

November 2025

MountainMonthly™

Your Guide to Cloudcroft and the Sacramento Mountains **FREE**



VENUES / ICE RINK

El Paso Hockey Owner Promises Cool Investment in Cloudcroft

A 20-year lease agreement envisions upgrades, longer seasons, and youth hockey

by **HANNAH DEAN**

Cory Herman is a Canadian-born entrepreneur, ice sports advocate, and owner of the El Paso Rhinos hockey teams—and the new long-term lessee for Cloudcroft’s James Sewell Ice Rink.

As the founder of Southwest Sports Solutions and a driving force behind El Paso’s thriving ice arena scene, Herman brings decades of experience in rink operations and youth program development to Cloudcroft.

Herman signed a 20-year lease with the Village of Cloudcroft for the Ice Rink—which

would start next year, in the fall of 2026—and plans to invest in the town’s outdoor recreation economy, promising both local benefits and tourism growth.

From Saskatchewan to the Southwest

Herman grew up in rural Saskatchewan, Canada, in a farming family, spending winters at the small community rink where his father volunteered.

There, he learned ice care, rink management, and the value of grassroots sports.

Continued, page 2

THIS ISSUE



Mural expert Samantha Odom paints two stories high on her latest work. Discover her art through an Art Walk in our LOCAL GUIDE, *pg. 11*



MOUNTAIN LIFE in pictures. *pg 18.*



Catch up with LIBRARY news and community contributions in our VOICES section, *pg 20*



Find where to shop, eat, and stay awhile in our LISTINGS, *pg 12*



Local Partnership Acquires 37 Year-Old Mountain Monthly Newspaper

With this issue, the Mountain Monthly has new owners, the third in its 37 years of publishing. **Darrell Pher**, owner of the Mountain Monthly since 2007, announced he has sold the monthly newspa-

per to a local company owned by (from left to right) **Chris Hearne**, **Hannah Dean**, and **Justin Muñoz**. Read Pehr’s farewell column looking back, and new editor Hannah Dean’s vision for the future. *Page 6.*



Corey Herman hopes to make Cloudcroft a destination for youth hockey

After years of traveling to play competitive hockey, the El Paso Buzzards pro team recruited Herman in the late 1990s.

A career-ending injury shifted his path toward youth hockey coaching and program development. By 2001, he had taken over El Paso’s youth hockey program, eventually relocating it to a custom-built rink and creating the El Paso Rhinos in 2005.

Under his leadership, the Rhinos became a popular community presence and the anchor for a diverse set of programs, including youth leagues, adult hockey, and figure skating clubs.

Herman says “Rhinos games tend to sell out.”

Cloudcroft Ice Rink Refurb and Goals

The collaboration between Southwest Sports Solutions and the Village of Cloudcroft happened in partnership with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board with help from Debi Lee from the Council of Governments, according to Parks and Rec. Chair Matt Willett.

On October 1, 2025, the Village Council unanimously adopted an ordinance granting a 20-year lease of the James Sewell Ice Rink to Southwest Sports Solutions.

The long-term lease, Herman says, is essential to justify the scale of investment—specialized ice plant and flooring, dasher boards, acrylic glass, a Zambo-ni, LED lighting, a scoreboard and sound system, staff training, and extensive program equipment.

The new ice plant and flooring

will allow for longer skate seasons in Cloudcroft.

The goal is to operate from October 1st through March 31st each year.

Mayor Tim King announced through Facebook that the agreement has been sent to the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration for approval.

By fall 2026, Herman plans to transform the existing rink into a fully operational ice facility with consistent, high-quality ice throughout the six-month season.

Planned Programming and Community Impact

According to Herman, the Cloudcroft rink will offer:

- The opportunity for physical education courses and school use;
- Public skating and birthday parties;
- Learn-to-skate and learn-to-play youth hockey;
- Youth hockey tournaments;
- Competitive hockey leagues and “house league” weekends, possibly pairing El Paso and Cloudcroft teams;
- Adult hockey opportunities;
- Figure skating programs, and more.

Herman emphasizes hiring and training local staff, supported by his experienced El Paso team, ensuring employees know how to maintain the ice and run programs.

Seasonal passes for locals, scholarship programs for children, and beginner-friendly ice equipment are part of his inclusivity

goals.

“We really want to make it affordable so that everybody can use the ice rink,” Herman says.

“Our whole dream would be to have a high school, junior varsity, and varsity hockey team out of the Cloudcroft school,” Herman continues.

Tourism and Economic Benefits

Herman sees the rink as both a community hub and a tourism draw. He plans to host youth hockey tournaments to bring in teams from across New Mexico, Texas, and beyond—boosting the village’s economy.

Herman hopes to collaborate with other businesses, knitting the rink into the town’s broader visitor experience.

“We just want to grow all the different programs. We also want to bring youth hockey tournaments to Cloudcroft. That’s good for the town, with the hotels, restaurants, and different stores. Teams are really gonna want to come to Cloudcroft because it’s a mountain town,” Herman says.

Connection to Cloudcroft

Herman and his family own a mountain home and have visited Cloudcroft for years.

For him, this project blends his expertise with his love of the mountain community, creating what he calls “a great quality-of-life program” for local children, families, and guests.

Learn more about the James Sewell Natural Ice Rink in our interview with longtime lessee and operator Donald Wiklund on pg. 6



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Burning Sunday



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Reflections

The mountain view from the editor’s desk and beyond.

18 Years of Publishing the Mountain Monthly

By Darrell Pehr
former *Mountain Monthly* Owner/Editor

After 230 editions, almost 10,000 pages and a lot of late nights (even some “all-nighters”), our *Mountain Monthly* project is complete!

