

Mountain Monthly

Your Guide to Cloudcroft and the Sacramento Mountains | AUGUST 2026



Noemi Smith poses with her fantastical clay creation

Almost Alive: Noemi Smith’s Art Dolls

*The local artist and dollmaker shares her craft online,
at conventions, and even with movie sets*

BY HANNAH DEAN • PHOTOS BY BRE KINCAID

The first thing you notice is the skin.

Hold one of **Noemi Smith’s** silicone babies and the illusion is immediate. The handmade and painted doll has the heft of an actual one-month-old, and the material itself seems to breathe, shifting and settling in your arms with an almost-alive wiggle. You find yourself wanting to pat its back.

Translucent layers reveal the faint blue and yellow of veins and fascia beneath, a soft spot almost pulses at the crown, and tiny wrinkles crease the ankles.

That realism, the one that makes you cradle a doll like a newborn, is exactly what Noemi has spent two decades learning to build.

Working from a studio in the tiny home she shares with her

husband, Phillip “Flip” Masters, Noemi crafts two very different bodies of work under one roof: hyperrealistic baby dolls, and fantasy creatures pulled straight from pop culture and imagination: werewolves, dragons, fairies, ogres, and sprites.

From Peru to Polymer

Smith was born in an apartment in downtown Lima, Peru, and began drawing at five, under her mother’s tutelage.



“Angels by Noemi” range in subject matter, size, and material

But she says there was no path to “artist” in the place where she grew up. “They used to say, oh, you’re gonna starve,” she recalls. “There was not a big interest in being an artist in Peru. You finish school, and you work.”

Noemi recalls making dolls and stuffed animals, even as a nine

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Noemi's realism
hasn't gone unnoticed
by Hollywood.

or ten-year-old, and selling stuffed dragons to help her parents. “That was my first little business,” she says. “I learned that I can make things.”

She immigrated to the United States about twenty years ago. She took up doll making as “a housewife” with no formal art training, and no internet video tutorials to speak of, just static how-to photos posted by a handful of early polymer clay instructors online.

“There was no AI back then. Everything was man-made,” she says. Working from cornstarch clay and then polymer, she taught herself wire armature and sculpting from those pictures alone. Her first pieces were Lord of the Rings characters — Arwen, Galadriel — which sold immediately.

From there, her craft evolved: polymer clay art dolls gave way to painted vinyl, and eventually to full silicone sculpture.

Vinyl kits are sculpted by hand in her studio, then shipped to factories in Germany or China, to be cast in runs of 50 to 300, sold on to dealers as far as Australia and New Zealand. Her “Vlad” vampire bat baby doll kit is one of the most recognized in the vinyl world, according to Flip.

Flip and Noemi bond over make-believe. He’s her business partner, an actor and photographer, who also volunteers with the local fire department.

Formal training is now part of Noemi’s process. Cinema Makeup School, prosthetics classes, Monster Clay and Chavant workshops. “I would recommend always taking a class if you have the chance,” she says. “Especially with expensive materials like silicone. You don’t want to be playing around with that.”

Craft and Collectors

Ask Noemi which she loves more, and she doesn’t hesitate: the art dolls. One-of-a-kind, no molds, sculpted from scratch. “My hobby will be going back to the art dolls,” she says.



But it’s the babies and the fantasy creatures that pack the convention floor.

The two audiences rarely overlap, and each carries its own strange gravity. Doll collectors often come to the realistic baby dolls through loss, grief, or simply a need to nurture.

“Many times it takes people who have lost children, and then they become mommies,” she says. “It’s just relaxing. It’s their therapy.”

Flip has seen strangers who’ve never held a handmade doll before shift its weight in their arms, the way you’d support a real baby’s head. “That instinct is so powerful,” he says. “I’ve watched it happen.”

The fantasy side draws a different crowd. Collectors who believe, or want to believe, in something just past the edge of what we can see.

Noemi doesn’t shy from saying so herself. Raised in a devout Christian home, she once thought fairies and fantasy creatures were best avoided; now she sees the work as an extension of faith rather than a departure from it. “I believe in fairies. I believe in dragons. I believe in gnomes,” she says. “We just can’t see them because we’re living in a third dimension.” She’s taken criticism for it, too — people online calling her



Uncanny realism, unbelievable subjects

creatures ‘demonic’ — but she’s made peace with the contradiction.

“Each one has their own truth and their own beliefs, and each one has their own rights,” she says.

Skilled Maker

The process for crafting one of the dolls is arduous.

Before the layers of paint and molding,

Smith hand-carves clay for the original cast. Her skilled handiwork is masterful, accomplished, and as versed in anatomy as Michelangelo, but with a smaller, wilder subject matter.

Noemi’s realism hasn’t gone unnoticed by Hollywood.

Her dolls have been rented out for film sets, including one recent shoot where a modified Shrek baby was born on camera for a comedy production. At \$2,000 to \$5,000 apiece, the dolls are too costly for most productions to buy outright, so renting has become its own small side business.

Noemi and Flip currently have a few contracts in the works with different film projects, though the details are still under wraps. “We can’t talk about it yet,” Flip says.

“We can’t see them, these creatures,” Noemi says of her fantasy work, “so I think it’s worth having them be seen by humans.”

Connection might be the point. The dolls, realistic and fantastical, are born from earthen material, given weight, and handed over gently, as if they might wake up.



The artist and her creations



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A chipmunk caught by Bobby Moberly's lens. Find Bobby's work at Art and Wine in the Cool Pines, August 7-9 at the Sacramento Mountains Historic Museum

Dear Readers,

This month's cover story turns the spotlight on **Noemi Smith**, the mountain's own eclectic doll artist. Her work has a way of catching people off guard, a little wild, a little precise, entirely her own, and we think you'll enjoy getting to know the artist behind it.



Speaking of unique flavor, this issue kicks off our new Flavor Lab, now proudly sponsored by **Cloudy's Market**. We're already looking forward to the culinary program's return once school is back in session, more on that soon.

In Mountain News, Contributing Editor **Jonny Coker** files a special report on the vanishing Checkerspot Butterfly, drawing on research from the Albuquerque BioPark team studying our area's meadow insects and plant life. It's a story about what "endemic" really means, and what we stand to lose without knowing it. Read it on p. 6.

School is back in session August 5th, and with it comes a mountain's worth of stories we can't wait

to cover. Our intern, **Paula Finch**, returns with her *Peak Performance* column, keeping you close to the action all season long.

Extra, Off the Press

Out on the courts, the **Pickleball Addicts of Cloudcroft** hosted a successful fundraiser tournament July 17-19, with proceeds going toward improvements to the Zenith Park public courts and viewing areas. PAC members and Cloudcroft regulars **Jason** and **Tami Alexander**, **Shawn Cornella**, **David Blackmon**, **Rhonda Suggs**, **Nate McDonald**, and **Mylie Wood** all made the podium.



Cloudcroft's 4th of July parade was a big hit, with spectators lining Burro Aveune in the largest turnout in recent memory

For the 250th Independence Day celebration in Cloudcroft, the **Chamber of Commerce** organized a Burro Avenue Parade. Longtime attendees say it was the most packed parade they'd seen in years, maybe ever. Catch a glimpse of parade Grand Marshall **Scott Powell**, the village's decades-long wastewater plant operator, in *Mountain Life*, p. 21.

A few things worth your attention beyond these pages: don't forget to check out the Mountain Monthly Facebook page, where you'll find video reports from **Vivian Willett**, answer keys for **Wells Vaiana's** Cloud Puzzle, and other content you won't find in print.

Summer's almost over, and there's more on the calendar than we can fit here. For the full picture, where to stay, eat, shop, and play, visit **Discover-Cloudcroft.com**. It's the local guide, and it's kept current.

Keep your mountain moments coming. We love hearing from you. Find your scenes of *Mountain Life*, p. 21. Have a story idea, a contribution, or a comment? Send it our way at

hello@mountainmonthly.com.



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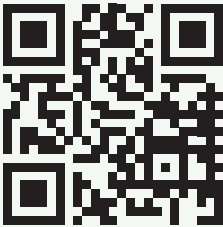
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Local Artist Drew Gaines at
 Art & Wine in the Cool Pines, 2024.
 View Drew's work at Blackbear Coffee Shop,
 where he is the featured artist-of-the-month
 for August.

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Scenic Rim Trail (T105) at ~8,600 ft with sweeping views of the Tularosa Basin.

Date: Saturday, August 15, 2026

Distances: 53K / 9.5 mile / 4.75 mile / 1 mile Kid's Dash

Location: Cloudcroft, New Mexico

Register: wanderlust.run



ART AND WINE
IN THE COOL PINES

Enjoy art, wine, and a relaxing mountain weekend surrounded by the beauty of the pines.

Dates: Friday–Sunday, August 7th–9th, 2026

Time: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Location: Sacramento Mountain Museum & Pioneer Village, Cloudcroft

Info: Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce (575) 682–2733 chamber@coolcloudcroft.com



LIVE MUSIC

Nova Rush (neo-indie folk) at Noisy Water Winery Cloudcroft Location
 Saturday, August 1st | 3–5 p.m.
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Tiger Alley (Austin's swingy, bluesy, country sensation)
 Shady Pines Chamber Players' Bertha Stage
 Saturday, August 1st | 7 p.m.
 200 Fox. Free event

Designated Mind at Cloudcroft Brewing Company
 Saturday, August 8th | 6–9 p.m.
 Classic rock



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Register: chubbytire.com



GOLF THE LODGE AT CLOUDCROFT

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Thomas Bulger, a University of New Mexico graduate student, works a meadow with his net during the July 1 survey, netting butterflies and other insects to identify and release.

Still No Sign of Cloudcroft’s Vanishing Checkerspot Butterfly

The subspecies exists only in the Sacramento Mountains and hasn’t been seen in the wild since 2022. This summer’s field searches are the recovery effort’s last strategy

by JONNY COKER

A team of researchers spent July 1 walking the high meadows near Cloudcroft in search of a butterfly that lives nowhere else on earth.

The Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly, a subspecies whose name comes from the town it was first found near, has not been confirmed in the wild since 2022.

Once again, the team did not find it.

In May, the last individual held in captivity died at the Albuquerque BioPark, ending a years-long effort to rear the insect in a lab.

The subspecies was listed as federally endangered in 2023, despite warnings of decline since the late 1990s. With the captive line gone, the summer field searches are what the recovery effort has left, and the question hanging over each one is whether the butterfly still exists in the wild at all.

“We did not see the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly, but I did not have super high expectations that we would,” said **Dr. Quin Baine**, a species survival specialist for invertebrates at the New Mexico BioPark Society, who led the field work.

Wednesday’s search was one of several this summer, staffed by a few people each week from mid-June through the end of July.

How the Search Works

The work comes in two parts. Surveyors follow set routes through the meadows using a modified Pollard walk, a special butterfly population-monitoring and tracking method, to log every butterfly species they see within a fixed distance and net some for catch-and-release identification.

They also collect flower heads from the checkerspot’s preferred nectar plant for environmental DNA testing, which can detect traces of an animal from the places it has touched. The samples are kept cold and sent to a laboratory for sequencing.

Even on a day when the checkerspot does not turn up, Baine said the survey has value, because documenting the other butterflies that fill these meadows builds a record of the ecosystem’s health.

“There’s so much value in documenting every other butterfly species that lives in these meadows, because this ecosystem supports a huge number of endemic butterflies and plants,” she said.

Long Odds

Baine was measured about what a single empty search means.

“One day doesn’t have that much meaning in and of itself,” she said, noting that a whole team is covering the mountains at different times through the summer. “But it doesn’t point toward an optimistic result.”

Pressed on whether the butterfly will be found this season, Baine said she thinks it is unlikely, but not impossible. Survey coverage has been inconsistent in recent years, and some meadows, including one walked on July 1, hadn’t been searched for two years.

“I am always suspicious that there are areas that are completely uncovered by survey effort and could be home to this butterfly still,” she said.

HOW’S THE MARKET?



JUNE 2026

CLOUDCROFT MOUNTAIN AREA

HOMES SOLD	12
MEDIAN SALES PRICE	\$275,000
AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	94 Days
ALL ACTIVE LISTINGS	302

CURRENT PRICE RANGES

RESIDENTIAL:	\$75,900 - \$2,200,000
LAND:	\$9,000 - \$2,950,000
COMMERCIAL:	\$340,000 - \$2,900,000

RUIDOSO MOUNTAIN AREA

HOMES SOLD	24
MEDIAN SALES PRICE	\$428,250
AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	148 Days
ALL ACTIVE LISTINGS	923

CURRENT PRICE RANGES

RESIDENTIAL:	\$60,000 - \$5,500,000
LAND:	\$5,450 - \$2,200,000
COMMERCIAL:	\$225,000 - \$3,650,000

ALAMOGORDO & BASIN AREA

HOMES SOLD	51
MEDIAN SALES PRICE	\$253,970
AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	60 Days
ALL ACTIVE LISTINGS	274

CURRENT PRICE RANGES

RESIDENTIAL:	\$40,000 - \$800,000
LAND:	\$18,000 - \$5,000,000
COMMERCIAL:	\$19,000 - \$950,000

Data sourced from the Otero & Lincoln County Associations of Realtors MLS and provided by Future Real Estate

Thomas Bulger, a graduate student at the University of New Mexico who joined the survey, was blunter.

“I think it’s gone,” he said, though he was careful to note that a great deal of ground remains to cover before anyone could call it extinct. “The checkerspot is probably not an isolated incident. We have a lot of other endemics and more common stuff that might start appearing less frequently. And pollination is the basis of all this life we see around us.”

Bulger said he felt somber walking through a good habitat that no longer seems to hold the butterfly.

“You live on this giant sky island, where insects are here and only here.”

— Thomas Bulger

“For all the people of Cloudcroft, I think you should be really proud that you live in a place that’s unlike anywhere else in the world. You live on this giant sky island [where] insects are here and only here. That’s incredible. I think that’s natural heritage that you should be proud of, and is worth fighting for.”

A Warning

Why a single butterfly matters is a question Baine hears often. Her answer is that the checkerspot is a warning.

“If you care about the whole ecosystem, then we should care about any one of these individual species that is endemic and native and, for whatever reason, is disappearing.”

Baine said that one of the main drivers of the decline is the loss of winter snowpack.

The checkerspot’s caterpillars spend the winter nearly full-grown, tucked just beneath the soil, where their metabolism drops and they wait out the cold. Snow acts as an insulator, Baine said, holding that shallow soil at a steady temperature. With less snow, the caterpillars can warm too soon, burn through their energy stores, and starve before spring.

The threat is not the checkerspot’s alone. Baine said three other butterflies native to the Sacramento Mountains haven’t been seen in more than 20 years.

For residents, her ask is simple. Pay attention to what lives here.

“If you see a butterfly, maybe try and

figure out what it is. You know, try and pay attention to who lives here, because we’re worried that everything might be declining and disappearing. And the more eyes we can have on this issue, the better. And the better we can figure out what the right method might be to meet everybody’s needs.”

