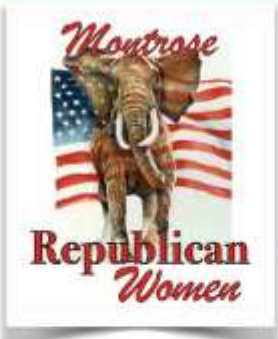


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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

TELLURIDE ARTS ANNOUNCES OPEN CALL FOR ARTISTS: THE COLOR OF SUMMER

Special to the Mirror

TELLURIDE— Telluride Arts invites local artists to participate in The Color of Summer, a community exhibition opening during Telluride Art Walk on July 2, 2026, at Telluride Arts HQ.

Summer is often remembered through color. The Color of Summer challenges artists to select a single color, or range of hues, that best defines summer for them. Inspired by the natural landscape, personal memories, cultural traditions, emotional associations, or entirely unexpected interpretations, artists are encouraged to explore the many ways color shapes our experience of the season. Through painting, photography, sculpture, textiles, mixed media, and other artistic disciplines, participants will contribute to a collective visual experience. The exhibition will be installed by color, transform-

ing the gallery into a vibrant spectrum where individual works become part of a larger conversation about place, memory, and creativity.

"There is no right or wrong color, and no single interpretation of summer," said Jessica Galbo, Executive Director of Telluride Arts. "We encourage artists to submit work they genuinely connect with and to share the story behind the color they've chosen."

Eligibility

Applicants must live or work in the Telluride region. For this exhibition, "artist" includes fine artists, designers, photographers, filmmakers, literary artists, musicians, performers, and multidisciplinary creatives.

Submission Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by a jury based on: Artistic Merit and Professional

Value as well as Feasibility. Artwork must not exceed 6 feet by 6 feet in size. Final exhibition selections will be made by the jury committee. All application materials are available in both English and Spanish.

APPLY HERE: telluridearts.org/color-of-summer

Important Dates

-Open Call Opens: June 8, 2026 at 10:00 AM MST

-Application Deadline: June 22, 2026 at 11:59 PM MST

-Artwork Drop-Off Deadline: June 29, 2026

-Opening Reception & Art Walk: July 2, 2026

-Exhibition Dates: July 2 – October 25, 2026

For information, contact: Olivia Pederson, Gallery & Programming Coordinator at olivia@telluridearts.org



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DMEA CREWS HELP BRING THE POWER OF HOME TO NAVAJO FAMILIES FOR FOURTH STRAIGHT YEAR

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— Delta-Montrose Electric Association (DMEA) line crews recently returned from the Navajo Nation after participating in the Light Up Navajo initiative for the fourth consecutive year, helping extend electric service to families living without access to power.

"One of the things I love most about this project is that it reflects who cooperatives are at our core," said DMEA's Chief Executive Officer Jack Johnston.

"We're neighbors helping neighbors. Whether it's here at home or on the Navajo Nation, we're committed to improving the quality of life through the power of electricity. We were honored to lend our skills and be part of that mission once again."

Light Up Navajo, a partnership between the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority and the American Public Power Association, brings utility crews from across the country together to help connect remote homes to the electric grid. Since the program began in 2019, more than 1,000 Navajo households have received electricity for the first time through the combined efforts of volunteer utility crews and NTUA employees.

This year, DMEA crews were stationed out of NTUA's Dilkon office in Arizona. The assignment presented some of the most



Delta-Montrose Electric Association (DMEA) line crews recently returned from the Navajo Nation after participating in the Light Up Navajo initiative DMEA courtesy photo.

remote work conditions DMEA has experienced during its four years with the program. Crews often spent five to six hours each day traveling to and from remote job sites across the vast Navajo Nation.

Despite the challenging terrain and long travel times, DMEA crews completed five separate projects, setting 39 poles and successfully energizing four homes.

During the project, crews received a visit from Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, who visited a work site on May 12 to thank volunteers for their efforts and recognize the impact the program is having on Navajo families.

The Light Up Navajo initiative continues

to address one of the nation's most significant electrification challenges. Approximately 10,000 families across the Navajo Nation still lack access to electricity, making partnerships with cooperatives like DMEA critical to accelerating connections for families in need.

DMEA's participation reflects the cooperative principle of Concern for Community and the cooperative's ongoing commitment to supporting neighboring communities through mutual aid and service opportunities.

To learn more about Light Up Navajo, please visit <https://www.ntua.com/light-up-navajo.html>.



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COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

BETTIE JOYCE WEAVER ***October 3, 1932 — June 2, 2026***



BETTIE JOYCE WEAVER passed away peacefully on June 2, 2026, in Montrose, Colorado, at the age of 93.

Bettie was born October 3, 1932, to John Aubrey and Ethel Marcella (Hilton) McKelvy in Elkhart, Kansas. They moved to Chickasha, Oklahoma in 1933. She was raised in Chickasha and graduated from Chickasha High School in 1950. Bettie enjoyed 12 years of piano, tap dancing and ballet. The family moved to Gunnison, Colorado in 1950. She attended Mid-Western Air Line School in Kansas City, Missouri and worked as a teletypist for Frontier Airlines for three years. She married Airman Russell Weaver on May 23, 1953, in Denver, Colorado. She was baptized and confirmed in the Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Broomfield, Colorado. While living in Broomfield, she was actively involved in scouting and 4-H with her kids.

In 1968, the Weaver family moved to Gunnison, Colorado and purchased the Neversink Resort and operated it for four years. Mid-life she attended classes at the Delta-Vo Tech center in Montrose for a certificate in bookkeeping. Bettie had a variety of jobs before retiring in 1997: the Mountain View Senior Living, Gunnison County Assessor Office, WCU cafeteria, Walmart, Lallier's, and Ace Hardware. She was an avid quilter for many years and was proficient in crocheting,

teaching her daughters and granddaughter, and enjoyed crafting. Russ and Bettie moved to Oregon in 2001; she returned to Colorado in 2019.