We bought the newspaper in 2006 from Gary and Gloria Wood, founders and operators of the newspaper for 18 years. We published the paper for 19 years, and now we’ve passed it on to a great group of people. I hope the new owners have fun with this wonderful community service for even longer.



I say “community service” because that is really what it has been for Linda and I. Linda completed a more than 32-year career as a math educator and I worked all these years for universities and now a trade journal as a science editor, but the *Mountain Monthly* was a special project we could work on together, hoping to make a difference in a place we love.

Of course, we didn’t do it by ourselves. We’ve had some amazing employees who handled day-to-day duties (thanks, Liz and Rachel, for all your great work). We welcomed the creativity of writers, poets, photographers and artists, each of whom lent their time

and talents to communicate, inform and inspire others about our special place on the mountaintop. We had steadfast support from incredibly loyal advertisers, some of whom never missed sharing their message in all 230 editions!

We are grateful, relieved that the *Mountain Monthly*’s future is in good hands, and eager for the next exciting chapters to unfold in our lives. The void left by the absence of the *Mountain Monthly* is already being filled by travel, more time with family and friends and often-put-off hobbies, recreation and creative activity, which for me will include, literally, new chapters as I pursue overdue challenges as a novelist.

Thanks, mountain friends: contributors, advertisers, employees and most of all, readers. As I’ve said in many prior columns, maybe we’ll see you on the trail.

...And The Road Ahead

By Hannah Dean
Editor and Partner, *Mountain Monthly*

This month marks a new beginning for *Mountain Monthly*, and I couldn’t be more grateful to step into the role of Editor. For nearly four decades, this paper has woven itself into the fabric of Cloudcroft, reflecting the voices and vision



of our mountain community. Now, as your neighbor, fellow parent, artist, and local business owner, I’m excited to carry that tradition forward.

Like many of you, my love for Cloudcroft runs deep. My husband and I raise our daughter in this forest’s wild beauty, trade stories over mugs at our local coffee shops, and cheer for our kids on game day.

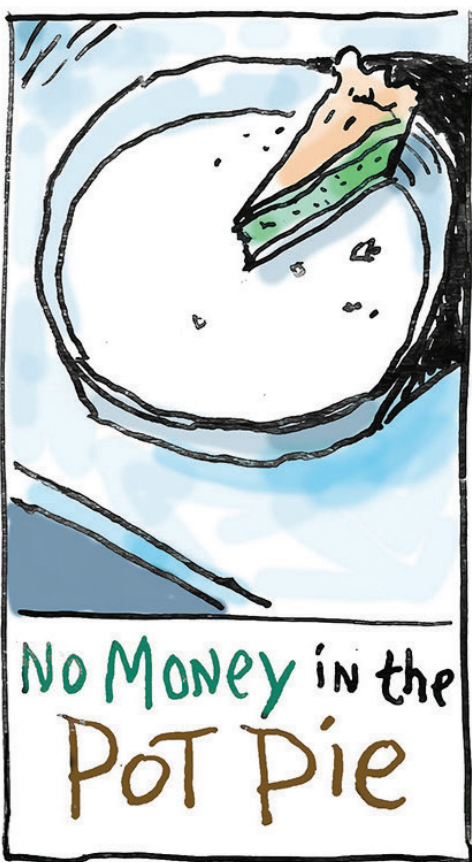
Our best ideas happen over backyard barbecues or on winding trails—never in isolation. The *Monthly* should be much the same: engaged, open, and true to the mountain life we all share.

Joining me are Justin and Chris, whose families and ventures stand shoulder-to-shoulder with yours in shaping the future of our village. We bring our own histories, but share one goal: to make these pages a vibrant reflection of your stories, businesses, events, and traditions that draw us all together.

In this first issue, you’ll notice something new: our Local Guide, which invites you to explore, connect, and celebrate our community. Whether you’re a lifelong local, a weekend wanderer, or a fresh arrival, we want to be your guide.

You’ll also notice some old favorites, like the “Around Town” section, now called *Mountain Life*.

I’m deeply grateful to be part of what comes next. Here’s to telling our story, together.



Spotlight

Donald Wiklund and Cloudcroft Ice Rink’s Final Natural Season

Cloudcroft’s James Sewell Ice Rink is seeing the end of an era: its last season as a natural, outdoor rink is at hand, closing a unique chapter in New Mexico’s winter traditions.

by Hannah Dean



Through a recent interview with long-time lessee Donald Wiklund, the rink’s history, culture, and the sweat behind every skating day are coming into focus for one last winter season before the rink lease changes hands.

The Rink’s Special Place in Cloudcroft

The James Sewell Ice Rink has long been a rare, nostalgic draw for families across the Southwest.

Sitting at 8,650 feet in Cloudcroft’s centrally-located Zenith Park, it brings winter magic to a region where snow can be unreliable. As Wiklund put it, “This is the southernmost outdoor, all-natural [ice rink] in the United States. There’s something to be said about that.”

Twenty-Six Years of “Luck and Logic”

For nearly three decades, the Wiklund family kept the rink alive.

At the recent public hearing

to adopt an ordinance for the new ice rink lease in the Village Chambers on October 1st, Donald recalled, “I’ve been doing this for 26 years... I just want a fair chance at this.”

He described the hard-earned wisdom behind tending natural ice: “It’s a lot of luck and logic, a lot of time too. You’re always checking for the soonest opportunity you can make ice... You kinda gotta know winter conditions and be up here a lot. Sometimes you get warm pockets that just show up late at night, so the ice won’t set up like you think it would.”

Laying natural ice, Donald explained, could mean working from 8 p.m. until morning, especially as the weather got trickier in recent years: “I found it really neat in my experience of making ice, the coldest time of the day is like 7 to 8 a.m... But just a lot of trial and error. Sometimes it could chip up, sometimes it flake up, sometimes it gets slushy. Like, you name all the different forms of ice—I’ve seen it. Even like Sonic ice!”