The surveys continue through the end of July.

Board Openings, Police Updates, and More at a Full Village Meeting

Hires, promotions, a new Planning and Zoning Clerk/Code Enforcement Officer position, plus, at the July 14 Cloudcroft Village Council meeting

by HANNAH DEAN

July 14’s Cloudcroft Village Council Meeting began with a packed agenda of department reports, public hearings, and nine discussion/action items, including hires, new positions, and lease renewals—all with a dozen of the usual village watchdogs in the audience.

Trustee **Matt Willett** joined by phone and video from out of town; Trustees **Keith Hamilton**, **Gail McCoy**, and **Danny Hardwick** sat behind the dais with Mayor **Dusty Wiley**, Clerk **Jini Turri**, and Attorney Zach Cook.

The Safety Report

Police Chief Roger Schoolcraft told the council that calls for service have climbed with the summer crowds: “We have taken almost 800 calls for service or public contacts... with traffic stops as well.”

He addressed a recent call in Mayhill:

“The significant arrest we had was a couple about a week ago, we had what was called in as a possible barricaded hostage crisis situation.”

“I went down to Mayhill and assisted the sheriff’s office and state police. My former employment was as a negotiator for about 15 years with the SWAT team, so we had a peaceful resolution of that.”

“We were able to get the young lady out of the vehicle and get [a man] taken into custody without anybody getting hurt. I think that was a real godsend,” he said.

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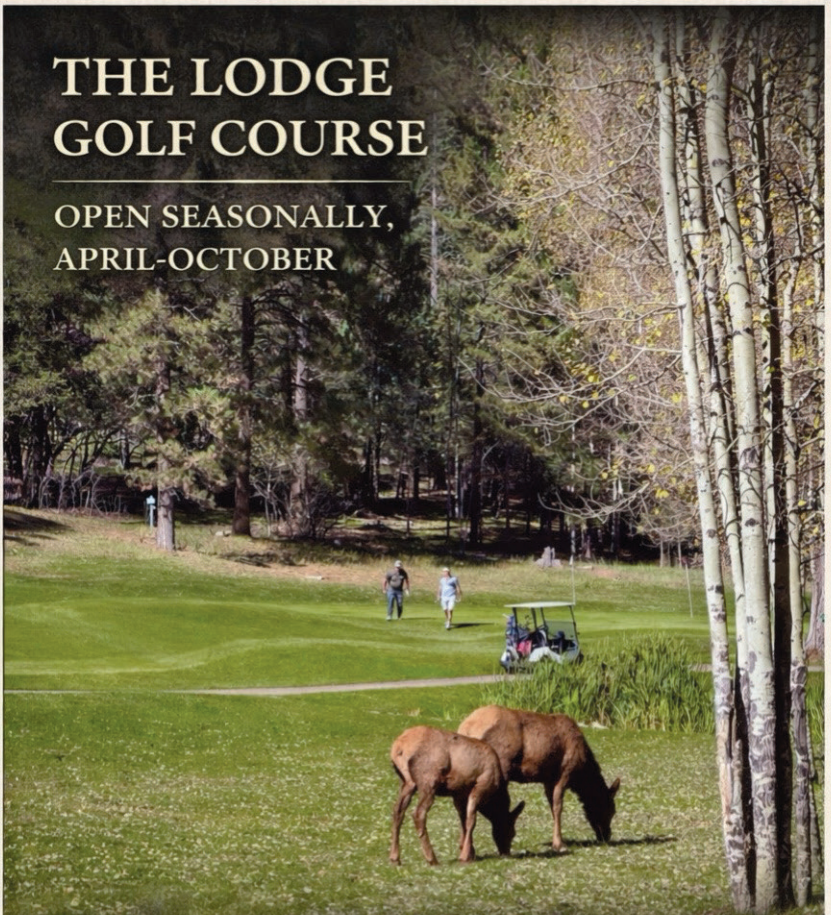
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The suspect was arrested on felony charges of making a shooting threat, DWI (driving while under the influence of liquor), negligent use of a deadly weapon (intoxication), and negligent use of a deadly weapon (discharge).

Schoolcraft credited the otherwise low incident count, despite record tourist numbers, to residents, law enforcement, and well-behaved visitors alike.

Library Numbers, Hire, and Open Seats

Library Director **Sandra Barr** reported daily patron counts in the high 30s and seven to eight new library cards per week.

Barr said 200-plus people passed through on the Fourth of July alone.

Trustees Hamilton, Hardwick, and Willett voted to formalize Trustee and Library Aide Gail McCoy's role as a permanent part-time position. McCoy left the room and recused herself from the discussion and vote due to the conflict of her position on the council and her employment with the village.

Separately, Mayor Wiley announced four open seats on the Library Advisory Board, plus one each on the Lodger's Tax Advisory Board and the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Residents interested in any of the three should contact the village and submit a letter of interest.

Promotions, New Positions

Barbara Garcia was appointed Deputy Clerk.

The council also approved a long-discussed Planning & Zoning Clerk and Code Enforcement Officer position at \$19 per hour, to handle permits, non-compliance letters, and follow-up work, which Clerk Turri said has fallen through the cracks for years.

Propriety, Formalized

The council adopted its annual rules-of-procedure resolution, a house-keeping item made newly relevant by this year's legislative session, according to Turri.

The same careful procedural process was followed in both variance hearings, including sworn testimony, cross-examination, and no ex parte contact, keeping neighbor-to-neighbor discussions on the record and out of the parking lot.

Tentative July 28 Special Meeting

The Cloudcroft Light Opera Company and Cloudcroft Fitness lease renewals both got pushed to the next scheduled meeting.

The council wants clean redlines in hand, not verbal edits, before it votes. Also on that agenda: the year-end budget. Turri is racing to get everything into the state's system by the end of the month.

The next council meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 28.





Rebecca Alm focuse on student well-being through initiatives like the free summer Farm to Market program

A Garden, and Students, Grow at Cloudcroft Schools

Rachel Alm stretched a state wellness grant into a four-week summer program where kids build, plant, water, and sell their grows
by JONNY COKER

On a bright morning behind Cloudcroft High School, students are working outside the school's greenhouse.

Some are filling raised beds with soil. Others are digging holes along a walkway for young trees. One 9-year-old has appointed himself keeper of the hose, running it back and forth across the lot so the diggers can keep the ground soft.

This is Farm to Market, a free summer program for fifth through 12th graders that has kids at the school four days a week through the end of June.

It is run by **Rachel Alm**, the district's wellness room and community engagement coordinator. She built the program this year out of a state grant.

The money came from a New Mexico Public Education Department initiative to create "wellness rooms," quiet spaces inside schools where students can reset when they are stressed or in conflict before heading back to class.

Principal **Cody Skinner** applied for the grant and won it, Alm said, but had not settled on how to use it.

Digging into Accessible Wellness

Alm, who came to the district with a background in school counseling and a strong interest in agriculture, created an indoor wellness room, but saw a chance to stretch the idea outdoors.

"I really believe that growing plants has a place in wellness, especially for students," she said. "We're lifting things, we're digging things. We're outside in the fresh air, we're active."

The indoor wellness room is full of plants and soft lighting, a space where students can decompress. The summer program extends that thinking into a working school garden.

Alm's path to the job wound through medicine, nutrition and education. She sees Cloudcroft's isolation as part of the program's purpose.

"Our geographic location here in Cloudcroft does set us up to limit access to certain health resources," she said. "All of the data really shows that that's an area where we are limited here."

The four weeks are built to grow. The first was construction, when students assembled a tool shed, raised beds and greenhouse benches.

The second is dirt, which includes filling garden beds, mixing potting soil and tending a classroom worm bin that turns kitchen scraps into compost. Week three turns to water, including gutters newly installed on the greenhouse to catch monsoon rain.

The final week is business, when students learn what it costs to grow food, how to price it and how to sell it.

Supply and Demand

The response from families was immediate.

Alm said registration filled so fast she split the day into morning and afternoon sessions and let students sign up one week at a time rather than commit to the whole month.

Demand, she said, has spread mostly by word of mouth.

Each day starts inside with circle time and a talking piece, often a garden tool or an irrigation nozzle. Whoever holds it has the floor. Students go around saying how they feel and what they liked or disliked about the day before, then head up to the greenhouse, where, as Alm put it, there is always a plan and almost always a little chaos.

The students seem to be absorbing more than how to plant. Paxton, one of the enrolled kids, said he wants people to understand where food actually comes from.

"Clearly we didn't just plant it," he said. "We've been digging and filling and all that stuff all day, so it's definitely a long process."

Alm said the biggest surprise has been the students who arrived unsure whether they even liked gardening. Several told her on the first day they had never done it before.

"Now those are the leaders in my group," she said. "They are the ones who are reaching for the hose and saying, hey, everybody, let's go make sure that everything is watered."

Growing Beyond this Summer

Her hope for the long term is a garden that touches every student in the district, not only the ones who sign up for summer or join her garden club. She imagines lunchroom scraps fed into a composting program and classrooms taking turns to water.

She is also looking for help for expanding what the program can offer. Building fencing tall enough to keep deer, elk, skunks and raccoons out of a high-elevation garden is, she said, no small job, and she would welcome a community work party.

Alm said that she wants students to walk away with an appreciation for what the earth can produce.

"I want them to take pride in their school and have that experience of nurturing and growing something," she said. "Nobody will take that away from them."

Wastewater Treatment Plant Number One: Council Sets Five-Year Infrastructure Funding List

The council planned what Cloudcroft projects need outside financial help, and ranked each project by urgency and its odds of landing funding
by HANNAH DEAN

The Cloudcroft Village Council voted unanimously on Thursday, June 25, to adopt a six-project Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) for fiscal years 2028 through 2032, ranking water and sewer system replacement as the village's top funding priority.

The ICIP is a five-year planning document that municipalities use to help request state and federal capital outlay funding.

A project's placement on the list doesn't necessarily reflect the village's top priority; it signals where the village needs outside funding help.

The Ranking

The council approved Resolution 2026-19 with the following priority order:

1. **Water and sewer infrastructure replacement** project, a package wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), estimated at \$15 million

Mayor Dusty Wiley later told the Monthly about the project:

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out of the box.”

“That’s the one that, I think, in either September or December, they’re supposed to have just the engineering done on it. And so once we have that, our next step would be hopefully—the state, whoever it is—says, yeah, that’s good.”

“They give us whatever they give us, then we have to go out to the Water Trust Board, and that’s who has real money, and see if we can get money from them. And if they believe in trusting us to get it done.”

“Usually, there’s going to be matches. And then we’ll have to find other grants that will allow us to use them as part of our match to make that money. I mean, there’s no way a small village like us can come up with that kind of money.”

Wiley then described phasing out the oldest part of the WWTP and relying on the newer membrane bioreactor (MBR) filter system, which is “20-30 years old,” while the brand-new system would be brought online.

The \$15 million water and sewer ask would be for the WWTP project, not for existing water and sewer pipes or other infrastructure in the village, according to Wiley.

2. New water storage tank, intended to add holding capacity ahead of high-use tourism seasons

3. Purchase of property for a parking lot

4. Pedestrian bridge and crosswalk

5. Community center and public library renovations

6. Road improvements

Trustees Keith Hamilton, Danny Hardwick, Matt Willett, and Gail McCoy unanimously approved the list.

Clerk Jini Turri explained that ICIP placement carries real weight with certain funding agencies.

The council also considered an informal rule requiring ICIP projects to have a useful life of at least 10 years. That standard shaped the debate over road improvements, which dropped to the bottom of the list.

The Water Table(d)

The council ranked a new water storage tank second on the infrastructure funding request list to increase holding capacity for busy weekends in Cloudcroft.

In recent years, the village has had to haul water when production didn’t meet demand, whether due to usage or leaks...

Read the full story, *Cloudcroft Reader*:

<https://www.cloudcroftreader.com/p/wastewater-treatment-plant-number>

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Where to visit with your pooch in tow (Photo: Drew Gaines)

Local Guide:

Dog-Friendly Cloudcroft

What to Know

Perusing the village with your pet? Here’s where you’ll find the best spots for your whole family.

Eat/Drink:

Noisy Water Winery on Burro allows pups inside and on their spacious outdoor boardwalk seating. Try a wine flight and grab a cheese plate to share.

Blackbear Coffee Shop has a bistro table on their porch, perfect for when you want coffee with your pooch in tow.

The **Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop** side patio allows for fido to join your lunch. They offer classic deli sandwiches, salads, ice cream, and more. Snag a selfie next to Samantha Odom’s Cloudcroft mural before you leave.

Brother-N-Law BBQ is a prime location for savory smoked meats where your leashed companion is always

welcome on the patio. Grab a seat at an umbrella-shaded picnic table out front and dig into their selection of brisket, pulled pork, turkey, and ribs. Try the mac and cheese and dessert for an extra decadent day.

Big Daddy’s Diner has a spot for Spot. Snag a seat on their rustic, enclosed patio—complete with heaters for chilly mountain days—to enjoy breakfast, lunch, or a hearty dinner. Their extensive menu features everything from savory fried starters and fresh salads to burgers, Mexican specialties, and vegetarian fare. They even provide water bowls to ensure your canine companion stays refreshed while you dine.

Shop fresh produce, meat, and the necessities for your own home-away-from-home cooked meals at **Cloudy’s Market**, where they’ve got an outdoor leash hook up and water for your pet.

Play:

Walk all over the Burro Avenue boardwalk with your pet—but know that store entry varies shop by shop. The newly-opened **Pawsh Pet & Me** upstairs at the Burro Street Exchange will have the pet goods you need.

Enjoy disc golf at **Zenith and Elevation Parks** in Cloudcroft. Bring your dog (and kids) to Deer Park behind Allsup’s for a Burro Avenue break.

Check out the Dog Park at Zenith, and then hit the scenic .7-mile walking path.

Visit the Lincoln National Forest hiking trails. The Mexican Canyon Trestle and Osha Trail are both a short walk from the village. Remember to observe leash laws and leave no trace. Pack it in, pack it out.

Stay:

Here are some choice lodges in the village that are pet-friendly, with a fee.

The **Grand Cloudcroft Hotel** is the newest lodging in Cloudcroft. Indoor year-round pool and hot tub, unique in Cloudcroft. 50 modern rooms with king beds, complimentary breakfast, and underground heated parking.

Osha Trail Lodging is an apartment-style short-term rental complex on Mexican Avenue in central Cloudcroft. Mid-century-modern interiors, full kitchens, and a short

walk to Burro Avenue, restaurants, and trailheads.

Dusty Boots Motel & Cafe has pet-friendly rooms. This small, family-run themed motel on James Canyon Highway boasts 16 individually themed rooms (I Love Lucy, Harry Potter, Roy Rogers, and more), an on-site cafe with summer hours and breakfast served until noon The hiker boot omelette, loaded with veggies, is a fave.

Make the most of your mountain visit.