Bettie is survived by four daughters: Cheelone (Dennis) Spritzer, Heather (Dwight) Osborne, Michele Sandlin, Audrey Cook and two sons Russell Weaver Jr. and Mark Weaver. Seven grandchildren: Cheree (Scott) Lueck, Chad (Lindsay) Spritzer, Rebecca (Bo) Tubaya, Tyrel Sandlin, Tanya (Justin) Riley, Sonya (Marcus) Salorio, and 18 great grandchildren. Other family members include her brother-in-law, Crandall Howard, and cousins, nieces, and nephews. Proceeding her in death are her husband Russell of 59 years of marriage, her parents, sisters Janella Tate and Ramona Howard, her brother Delmer McKelvy, and grandsons Nicholas Osborne and Loren Weaver.

Remembrance for Mrs. Weaver is currently planned for July 25th in Gunnison. Ashes will be interred next to her husband, Russell. The family requests that donations in lieu of flowers should be sent to HopeWest, 725 S. 4th Street, Montrose, CO 81401 or online at Donate - HopeWest.

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

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

JUDY K. DEVINCENTIS (NEE WILSON) *October 13, 1956 — June 1, 2026*

Judy passed away peacefully on June 1, 2026. She was surrounded by the love of her family, whose presence brought her comfort in the final months and days of her life.

Judy was born on October 13, 1956, in Pierre, South Dakota to JoAnn and Jack Wilson. Following the tragic loss of her dad, Judy moved to Montrose with her mother and brother, Brian Wilson. Her family later grew when JoAnn married Jerry Trudell, and Judy became the beloved daughter of Jerry and gained four additional siblings: Ray (1956-2001) Kim, Bill (1960-2008) and Laura (Annie).

Judy spent her childhood in Montrose, where she developed the determination, independence, and an iron will that would define her throughout her life.

She graduated from Montrose High School in 1974 and went on to attend Western State College, where she was bold enough to sneak her beloved golden retriever into her dorm room for an entire semester! She earned both her bachelor's degree and master's degree in early childhood education.

In 1978, Judy married Gerald Koch and together they welcomed two children, Kirsten and Christopher, into their family. Kirsten and Chris were among Judy's greatest joys and proudest accomplishments. Judy subsequently married Gene DeVincentis in 2000 and gained two wonderful stepchildren, Gina and Kevin. After Gene became ill, Kevin became the caregiver, grounds keeper, chauffeur, and "butler," and was a steadfast source of support to Judy, providing help wherever it was needed.

As a grandmother, Judy delighted in her ability to hold "Camp Grandma" each summer, organizing, hosting, and directing activities for all her grandchildren for an entire week! Judy also took such joy in taking many road trips and cruises with her adult children and her grandchildren with a goal of visiting every national park in the United States. One of her most treasured trips was a recent excursion to Yosemite National Park with all her family.

Judy began her working career as the owner and operator of a preschool. Judy eventually became a multifaceted businesswoman. In 1990, Judy became a partner in Western Gravel and worked closely with her father, Jerry. One of their favorite activities was to meet for coffee, celebrate their latest success and start sketching out their next business adventure on a napkin! Together they built a reputation for excellence that became known throughout Colorado's concrete and gravel industry. As a woman in a mostly male dominated profession, Judy transformed her vision into a highly respected enterprise that helped shape countless communities across the state.

Judy became a franchise owner of FirstLight Home Care in 2012. She subsequently opened four different territories of the FirstLight Home Care and eight out of her first ten years in the business, she was awarded "Franchisee of the Year" which resulted in multiple reward trips that she shared with her family. She was also the recipient of the inaugural, Founders Award in 2023, which recognized Judy for her outstanding commitment to clients, families, caregivers, and fellow franchise owners. Judy also served on the National Advisory Council as both chair and vice chair.

Over the years, Judy served as a mentor and trusted advisor to new owners and was a valuable resource to the corporate office as well as her own family. Judy's passion for the possible inspired her family to follow in her footsteps and provide care and resources to people in their communities.

Judy possessed a seemingly endless supply of energy, skillfully balancing the ownership and operation of multiple business at once while inspiring those around her with her vision, determination, and tireless work ethic. Following the example she so beautifully set for them, Judy's family is the embodiment of her living legacy.

Judy was blessed to have many dear friends in her life. The family would like to

especially thank Jenny Enoch, Drena Brown, and Judy's care team during her treatments (and after) for their many contributions to her health, care and well-being.

Though cancer ultimately claimed her life, it never diminished her spirit. Judy's legacy is not one of illness, but of resilience.

She showed us what true strength looks like—not loud or dramatic, but quiet, constant, and deeply inspiring. She taught us that courage is not the absence of fear or pain, but the decision to keep moving forward despite it. She showed us how to live each day, each hour, and each minute with grace and an iron will. Judy, may you and Jerry find that perfect piece of ground and put together a deal that catapults you both into a new universe!

Judy is survived by her children; Kirsten (David Garrett) and Christopher (Amanda Koch) her mother, JoAnn Trudell; her brother, Brian (Tina) Wilson; her sisters, Kim Moore, and Laura (Birdie) Birchak; and many grandchildren, nieces, nephews, extended family members and dear friends. She was preceded in death by her dad, Jack Wilson, her father, Jerry Trudell, and brothers Ray and Bill.

A celebration of Judy's life will be held at 10 am, Saturday, June 27th at Grace Community Church, 16731 Woodgate Road, Montrose, CO 81401.

In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes memorial donations to the Nick Birchak, Strength of Character Scholarship Fund - Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern New York. Nick, Judy's beloved nephew, died in 2011 due to his epilepsy.

This scholarship fund provides college scholarship to students with epilepsy. The address is: Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern New York, 3 Washington Square, Albany, NY 12205.



COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

SHARON KAY ESHELMAN

January 25, 1949 – May 20, 2026

SHARON KAY ESHELMAN, 77, of Olathe, Colorado, passed away on May 20, 2026, after a courageous battle with colon cancer. Born on January 25, 1949, in Denver, Colorado, Sharon lived a life defined by her unwavering dedication to others, her pursuit of excellence, and her deep and abiding faith.

