

MountainMonthly

Your Guide to Cloudcroft and the Sacramento Mountains

FREE



Garrett (L) and Steven (R) craft their sourdough batches at high elevation in the former Tunnel Stop Shop

Rising to the Occasion: Levain It Up in High Rolls

*The aroma of fresh-baked bread fills the air at Levain It Up Sourdough Bakery in High Rolls, where **Garrett Barnett** and **Steven Jackson** are transforming both an old building and their own lives. by Hannah Dean photographs by Bre Kincaid*

Inside what was once the Tunnel Stop shop, flour dusts a shiny metal countertop as Garrett and Steven shape loaves with practiced hands. This behind-the-scenes work leads to the storefront where mountainfolks and passersby line up for their weekly fix of croissants and sourdough bakes.

Time for Change

For Garrett, the move from Las Cruces to High Rolls Mountain Park wasn't just a change of scenery—it was an escape.

"I was working as the kitchen manager at Kind Bread Co. for about three years," he explains, "but I was also doing biohazard crime scene cleaning on call. Whenever something happened, they needed someone to clean up."

The work paid well, but it took its toll. "I realized after the fact that it kind of stuck with me a little more than I thought it did," Garrett admits. He said that after cleaning crime scenes—including vehicles from the Young Park mass shooting—then, soonafter a murder

and brutal stabbing scene, he knew something had to change.

Steven, who spent five years working at garden centers in Las Cruces after twelve years in home health care, found himself pulled into Garrett's vision. "He kind of forced me into it," he laughs. "He said, 'We're doing this. I need help.'"

The couple had driven past the empty building countless times while visiting Garrett's mother, Monica, in Cloudcroft. When they learned the rent-to-own price was a third of the rentals they found in Las Cruces, the decision became clear.

But the building needed work. Squatters had occupied it for two years, stripping wires and damaging the interior. "It was really bad," Steven recalls. With help from family—Garrett's uncle rewiring, his father checking the foundation—they slowly brought the space back to life.

Now, just four months in, the bakery is defying expectations. "Everyone told us not to expect hiring people until the first year, maybe year and a half. So, we're on a fast track."

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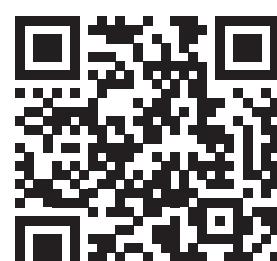
P+Z Begins New Year with Three New Members—and Seeks Two More

The Village of Cloudcroft Planning and Zoning Commission has three new members: Chair, Rick Donnelly (left),

Vice-Chair Dave Bradshaw, and Amy Coor.

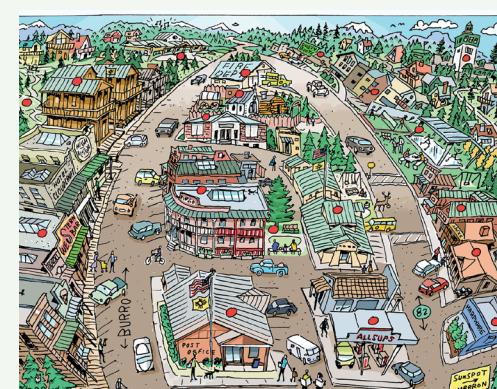
Two seats are open this January as longtime P+Z folks **Jessica Beach** and **Susan Difani** step down after their two-year terms. To apply for the open positions, email ccvillagemayor@cloudcroftvillage.com.

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Luke Benjamin wins a Red Ryder at the Hardware Store jar guessing game. See more MOUNTAIN LIFE, pg. 22