DiscoverCloudcroft.com



Copper keeps an eye on the entrance to the Burro Street Trading Post

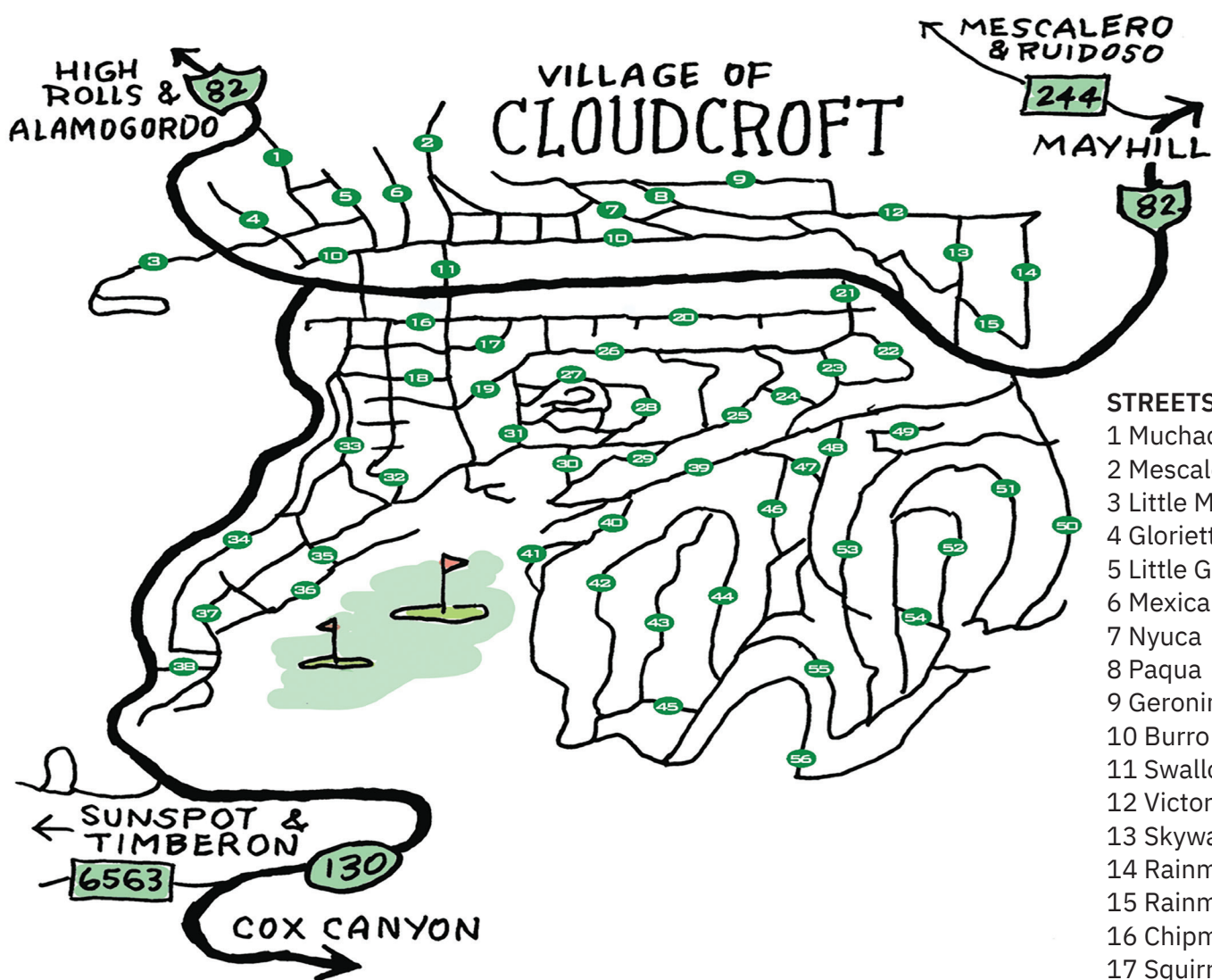




welcome to the village

Let us show you around

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <p>A</p> <p>Off the Beaten Path
ICAT Trap & Release Program
Summit Christian Fellowship
Sacramento Mountain Senior Services
Black Bear Coffee Shop
King's Treasure
Bhair Necessities
The Fat Rabbit
The Little Gallery
Aspen and Ivy Boutique
Samantha Odom Art Gallery
Dave's Cafe
Higher Grounds
Instant Karma & Chai Bar
Base Camp 9k</p> <p>B</p> <p>Western Bar and Cafe
Western Package Store
Hotel Cloudcroft
Kennabelle's Kreations Bakery
Gary Mack Real Estate
The Bear Track
High Altitude
High Altitude Bike Shop
Scotty's Propane</p> <p>C</p> <p>Elevation Park and Disc Golf Course</p> | <p>D</p> <p>Otero County Electric Cooperative
Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage
Cloudcroft Archery
Crystal Tompkins Photography
Coco Blu
Green Mountain Real Estate & Construction, Skywater
Shelley Hughes Architecture PC
Osha Trail Depot
Osha Trail Lodging
Cloudcroft Souvenirs
Laughing Leaf Dispensary
Eight the Cake
Mountain Magic
Poke the Bear</p> <p>E</p> <p>Burro St. Boarding House
Cloudcroft Brewing Company
The Distillery
Sparks and Rec</p> <p>F</p> <p>Ski Cloudcroft</p> <p>G</p> <p>Apsen Trails Realty
Big Daddy's Diner
Tularosa Communications
Cloudcroft Animal Hospital
Dusty Boots Cafe & Taco Cantina and Motel</p> | <p>H</p> <p>The Lodge Resort
The Lodge Golf Course
1899 and Saint Andrew's Lounge
Seasons Boutique Gift Shop
SugarPines RV Park</p> <p>I</p> <p>Grand Cloudcroft Hotel
Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce
Cabins at Cloudcroft</p> <p>J</p> <p>Zenith Park and Playground
Pickleball and Tennis Courts
Zenith Park Pavilion
Byron Ligon Disc Golf Course
James Sewell Ice Rink
Anglican Church of the Epiphany
Family Dollar
Brother-N-Law BBQ
Magnum's Guns II
Crofting Bed & Breakfast</p> <p>K</p> <p>Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Village Plaza
Homee
Be in the Mountains Yoga & Massage Therapy
Road Runner Cannabis
High Rollin' Coffee</p> | <p>L</p> <p>Mad Jack's Mountaintop BBQ
Roots Flower Co.</p> <p>M</p> <p>New Village Hardware
Pre-School and Extended Care
Cloudcroft United Methodist Church
Summit Inn
The Lodge Pavilion</p> <p>N</p> <p>Presbyterian Medical Center
Rick Roger's Auto & Equip Repair
Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts
Cloud 9000 Coffee
Fernando's Burritos</p> <p>O</p> <p>United States Post Office
First National Bank
Village Office</p> <p>P</p> <p>Allsup's</p> <p>Q</p> <p>Future Real Estate
The Highland</p> <p>R</p> <p>Deer Park
Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop</p> | <p>S</p> <p>Cloudcroft Schools</p> <p>T</p> <p>Burro Street Exchange
The Elk Shed
Atelier Art of Hair by Anna
Red Wall Jewelry
Burro Street Bakery
Tree Top Teez
Noisy Water Winery
Burro Street Trading Post
Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy
Old Barrel Tea Co.
Turquoise Shop
Cloudcroft Church of Christ</p> <p>U</p> <p>Old Red Brick Schoolhouse
Michael Nivison Public Library
High Valley Weaving School
Cloudcroft Fitness
Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op Gallery</p> <p>V</p> <p>Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum and Pioneer Village</p> <p>W</p> <p>Cloudcroft Fire and Rescue Station
Trestle Medical Services</p> |
|---|--|---|---|--|



STREETS

- 1 Muchachita
- 2 Mescalero
- 3 Little Mexican
- 4 Glorietta
- 5 Little Glorietta
- 6 Mexican
- 7 Nyuca
- 8 Paqua
- 9 Geronimo
- 10 Burro
- 11 Swallow
- 12 Victoria
- 13 Skywater
- 14 Rainmaker
- 15 Rainmaker
- 16 Chipmunk
- 17 Squirrel
- 18 Coyote
- 19 Fox
- 20 Grand
- 21 Lynx
- 22 Aspen
- 23 Lynx
- 24 Ponderosa
- 25 Panther
- 26 Coyote
- 27 Lynx Loop
- 28 Fox
- 29 Beaver
- 30 5th St
- 31 4th St
- 32 Wren
- 33 Curlew
- 34 Sunset
- 35 Otter
- 36 Fairway

- 37 Corona
- 38 McDaniel
- 39 Chautauqua Canyon
- 40 Big Bear
- 41 Sugar Bear
- 42 Little Bear
- 43 Sugar Pine
- 44 Sugar Pine
- 45 Oak Alley
- 46 Maple
- 47 Beaver
- 48 Columbine
- 49 Balsam Circle
- 50 Woodlands Way
- 51 Shells
- 52 Julies
- 53 Balsam
- 54 Susans
- 55 Woodlands Way
- 56 Blanca Vista



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Welcome to Cloudcroft, New Mexico — a mountain village with timeless charm and plenty to do.

Whether you’re looking for a cozy cabin, a good meal, or ideas for a scenic day trip, this list is here to help you make the most of your visit.

Here you’ll find local restaurants, lodging, shops, and services — everything you need to explore, relax, and enjoy your time in our beautiful mountain community.

Eat/Drink

Big Daddy’s Diner
1705 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-1224, bigdaddysdiner.com Comfort food and desserts. Try the fried chicken basket. Open daily 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Black Bear Coffee
200 Burro Ave., 575-682-1239, mybbcoffee.com Locally-roasted beans on the west end of Burro. Head upstairs for conversation nooks, enjoy the downstairs gallery wall with rotating exhibition. Wednesday-Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Sunday 8:00-3:00.

Brother-N-Law BBQ
209 James Canyon Hwy, 215-858-0400 Delicious smoked meats, baked potatoes, sandwiches, and fried okra. Don’t skip the sauce. Open 11:00. a.m.-6:00 p.m. every day but Thursday.

Burro Street Bakery
505 Burro Ave., 575-682-2777 Sit awhile at this centrally-located joint. Pies, danishes, breakfast burritos, coffee, and more. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Cloud 9000 Coffee
96 James Canyon Hwy Quick breakfast—smoothies and handhelds. Coffee, tea, and lemonade, too. Outdoor seating only. 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, closed Mondays.

Cloudcroft Brewing Company
1301 Burro Ave., 575-682-2337, cloudcroftbrewing.com In-house and regional brews, live music, and fantastic atmosphere. Gnosh on wood-fired pizza, soup du jour, salad, chips & guacamole. Closed Tuesdays. Open 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. the rest of the week—til 10:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop
505 Burro Ave., 575-551-0065, cloudcrofts-andwich.shop Traditional deli in the Burro Street Exchange. Mural photo op in the outdoor patio. Get any sandwich as a salad, then a monster-sized cookie—#balance. Open 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. every day, closed Wednesdays.

Dave’s Cafe
300 Burro Ave., 575-682-2127 Classic burgers, fries, and more at a casual setting in the heart of Burro. Open 11:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Friday-Sunday.

Dusty Boots Cafe & Taco Cantina
1317 James Canyon Hwy, 575 601-2009 Laid back home cooking—burgers, tacos, salads, and more. For breakfast, try the veggie-loaded Hiker’s Boot omelette

and western potatoes. Open 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, closes at 5:00 Sunday.

Eight the Cake Bakery
506 Burro Ave., 575-682-3088, eightthecake.com Lovely custom cakes. Cupcakes, cinnamon rolls, and local art. Open Thursday-Monday from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Family Dollar
309 James Canyon Hwy, 505-532-2697, familydollar.com Get the essentials. Discount chain with groceries, toiletries, and home goods. Open 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. daily.

Fernando’s Burritos
96 James Canyon Hwy Best burrito, barbacoa, and burger in the village. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Outdoor seating only. Open 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. daily, closed Mondays.

High Rollin’ Coffee
109 James Canyon Hwy Gourmet freshies galore on a rotating weekly menu. Open Monday and Tuesday 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and Friday-Sunday 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Higher Grounds
300 Burro Ave., 575 682-2127 Ice cream and milkshake counter next to Dave’s Cafe. Hours vary.

Instant Karma Chai Bar
302 Burro Ave. Global spice blends, ayurvedic teas, soothing cacao, and more at their countertop. Stay awhile. Open daily from 1:00-5:00 p.m.

KennaBelle’s Kreations Bakery
308 Burro Ave., 575-682-2712 Follow your

nose to this pink patisserie. Custom cakes and orders. Gluten-free options. Open 7:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Closed Sunday.

Mad Jack’s Mountaintop Barbeque
105 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-7577 Legendary barbeque in the old mercantile building. Don’t let the line deter you—it’s worth the wait. Open 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Thursday-Sunday, or until sold out.

Noisy Water Winery
505 Burro Ave., 575-682-6610 Local wine, cheese, charcuterie, and gifts. Upscale offerings, casual boardwalk venue. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m. daily, open until 7:00 on Friday, and until 7:30 on Saturday.

Old Barrel Tea Co.
505 Burro Ave., 575-682-7474 Fresh houseblend teas to order, plus provisions. Open 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Sunday.

Saint Andrew’s Lounge and 1899 at the Lodge
601 Corona Pl., 575-682-2566, 223collectionhotels.com/the-lodge Chef Richard Lepree brings global flair and locally-sourced flavors to the plate. Reservations required on the 1899 side, open Wednesday-Saturday from 5:00-8:00 p.m. Saint Andrew’s Lounge open Wednesday-Saturday from 12:00-8:00 p.m.

The Distillery
1303 Burro Ave., 575-682-2337 Craft cocktails with New Mexico and in-house spirits for date night—adults only.

Western Bar and Cafe and Package Store
304 Burro Ave., 575-682-2445, westernbarandcafe.net Dark and cozy dive bar with tasty food for lunch and dinner. Beer on tap, full bar. Play pool while you wait. Closed Wednesdays, open 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. the rest of the week.