Sharon demonstrated exceptional academic commitment from an early age, maintaining a 4.0 grade-point average throughout high school and college. She graduated from the Presbyterian School of Nursing on January 12, 1979, earning her credential as a Registered Nurse and embarking on what would become a remarkable fifty-year career in healthcare. Driven to continue her education, she attended Regis University in Denver, Colorado, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing on December 14, 1996. In recognition of her outstanding academic achievement, she was selected as a Senior Marshal for the 1996 Winter Commencement Ceremony.

Sharon's nursing career was distinguished by her specialization in the operating room, where she served first as a Surgery Technician before rising to the role of Operating Room Director, a position she held for more than thirty years. Her leadership shaped surgical departments across western Colorado, including Valley View Hospi-

tal in Glenwood Springs and hospitals in Rifle, Montrose, and Delta. Beyond her hospital work, she served her broader community as a nurse aboard a community health bus, bringing care directly to those in need.

Sharon was a woman who consistently put others before herself, whether that meant taking call, covering shifts so colleagues could spend time with their families, or quietly ensuring that every responsibility at home was met. Her kindness and selflessness touched everyone who knew her.

Outside of her career, Sharon embraced life with curiosity and enthusiasm. She was an avid quilter, a dedicated reader, and a skilled marksman who enjoyed shooting. She loved to travel and was a true adventurer, willing to try anything once. Her passion for family genealogy led her to serve as Treasurer of the Montrose Genealogy Society. She was also an active member of Eastern Star Chapter No. 40, carrying forward a family tradition established by Sharon's Grandfather Limon Platt and Mother Ivy Holmes, who were involved in the Masonic and Eastern Star organizations during their lives. This fueled Sharon's curiosity in Eastern Star and helped her make the decision to join Eastern Star.

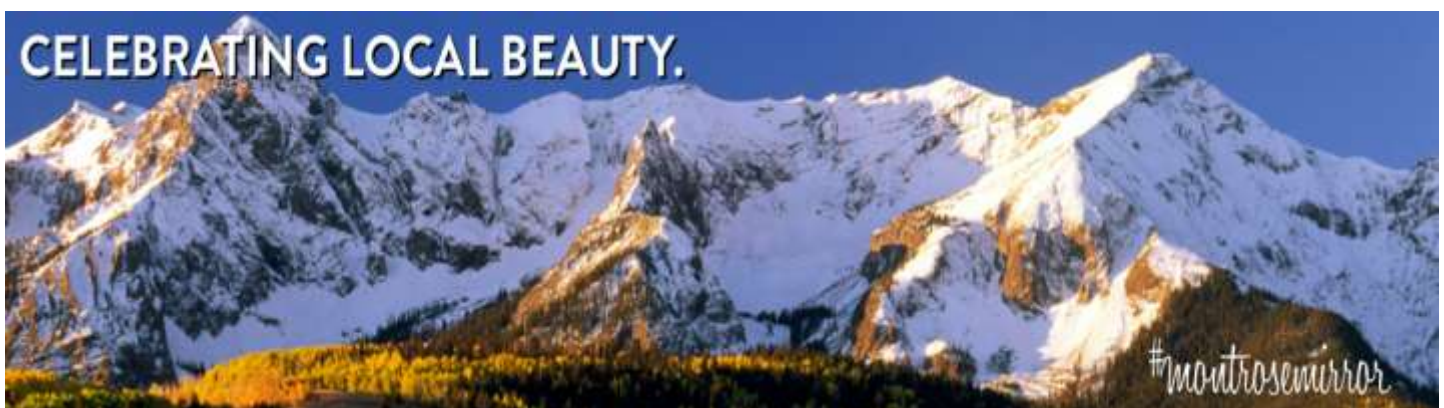
Sharon's faith was the cornerstone of her

life. She grew up in the church, where her Grandfather Limon served as a pastor at the Friends Church in Paonia, and Dear Trail, Colorado. Sharon made her own personal declaration of faith when she was baptized on August 12, 2004, at Faith Fellowship Church in Rifle, Colorado. She was a devoted member of the Presbyterian Church and a dedicated student of Scripture, beginning each morning in study of her Bible and deepening her understanding through study of the Torah. Her faith was not merely something she professed; it was something she lived in every act of service and compassion.

Sharon is survived by her loving husband, Gary Eshelman; her son, Corey Eshelman; and her brothers, Melvin Holmes and Gail Holmes.

Sharon was extremely devoted to God, to her fifty-year career in nursing, and to her family. In the words of Psalm 116, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants."

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, June 20, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. at Delta Presbyterian Church, 135 East Fourth Street, Delta, Colorado 81416. A reception will follow at Westminster Hall, located next to the church. All who knew and loved Sharon are welcome to gather in her memory and give thanks for a life so generously lived.



COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

MARY HOLZMEISTER *September 22, 1947- June 3, 2026*

MARY MARGARET HOLZMEISTER, beloved mother, grandmother, sister, and friend, passed away unexpectedly on June 3, 2026, at St. Mary's Regional Hospital in Grand Junction, CO. She was born on September 22, 1947, in St. Paul, Minnesota, to Rosemary and George Heavers.

Mary attended Montrose High School and married Robert Holzmeister in 1964. Together, they dedicated much of their lives to managing the family-owned Grandview Cemetery, serving countless families with compassion, dignity, and care.

Mary was an avid reader who found joy in books throughout her life. She also enjoyed oil painting, bowling and bingo, hobbies that reflected both her creativity and her appreciation for time spent with friends and family. She was guided by a strong Catholic faith. Her warm spirit, gentle nature, and unwavering devotion to those she loved will be remembered by those who knew her well.

Mary was preceded in death by her husband, Bob; her parents; and her brother, John, who died at birth. She is survived by her children, Bob Holzmeister Jr. (Julie), AnnMarie Dutra (John), and John Holzmeister (Michelle); her grandchildren, Samantha Hutson, Jeremy, Trevor, and Tanner Holzmeister; her siblings, Tim Heavers, Bob Heavers, Debbie Lofton, and Dawn Ungerman; and many nieces, nephews, great-grandchildren, and extended family members.