Donald’s family was not alone. Local employees and volunteers pitched in, with memories of late-night freezing and hurried maintenance so families could skate the next day.

“Man, the kids—the kids are awesome. It just reminds me of my time here. This place is special.”

“My employees, that’s probably the biggest cost... You just gotta pay them well. Not very many people want to be out in the cold.”

Wiklund and his predecessors passed the art of ice over time. “Originally, what they would do—

when Mr. Bookie actually had it—he’d get snow and compact it with his tractor, then throw water on it, and it would freeze over. As things got warmer, even the old tricks needed updating.” In recent years, spraying water in ultra-thin layers became the norm, hoping the next freeze would come early and stick.

The Rink’s Last Natural Ice

This year is bittersweet. “I want to make it fun, family-friendly,” Donald says.

“Man, the kids—the kids are awesome. It just reminds me of my time here. This place is special.”

Despite recent warm winters—the season sometimes shrank to just a couple of weeks—Donald is determined to give Cloudcroft one memorable last natural-ice run. He’s planning themed skate nights, live music, and that beloved community spirit still burning—including the annual popular ski-burning bonfire event, Ullr Fest.

“I just want to finish strong,” Donald says.

Passing the Torch with Hope

The future will bring change: the village council has adopted an ordinance paving the way for a new operator—Southwest Sports Solutions out of El Paso, owned and operated by Cloudcroft-connected Cory Herman—and refrigerated ice, with longer seasons in sight.

Donald’s words capture both nostalgia and hope: “I want to leave Cloudcroft in a good place. I’ve been doing this for a long time. It depends on the weather, and that’s something hard to control.”

But even as he prepares to step back, he is hopeful: “I’m just glad that winter sports are here, and I hope it continues to stay that way.”



Folks of all ages gather at Zenith Park for the ice rink, the southernmost natural rink in the US, for one more season

Events

Each month, the Sacramento Mountains come alive with art, culture, and community. Here are a few highlights to help you experience the creativity and connection that make life in our mountain region so special

Chamber of Commerce

Now through November 26th: Thanksgiving Outreach Baskets—drop off at the Chamber of Commerce or Mayhill Baptist Church. Fill a bag with listed items and help a local family enjoy a holiday meal.

Annual Christmas Market

Local and regional vendors spread holiday cheer at the Cloudcroft High School from 10:00-5:00 November 28th and 10:00-4:00 November 29th. Snag your stocking stuffers and more.

Cloudcroft Schools

NO SCHOOL on November 4th, Election Day.. Thanksgiving Luncheon, Thursday, November 20th. Contact the administration office for more info. Thanksgiving Break: November 24th-28th. Board of Education Meeting: Tuesday, November 18th at 6:00 p.m. in the District Boardroom, 10 Swallow Place.

Kira’s Angel Tree

Sign up by November 15th to help deliver gifts to children and seniors in Cloudcroft, High Rolls, and surrounding communities. In memory of Kira Davis. Contact: kangel-tree@icloud.com or call (575) 285-4205

Mountain Moms

Take a breather and gather at the Mountain Moms program at Summit Christian Fellowship on Wednesdays from 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Storytime with Paige

At the Michael Nivison Public Library on Fridays from 10:30-11:30 a.m. continues this month.

Cloudcroft Art Society

Shop the CAS Gallery Holiday Show—Saturdays now through the end of November, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. at the Old Red Brick Schoolhouse.

Dark Skies

Meteor showers for November: South Taurids 11/4-11/5 from 1:00-3:00 a.m. North Taurids 11/12-11/14 from 12:00-2:00 a.m. Leonids 11/16-11/17 4:00-5:00 a.m.

Keep Cloudcroft Clean

Final event of 2025: Final 2025 event, TBA. Contact Alex at alex@KeepCloudcroftClean.org

Road Runner Food Bank

rrfb.org for dates and locations. Mobile food bank: Sacramento



Tyler Jones of the Doso Dirtbags plays a solo set Nov. 22nd at The Distillery and Nov 26th at Noisy Water Winery in Cloudcroft

Mountain Senior Center, High Rolls. Alamogordo

Veterans Day Weekend Sounds of Freedom

Groove and give thanks Saturday, November 8, 2025, 3:00–7:00 pm at Alameda Park. Free entry, kids’ games, beer garden, car show, and live music.

Flickinger Theatre

Starting Friday, November 7th through November 15th: Prince of Egypt, an “epic musical journey of courage and

faith” by the Children’s Music Theater of Alamogordo

Luca Stricagnoli with special guest singer-songwriter Meg Pfeiffer: Thursday, November 20th.

Otero Artspace

Mata Ortiz Pots from Mexico exhibition reception 5:00-7:00 p.m November 7th. November 11th: Veterans Day Dramatic Readings, 5:00 p.m. Nomad String Ensemble string quartet performs November 14th from 7:00-9:00 p.m. 1118 Indiana Ave., Alamogordo, NM.

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Wednesdays from 5:00-8:00, enjoy Prime Rib nights. Thirsty Thursday half-priced drinks at Saint Andrew's Lounge 12:00-8:00 p.m. Thanksgiving at the Lodge: Turkey, hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and all the sides. Reservations required. (575) 682-2566.

Rock Night at the Pavillion, Friday November 14th 6:30-Midnight. Cash bar, nacho and Frito pie buffet, \$10. Four bands and a \$15 cover.

Cloucroft Brewing Co. & The Distillery

Karaoke night every Monday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at the brewery side.

The Western Bar

Enjoy \$1.50 tacos—only served on Tuesdays.

Sacramento Senior Center

Got talent? Show it off on from 10:30-11:15 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month.