For more detailed information on where to eat, go to www.discovercloudcroft.com/complete-guide-where-to-eat-in-cloudcroft-2026.html

Lodging

Burro St. Boarding House
608 Burro Ave., 575-682-3601 Rustic and artful digs near downtown. burrostreetboardinghouse.com

Cabins at Cloudcroft
1006 Coyote Ave., 575-682-2396 Retro casitas by the park. cabinsatcloudcroft.com

Crofting Inn
300 Swallow Pl. Comfy B-and-B. Book on Expedia or Hotels.com

Dusty Boots Motel
1315 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-7736 Themed rooms with a restaurant next door. thedustyboots.com



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Grand Cloudcroft Hotel
1207 James Canyon Hwy, 575-601-2202 Relax in the indoor pool and spa. All king-sized beds. grandcloudcroft.com

Osha Trail Lodging
102 Mexican Ave., 575-937-3767 Modern, conveniently-located suites. Book on AirB-nB or oshatraillodging@gmail.com

SugarPines RV Park
601 Columbine Blvd., 575-682-3375 Easy access in the heart of the village. sugarpinesrvpark.com

Summit Inn
103 Chipmunk Ave., 575-295-3235 Chic interiors, classic mountain exterior. summitinnnm.com

The Lodge
601 Corona Pl., 575-682-2566 Historic beauty. Stay, eat, play. thelodgeresort.com

For more in-depth lodging information and pictures, go to discovercloudcroft.com/complete-guide-to-lodging-in-cloudcroft-new-mexico-2026.html

Shopping

Aspen and Ivy Boutique
206 Burro Ave. Bespoke goods, candles, plants, and local art. Open Thursday-Sunday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Base Camp 9K
302 Burro Ave. Teeny space with quality shirts, hats, and more. Open Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Burro Street Trading Post
505 Burro Ave.,
225 253-2606 Rocks, gems, and original Southwest art and wear. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily. burrostreettradingpost.com

Cloudcroft Archery
100 Little Glorieta Ave., 575-439-7918 Indoor range and bow services. 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, Saturday 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Cloudcroft Souvenirs
502 Burro Ave. Southwestern tchotchkes and take-home memorabilia. Open Monday-Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts
94 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-6002 Requisite auto supplies. Open 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, Saturday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Closed Sunday.

Coco Blu
94 Little Glorieta Ave., 575-682-3039 Ladies' boutique with head-to-toe stylish selections and name brands. Open 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, and until 5:30 p.m. on Friday and 6:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The Elk Shed
505 Burro Ave. Southwestern goods, clothes, gourmet pantry staples, and more. Open 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. theelkshed.com

The Fat Rabbit
206 Burro Ave. Silver and turquoise, plus. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.

The Highland
206 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-1041 Nambe, gifts, hunting supplies, licenses, and beyond. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. daily.

High Altitude
310 Burro Ave. 575-682-1229 Your favorite little outdoors store, boutique, and bike shop. 10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday, until 6:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, until 5:00 p.m. Sunday. highaltitudenm.com

Homee
109 James Canyon Hwy Everything for sale. Home rental services. Hours vary. inhomee.com

Instant Karma
302 Burro Ave., 575-682-2651 Ayurvedic goods, yogi-friendly clothes, books, and yoga. Open 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily. getinstantkarma.com

King's Treasure
202 Burro Ave. 575-682-5524 Thrift to your heart's delight without breaking the bank. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. every day except Sunday.

Magnum's Guns II
207 James Canyon Hwy 575-682-6677 Guns and ammo on James Canyon Highway. 1:00-4:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday to Friday from 12:00-5:00 p.m., Saturday 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. magnumsguns.com

Mountain Magic
506 Burro Ave. 575-682-2348 Cloudcroft shirts, woodland toys, baby gifts, natural goods, and more. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

New Village Hardware
61 Curlew Pl. 575-682-2849 Everything you need for your latest project. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sunday.

Poke The Bear
510 Burro Ave. 575-682-1341 Find the music playing on Burro boardwalk for fun and unique finds—lamps, upcycled furniture, outdoor goods, t-shirts, and humor gifts. Open 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Red Wall Jewelry
505 Burro Ave. 575-682-4414 Delicate and artisanal wares—great for gifts. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Roots Flower Co.
62 Curlew Pl. 575-295-1644 High-end flowers and affordable prices. Bouquets of all sizes, event orders. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.

Seasons Boutique Gift Shop
601 Corona Pl. 575-682-2566 Shop at the historic Lodge.

The Bear Track
308 Burro Ave. Baubles, figurines, woodland critter decor, and more. Hours vary.

Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy
505 Burro Ave. 575-682-2566 Goodies for all ages. Open M, Th, Fri, Sat 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., W 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sun 12:00-5:00 p.m.

Tree Top Teez
505 Burro Ave. 575-430-5154 Custom silk-screen and embroidery shop. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Turquoise Shop
507 Burro Ave. 575-682-3327 Fine jewelry at every price point. Open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day, closed Sunday. cloudcrofitturquoise.com

Art

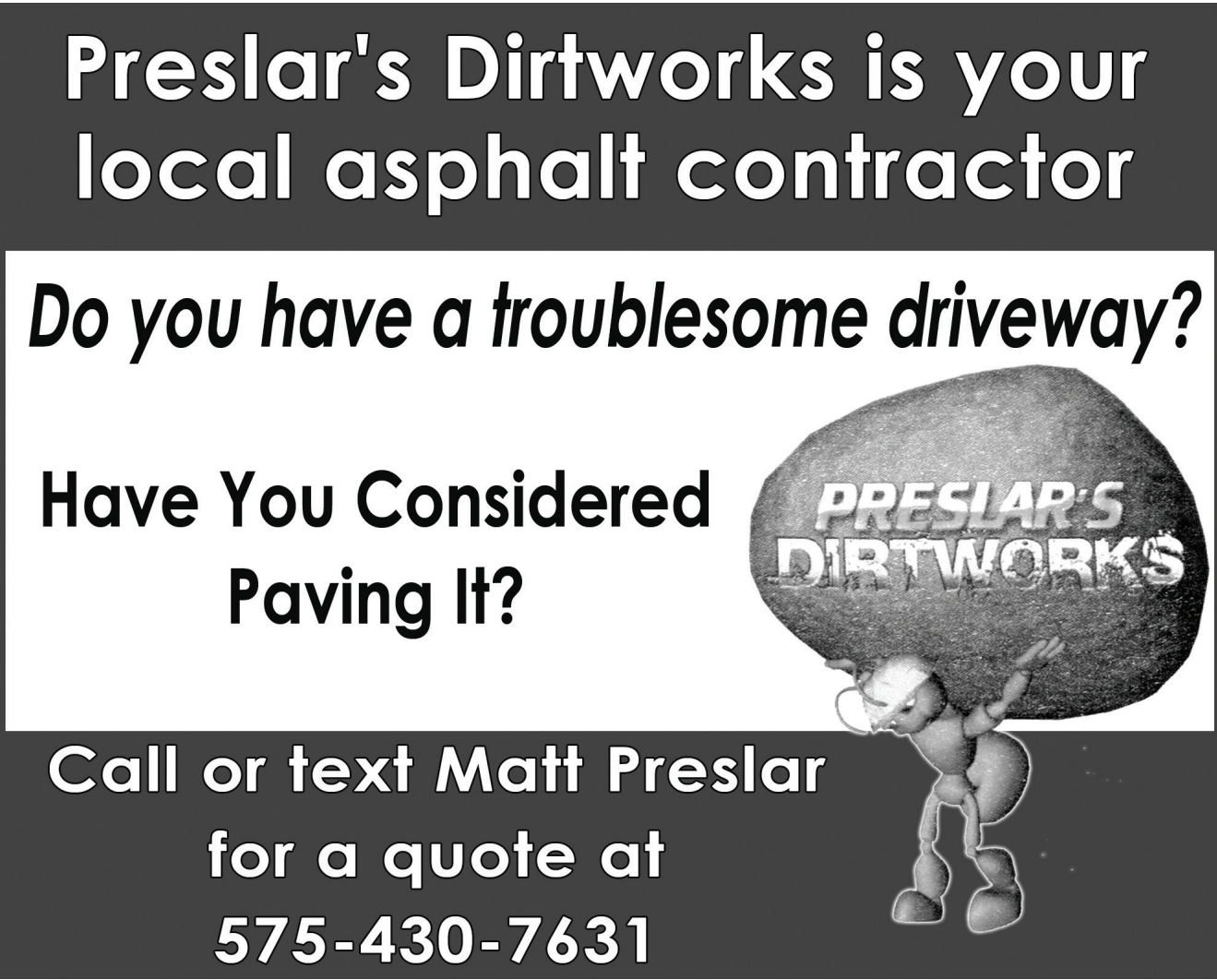
Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op Gallery
90 Swallow Pl. Artist-run rotating gallery. Open seasonal Saturdays 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and for holiday sales. ccartsociety@gmail.com

Off the Beaten Path
100 Glorietta Ave. 575-682-7284 Regional handmade art selection of all media. Open 10:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sunday. offthebeatenpathstuff.com

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A vibrant poster for a 'MARINE SALTY DOGS RUMMAGE SALE'. At the top, the words 'MARINE' and 'SALTY DOGS' are in large, bold, distressed fonts. Below them is a bulldog wearing a Marine helmet and a red collar with a tag that says 'SEMPER PARATUS'. The bulldog is sitting on a wooden crate. The words 'RUMMAGE SALE' are written in large, bold, distressed fonts across the middle. To the left of the sale text is a hotdog in a bun with mustard, and to the right is a bucket of popcorn labeled 'FRESH POPCORN!'. Below the sale text, it says 'HOTDOGS AND POPCORN SALES!'. At the bottom, it says 'SEPTEMBER 12, 2026' and 'CLOUDCROFT PAVILLION'. There is a QR code on the left and a 'shopify' logo on the right. The poster also includes the text 'GREAT FINDS! GREAT CAUSE!', 'SHOP SUPPORT SALTY DOGS!', 'OPENS AT 8 AM', 'VISIT OUR SHOPIFY STORE!', 'APPAREL • GEAR • ACCESSORIES SHOW YOUR SUPPORT EVERY DAY!', and 'MARINESALTYDOGS.COM'. At the very bottom, it says 'PROCEEDS SUPPORT OUR MISSIONS AND VETERAN COMMUNITY'.



A black and white advertisement for 'Preslar's Dirtworks'. The top half has a dark background with white text that reads 'Preslar's Dirtworks is your local asphalt contractor'. The bottom half has a white background with black text that reads 'Do you have a troublesome driveway? Have You Considered Paving It? Call or text Matt Preslar for a quote at 575-430-7631'. On the right side, there is a cartoon illustration of a man in a hard hat and safety vest, carrying a large rock on his back. The rock has the words 'PRESLAR'S DIRTWORKS' written on it.



\$329,900

CLOUDCROFT

15 Crestview Drive
Tucked among the tall pines in the Waterfall Subdivision near Cloudcroft, this inviting mountain home offers comfortable, single level living.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$269,000

CLOUDCROFT

33 Switch Back Lane
Updated 1 bed, 1.75 bath updated condo in the Village. Adjacent to the golf course and a short distance from the historic Lodge & restaurant and Burro St. shops.
Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



\$579,999

CLOUDCROFT

690 Karr Canyon
Perfectly sized for a vacation retreat, sitting on just over 5 acres, this log home includes 2 bed/2 bath plus a bonus loft. Log cabin styling at its finest!
Debbie Tate - (575) 430-9511



\$699,000

HIGH ROLLS

36 Old Railroad Drive
Pristine 3BR/2BA home with multiple living areas, pellet + wood stoves, remodeled kitchen/baths, landscaped yard, greenhouse, workshop, and barn.
Cori Abel - (816) 896-2674
Emily Kellam - (575) 214-9479



\$689,000

TIMBERON

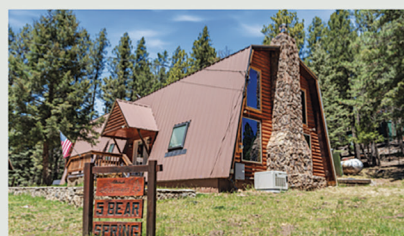
7 High Meadow Lane
Custom retreat on 6 acres with income potential & unmatched views. Beautifully custom built with the perfect blend of comfort and functionality.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$26,000

CLOUDCROFT

27 Ponderosa Pines Trail
This beautiful lot offers the perfect setting for your dream mountain home. This property has the ideal blend of accessibility, usable terrain and stunning natural surroundings.
Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



\$499,000

CLOUDCROFT

5 Bear Spring Road
Updated, immaculate 1.16-acre mountain home with 3 lots. Main-floor primary suite, ample parking, and storage/outbuildings. Furniture included with acceptable offer.
Danica Shaw - (575) 302-8854



\$130,000

CLOUDCROFT

6 Sepulveda Boulevard
Come see this charming 2-bed, 2-bath cabin. Enjoy beautiful mountain views from the spacious deck, while watching wildlife and unwinding in the quiet forest that surrounds it.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



(575) 415-4039
FUTUREREALESTATE.COM



Office locations in Alamogordo,
Cloudcroft, and Ruidoso



\$195,000

TIMBERON

20 White River Lane
3 Bed/2 Bath Cayco home on 1.5+ quiet acres, providing privacy, mountain views, and relaxed living in the Sacramento Mountains.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$1,400,000

CLOUDCROFT

102 Mexican Avenue
Osha Trail Lodging. Unique multi-family investment opportunity. Includes 6 nightly rental units, a retail space, 6 storage units, and a large finished and heated garage.
Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



\$309,000

CLOUDCROFT

802 B & C Chautauqua Canyon Blvd.
Investment opportunity in the heart of Cloudcroft featuring two charming 744 sq. ft. A-frame cabins. One is fully remodeled with modern updates, the second offers opportunity for your personal touch.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$299,900

CLOUDCROFT

1012 Maple Drive
Updated cabin with new roof, plumbing, flooring, paint, and tankless water heater. Expanded deck and fully furnished with an acceptable offer.
Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



SOLD!

\$200,000

HIGH ROLLS

59 Mountain Estates Road
Over 4 acres with a mix of trees and open meadow. Year-round access and a well in place make it ideal for building your mountain home.
Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



\$265,000

CLOUDCROFT

17 Carrie Camp Road
3-acre retreat in Pierce Canyon! The kitchen opens up to a covered/fenced patio area, offering outdoor living space perfect for entertaining. This 1 bed, 1 bath cabin is the perfect retreat for a mountain getaway!
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$419,000

CLOUDCROFT

1008 Victoria Avenue
A rare find in the heart of the Village of Cloudcroft! This home is situated on the "sunny side" of the mountain. Enjoy natural light and warmth year round!
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$259,000

MAYHILL

6 Will Scarlet
3 Bedroom, 2 bathroom home nestled on over 1 acre backing the Lincoln National Forest, located in quiet Robin Hood neighborhood. Carport and RV hookups!
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$90,000

CLOUDCROFT

14 Aspen
At just under 1.5 acres in Cloud Country Estates, this lot is ideal to build your forever home or vacation cabin!

Annie Daniels - (575) 434-3444



\$2,200,000

HIGH ROLLS

163 Karr Canyon Road
Stunning 126 acre property backing the Lincoln National Forest in High Rolls, NM. You get over 20 acre feet of water rights per year!