She will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by those who knew her well.

Celebration of Life will be held at St. Mary Catholic Church, Wednesday June 17, 2026 at 10:00AM. Private family burial will follow at Grandview Cemetery.



Now more than ever...

Thank you for reading

THE MONTROSE MIRROR

ISSUE 577 June 15, 2026

ART & SOL

MOOSE, OWL, QUAIL, THIEF!



Courtesy photo Wendy Videlock.

By Wendy Videlock

PALISADE-A few years back while driving with a couple of friends near Placerville, I leaned into a curve and came out the other side to find a gargantuan moose crossing the road in front of us. I slowed to a stop a few yards before him.

He turned his great head toward us and gazed, it seemed, for a lifetime. A silence had fallen over us all. Under the spell of twilight, the long-legged animal appeared to be both curious and quietly communicating.

The moose is a being who can embody presence through sheer magnitude, yet their remarkable size, I quickly learned, can be accompanied by an unexpected stillness.

Even as this magnificent creature resumed walking and vanished into the woods, none of us spoke for a long time. We continued driving on into the evening's fold.

Several minutes passed before my friend in the backseat whispered, *Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit, what a gift that was.*

Thousands of years before scientists mapped neural pathways and psychologist studied the mind, human beings have sought spiritual guidance and beauty in the living world. The first temples were forests, deserts, bodies of water and grasslands. And the first teachers were often animals.

To encounter a great horned owl at dusk, a covert of quail at dawn or a moose casu-

ally crossing the road is to linger in a moment that feels both deeply biological and deeply sacred.

Neuroscience helps us understand why such moments are often unforgettable. When we encounter a wild animal, our attention intensifies. The brain's orienting response is activated, drawing our senses fully into the present moment, whether we are suddenly experiencing fear, awe or a mixture of both. Background thoughts fall away.

In meditation traditions, practitioners spend years cultivating this state of focused awareness. Yet a single encounter with a wild creature can induce a similar experience in seconds. The mind becomes still because something wholly alive has entered the field of perception.

Here on the Western Slope, I've seen great horned owls hunting out on the back forty, and I've watched baby owls fledge from nests down by the river. Each encounter is magical, but I'll never forget the time I was leaving the memorial service of a dear friend and an owl swooped down in front of me, stopping me in my tracks. She moved upward then and perched in a nearby tree, watching me with eyes that have stayed with me forever.

Emerging from nowhere on silent wings, the owl seems less to fly than to materialize. Her feathers absorb sound, allowing her to move with extraordinary stealth. Any encounter with an owl can evoke awe, mystery and reverence. Psychologists describe awe as an emotion that

Continued next pg

MOOSE, OWL, QUAIL, THIEF! From previous pg

expands our perception of the world. Spiritual traditions have long understood this phenomenon. When the owl's eyes meet ours, we feel ourselves become smaller, which is to say not diminished, but properly situated within a larger living reality.

The language of science calls this *Attention Restoration*; the language of spirit calls it *returning to oneself*. Both describe the same phenomenon: the soul, or nervous system relearning how to be present and in full connection with the living world. Both pathways appear to guide us toward the same destination: a fuller experience of presence.

Prayer, like owl-flight, is not always speaking upward. Sometimes it moves downward, into the leaf-meal of reality.

The animals are not delivering messages in any literal sense. Rather they reveal qualities of awareness already present, but perhaps forgotten, within us. They remind us that spiritual practice is not confined to monasteries, churches or meditation cushions. Even watching the quail come and go out in our backyard feels very much like receiving an offering. Their small bodies dart through sage and bunchgrass, their calls stitching together the fabric of a landscape.

Biologists note that quail survive through cooperation and vigilance. Individual quail benefit from the awareness of the group, particularly of the look-out quail, who usually positions himself at a midway point near an abundant food source. From there he lets his kin know when it's safe to emerge and feast — and when it's time to flee. A quail's life is a low lying choreography of belonging.

I've witnessed a quail with a bum leg keeping up with his counterparts as they surrounded her and slowed their pace for her. These moments illustrate a principle increasingly supported by neuroscience: humans, too, are social creatures, whose nervous systems regulate through relationship and whose survival depend upon it.

Last month while presenting at a writers conference, I found myself keeping a pace that was unsustainable. During a much needed break, I drove up into the higher elevations just outside the town where homes were sparsely scattered, I parked and sat myself on the hood of my car, just to collect a little quietude.

As I sat there, eyes closed, I heard a rustling and the sound of paws trotting quickly past. I opened my eyes to find a red fox — with a foot-long sandwich in her mouth — still half covered in tin foil — scurrying down the path. Mid-crime, his eyes darted about and our eyes briefly met before he disappeared into the brush.

I laughed out loud.

Such good fortune for both of us! He with his easy lunch, clearly plucked from somebody's backyard or picnic basket, and me, simply being witness to the getaway.

I was immediately transformed. I laid back onto the hood of the car and basked in the glory of good timing.

I returned to the conference that afternoon a new person, ready to make offerings again, fully ready to laugh at myself again.

These are the moments I live for.

But nature is not some kind of scenery for spirituality. Rather it is one of its scriptures. When we enter wild places attentively, our own minds begin to follow ecological forms: quieter, more flexible, more relational, more practiced in communion. More willing to laugh out loud.

Science confirms that such encounters calm the body and restore the mind. Spirit adds that they may also soften the heart.

Between the measurable and the immeasurable mysterious, the wild world sings to us — and invites us all to learn the changing lyrics of the song.

The Owl

Beneath her nest
a shrew's head,
a finch's beak
and the bones
of a quail attest
the owl devours
the hour,
and disregards
the rest.