VFW Post 11999

Veteran's Day Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, November 8th, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Closed November 27th and 28th for Thanksgiving.

Timberon

Senior Social night at the High Country Lounge and Grill

Every Tuesday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. with food, drinks, and "those classic songs that you love." Also on Tuesdays—\$2.00 tacos all day.

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A cute flower girl prepares for a Lodge weekend wedding



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Range Report

Keep up on what’s going down on the mountain

Cloudcroft Voter Guide November 2025

Election Day is Tuesday, November 4, with early voting now open at the Otero County Clerk’s Office. This year’s ballot reflects the heart of Cloudcroft—neighbors stepping up to serve their community.

Mayor

- Timothy Edward King
- Gerald “Dusty” Wiley

Village Trustees

- Gail K. McCoy
- Keith Byron Hamilton
- Erwin (Danny) Hardwick

Municipal Judge

- Mark Tatum

School Board

- Lance Howard Wright
- Bruce W Odom
- Rebecca Michele Anthony

The General Obligation (GO) Bond is up for election, too. Vote “yes” for school security and technology improvements, and beyond. It won’t raise your taxes.

Take a moment to thank those who stepped forward—and then make your voice count at the polls.

For interviews with the candidates and to dive deeper, visit CloudcroftReader.com.

Cloudcroft Schools Board of Education Meeting Updates

Tuesday, October 21st, the School Board held its regular meeting in the newly redone District boardroom, complete with a scenic mural by local artist Samantha Odom.

Here are a few takeaways from that meeting:

- The “Bear Neccessities” closet, which provides clothes for students in need, is experiencing higher demand than in the past, especially for basics like socks and undergarments. Call the school to see how you can help: 575-601-4416
- A grant-funded Wellness Room is now available (and already popular). The room features comfortable seating, fidget tools, weighted blankets, journals, and more. The school is forming a student-led wellness council for advisement.

- School Nurse Dani McNatt secured a grant for eyesight and hearing testing services.

- The STEM lab opened on October 28th, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

In her superintendent’s report, Jocelyne Gillespie noted that around 30 students left the district this year: 31% moved out of state, 29% went to homeschool, 26% moved within the state, with the remainder leaving due to other factors. Taking Care of Village Business

In case you missed it—here are 5 takeaways from the October 21st Village of Cloudcroft Council Meeting.

Mayor **Tim King** and grants writer **Lauren Groesbeck** announced grant updates. Cloudcroft was recently awarded \$2.1 million through a Community Development Block Grant for the Mountaintop Project—replacing outdated water and sewer lines in the Mountaintop area, which Trustee Jim Maynard said has “leaded pipelines”—a needed update.

Water/Wastewater Department Supervisor **JJ Carrizal** reported that 33 more cellular-read water meters were installed, with more to come. Nine iHydrants have been placed around town to help pinpoint leaks by detecting pressure and temperature changes, which the department can view from their phones.

Trustees unanimously voted to approve an extension of the Local Government Road Fund through July 30, 2026. Carrizal will have until then to spend the LGRF’s \$59k on road repairs. The village will match around \$14k and can now allocate the funds raised through the water bill collections, which total around \$90k a year.

Upon the Lodger’s Tax Advisory Board’s recommendation, the council approved a \$55,000 cut of Lodger’s Tax Funds to Sunny 505 Advertising for the village. LTAB members **Julie Bragg**, **Lauren Groesbeck**, and **Bri Jonnes** envisioned the advertising campaign for the village to focus on all four seasons of the year.

Julie Bragg was nominated and appointed as the new LTAB Chair. A Cloudcroft alumna and former nurse, Bragg now manages the Grand Cloudcroft Hotel.

Several village advisory boards need volunteers: the Planning and Zoning Commission has two open seats; the Library Advisory Board has three vacancies; the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has one open spot; and the Lodger’s Tax Advisory Board has one opening. Apply online through the Village GIS dashboard.

Cloudcroft Attorney Zach Cook Joins State Public Defender Commission

Cloudcroft Village Attorney Zach Cook has been appointed to the New Mexico Public Defender Commission, which oversees the state’s Law Offices of the Public Defender and selects its chief public defender.

Cook serves as Cloudcroft’s village attorney since December 2024, succeeding longtime attorney Jeff Rhodes, who retired after more than five decades of service.

Cook practices law in Ruidoso and brings more than two decades of experience to the statewide post. A Clovis native and University of New Mexico School of Law graduate, he served in the New Mexico House of Representatives from 2009 to 2022, chairing the House Judiciary Committee and sitting on multiple key committees. His private practice focuses on local government law and civil litigation.



Watch: King and Wiley October 14th Debate available to stream at CloudcroftReader.com

Cook said he hopes to strengthen legal defense resources across rural New Mexico. “It’s important that public defenders, particularly in rural areas, have the support they need,” he said.

He was sworn in alongside Albuquerque advocate Yvonne Gallegos-Schobel during the commission’s October 10 meeting.

Cloudcroft Fire Prevention Day Draws Crowds to Zenith Park

The Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department hosted its annual Fire Prevention Day on September 27th at Zenith Park, joined by Sparky’s Boot Fund and an impressive lineup of regional agencies.

The event featured the unveiling of the new Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and welcomed the state CERT representative from the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Visitors met representatives from NM State Police, Otero County Sheriff’s Office, Tularosa Basin Dispatch, Otero County Emergency Services, NM Forest Service, and of course, Smokey Bear himself. Holloman Air Force Base firefighters brought a hands-on training trailer shaped like a home, where families learned how to get low and go when smoke fills a room.

FEMA and the American Red Cross offered guidance on assembling emergency “go-bags” for quick evacuations. Attendees also



Photo by Sandy Kirschenman

gathered for a live vehicle extrication demonstration led by Alamogordo Fire Department Lieutenant John Stroop, with Cloudcroft and Mayhill firefighters skillfully using rescue tools to simulate patient removal and ambulance transfer.