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$260,000

CLOUDCROFT

10 Oak Trail
Cozy 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom A-Frame cabin with 2 decks, just 10 minutes south of Cloudcroft in the Silver Cloud area.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$285,000

CLOUDCROFT

12 Little John Lane
2 Bedroom, 1 bathroom with lots of updates. Enjoy working on projects in the workshop with electric.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



\$464,000

HIGH ROLLS

73 Cider Mill Farm Road
Fully fenced and gated 2.5 acres offering privacy, nature, and space for hobbies. Updated home with new flooring and a charming rustic-modern kitchen.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



\$392,000

HIGH ROLLS

10 Red Mountain Drive
Escape to this 5-bed, 2-bath log-style home on 3/4 of an acre in High Rolls, NM. Features multiple living areas for entertaining and a beautiful wrap-around porch perfect for enjoying nature.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



Under Contract

\$595,000

HIGH ROLLS

53 Alta Vista Loop
Mountain home versatility with breathtaking views tucked into the mountainside. This home is designed to bring the outdoors in.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



\$955,000

HIGH ROLLS

61 Haynes Canyon
A rare mountain sanctuary where craftsmanship, astronomy, and luxury living come together beneath some of the darkest skies in the Southwest.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



\$359,000

MAYHILL

18 Carpenter Lane
This inviting 3 bedroom, 2 bath home is filled with natural light thanks to the abundance of windows that create a bright and welcoming atmosphere.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$425,000

CLOUDCROFT

802 A Chautauqua Canyon Blvd.
Ideal investment opportunity featuring two homes. The updated 1,394 sq. ft. main residence is complemented by a 744 sq. ft. A-frame vacation rental.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$819,000

MAYHILL

48 Milky Way
Architectural mountain retreat with sweeping views, wildlife, and an integrated roll-off-roof observatory for exceptional stargazing.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



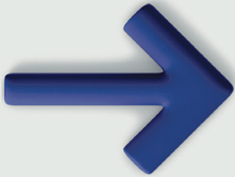
\$198,000

CLOUDCROFT

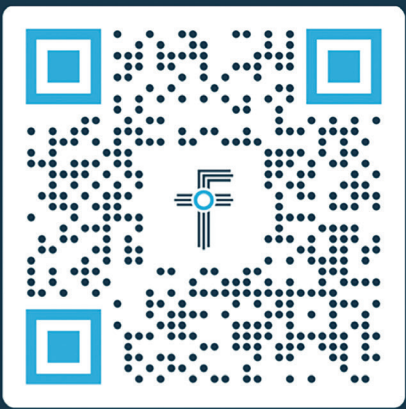
11 Center Road
Charming single-wide on 0.31 acres featuring open living, a primary suite, two guest rooms, and a covered deck among the tall pines.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

Scan Here!



**for more listings
& property
details**



\$325,000

CLOUDCROFT

0 Evergreen Lane
Just over 12 acres of beautiful mountain property with the flexibility to camp in your RV, build a cabin or place a manufactured home.

Sylvia Humphreys - (575) 921-1094

Art, continued from page 15

Samantha Odom Art Gallery (300 Burro Ave. (575) 649-9951) Original paintings and affordable prints by Samantha Odom. Open 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

The Little Gallery (206 Burro Ave.) Fine arts and paintings by local artists, and funky souvenirs. Open Wednesday-Sunday 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. or by appointment.

Healing

Be in the Mountains Yoga & Massage Therapy (109 James Canyon Hwy (575) 415-4573) Cozy space and comfortable pace in the Village Plaza. Open by appointment at yogaincloudcroft.com

Cloudcroft Animal Hospital (1403 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-2645) Critter care and adoptions. Open 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:30-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage (404 Burro Ave.) Relax and recover upstairs at the OCEC building. Open by appointment at cloudcrofttherapeuticmassage.com

Laughing Leaf Dispensary (504 Burro Ave. (575) 682-1354) Locally-owned bud tender. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Sunday.

Presbyterian Medical Center (76 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-2542) Clinic by appointment or walk-in. Open 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Southwest Naturals CBD (506 Burro Ave. (575) 682-6022) Range of CBD products, vitamins, and supplements in store. Open Monday 9:00 a.m.-5:00

p.m. and Friday-Sunday 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Trestle Medical Services (1200 James Canyon Hwy) Local family practitioner. Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-4:00 p.m. trestlemedical.com

Services

Atelier Art of Hair by Anna (505 Burro Ave. (415) 230-9506) Pamper your hair, style your photoshoot. Available by appointment vagaro.com/lacnb9/services

Bhair Neccessities (202 Burro Ave. (575) 518-9011) Classic color, cuts, and products. Available by appointment.

Cloudcroft Fitness (90 Swallow Pl.) Get moving with a range of class offerings and instructors. cloudcroftcycling.punchpass.com

Cloudcroft Village Office (201 Burro Ave.) Pay your water bill, attend village meetings, and more.cloudcroftvillage.com

Cloudsoft Laundry To Go (520-330-2613) Delivery service.

Crystal Tompkins Photography Family photos, headshots, business branding, soul sessions, and more. By appointment: crystaltompkinsphotography.com

Green Mountain Construction (500 Burro Ave. (575) 551-2811) Local development. Open 8:00 a.m-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. greenmountainconstr.com

High Valley Weaving School (90 Swallow Pl. 575-921-1020) Modern courses in ancient fiber techniques. Class schedules: highvalleyweavingschool.com

Pre-School and Extended Care (50 Chip-

munk (575) 682-1264) Local childcare.

Rick Roger’s Auto & Equipment Repair (72 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-3352) Gas and diesel mechanic services. Open Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Sacramento Mountain Senior Services (212 Glorietta Ave. 575-682-3022) Cafeteria and social hub. mtnseniors.org

U.S. Post Office (20 Curlew Pl. (800) 275-8777) Mail and passport services. Open 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, Saturday 9:30-11:30 a.m.

1CAT Trap & Release Program (100 Glorietta Ave. 575-682-7284) Non-profit feline care. Available by appointment.

Play

Deer Park Playground (30 Swallow Pl.) Behind the Burro St. Exchange. Picnic tables, easy downtown access.

Elevation Park (230 Mescalero Ave.) Disc golf, trailheads, and stargazing.

James Sewell Ice Rink (751 James Canyon Hwy) On the west end of Zenith Park. Seasonal skate rentals, snack bar, fireplace.

Pickleball Addicts of Cloudcroft (pickleballaddictsofcloudcroft.com) Join them! Regular seasonal play at Zenith Park.

Ski Cloudcroft (1920 1/2 Hwy 82) Southernmost ski area in NM—skiing, tubing, wood-fired pizza, and more.

The Lodge Golf Course (703 Corona Ave.) Scottish 9 in the clouds. Visit the pro shop for gear, snacks, and drinks.

Zenith Park (1001 James Canyon Hwy) Meadow in the middle of the village with playgrounds, ice rink, disc golf, walking, path, pickleball courts, and more.

Visit Cloudcroft

Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum and Pioneer Village (1000 Hwy 82) Study the Sacramentos

Sacramento Ranger District Forest Service Ranger Station (4 Lost Lodge Rd.) Visit for maps and forest facts

The Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce (1001 James Canyon Hwy) Stop in to learn about local businesses and events

Michael Nivison Public Library (90 Swallow Pl.) Community hub for all ages

THE CABINS AT CLOUDCROFT

Close to everything but off the main roads. Beautifully sited within the Village



3, 2, 1 Bedroom Cabins
Fire Places ! Kitchen
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www.cloudcroftnm.com

Fill Up/EV Charge

Allsups (10 Curlew Pl) Gas, groceries, beer cave in the middle of Cloudcroft.

High Rolls General Store (845 U.S. 82) A little bit of everything.

Mayhill Country Store (3497 U.S. 82) Travel stop with souvenirs, food, and gas next door.

Otero County Electric Co-op (404 Burro Ave.) Shop Cloudcroft’s downtown while your car charges.

Day Trip

Alameda Park Zoo (35 minutes) Observe critters in the Southwest’s oldest zoo. Educational programs, a playground, and summer camps available. ci.alamogordo.nm.us/816/Alameda-Park-Zoo

American Armed Forces Museum (23 minutes) Archives, memorabilia, and memorial garden. Volunteers welcome. americanarmedforcesmuseum.com

Cadwallader Mountain Farms (14 minutes) High-elevation orchards with scenic views and “u-pick” seasons. Find them on Facebook for updates.

La Luz, NM (24 minutes) Tularosa Basin settlement at the base of the Sacramentos to Mountains.

Lincoln National Forest Scenic Byway (Varies) Winding drives past basin views, mountain meadows, wildlife, and beyond. fs.usda.gov/r03/lincoln/recreation/opportunities/scenic-drives

Mayhill, NM (23 minutes) Neighbors to the east.

Museum of Space History (30 minutes): Exhibits, education, memorials, playground, and theater. nm spacemuseum.org

Nichols Ranch and Orchards (35 minutes) Seasonal harvests and events. nicholsranchandorchards.com

Oliver Lee Memorial State Park (47 minutes) Desert camping, historic site, and hiking. emnrd.nm.gov/spd/find-a-park/oliver-lee-memorial-state-park/

Sacramento, NM (48 minutes) Mountain hamlet nestled in the Sacramentos.

Silver Lake (17 minutes) RV and tent camping, fishing, and more. mescaleroapachetribe.com/parks-rec/silver-lake-official/

Three Rivers Petroglyph Site (59 minutes) One of the largest and most interesting rock art sites in the Southwest. blm.gov/visit/three-rivers-petroglyph-site

Timberon, NM (55 minutes) Mountain community surrounded by gorgeous forest—gas up on your way, no station for miles. timberon.org

Tularosa Basin Museum of History (31 minutes) area history with a full research library, gift shop, and bookstore.

Valley of Fires (80 minutes) Lava park featuring trails, visitor center, picnic areas, and campsite hookups. blm.gov/visit/valley-fires-recreation-area

Weed, NM (41 minutes) Mountain community, home of the Weed Bluegrass Festival. weednm.org

White Sands National Park (45 minutes) Otherworldly chalky dunes—pack sunscreen and water. nps.gov/whsa/index.htm Railroad Dr.)



Get Outside

Cloudcroft Ultra August 15th | Historic Rim Trail (T105) • Choose from 53K, 9.5-mile, 4.75-mile, or Kid’s Dash courses through the Sacramento Mountains at nearly 8,600 feet. Register: wanderlust.run

Moonlight Hike at White Sands National Park Friday, August 28, 7:45 p.m. | Fees Apply. Hike the dunes under a glowing full moon with a White Sands ranger. Tickets go on sale one month prior via Recreation.gov (\$8 ages 16+, \$4 ages 15 and under, plus park entrance fees). Register early — only six tickets per reservation, and tours sell out fast.

Dunes Discovery Morning Hike at White Sands National Park Saturday, August 1, 7:30 a.m. | Free. Meet a ranger at the Dune Life Nature Trail for a one-mile guided hike — a great way to kick off the day in the park. The program is free, but standard park entrance fees apply.

Art and Music

Cloudcroft Art Society The CAS Co-op Gallery, in the Old Red Brick Schoolhouse, is open Saturdays 11 a.m.–4 p.m. (new hours, aligned with the library next door). Fourteen local artists are showing original paintings, photography, pottery, pine-needle baskets, gourds, digital art, prints, and cards all summer.

Art & Wine in the Cool Pines — Aug. 7–9, Sacramento Mountains Museum grounds. CAS potters, wood-crafters, and painters return to their usual spot at the old Train Depot, by the caboose. Fri. 4–8 p.m., Sat. 12–8 p.m., Sun. 12–4 p.m.



Annual Patio Sale — Sat., Aug. 15, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Old Red Brick Schoolhouse Community Room (spilling onto the north patio, weather permitting). A favorite with thrift hunters: art supplies, art books, donated artwork, and household yard-sale finds (no clothing).

Blackbear Coffee Shop hosts an “artist of the month” on their gallery wall. This month, stop in to see Drew Gaines vibrant, sometimes overlooked scenes of life in and around the village. Open during regular business hours, 200 Burro Ave.

Cloudcroft Art Workshops (CAW) host

their week-long summer courses beginning in early June through the first week of August in the Old Red Brick Schoolhouse. Painting, drawing, fiber arts, and more.

Nova Rush at Noisy Water Winery Saturday, August 1, 3–5 p.m. | Singer-songwriter Nova Rush brings neo-indie folk to Noisy Water Winery’s Cloudcroft tasting room. Free live music.

Hear No Evil at Cloudcroft Brewing Company Saturday, August 1, 6-9 p.m. | This popular band comes to Cloudcroft only a few times a year. Designated Mind at Cloudcroft Brewing Company Saturday, August 8, 6–9 p.m. | Classic rock favorites performed live at Cloudcroft Brewing Company.

Community

Art and Wine in the Cool Pines Friday, August 7–Sunday, August 9 10 a.m.–5 p.m. | Sacramento Mountains Museum & Pioneer Village

Browse regional artists, enjoy New Mexico wines, live demonstrations, food vendors, and mountain hospitality in the pines.

Otero County Electric Cooperative Annual Members Meeting Saturday, August 1st | Registration: 8:30 a.m., Meeting 10:00 a.m. Join OCEC for giveaways, member updates, and lunch at the Cloudcroft High School gymnasium.

First Day of School Wednesday, August 5 | Cloudcroft Bears return to their studies and schedules. Find the full calendar at CMSbears.org

Debbi McCurdy Helipad Dedication Elevation Park, Saturday, August 15 11:00 | Join the village in honoring the late Debbi McCurdy and her work fundraising for the new Native Air emergency helipad at Elevation Park. A reception lunch to celebrate Debbi’s life will be held immediately after the dedication at Otero Electric Co-Op, 202 Burro Ave in Cloudcroft. Parking is available in the garage behind OCEC.

Afternoon Tea Time at The Lodge at Cloudcroft Every Saturday | 1-3 p.m., Slow down for an elegant afternoon tea featuring organic teas, tea sandwiches, fresh scones, cakes, homemade jam, butter, and whipped cream. Perfect for catching up with friends or a cozy weekend date. \$30 per person plus tax and gratuity. Reservations required at least 24 hours in advance; call (575) 682-2566.

Trivia Nights at the Distillery Wednesdays 6-8 p.m. | Family-friendly trivia nights, held weekly.