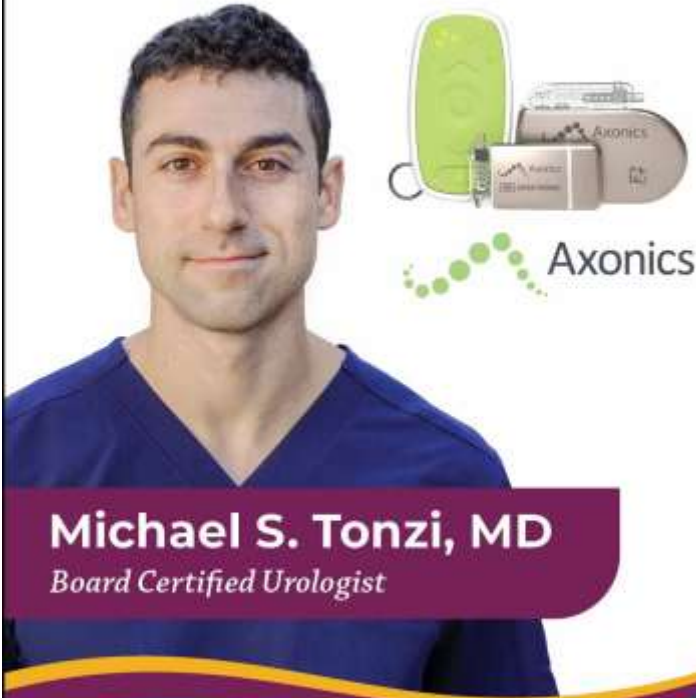
Wendy Vidlock lives at the foot of Thunder Mountain in Western Colorado. Her poems and essays appear in *Best American Poetry*, *Poetry Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Hudson Review*, *Rattle* and other venues. Her upcoming book, *Desert Kin: Speaking Animal in the Southwest*, will appear from Able Muse Press in Sept of 2026. To find out more about Wendy go [HERE](#)

COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

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MAGIC CIRCLE PLAYERS: HONK! JR-SHOW DATES

Magic Circle Players: HONK! JR

Thu Jun 11, 2026 - Sat Jun 20, 2026

Ugly looks quite a bit different from his darling duckling brothers and sisters. The other animals on the farm are quick to notice and point this out, despite his mother's protective flapping. Feeling rather foul about himself, the little fowl finds himself on an adventure of self-discovery, all the while unknowingly outwitting a very hungry Cat. Along the way, Ugly meets a whole flock of unique characters and finds out being different is not a bad thing to be. Score by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe. Directed by Dru Weaver. Tickets at magiccircleplayers.com. Magic Circle Players, 420 S 12th St, Montrose. Box office: 970-249-7838. Family discounts available through the box office!

Wednesday, June 17, 2026 - 07:30 PM MDT

Thursday, June 18, 2026 - 07:30 PM MDT

Friday, June 19, 2026 - 07:30 PM MDT

Saturday, June 20, 2026 - 02:00 PM MDT

FRIENDSHIP QUILTERS MEETING THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 9AM - NOON

Special to Art & Sol

MONTROSE-Friendship Quilters of Western Colorado will meet Thursday, June 25, 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. Julia Reid of ArtSpeak will tell us all about the importance of Value as it relates to Color in our quilts. Questions? 360.448.0153.

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

MCA ANNOUNCES PREMIER SCREENING OF GEORGIE O'KEEFFE: THE BRIGHTNESS OF LIGHT

Special to Art & Sol

MONTROSE-The Montrose Center for Arts (MCA) is proud to announce a premier screening on the Western Slope of a film the critics call “extremely powerful” and that “illuminates the magic and brilliance of **Georgia O’Keeffe** and her art.” Narrated by Hugh Dancy and featuring Claire Danes as the voice of O’Keeffe, *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Brightness of Light* follows the extraordinary life and lasting influence of an artist who reshaped the American art landscape.

The premier screening will take place on Monday, July 13, at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. at Fox Cinema Center, 27 S. Cascade Ave., Montrose. General Admission tickets are \$20 for each of the screenings, and VIP tickets are \$30. VIP tickets include a gallery reception at MCA from 5:30-6:30pm with appetizers and O’Keeffe-inspired cocktails, and VIP seating in the theater and are available only in limited quantities for the 7 p.m. screening. All tickets are available on the MCA website at www.MontroseCenterforArts.com — click on the Georgia O’Keeffe event for more details and to purchase tickets. Show your receipt of purchase at the door on movie night.

The film dives deeply into O’Keeffe’s unique life and will resonate with art appreciators and artists alike. It will also appeal to everyone who loves the beauty of the desert southwest and who lives on the Western Slope. O’Keeffe spent over 37 years on her ranch in New Mexico and fell in love with the mountains surrounding her ranch, which she painted over and over again in all their moods and glory.

From her formative years in the Midwest to her groundbreaking rise in New York’s modernist movement, and finally to the vast, sun-drenched solitude of the New Mexico desert, the film traces O’Keeffe’s remarkable creative journey. Blending letters, archival imagery, and the artist’s own words, Academy Award-winning director Paul Wagner paints a vivid portrait of a woman whose bold interpretations of nature and fearless independence blurred the boundaries between abstraction and realism. *Georgia O’Keeffe: The Brightness of Light* is a meditative and visually stunning exploration of art, love, and the search for creative freedom.

Our thanks to America Focus Films for providing the film. Special thanks to our sponsors — business owner Sangdrol Blanchard of Meditation Spaces (12 S Uncompahgre Ave, Montrose), and the Fox Cinema Center (27 S Cascade Ave, Montrose) for making the theater available for this special screening. Additional sponsors include Alpine Bank and Montrose Lifestyle for providing funds to help MCA promote this unusual offering.

Comments from Director Paul Wagner

“In 2018, my wife and producing partner, Ellen Casey Wagner, and I encountered a small museum exhibit about Georgia O’Keeffe. We learned that, in 1908 when she was 20 years old, O’Keeffe had given up on her dream of becoming an artist. This young woman, who would later emerge as “the Mother of American Modernism” and *the* iconic woman artist of the 20th century, did not pick up a brush to paint for nearly four years.”

“As filmmakers, we were drawn to make a short documentary about this extraordinary moment in her career. But as we reviewed the film work about O’Keeffe, we realized that there had not been an American feature documentary produced about her since 1977.”