For a bit of fun, Cloudcroft’s two ladder trucks were set up in the park so visitors could try operating the aerial ladders and stack cones.

As the season changes, residents are reminded to replace smoke detector batteries when clocks are set back on November 2nd.

To learn more about the Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department, email info@cloudcroftfd.com.
—By Katie Grabowski

NM Museum of Space History Names New Executive Director

The New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs and the New Mexico Museum of Space History Commission today announced the appointment of Karen Kincaid Brady as executive director of the museum, effective October 27, 2025.

“We are thrilled to welcome Karen to the New Mexico Museum of Space History,” said Debra Garcia y Griego, cabinet secretary for the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs.

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Local Guide

Discover Cloudcroft and the Lincoln National Forest



Each month, the Mountain Monthly highlights the local businesses and community spots that define Cloudcroft's character. In this edition of the Monthly's Local Guide, we feature the shops, eateries, and destinations that keep both residents and visitors coming back — showcasing the people and stories behind our village's small-town charm.

Discover the best of Cloudcroft with— a handpicked selection of favorite places to shop, eat, and play in the mountains.

Art Walk

Take in local mural expert **Samantha Odom's** freshest work on the west side of **Dave's Pine Stump Mall**, honoring former Mayor Dave Venable himself.

Stroll to the **Turquoise Shop** and **Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop** on Burro Avenue and peep her other works featuring cowgirl (NAME) and a welcome to the village.

Our monthly selection of local businesses, lodging, restaurants, and more.

Good Eats

High Rollin' Coffee: Don't miss the weekly menu at this light-filled and airy eatery, located at the Village Plaza along James Canyon Highway. Owner Beth Offolter uses fresh seasonal and organic ingredients in her offerings. Limited menu, unlimited and unique flavors.

Saint Andrew's Lounge and **1899 at the Lodge:** Enjoy traditional bar food plus a few high-end offerings by **Chef Richard Lepree** at Saint Andrew's Lounge. Make reserva-

tions for **1899** to experience seasonal, upscale offerings.

Check out either adjoining restaurant on Thursdays for half-price all adult beverages—wells and beyond.

Big Daddy's Diner: Go for the fried chicken or steak fingers with gravy to warm up on a cool Cloudcroft evening.

KennaBelle's Bakery: Treat yourself to a buttery croissant or level up to a green chile bacon roll. Follow the scent of fresh bakes on Burro to find your way to the petite pink patisserie.

Black Bear Coffee Shop: The local hang-out spot, enjoy artful brews and rotating monthly gallery exhibitions.

Stay Awhile

Osha Trail Lodging: Family-friendly units complete with kitchens and living rooms located downtown next to Burro Avenue.

Grand Cloudcroft Hotel: New digs next door to Zenith Park with king-sized beds and an indoor pool and spa. Pets welcome.

Cloudcroft Hostel: Budget-friendly beds next to the National Forest in High Rolls.

For more lodging options, and videos, check out the Cloudcroft Reader Lodging series online at: <https://www.cloudcroftreader.com/p/cloudcroft-readers-lodging-guide>

Shop Local Spots

Burro Street Trading Post: Grab your favorite gems and geodes. For the fine art collector, hand-carved Kokopelli by Jerold "Jerry" Guy line the counter, each a stand-out sculpture.

Mountain Magic: Best baby boutique and stuffed toys in town. Lotions, purses,

t-shirts, and gifts for all ages line the cozy shop.

Roots Flower Co.: Treat a loved one (or yourself) to fresh blooms. Owner Shanna Waitt's expert eye combines high-end looks at affordable prices.

High Altitude: Outdoor goods, whimsical gifts, and a wide range of clothing for all ages. Surprised by Cloudcroft's weather? Grab a jacket, proper shoes, and toasty socks here.

Osha Trail Depot: Local artists and artisan wares, classic New Mexican goods. Just behind Burro Ave.

Relax and Refresh

Instant Karma: Bend in a yoga class and/or sip a healing tea at the Chai Bar counter while perusing Prana and other yogi-friendly brands.

Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage: Relax and repair in this soothing space located in the Otero County Electric Cooperative building business suites.

Bhair Neccessities: Trims and 'dos for all ages. Plus: luxury hair care products.

Four-Season Playground

Pickleball: six new outdoor courts located east side of Zenith Park.

Disc Golf: Check out the beginner-friendly Byron Ligon Disc Golf Course in **Zenith Park**.

Scenic Drive: Take in scenic basin views and changing aspen groves along the **Sunspot Highway**.

Hike: **Osha Trail** features trees galore, and trailheads are easily accessible from the village.



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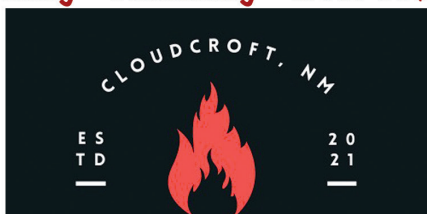
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**209 James
Canyon Hwy
(Hwy 82)
in Cloudcroft**

Times may vary due to maintenance (Google in advance)

Listings

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 — 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)

Black Bear Coffee (200 Burro Ave.)

Brother-N-Law BBQ (209 James Canyon Hwy)

Burro Street Bakery (505 Burro Ave.)

Cloud 9000 Coffee (96 James Canyon Hwy)

Cloudcroft Brewing Company (1301 Burro Ave.)

Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop (505 Burro Ave.)

Dave's Cafe (300 Burro Ave.)

Dusty Boots Cafe (1317 James Canyon Hwy)

Eight the Cake Bakery (506 Burro Ave.)