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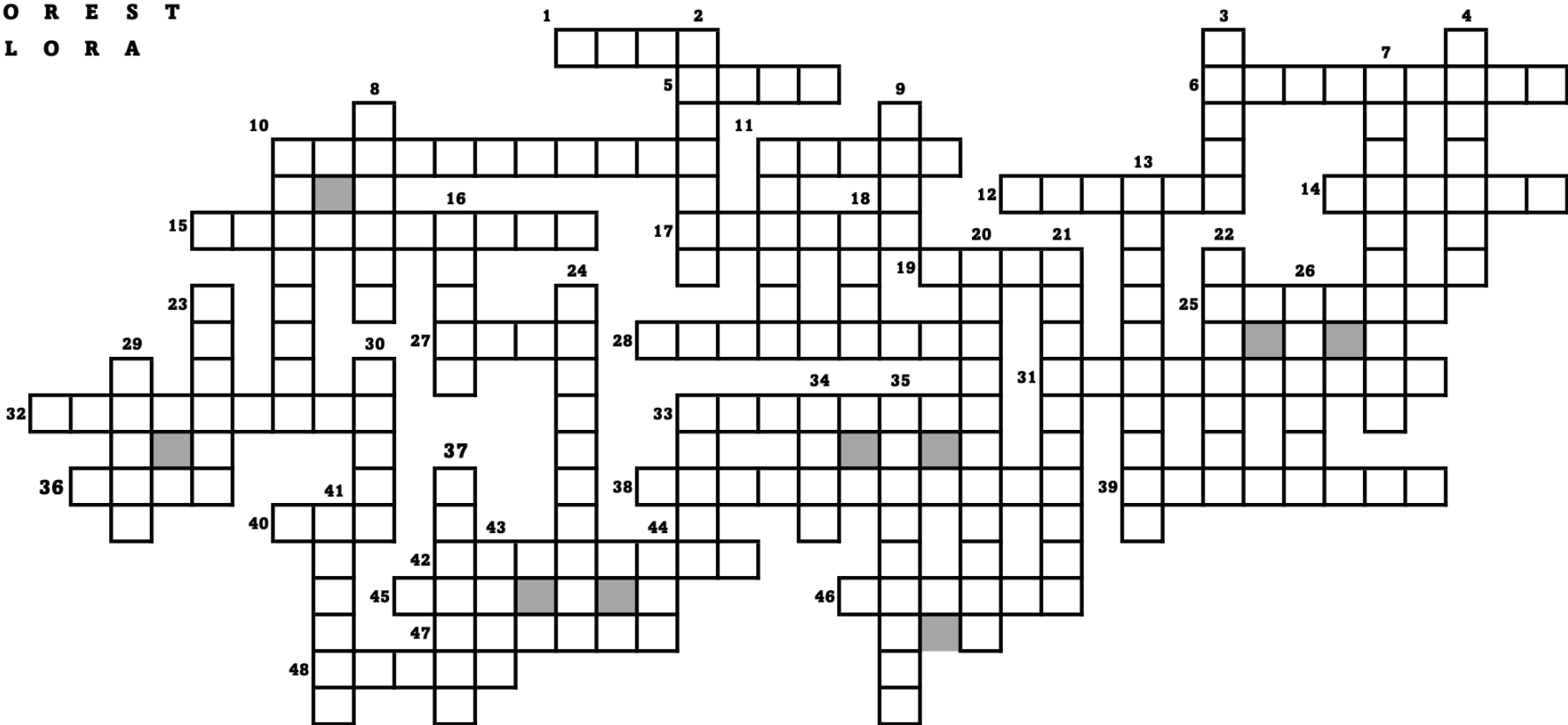
For reservations, call 575-682-2566

www.thelodgeresort.com



“Forest Flora”

F O R E S T
F L O R A



ACROSS:

- 1 – Herb commonly used in toothpaste
- 5 – A frogs favorite beer has lots of
- 6 – Long needled pine, named because its pink?
- 10 – A lethargic forage, canyons name-sake
- 11 – Tear inducing bulb
- 12 – It’s a species of oak, i’d bet on it
- 14 – They call it mellow _____
- 15 – Flowering plant called beardstongue
- 17 – Spindly tree with threatening thorns
- 19 – What a hippie gives to a tree (2 wds.)
- 25 – Quasi-plant which sticks to rocks, and hangs from trees
- 27 – Prehistoric swamp plants, now flammable
- 28 – Yellow in bloom, blowing wishes with plume
- 31 – Red seedy jam fruit, found here but tiny
- 32 – A quasi-plant parasite you might kiss under
- 33 – Furniture grade wood, mountain version is just a shrub
- 36 – Gully fringes with a fractal leaf pattern
- 38 – Southwest shrub with white flowers and native name
- 39 – Camoflauge company sold at walmart
- 40 – A species of tree, and what left after its burned
- 42 – Elementally essential for most natu- ral processes
- 45 – A type of evergreen tree, sounds like animal hair
- 46 – Oaty grass for cereal, beer, or just as a shot of juice
- 47 – Range land tree with nuts commonly roasted
- 48 – Falling tree seeds, heads up!

DOWN:

- 2 – Abundant invasive with spikey purplpe bloom
- 3 – Homestead tree, fruit is crisp and delicious!
- 4 – Conifer with a mans namesake. some call them red
- 7 – Bunches of purple tree fruit, they are to be respected
- 8 – Ground plant with stinging leaves
- 9 – The absorbing anchor
- 10 – Essential for growth: comes from the heavens
- 11 – Rare plant a fantastic flower
- 13 – A colorfully named forage for cattle
- 16 - Shredded wood placed above the garden
- 18 – Essential for growth: of the earth
- 20 – Beehive comb sipping, a flower
- 21 – Fruiting shrub named from aquatic avia
- 22 – The parts with the stamens and the pistils
- 23 – Lambs ear
- 24 – The pre-iphone handheld assisstant
- 26 – Theres a whole festival for this one
- 29 – These trees have eyes, and shakey leaves
- 30 – Georgias finest stonefruit
- 33 – Syrup producer
- 34 – White plumage with medicinal root
- 35 – Culinary tendrils, can be found here wild
- 37 – Bushy short tree with cedar fra- grance
- 41 – High elevation tree, sometimes blue
- 43 – Has an ornate flower, also part of your eye
- 44 – A clear spirit made from the berries of 37 down



Meet the Constructor

Long-time solver, first-time puzzler **Wells Vaiana** has lived in Cloudcroft since 2018, and his love for the village is clearly expressed in each puzzle, which is created without AI or any kind of online assistance. Wells is proud to be contributing these puzzles, and plans to continue doing so until they eventually drive him insane. Enjoy!

dude.wells@gmail.com



Senior Employment Program

- Are you 55 years or older?
- Do you have low or no income?
- Do you want to get paid through on-the-job-training?

If you answered “yes” to the above questions you may be eligible for SEP. Reach out to the Sacramento Mountains Senior center director on how to enroll.

The Senior Employment Program is a training program funded by the state of NM through ALTSD and the Non-Metro AAA. The positions are for 20 hours a week.

Call us at 5756823022



The Cloudcroft Scouts camped for 3 days at Wehinahpai in the Sacramento Mountains. Dylan Smith writes about the experience for Scouting Around in VOICES, p. 22

Mountain Life

Folks Caught on Camera Living Their Best Mountain Life



Kids of Cloudcroft celebrate High Altitude's 30 years



Tyler and Audrey enjoy that 90s life at the High Altitude Block Party



JJ Carrizal and Adrienne West join Leadership Cloudcroft for a tour of the village's wells and springs



(L to R) Emma, Lance, and Mia Mulholland work out with Coach Tami Alexander



Richard Lamb celebrates at the Village 4th of July Parade



Judy Seibenaler displays her handiwork



4th of July Parade Grand Marshal Scott Powell (L) and Mayor Dusty Wiley (R) celebrate the United States' 250th Independence Day



Leadership Cloudcroft tours the village's wells and springs near Ski Cloudcroft



Cub Scouts have a “gaga” time at Camp Geronimo. Read Scout Dylan Smith’s (L) report below

Scouting
Around

Cub Scout Dylan Smith delivers
the August report

This summer, the Cloudcroft Scouts went to two different scout camps: Camp Geronimo in Arizona and Cub Camp at Wehinahpay Mountain Camp here in the Sacramento Mountains. They were both super fun but also really different. We learned a lot, hiked a ton, and did some stuff I never thought I'd do.

Camp Geronimo

At our weeklong camp at Geronimo, leaders Tyler and Kyra brought scouts Aubrey, Alexa, Emma, Jace, Kelton, and me (Dylan). We hiked around 7 miles every day just going to our classes. Our campsite was the farthest one from the dining hall, so we walked even more than other scouts there.

We played GaGa Ball whenever we could. Ga-Ga Ball is a game where you hit a ball with your hand and try and get the ball to hit another person's legs.

We took a bunch of merit badge classes, including Space Exploration, Chess, Archaeology, Leatherwork, Swimming, Shotgun and Rifle Shooting, and Kayaking.

We all swam across the pool in the morning and did an ice plunge to earn the polar plunge patch. The dining hall food was okay, but the snack shack/gift

shop food was really good. We all rode there together in a van, which was chaotic but fun.

We went to a wildlife park and fed giraffes out of our mouths (yes, really). The scoutmaster, Tyler, bought us ice cream for doing it!

We rode horses on a trail, which was my favorite part of camp.

Camp Wehinahpay

At our 3-day camp at Wehinahpay, Leaders Sharon and Kyra brought Aubrey, Emma, Jace, and yours truly. The food at Wehinahpay was a lot better, but I'm sad that there was no Ga- Ga Ball.

We still did a lot of hiking, but at least our campsite was the closest to the dining hall! We all went fishing, did archery, shot BB guns, and climbed the climbing tower, but not all at the same time. In our group, there were as many in the pack as in the troop, so every cub scout had a troop member with them. At the closing campfire, we won the Honor Pack Award for completing extra tasks as a group during camp.

Both camps were awesome in different ways. Geronimo had the most adventures, and Wehinahpay had the best food. I'm tired, a bit sunburned, and probably still smell like campfire and pine, but I'd totally go again.

If you're interested in joining the Cloudcroft Scouts, please contact leaders at info@CloudcroftScouts.org

-Dylan Smith



Celebrating
Smokey Bear: A
Legacy of Wildfire
Prevention

Lincoln National Forest
celebrates a local legend

This month, the Lincoln National Forest is proud to honor none other than Smokey Bear. Every year on August 9th, Smokey Bear's Birthday is celebrated nationwide to recognize his enduring role in educating the public about preventing human-caused wildfires, and here on Smokey's home forest, the celebration feels especially meaningful.

Smokey Bear was first introduced in August 1944 as an icon for wildfire prevention. His earliest poster featured a brown bear wearing a ranger's hat and blue jeans, sharing the now-famous message: "Remember... Only You Can Prevent Wildfires." This slogan has since become America's longest-running public service advertising campaign, carrying Smokey's message across generations.

Smokey's story became even more remarkable in May 1950 right here on the Lincoln National Forest when a human-caused wildfire, known as the Los Tablos Fire, swept through the Capitan Mountains. Two days later the Capitan Gap Fire ignited nearby.

Driven by winds reaching 70 miles per hour, the two fires burned over 17,000 acres and proved extremely difficult to contain.

During firefighting efforts on May 9th, crews discovered a small American black bear cub clinging to a charred tree. Badly singed and frightened, the cub was brought to the fire camp and nicknamed "Hotfoot Teddy" due to his burned feet. After receiving care at the Flatley Ranch, he was flown to a veterinary hospital in Santa Fe.

Soon afterward, the cub's nickname was set aside, and he became known as Smokey Bear, the living embodiment of the wildfire-prevention message. Once fully recovered, Smokey flew to Washington, D.C., where he spent the rest of his life at the National Zoo. Millions of visitors came to meet Smokey and learn about his story.

In 1976 Smokey passed away. He was returned home to the Capitan Mountains here on the Lincoln and laid to rest beneath the shady trees at the Smokey Bear Historical Park, where his legacy continues to inspire future generations.

Today, Smokey's story continues to remind us that each of us plays an important role in preventing wildfires. His legacy reflects both the deep history of fire in this region and the ongoing importance of staying aware and making responsible choices when enjoying the forest.

Wildfire-prevention practices have evolved over the decades, and Smokey's message now extends to simple, everyday actions that support responsible recreation. Securing tow chains, fully extinguishing campfires, avoiding parking in tall grass, and staying alert to changing fire conditions all help protect the Lincoln National Forest and the communities around it.

As we celebrate Smokey's birthday, we invite everyone to join us in practicing smart wildfire-safe habits and sharing his message with friends, family, and fellow forest visitors. Together, we can help keep this landscape, and Smokey's legacy, thriving for generations to come.

Happy Birthday, Smokey!

—Jorden Scott

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Cloudcroft's first CERT team graduates

Celebrating Service

Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department Honors Its Own

The Cloudcroft community gathered at the Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department's main station in June for the department's annual banquet — a tradition that blends recognition, celebration, and smalltown mountain camaraderie.

Started in 2020, the banquet has grown from a simple annual meeting into a festive villagewide event. With live music, dancing, and openstation tours, it has quickly become one of Cloudcroft's most beloved summer traditions. "This year's banquet was a fantastic turnout with over 75 attendees — the biggest turnout yet," said Fire Chief **Erich Wuersching**.

Before presenting awards, Chief Erich highlighted the department's remarkable achievements over the past year. These included:

- Training Cloudcroft's first Community Response Team instructors, laying the foundation for the inaugural CERT team
- Continued success with the Firewise program, including an NFL grant and Clean & Beautiful funding
- Acquisition of two new Rokons
- A successful Fire Prevention Day
- Recognition for CVFD's support of the New Mexico Emergency Management Conference
- Addition of a command truck gifted by the Cloudcroft Police Department
- A 2026 grant award for a new ambulance
- Funding secured for emergency notification sirens
- A successful Wildfire Academy with more than 100 students
- A new SCBA fill station placed in service
- Updated graphics on department trailers
- Eight graduates from the inaugural CERT program
- Numerous EMS certifications from the Region 3 Conference
- Three new Advanced EMTs joining the department

Additional milestones included a successful fundraiser for the new Cloudcroft Helipad — a resource that will support the entire mountain during medical emergencies — and Sparky's highly successful Annual Rummage Sale, whose proceeds provide essential equipment and support for CVFD.

Honoring Excellence: 2026 Award Recipients

This year's awards celebrated the dedication and service of both Fire and EMS personnel. Honorees included:

- Todd Cooper — Firefighter of the Year
- Kathy Denton — Rookie of the Year
- Lewis Hournbuckle — EMT of the Year
- Jason Austin — MVP of the Year
- Robert Booky — 40 Years of Service
- Sue Dreikosen — 25 Years of Service

Members in good standing also received gifts and certificates recognizing their service, including custom mugs and personalized department jackets.

Welcoming Cloudcroft's First CERT Graduates

A highlight of the evening was the introduction of Cloudcroft's first CERT graduates. CERT — the Community Emergency Response Team program — trains local residents to respond safely and effectively during emergencies. Bringing CERT to Cloudcroft marks a major step forward in strengthening community readiness and resilience.

Graduates recognized at the banquet included: Becky Casinger, Brice McCreary, Carlos Ramirez, Cathy Legget, Glenn Legget, Julia Dingee, Patti Benthul, and Rick Benthul.

Looking Ahead

Chief Erich also shared updates on major initiatives planned for the remainder of 2026. The Station 82 facelift and bay addition are moving forward with updated architectural and engineering surveys. Discussions have begun on specifications for the new ambulance. A \$2.5million Firewise thinning application, submitted in partnership with the New Mexico State Forestry and South Central Mountain Resource Conservation & Development Council, is under review. Upcoming community events include the next CERT class (date to be announced), a fall banquet, and Fire Prevention Day.