“In this endeavor, we have won the support of every major O’Keeffe scholar and biographer and the cooperation of the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, which controls the licensing of O’Keeffe’s art and archival materials. This unprecedented level of support from the O’Keeffe “world” has allowed us to create a film that is detailed and authoritative.”

“In the last years of Georgia O’Keeffe’s life, curator Sarah Greenough of the National Gallery of Art created an exhibit including letters to and from Alfred Stieglitz. O’Keeffe had only two requests regarding the presentation. We have attempted, in creating our film, to adhere to the same two standards – to make it beautiful and to make it honest.”

The Mirror:

Coverage with vision for the future.



The Satisfied Self

THE SATISFIED SELF: THE LIFE WE IMAGINE VS. THE LIFE THAT UNFOLDS



By Gia Pirelli

Most of us are living two lives at once.

The life we're actually living.

And the life we've imagined.

The imagined life isn't necessarily a fantasy. It's often built from real hopes, real plans, and real possibilities. We

connect the dots, project them forward, and create a story about where we're headed. Sometimes we become so attached to that story that we mistake it for certainty.

A few years ago, on my 50th birthday, I found myself standing on a rooftop terrace, 57 floors up, at the iconic Ce La Vie, overlooking the Singapore skyline. It was one of the most memorable trips of my life. Standing beside me was the man I believed I would spend the rest of my life with.

Looking out over the city lights, I felt certain.

Not just about where I was.

About who I was.

About where I was going.

I think most of us have moments like that.

Moments when time stands still and the future seems obvious, perfect, and full of possibility.

We tell ourselves a story about what comes next. We imagine the relationship, the career, the opportunity, the destination. We begin building a future in our minds before it has actually happened.

Then, gradually, we become attached to that story, and the outcome.

Not because it's real.

Because it *feels* real.

The human mind craves certainty. Because certainty carries the illusion of safety. The mind wants reassurance that the choices we're making today will lead exactly where we hope they will tomorrow.

So we imagine futures. We fill in the blanks. Like a fruit salad of narratives and scenarios made of hopes and dreams,

seasoned with expectation and prior experience.

And often, life has other plans.

We don't just imagine futures. We emotionally invest in them.

Long before it is written, we begin living inside the story.

We decorate the house that doesn't exist yet. We spend the money we haven't earned. We build the relationship years beyond where it currently stands. We celebrate victories that haven't arrived.

Or, on the other side of that spectrum, we catastrophize losses that may never come. We imagine endings before something has a chance to begin. We quit before trying, or after the first setback.

The mind is constantly trying to reduce uncertainty by turning possibility into prediction. The problem is that life is rarely interested in our predictions.

The relationship I was certain about ended.

The future I thought I was building never arrived.

And yet, strangely, I don't look back on that trip with sadness.

I look back with gratitude.

Because the experience was real.

The love was real.

The joy was real.

The lesson was real. And that spectacular view? One more rare perspective I'm so grateful to have had.

Just because the future I imagined never happened doesn't mean the experience failed.

In fact, I've come to believe that we misunderstand the purpose of certain chapters in our lives.

Not every relationship is meant to last forever. Or not in the way it originally began.

Not every dream is meant to become reality. Sometimes the point is just to dream.

Some experiences arrive simply to teach us something, reveal something, or awaken something within us.

Perhaps they are complete exactly as

they are.

One of the greatest sources of suffering is our attachment to outcomes. We become convinced that happiness exists somewhere ahead of us, outside of us, attached to a specific result. A certain relationship. A promotion. A number in the bank account. A goal achieved.

Meanwhile, we miss the life unfolding directly in front of, and around us.

We spend so much time living in the future that we forget to inhabit the present.

And yet the present is the only place where life is actually happening.

The future exists only in imagination.

The past exists only in memory.

The lesson, the beauty, and the joy are always found here.

Now.

I've come to believe that when we think about the future, we tend to operate from one of two places: fear or faith. And not in a religious context, but in a psychological and neurological one.

Fear imagines the worst-case scenario.

Faith imagines the best.

Neither one is reality.

Both are simply stories created by the mind attempting to predict what comes next. It is essentially the brain's best guess at what will happen based on past experiences, and accumulated beliefs.

The interesting thing is that neither story is inherently more factual than the other.

Your brain is guessing either way. But that guess is based on the lens of perspective.

So if we're going to imagine a future that doesn't yet exist, why not choose the version that expands us instead of contracts us?

Why not choose possibility over catastrophe?

Not because we know what will happen.

Because we *don't*.

Life has a way of surprising us in both directions.

The future I imagined from that rooftop in Singapore never arrived.

But the life that unfolded afterward contained lessons, friendships, opportunities,

THE LIFE WE IMAGINE VS. THE LIFE THAT UNFOLDS *From previous pg*

growth, and experiences that I never could have imagined from where I stood that night.

Had I received exactly what I thought I wanted, I may never have discovered what I actually needed.

And perhaps that's the real lesson.

Sometimes the blessing is getting what we want. Yes.

But sometimes, the blessing is *not* getting it.

Either way, life keeps inviting us back to the same place.

The present moment.

Looking back, I can see that many of the most important moments of my life arrived completely uninvited.

I didn't plan my career. I didn't plan my

marriage. I didn't plan my divorce.

I didn't plan the people who changed me. I didn't plan the opportunities that expanded me.

Many of the experiences that shaped my life most profoundly were things I never would have thought to ask for.

Which makes me wonder how much energy we waste trying to control a future that has always been beyond our control. Not because planning is bad. Planning is useful. But planning and attachment are not the same thing. One creates direction. The other creates suffering.

The future we imagine is rarely the future that arrives. Yet life has a way of delivering exactly the lessons, people, opportunities, and experiences we need—even

when they arrive in forms we never would have chosen.

The challenge is learning to participate fully in the moment we're living instead of clinging to the story we've already written.

Because the only life that truly exists is the one unfolding right now. Stop and look around, or you could miss it.