Family Dollar (309 James Canyon Hwy)

Fernando's Burritos (96 James Canyon Hwy)

High Rollin' Coffee (109 James Canyon Hwy)

Higher Grounds (300 Burro Ave.)

KennaBelle's Kreations Bakery (308 Burro Ave.)

Mad Jack's Mountaintop Barbeque (105 James Canyon Hwy)

Noisy Water Winery (505 Burro Ave.)

Old Barrel Tea Co. (505 Burro Ave.)

Saint Andrew's Bar and 1899 at the Lodge (601 Corona Pl.)

The Distillery (1303 Burro Ave.)

Western Bar and Cafe and Package Store (304 Burro Ave.)

Lodging

Burro St. Boarding House (608 Burro Ave.)

Cabins at Cloudcroft (1006 Coyote Ave.)

Crofting Inn (300 Swallow Pl.)

Dusty Boots Motel (1315 James Canyon Hwy)

Grand Cloudcroft Hotel (1207 James Canyon Hwy)

Osha Trail Lodging (102 Mexican Ave.)



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SugarPines RV Park (601 Columbine Blvd.)

Summit Inn (103 Chipmunk Ave.)

The Lodge (601 Corona Pl.)

Shopping

Aspen and Ivy Boutique (206 Burro Ave.)

Base Camp 9K (302 Burro Ave.)

Burro Street Trading Post (505 Burro Ave.)

Cloudcroft Archery (100 Little Glorieta Ave.)

Cloudcroft Souvenirs (502 Burro Ave.)

Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts (94 James Canyon Hwy)

Coco Blu (94 Little Glorieta Ave.)

The Elk Shed (505 Burro Ave.)

The Fat Rabbit (206 Burro Ave.)

The Highland (206 James Canyon Hwy)

High Altitude (310 Burro Ave.)

Homee (109 James Canyon Hwy)

Instant Karma (302 Burro Ave.)

King’s Treasure (202 Burro Ave.)

Magnum’s Guns II (207 James Canyon Hwy)

Mountain Magic (506 Burro Ave.)

New Village Hardware (61 Curlew Pl.)

Poke The Bear (510 Burro Ave.)

Red Wall Jewelry (505 Burro Ave.)

Roots Flower Co. (62 Curlew Pl.)

Seasons Boutique Gift Shop (601 Corona Pl.)

Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy (505 Burro Ave.)

Tree Top Teez (505 Burro Ave.)

Turquoise Shop (507 Burro Ave.)

Art

Aspen and Ivy Boutique (206 Burro Ave.)

Burro Street Trading Post (505 Burro Ave.)

Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op Gallery (90 Swallow Pl.)

Off the Beaten Path (100 Glorietta Ave.)

Osha Trail Depot (102 Mexican)

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3491 US-82, Mayhill: Mayhill Cafe & Hotel. Prime property centrally located on US Hwy 82. The Cafe features a large dining area. Upstairs the Hotel has 3 rooms with private baths and a 2 bed apartment, a great option for families. Also included are 2 separate short term rental properties. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



13 Carrie Camp Rd: 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom Log Home on 4.5 acres in Pierce Canyon. Surrounded by lovely aspen trees and soaring pines. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



20 White River: 3 bed 2 bath Cavco Manufactured Home on over 1.5 serene acres in the secluded Timberron area of the Sacramento Mountains. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



1012 Maple: Too many updates to list them all: New flooring, tankless water heater, expanded deck and more. For more information, call Blake Bingham - 830.496.1836



9 Elk Meadows: 5.15 acres. Very level with paved roads, underground utilities and excellent shared wells with water at the lot line. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



3 Autumn Rd: Located in the sought-after Aspen Meadows Community. 2 bed, 2 1/2 bath log-sided home sits on over 4 acres and includes a detached garage. For more information, call Annie Daniels - 575.442.3444



801 Panther: Flexible property centrally located in the Village, live in half, rent the other half or short-term rental. Or, a large space for a large family. Completely updated with new floors, new paint, new bathrooms, and more. + Buyer concessions. For more information, call Blake Bingham - 830.496.1836 Realtor/Owner



1084 Woodlands Way: One-year-new luxury home in Cloudcroft. Custom-built retreat offers open living spaces, soaring ceilings, designer finishes, and walls of windows. Chef's kitchen, primary suite with a spa-inspired bath. Additional bedrooms and flexible spaces. Oversized deck. Enjoy modern efficiency and thoughtful design without the wait of new construction. For more information, call Cori Abel - 816.896.2674



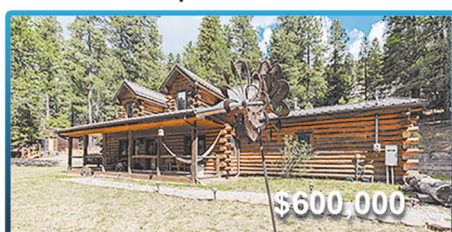
7 Navajo: 3 Bedroom, 1.75 bath cabin with rustic charm located in the James Canyon/Twin Forks Area! For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



59 Mountain Estates Rd. High Rolls: Over 4 acres of land offering the perfect blend of trees and open meadow. Easy access year-round and well in place make this the perfect spot to build your mountain home. Call Annie Daniels for more information - 575.442.3444



11 Maple Crest: Over 3,000 sq ft log-sided home featuring 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 large living areas, plus a drive through garage. On 1.3 acres and backs the Lincoln National Forest. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



63 Sullivan Canyon: 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom Log Home on 5 acres makes the perfect mountain retreat. For more information call Annie Daniels - 575.442.3444



1094 Blanca Vista: 3 bedroom, 3 bath spacious home in the Village. 3 car garage and a built in safe room. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