Closing

The annual banquet once again showcased the strength, dedication, and heart of Cloudcroft's volunteer responders. From seasoned firefighters to brandnew CERT graduates, the evening honored the people who keep the mountain community safe — and the community that proudly stands behind them.

Get Involved

For fire safety information or volunteer opportunities, including the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), contact the Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department at info@cloudcroftfd.com.

— Hilary Kitzman



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The Cloudcroft TSA chapter gathered together at the National TSA Conference in Washington, D.C.

Peak Performance

School starts August 5th, TSA goes national, and sports gear up for the fall

With summer drawing to a close here in Cloudcroft and the new school year just around the corner, there’s plenty to celebrate: our Cloudcroft Technology Student Association (TSA) chapter has returned from the National TSA Conference in Washington, D.C. with outstanding results, and our athletic program is gearing up for another competitive season of football, volleyball, cross-country, and cheerleading.

Cloudcroft TSA Earns Top Marks at National Stage

After months of preparation—and a feature in last month’s column—our Technology Student Association chapter took its talents to the national stage in Washington, D.C. I’m proud to share how this amazing chapter performed and how we represented our community among the best in the nation.

After competing against some of the top TSA students in the country, Cloudcroft delivered an impressive showing across multiple events. The Senior Solar Sprint team—Alexander Newton, Gena Davis, Christopher Yousif, and Jadon Myers—earned a top-10 national finish as finalists with their solar-pow-

ered car, walking the national stage in the process. I placed in the top 12 nationally as a semifinalist in Promotional Design.

The drone team—Nathan Brokaw, Logan McNeil, and Michael Anthony—finished in the top 16. Hannah Ferdetta also represented Cloudcroft well, placing in the top 24 in Transportation Modeling. Together, these results reflect the creativity, dedication, and passion of our chapter at the national level.

As the conference concluded, another milestone was reached for Cloudcroft TSA. Parker Muncy and I were officially inducted as New Mexico TSA state officers, representing not only our chapter but our entire community at the state level. It is an incredible honor to serve, and we look forward to the year ahead. With a strong new chapter team and growing momentum, the future of Cloudcroft TSA is bright.

From Nationals to New Seasons

While Cloudcroft TSA has made its mark on the national stage, the excitement at home is just beginning. Fall sports—football, volleyball, cross-country, and cheerleading—are ramping up, and Cloudcroft athletes are already preparing to take the field, court, and course for another strong season.

Our cheer program made the most of summer as well, traveling to Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) camp in El Paso and delivering stand-out performances. The team earned

third place in sideline cheer and second place in cheer with music, and also brought home a UCA Spirit Stick. Their success earned the team an invitation to perform at the All-American Citrus Bowl in Orlando, Florida, while senior and leadership members were selected to participate in the Walt Disney World Main Street Parade. Baylee Craine and Levi Edwards were further recognized as UCA All-Americans, earning the opportunity to perform in Hawaii.

From Washington, D.C to our home fields and courts, Cloudcroft students are representing their community with pride. Whether in academics, leadership, or athletics, students are ready to build on this success and make this year count. And don’t forget to keep a lookout for the upcoming football, volleyball, and cross-country schedule located on the Cloudcroft Municipal School website.

—Paula Finch

Cloudcroft Museum Fest

20+ Museums from southern New Mexico came to Cloudcroft to display exhibits and to exchange ideas

Saturday, July 18, this author, the organizer of the Cloudcroft Museum Fest, spoke briefly and handed an American flag to Cloudcroft Mayor Dusty Wiley. The mayor briefly spoke of the virtues of Cloudcroft and handed the flag to Connor Smith, the senior member of Cloudcroft Scouting, who placed it in its holder. The Scouts then led the group, museum presenters and board members, as well as history-curious visitors, to Cloudcroft in the pledge of allegiance.

With that opening, the Sacramento Mountains Historical Society Cloudcroft Museum Fest, in planning since December, started its Exposition in the partially renovated Ice Rink. Artesia, Deming, Carlsbad, Hobbs, Lordsburg, NMSU Archives, Carrizozo, Las Cruces Railroad Museum, Alamogordo, White Sands Missile Range, Kingston Ghost Town, to name a few of the presenters. Each came to display samples of its distinctive collections and, of course, to encourage visitors to come and enjoy the entire museum.

A short time later, representatives from the museums made their way to the CLOC Pavilion for the Roundtable session of the Cloudcroft Museum Fest. Here, museum personnel had a chance to describe their needs and frustra-

tions, exchange ideas, and learn from each other.

With 30-40 people in attendance, the group decided to break into two discussion groups: one focused on developing alliances and seeking grant funds, the other on museum operations and collection management, including inventory and deaccession. Many of the museums are small and fragile and alliances can provide enhanced information and techniques as well as participation in grants that are generally restricted to larger organizations.

The Cloudcroft Museum Fest was not all talk. New Mexico Rails to Trails Association opened Bonnie’s Trestle – an 1899 wooden trestle restored by NMRTA – to the public and provided both a shuttle to the site and an explanation of the restoration process. Think about it, Rails to Trails operates an “open-air” museum. No building, and artifacts – railbed – that is hard to steal.

What games did kids play in 1910? Jacks and marbles are two examples. At the east end of the Ice Rink, kids of all ages could borrow sets of jacks and marbles and learn to play these – no batteries needed – games.

The attendees are already thinking about what the next Fest should be like – rotating the host museum, annual or every other year, roundtable only, and more.

Thanks to all who helped: Ashley White and Jini Turri in the Village office, Cindi Bradshaw at the Chamber of Commerce, Cory Herman, who leases the Ice Rink, and his contractor crews, the Tularosa Basin Historical Society and Kingston members who helped with the setup, and Sacramento Mountain Historical Society members of volunteered for one task after another.

—Lynn Melton

Life in the Sacramentos with Lyn Canham

Dark sky observations and upcoming events

Most of us who live and visit here know the Sacramento Mountains hold dark-sky wonders. If you live close to a mountain Village, the skies would be a little bit more muted, but for both the communities and all of the near-empty lands in-between, there is little to dampen night-sky viewing with the naked eye of galaxies, constellations, meteor showers and occasional comets.

The developers and operators of telescopes knew this and sited the Dunn Solar Telescope (albeit, a daylight object-imaging mission), the New Mexico State University-operated Apache Peak Observatory and its four astronomical telescopes, some former Air Force telescope observatory sites, and the New Mexico Skies Observatories locations near Mayhill, in the southern Sacramento Mountains.

For the rest of us mere mortals, the dark-sky viewing is a tremendous asset to living here (I would hope readers feel that way). Cloudcroft and Otero County are aware of the observatory missions and needs, as well as the public’s wishes, and have Dark Sky ordinances in place that specify the use of downward-facing outdoor lighting with side-light shielding, a maximum color temperature of 3000K, total lumen output specifications, and curfews for non-essential lighting, for example.



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Any given summer night in these mountains during cloud-breaks in the monsoon, it is highly worth stepping outside and looking up. There is the astonishing Milky Way, famous summer constellations like Sagittarius and Scorpio in the southern sky, the nebula and/or red star giants within some of these constellations, planets, sometimes even planetary conjunctions, and meteor showers that can all be seen with the naked eye or with binoculars.

However, we have more than ‘everyday’ night sky viewing delights coming up fast here in August 2026. Underway as early as July 17, the Perseids meteor shower, often considered the best shower of the year worldwide, will be illuminating the sky with thrilling light streaks with its peak on the night of August 12-13. Sky watchers could witness 50 to 100 meteors an hour as Earth travels through the remnant dust trail of Comet Swift-Tuttle.

What is it like to view the night sky here? ...It’s later in the night of August 12, or maybe the early hours of August 13, and you’ve made your way outside. The odds were against it, as late as it is. Outside, it is so quiet. Not even the crickets are ‘crick’ing. You have to step carefully, as your vision is not yet adjusted to the dark. After a good 10 minutes to mostly (80%) dark-adapt your eyes, you look up, and every millimeter of the sky is packed with stars. Many are duller, of course, but they can still be seen and included in the perception of the infinitesimal quilt of stars.

What stands out first is the fuzzy arc of The Milky Way, with its alluring darker and lighter patches spread throughout its length. If meteor-watching before bed, the Milky Way would be a little east of directly overhead, but later on, its beauty would stretch directly overhead.

To observe the meteor shower, be prepared to “see out of the corners of your eyes”, i.e., be ready to rely on your peripheral vision. Our rods are most active in dark vision as well as motion circumstances, so the rods are natural helpers in the detection of nighttime movement like meteors.

The Perseids are best viewed in the ‘wee’ hours after midnight, especially 4 to 5 a.m., mostly in the northeast sky. They appear to come out of the constellation Perseus - thus, their name; you will see most of them originate NE and travel out from there. This year’s show should be excellent, with the peak viewing nights during the new moon. Of course, viewing is always cloud-dependent, since it is still the monsoon season. Pray for dry weather!



VFW Post 11999 Dispatch

The Post Continues Tradition of Service to Cloudcroft Community and America’s Veterans

VFW Post 11999 recently celebrated a busy and successful Independence Day season highlighted by the Post’s leadership role in Cloudcroft’s July 4th parade, continued support of visiting service members, and the completion of its annual Mountain Assault retreat benefiting soldiers and their families from the Fort Bliss Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU).

While supporting Cloudcroft’s Christmas in July Jamboree, Post Commander Paul Benshoof recognized the many Post members, Scout Troop 958, community partners, and volunteers who contributed to the success of the Independence Day parade. The Post received numerous compliments from residents and visitors for leading the parade and helping launch the Village’s patriotic celebration honoring the nation’s 250th anniversary.

“Events like this demonstrate what a small community can accomplish when people come together,” Benshoof said. “Our Post is proud to support Cloudcroft’s traditions and help create opportunities for residents, visitors, veterans, and service members to celebrate together.”

This year’s parade also provided an opportunity to welcome soldiers from the Vermont Army National Guard’s 3rd Battalion, 172nd Mountain Infantry Regiment, who joined the parade formation while training at Fort Bliss in preparation for an upcoming deployment. The soldiers brought a special connection to the celebration when their Battalion Commander shared that two members of the unit had recently married before their deployment. One soldier serves as an infantryman and the other as a mechanic, and both were scheduled to deploy separately to locations within the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility.

Recognizing their service and sacrifice, members of VFW Post 11999 helped make the soldiers’ honeymoon visit to Cloudcroft a memorable experience. Thanks to the generosity of the Cabins at Cloudcroft, the newlyweds spent their weekend in a comfortable, well-appointed honeymoon suite, providing them an opportunity to relax and enjoy the beauty and hospitality of the Sacramento Mountains before their upcoming deployments. “It was an honor to welcome these soldiers to our community and show them the appreciation they deserve,” Benshoof said.



Graham Cracker Apple Flambé

Dylan Kincaid shares a simple yet elevated dessert inspired by classic apple pie, featuring toasted honey graham crackers, warm caramelized apples, brown butter ice cream, and a touch of flaky salt. The optional olive oil finish adds a sophisticated contrast to the sweetness and richness of the dish.

Flambé Warning: This dish involves igniting alcohol with an open flame. Use caution when preparing or serving; keep flammable materials away and allow flames to fully extinguish before handling.



Serves: 4

Ingredients:

Toasted Graham Cracker Crumble:

- 6 honey graham cracker sheets
- 2 tablespoons salted butter

Rum-Flambéed Apples:

- 4 medium Washington Red Delicious apples, peeled, cored, and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons salted butter
- ½ cup packed brown sugar

- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Pinch of salt
- 1 ounce dark rum

To Finish

- Brown butter ice cream
- Flaky sea salt
- High-quality extra virgin olive oil (optional)

Directions

Place the graham crackers in a zip-top bag and crush them into a coarse crumble.

In a skillet over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons of salted butter. Add the graham cracker crumbs and toast, stirring frequently, until golden brown and fragrant, about 1 minute. Be careful not to burn them. Divide the toasted crumble evenly among four ramekins or bowls and allow to cool.

Peel, core, and cut the apples into ½-inch cubes.

Remove ice cream from freezer to thaw for a perfect scoop.

In a saucepan over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons of salted butter. Add the apples, brown sugar, cinnamon, lemon juice, and a small pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the sugar melts into

a glossy syrup and the apples are tender but still hold their shape, about 4–6 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract. Add the rum and carefully ignite with a long lighter to flambé. Allow the flames to burn out naturally, then return the pan to low heat for 1–2 minutes until the syrup slightly thickens and coats the apples.

Spoon the warm apples and syrup over the toasted graham cracker crumble. Top each serving with a generous scoop of brown butter ice cream and drizzle with the reserved apple syrup.

Finish with a pinch of flaky sea salt. For an elevated version, add a few drops of high-quality extra virgin olive oil just before serving.

Serve immediately while the apples are warm and the ice cream is beginning to melt.



Pre-K at Little Paws Learning Center – Now Enrolling!

Enrollment for the 26–27 New Mexico Pre-K year.

-  School starts August 5th.
-  Children must be 4 years old before September 1st to enroll.
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The Post’s commitment to supporting service members continued with the completion of its signature annual event, Mountain Assault, held July 17–19 at the Sacramento Camp & Conference Center. Approximately 40 soldiers and family members from the Fort Bliss Soldier Recovery Unit participated in the weekend retreat, which provides an opportunity for rest, recreation, fellowship, and strengthening family connections.

Despite periods of inclement weather, participants enjoyed a variety of activities throughout the weekend, including horseback riding, ATV tours, weapons activities, and challenge courses. More importantly, the retreat provided soldiers and their families a chance to step away from the stresses of recovery and rehabilitation while experiencing the welcoming atmosphere of the Sacramento Mountains.

The event was also recognized by community and veteran leaders. Distinguished guests visiting the retreat included VFW Department of New Mexico Commander Mack Dyer and New Mexico Representative John Henry, who both addressed participants and expressed their appreciation for the soldiers’ service. Representative Henry also presented VFW Post 11999 with a certificate of appreciation recognizing the Post’s dedication in organizing and hosting Mountain Assault.

Established in 2011 as the Warrior in Transition event, Mountain Assault was created to provide ill and injured soldiers an opportunity to recharge away from the challenges of medical recovery. Over the years, it has grown into one of VFW Post 11999’s signature programs, focused on healing, camaraderie, family support, and community connection.

In addition to its veteran outreach programs, Post 11999 recently achieved All-American status, a prestigious VFW recognition honoring excellence in membership, community involvement, and support of VFW programs.

The accomplishment is especially meaningful considering the Post’s size compared with many significantly larger VFW Posts throughout the nation. Through the dedication of its members, Post 11999 has become a visible and active part of the Cloudcroft community, supporting local events, honoring veterans, assisting service members, and building partnerships throughout the region.

“Our success is a direct reflection of the commitment and generosity of our members,” Benshoof said. “Every volunteer hour, every community event, and every effort to support veterans and service members contributes to the impact our Post has on Cloudcroft and beyond.”