Gia Pirelli is a writer, yoga teacher and sound healing practitioner, specializing in applied mind-body practices for self-leadership in modern life. Through her weekly column, she explores personal growth, reinvention, and what it means to live an expanded life. Learn more at <https://www.giapirelli.com>

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY POET LAUREATE PAULO MUNGUÍA LEADS STORIES & POEMS TUESDAY JUNE 16 AT THE WILKINSON

Special to the Mirror

TELLURIDE-San Miguel County Poet Laureate Paulo Munguía will be the featured presenter in English and Spanish at the Talking Gourds' Stories & Poems series at the Wilkinson Public Library on Tuesday June 16th at 5:15 pm.

"Paulo has really blossomed at our local poet laureate, creating fascinating (and funny) videos as well as making strong poetry performances in both Spanish and English," said Talking Gourds director Art Goodtimes.

Born in Morelos, México and based in Montrose, Colorado, Munguía defines himself as a free soul. He is the first Hispanic person to be named poet laureate in San Miguel County (2025-2027)

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.

For those that like prompts, this month's will be "Cinco de Mayo" although stories or poems on any subject are welcome. T In July on the 21st Durango-based Indigenous Poet Esther Belin heads up the even-

ing.

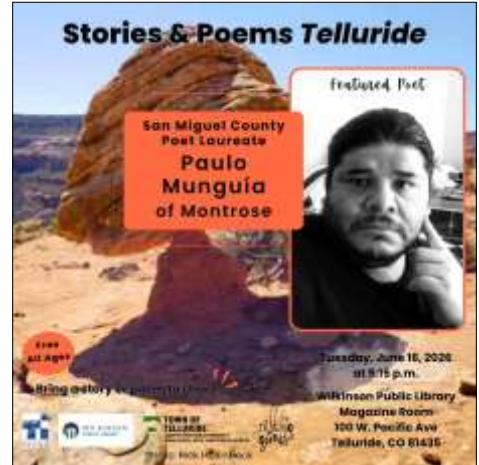
The **West End Stories & Poems** series continues at the Naturita Community Library on the second Thursday of each month at 6 pm MST.

Writers and reciters are also invited to share stories and poems of their own -- or of their favorite poets/authors -- with facilitators Leslie Ament and Goodtimes. The June 11th session will feature Buddy Davis of Norwood speaking about his great-great-grandfather Quanah Parker of the Comanche.

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.

To get on our zoom link, participants not on our Bardic Trails mailing list need to visit <<https://www.tellurideinstitute.org/western-slope-calendar>>

The national **Fischer** and state **Cantor** poetry prize contests started up again April 1 for 2026. Go to our website to see photos, bios and poems of our winners and finalists. Deadline for submissions is Aug. 31, 2026. In addition to being eligible



for over \$4000 in prize awards, participants are a primary means of support for all the projects of the Talking Gourds poetry program. So we deeply thank you for your participation.

Thanks also to the Cantor Family, the Guttman Family Foundation, CCAASE, several local and regional donors and our Fischer and Cantor contest participants for financially supporting our program and all our projects.

For more information, visit the Telluride Institute Talking Gourds website: tellurideinstitute.org/talking-gourds

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

LOCAL HEALTHCARE PROGRAM TO HONOR PARTICIPANTS WITH REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY AND BUTTERFLY RELEASE

Special to Art & Sol

REGIONAL-The Western Colorado PACE program will host a moving Remembrance Ceremony and Butterfly Release on June 23, 2026, from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Montrose PACE Day Center courtyard to honor participants who passed away while receiving care over the past year.

Led by PACE Chaplain Tim Lister, the ceremony will feature photographs of the individuals being remembered, the reading of their names, reflections from staff and loved ones, and a symbolic butterfly release. Following the ceremony, family members, participants and staff will gather to share memories and refreshments.

This unique event highlights the deep relationships formed within the PACE program and the organization's commitment to honoring the lives, stories and legacies of those it serves. The butterfly release and personal tributes provide meaningful visuals and heartfelt interview opportunities for media coverage.

Media are welcome to attend and speak with program leaders, families and staff about the impact of compassionate end-of-life care and the importance of remembrance.



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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
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snacks and conversation. On the third Sun-
day of the month we celebrate a potluck
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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,
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Our mission is to exalt Jesus Christ by
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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://](https://celebrationmontrose.org/)

celebrationmontrose.org/

Worship Service Times: 9am and 10:45am

Senior Pastor:

Pastor Brandon Mathis

Church Description/Mission: Celebration
Church makes disciples that make 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*

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Address: 504 N. 1st Street (HAP Building)
Office hours: Call or text for appointment
 Phone: 970-765-7070
Email: spirit@communityspiritucc.org

COVENANT HEBRAIC FELLOWSHIP

Denomination affiliation. No affiliation
Address Office hours N/A
Contact: 720-951-9941,
office@ccfmontrose.net,
www.ccfmontrose.net

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MONTROSE

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

HILLCREST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Denomination affiliation: United Church of Christ
Address: 611 South Hillcrest Drive, Montrose, CO 81401
Office hours: By appointment
Contact information:

MONTROSE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Denomination Affiliation: United Methodist
Address: 19 S. Park Avenue Montrose CO. 81401
Office Hours: M-Thu, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Contact Information: 970-249-3716,
office@montroseumc.org, [mont-](http://montroseumc.org)

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

Website: communityspiritucc.org
 Current Pastor: Rev. Wendy Kidd
Worship service: Sundays at 11:30 am
 Mission: Our commitment to a more inclusive and accepting world is steadfast, and we will continue to work towards a

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

Services Sunday: Worship 10:30 AM, Discipleship Hour: 9:30 AM. Discipleship Hour has classes across all age groups. Nursery for children UNDER 3 is available during Worship and Discipleship Hour. Youth Night (6-12th grade): Tuesdays, 6:30 PM. Weeknight Bible Study: Wednesdays, 6:30 PM. Mission Statement: Montrose First