9 Serenity St: 4 bedroom, 2 bath on 2 acres. This is a stargazers paradise in the NM Skies Astronomy Enclave and backs Lincoln National Forest. For more info, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



29 Mystery Path: 1-Bedroom/1 bath Cabin with rustic appeal and bonus bunkhouse in Twin Forks! Fenced front yard and covered deck. Wood stove. Unique soaking tub room offers a spa-like retreat, complete with a loft bed. For more information, call Rebekah Graham - 575.921.5517



1855 Sacramento Dr, Timberron: 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom modern retreat nestled on 20 unrestricted acres. This property is horse-friendly and includes a large metal building, RV parking, and a serene pond. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



606 Fifth St: 5 bedroom, 2 bath home in the heart of the village. Open concept kitchen, living, dining rooms and a large loft room. Features ground level entry to the main floor of the home plus a workshop and detached 1 car garage. For more info, call Megan Corvin - 575.551.1999



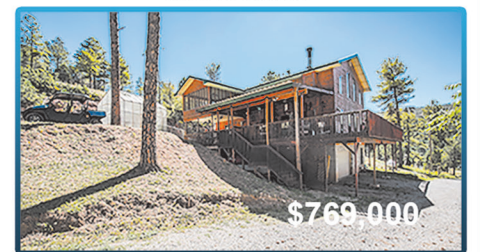
46 Ponderosa Pines Trl: 4 bedroom, 3 bathroom home with a large attached carport and exterior sauna. Call Debbie Loper for more information - 575.430.7044



163 Karr Canyon Rd: Stunning 126-acre property backing the Lincoln National Forest in High Rolls. This land features a diverse landscape that includes rolling hills, open meadows, and lush greenery, making it ideal for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers. Substantial water rights, boasting over 20 acre-feet of rights per year. The apple barn has been converted into an entertainment area where you can have gatherings and fun for all! Whether you envision building a dream home, creating a retreat, or investing, this unique piece of land is a must see. For more info, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



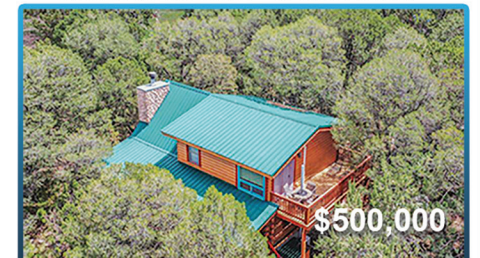
00 Sixteen Springs Canyon Rd: Five acres with no restrictions. For more information, call Blake Bingham - 830.496.1836



2979 US Hwy 82, Mayhill: 3 level, log-sided home with 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths. Situated on over 6 acres backing the Lincoln National Forest. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



35 Cottage Row, High Rolls: Unique investment property offers not one but two beautifully crafted tiny homes, perfect for short-term rentals, vacation retreats, or long-term income potential. A blend of modern comfort and rustic charm. Currently both homes have long term leases. For more information, call Rebekah Graham - 575.921.5517



23 Mountain Park Rd, High Rolls: Serene mountain living in a beautifully tucked away retreat. Step inside to a welcoming, airy living space with vaulted ceilings that brighten the home. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



RAISE YOUR EXPECTATIONS.

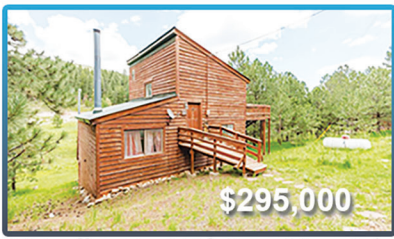


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\$295,000

29 Trading Post Rd: Cozy Mountain Retreat in Cloud Country West nestled on three lots in this desirable subdivision. This charming cabin offers the perfect getaway for every season. Call Annie Daniels for more information - 575.442.3444



\$409,000

54 Wimsatt Lp: Stunning Mountain Retreat with Established Income Potential! This 5 bed 3 bath home is situated on .89 acres just 7 miles from the Village of Cloudcroft. For more information, call Tabitha Foster - 325.450.6309



\$343,000

4 Timber Dr, Timberon: 4 bedroom, 2.5 bathrooms on 2 acres. Includes an oversized garage with heat and electric. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



UNDER CONTRACT

\$249,000

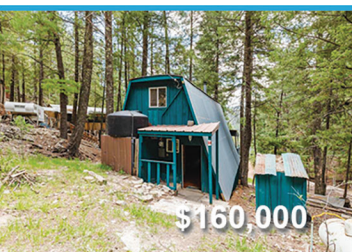
8 Blue Grass: Serene mountain retreat. Three bedroom, 2-bath home blends rustic charm with modern comfort, offering generous living spaces, breathtaking views, privacy, and easy access to hiking, outdoor recreation, and local amenities. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



SOLD

\$289,000

1301 Chautauqua Canyon Rd: 3 bed, 1 3/4 bath home in Cloudcroft. Open concept with lovely hardwood floors. For more info, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



\$160,000

23 Hollywood Blvd: 2 Bedroom, 1 bath A-frame with rustic charm. A wood-burning fireplace is the focal point of this open concept cabin. Contact Debbie Loper for more information - 575.430.7044



\$574,000

10 Apache Canyon: 3 bedroom, 2 bath, approx. 2400 sq. ft. home on just over 2.3 acres featuring tongue and groove ceiling, rustic wood beams and floor to ceiling stone fireplace. Wraparound porch. Shop w/electric over 2400 sq. ft. Owner solar panels hooked into Co-op electric. Call Annie Daniels for more information - 575.442.3444



\$585,000

53 Alta Vista Lp, High Rolls: 2000 sq ft loft style, studio home with panoramic views of Karr Canyon. High quality finishes. Solar system hooked to the grid, plus EV charging station. Call Annie Daniels for more info - 575.442.3444 (MLS#170208)

FEATURED 36 Old Railroad, High Rolls



\$725,000

Welcome to your dream home! This pristine 3-bedroom, 2-bath mountain home offers modern updates, including a remodeled kitchen and baths, new windows and doors, and efficient mini-split A/C units in every room. All appliances, including washer and dryer, are included. The incredible landscaped grounds feature timed irrigation, lush grass, fruit trees, and a greenhouse. Every outbuilding has water and power, including a spacious workshop with loft storage, water heater, wood stove, and commercial-grade setup for processing game meat. An additional barn provides versatility. This move-in-ready retreat is designed for comfort and functionality.