VFW Post 11999 continues to support the community through veteran programs, patriotic events, youth activities, and partnerships with local organizations. For more information about the Post and its activities, contact Post leadership at vfwcloudcroft@outlook.com.

—Paul Benshoof





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Scout meets one of her heroes, Simone Biles

Scout Fair: Rising Above

Local teen doesn't let a diagnosis determine her success

by Hannah Dean

Scout Fair doesn't try to hide her scar.

The long, curved line running across her head from her second brain surgery is something to be proud of, she says, pushing back her silky, light brown hair to show the spot fully.

"She likes it when people ask her about it," said her mother, Lauren. "She likes to tell her story so people just understand."

Scout, 14, is an eighth grader at Cloudcroft Schools. For the past three and a half years, she has returned to full competitive gymnastics, maintained near-perfect grades, and gone to the national stage with the Technology Student Association (TSA), all with a brain tumor.

The Diagnosis

Scout was nine years old and living in Alamogordo when the headaches started in October 2022. Her mother assumed they were migraines. They worsened. Scout began missing school. Then came the vomiting.

An emergency room visit and an MRI delivered the answer.

"The doctor walked in and said, 'Scout has a brain tumor. An ambulance from El Paso Children's Hospital is on the way,'" Lauren said.

Scout underwent her first emergency craniotomy within days.

Lauren then found St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, through late-night research that revealed St. Jude was actively studying Scout's specific diagnosis: a craniopharyngioma, a rare tumor of the pituitary gland.

"I emailed them on a Friday night at 10 p.m.," Lauren said. "By 9 a.m. Monday morning, I had a call from the head oncologist himself."

Doctors planned 36 rounds of proton radiation. During Scout's first session, she temporarily lost her vision. A second emergency craniotomy followed. Two weeks later, she began six con-

secutive weeks of radiation.

"While the rest of our family was falling apart in fear," Lauren said, "Scout carried enough strength and grace for all of us."

Life Now

Scout describes her medical journey in the same matter-of-fact way she talks about gymnastics placements or TSA competitions.

She acknowledges ongoing challenges. She does not dwell on them.

"I don't have any issues or anything wrong right now," she said following her most recent appointment. "They saw that it was shrinking."

The tumor is inoperable. Surgeons cannot remove it without risking damage to the optic nerve and other sensitive brain structures. Radiation aimed to eliminate any surviving cells. Scout returns to St. Jude every six months for scans. Her most recent results showed the tumor shrinking, with no new complications.

"We're approaching the five-year mark," Lauren said. "The closer we get to five years of clean scans, the better her chances."

Competitive Spirit

Scout has been trained in gymnastics since the age of two or three. Surgery and recovery cost her nearly a full year. When she returned, she closed the gap behind her teammates over a two-year period.

This year, Scout advanced to the Gold team, a more competitive level, and entered the group category for the first time.

At the most recent state competition, she placed eighth all-around out of approximately 200 competitors and took third on both the theme and vault events. In each of her previous two competitive years, she won the all-around first-place title at the state level.

"She still misses a lot of gymnastics

because of St. Jude visits," Lauren said. "Yet she somehow manages not only to make the podium, but to crush it."

Scout plans to keep pursuing her passions.

As a member of the Technology Student Association, she competed in the Career Prep event, presenting herself as a national park ranger candidate with a resume, cover letter and mock job interview.

"It's a good skill to know how to make a resume and cover letter," Scout said. "That's something you'll need in life."

A park ranger is not what she has in mind in the long term. Scout wants to be a doctor or a geologist — the latter driven, in part, by the fossil-rich landscape surrounding Cloudcroft, which she explores on hikes.

She carries near-straight A's and, according to Lauren, treats the occasional B as a problem requiring an immediate fix.

Outside school and competition, Scout paints landscapes, mountains and trees, from the balcony of her home, a hobby she shares with her brother Jett and stepdad Mason.

A Community Behind Her

The family moved to Cloudcroft in 2023, but came to the mountains to play any chance they could from Alamogordo, where they had lived since 2018.

"The best move we made was moving up here," Lauren said. "This community is so tight. Just the way people hold together. I have no doubt we will always have support."

Scout agrees. Asked whether she feels supported by the community, she answered without hesitation: "very."

Lauren said Scout's empathy comes from experience. She has known children at St. Jude who did not survive. "She knows what real problems are like."

Scout herself seems less focused on what she has been through than on what comes next: the next competition, the next TSA event, and hanging out with friends and family. She enters ninth grade in the fall.

She is ready.

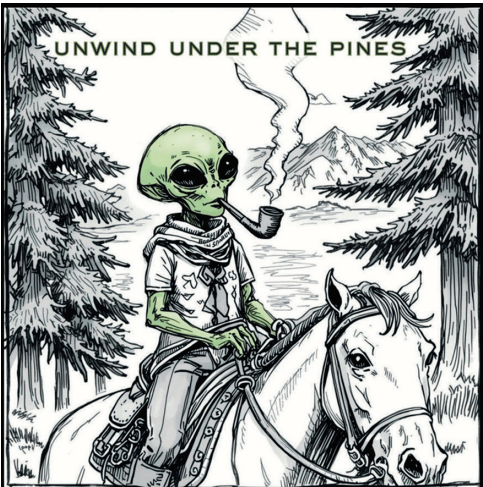


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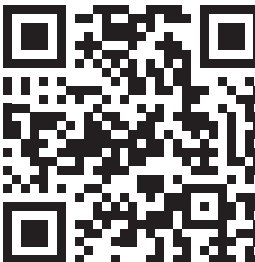




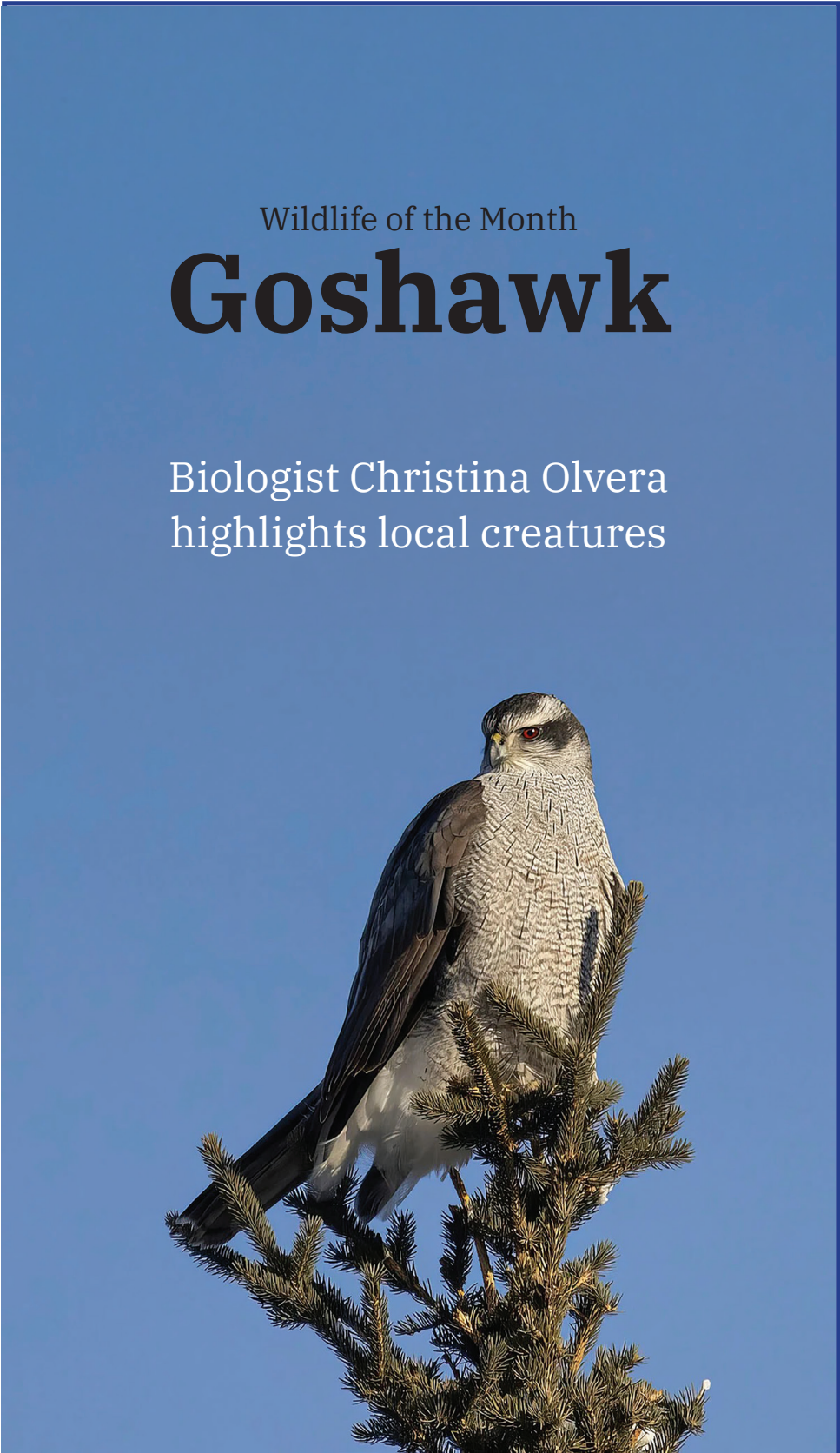
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From the editors of | Cloudcroft Reader & Mountain Monthly



Wildlife of the Month

Goshawk

Biologist Christina Olvera highlights local creatures

Among our lesser known native wildlife here are northern goshawks. Goshawks are highly territorial and fiercely protective of their ntes and young. The young hatch with bright yellow eyes, and as they age turn bright red. **Goshawks** are found in mixed-coniferous forests, preferring large, old-growth trees and closed canopies to nest in and hunt for small birds and mammals along forest edges and open areas.

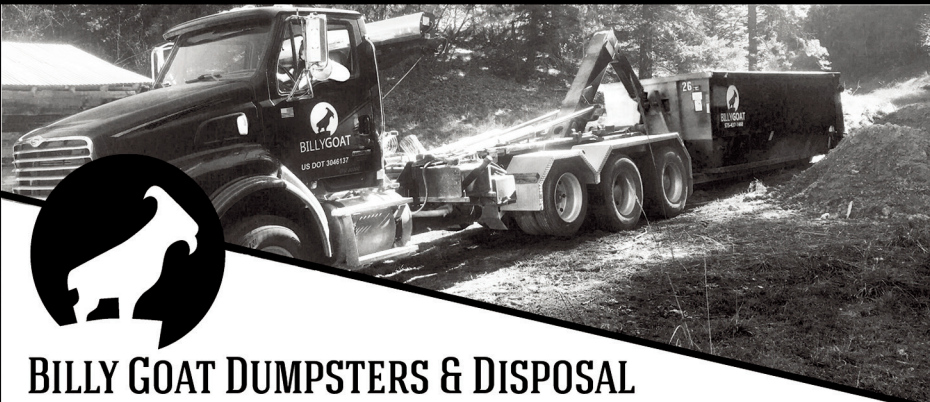
Their speed, agility, and exceptional hunting abilities have been admired for more than a millennium. They are such stealthy and successful hunters, they were once used by European nobility during the Middle Ages to hunt and put food on the table. According to legend, Attila the Hun, King of the Huns from 440-453 AD, had a symbol of a goshawk on his war helmet as a symbol of ferocity that mirrored his reputation.

For over a thousand years people respected the goshawk’s hunting prowess – today, people should respect their fierce protective instincts. Beware of goshawks in the area while hiking during the summer – goshawks are known to swoop people who they fear may be getting too close to their nest and babies! This can potentially cause harm not just to yourself, but also the birds. Exercise caution and keep your head up. If you see a goshawk making alarm calls or making defensive wing movements, hike out while being aware of the bird’s whereabouts – goshawks are less likely to swoop or attack if you remain calm and avoid eye contact.

To see what birds folks are finding in the forest and around the village, check out <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L19878435>. Maybe you can add a species to the growing list!

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Faces & Places



Yarbrough’s many works: growing up in Cloudcroft, keeping the library open, and now completing an artist’s residency at a National Park

For three summer weeks, **Ayla Yarbrough** watched a million bats pour out of a hole in the ground each evening.

“That’s my favorite part of being there,” said Yarbrough, 19, who grew up in Cloudcroft and just completed the artist residency at Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

“I’ve loved it since I was a kid. I grew up going to Carlsbad Caverns, and we visited so many times. It was nice to be there and see it through a different lens.”

Yarbrough’s previous body of work, paintings of sometimes-dead birds and flora, carries the precision of Audubon illustrations. Closely observed, taxonomically faithful, and arranged with the spare elegance of fine china patterns, negative space does as much work as the subject.

She came home from the Caverns with something new: landscape.

The park kept one of those paintings.

“They don’t have it on display right now,” Yarbrough said, “but they eventually hope to have a wall dedicated to all the different artwork throughout the program.”

Living in the Park

Cloudcroft readers may know Yarbrough from the Michael Nivison Public Library, where she helped keep the doors open and the summer program running during a difficult stretch of staff turnover in recent years.

She reached out to Carlsbad Caverns in January after a family visit the summer before.

Art From the Dark: Ayla Yarbrough at Carlsbad Caverns

Cloudcroft native Ayla Yarbrough just completed a three-week artist residency at Carlsbad Caverns National Park, and the park kept one of her paintings

by **Hannah Dean**

The program accepted her for a three-week stay at a cabin on park property, a studio in the visitor center, and five or six hours of painting each day in front of visitors who wandered through.

“It was my first time painting in front of that many people,” she said. “It was one of my favorite parts — getting to paint while people watched me paint. That was definitely new for me.”

Before leaving, she led a one-time watercolor postcard workshop for park visitors.

According to Yarbrough, the residency program itself is young. Carlsbad Caverns now brings in new artists every three weeks from May through October across media: painters, photographers, and sculptors.

Conservation and Creation

Yarbrough’s path to conservation biology runs straight through Cloudcroft. She grew up hiking and camping with her family, drawing wildlife as far back as she can remember.

“It’s something I’ve known I wanted to major in since I was 13 or 14,” she said.

In Fort Collins, Yarbrough finished her freshman year at Colorado State University(CSU), where she’s majoring in fish and wildlife conservation biology and eyeing a possible education minor.

The two pursuits, science and painting, aren’t in tension for her.

“I think a lot of people assumed I was going to go to art school,” she said, “and it threw some of my family off when I didn’t. But for me, my artwork directly shows people why conservation is important. That’s my goal with some of my work. I want to paint these animals that maybe don’t get as much recognition.”

This spring, she was also part of CSU’s Engage Scholars program, doing community conservation projects in the Fort Collins area, including planting trees in Rocky Mountain National Park. That experience, she said, pointed her back toward the Caverns residency, illustrating the value of meeting people doing real park work and getting a foot in the door.

She returns to Colorado State in August.

She said of the residency, “It gave me something to look forward to. It really made me love it out there.”

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- Guest Speaker Mark Gutzman

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