Contact: 970-249-4732, in-form@fpcmontrose.com,
www.fpcmontrose.com
 Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jesse G. Mabanglo
Worship Service times: 9:30AM,
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 Website: montroseucc.org
Current Pastor: Rev. Wendy Kidd
Worship service times: Sunday, 10 a.m.
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roseumc.org
Current Senior Pastor: Rev. Kevin Young
Worship service times:
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10:30 AM: Sanctuary & Virtual Worship
 Montrose UMC is a leader in being fully

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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'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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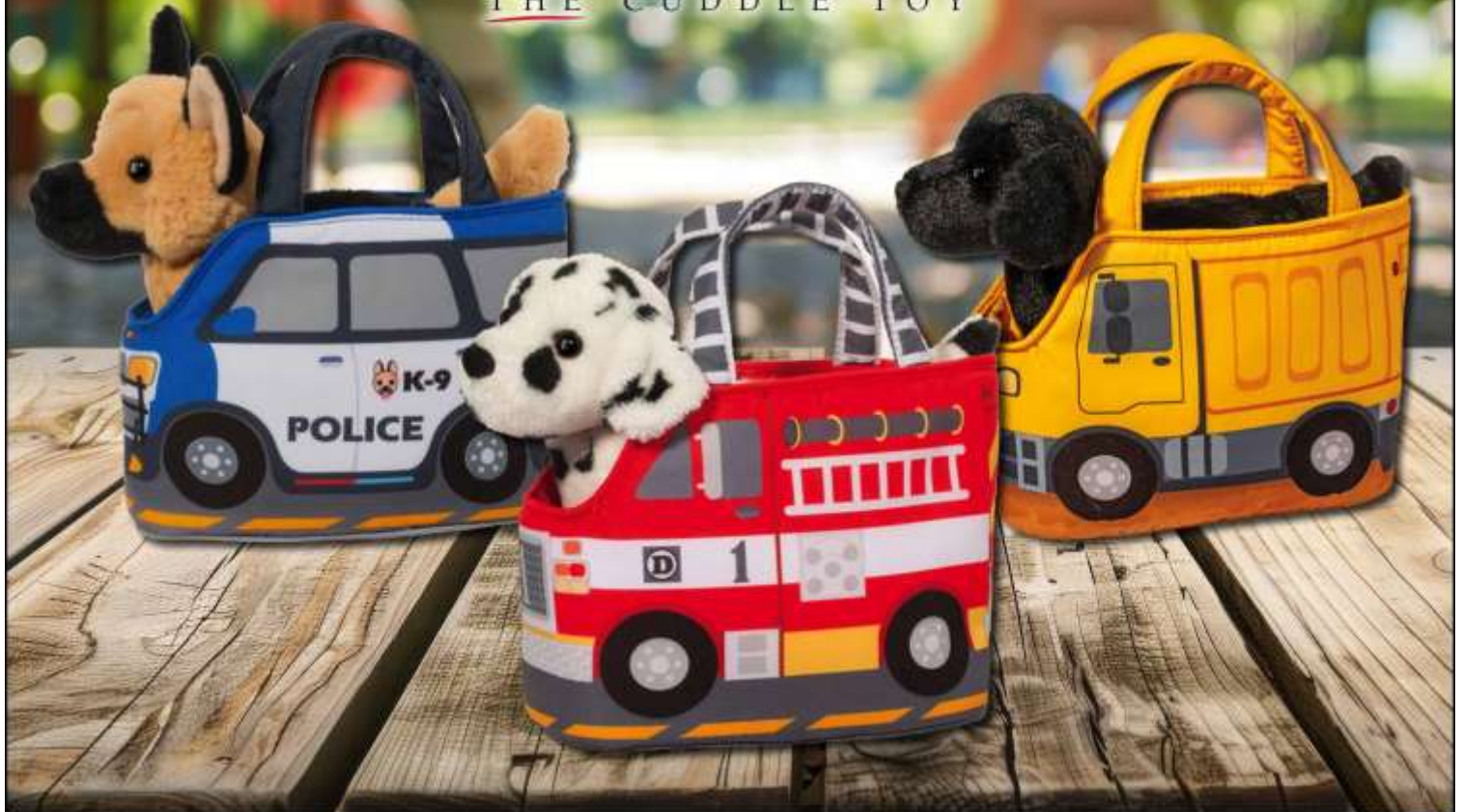
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SAVE THE DATE! LOCAL EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING-

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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 HISTORICAL SOCIETY meets 1st Wednesday of the month @ Friendship Hall, 1001 North Second, Montrose, 7 pm (970) 249-2085 www.montrosehistory.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH-3rd Wednesday of every month at 6pm, the Montrose County Neighborhood Watch meets at the Sheriff's Office at 1200 N Grand Ave

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.

MONTHLY

June 23-The Western Colorado PACE program will host a moving Remembrance Ceremony and Butterfly Release on June 23, 2026, from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Montrose PACE Day Center courtyard to honor participants who passed away while receiving care over the past year.

June 25-Friendship Quilters of Western Colorado will meet Thursday, June 25, 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. Julia Reid of ArtSpeak will tell us all about the importance of Value as it relates to Color in our quilts. Questions? 360.448.0153.

June 27-Sharing Ministries presents the Back to the Future Festival-Food, Shelter, Hope. 8:30am to 4:30pm. Museum of the Mt. West 68169 Miami Road.

June 28-Sunday, 3pm, Montrose Pavilion- **Free Patriotic Concert**, Montrose Community Band. We have chosen songs that exemplify the patriotism, grandeur, and history of our wonderful country.

June 30-Montrose County invites residents to attend a Community Fire Summit on June 30 from 7:30 am. to 11:30 am. at the Montrose County Event Center.

The event is free and open to the public, however registration is required.

For additional information and to register, please visit www.montrosecounty.net/fire or email pr@montrosecounty.net. Questions may also be directed to (970) 252-4508.

ONE MORE FROM THE BLACK CANYON CLASSICS CAR CLUB...



This year, participants met at Culver's Restaurant in Montrose and made the 70+ mile round trip to Box Canyon Falls in Ouray, CO where they toured the site and got to see a spectacular natural canyon and associated waterfalls. Photo by David White.

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