Experience peaceful mountain life today!

For more information, call Cori Abel at 816.896.2674 and Emily Kellam at 575.214.9479



\$1,350,000

102 Mexican Ave: 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. For more info, call Megan Corvin - 575.551.1999



\$99,900

12 Oak Ridge Loop: Well kept mobile home on two lots in Cloud Country West RV. One bedroom and one bathroom. Escape the heat and run to the mountain for cool summers amidst the tall pines. For more info, call Blake Bingham - 830.496.1836



\$262,000

502 Phelps: 2 Bed, 2 Bath in the Village of Cloudcroft. So many updates! Solar panels, oak floors and much more. For more info, call Blake Bingham - 830.496.1836



UNDER CONTRACT

\$399,000

94 Young Canyon: Quintessential mountain retreat on over 2 acres in Young Canyon. This 2 bedroom, 2 1/2 bath home is calling your name! Call Annie Daniels for more information - 575.442.3444



\$299,000

1313 Blanca Vista: Cozy mountain cabin with two-car carport, 2 spacious bedrooms share a large bathroom with walk-in shower. Large deck to enjoy the outdoors! Call Annie Daniels for more information - 575.442.3444



\$199,500

1846 Rio Penasco: 7.5 acres of undeveloped land! With mountain views and the Rio Penasco running through you can have a serene and peaceful property, however you choose to use it! For more information, call Megan Corvin - 575.551.1999



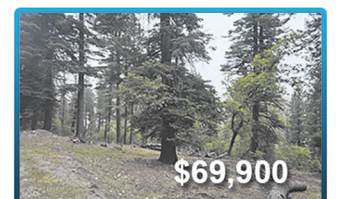
\$349,000

1102 Paqua Ave: This beautifully updated 3-bedroom, 2-bath home offers sleek modern finishes in a peaceful village setting. Call Debbie Loper for more info - 575.430.7044



\$199,000

94 Pawhuska Dr: Bright, welcoming retreat in the quaint village of Timberon. This home would be perfect for full-time living, a vacation getaway, or a seasonal residence. Two bedroom, 1 bath home features a comfortable floor plan. For more information, call Debbie Loper - 575.430.7044



\$69,900

000 Canyon Trail: Grab your own little piece of the mountain. 1.022 acres in coveted Cloud Country West. For more info, call Blake Bingham - 830.496.1836



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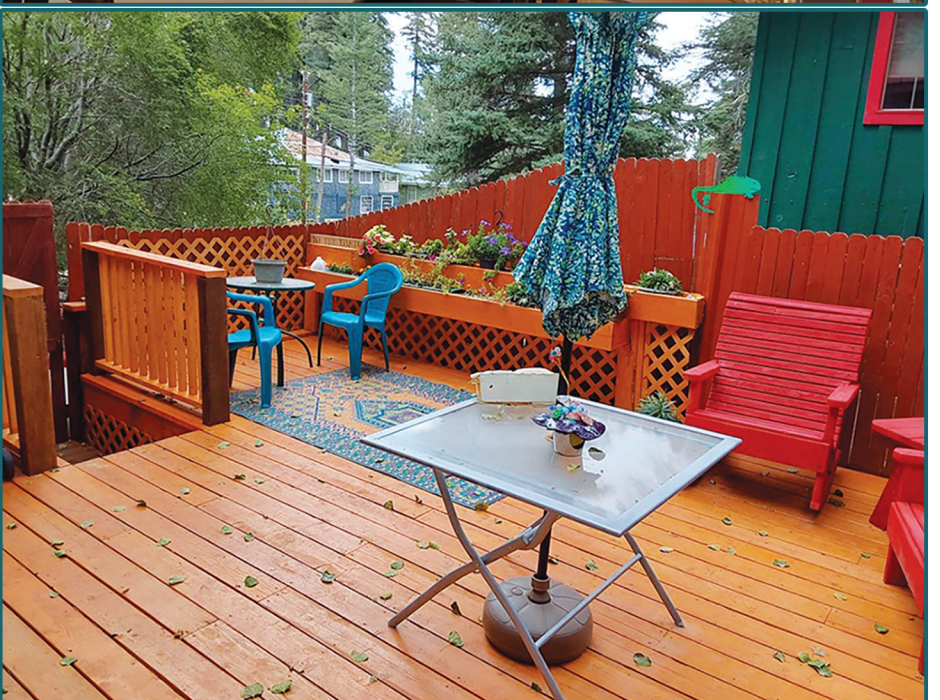
A great place to live and work, or to spend your holiday! Enjoy the upcoming holidays in this unique setting in beautiful Cloudcroft!



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Owner financing may be available for a qualified buyer.



Call Marsha!
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MLS

Samantha Odom Art Gallery
(300 Burro Ave.)

The Little Gallery (206 Burro Ave.)

Healing

Be in the Mountains Yoga & Massage Therapy (109 James Canyon Hwy)

Cloudcroft Animal Hospital (1403 James Canyon Hwy)

Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage (404 Burro Ave.)

Laughing Leaf Dispensary (504 Burro Ave.)

Presbyterian Medical Center (76 James Canyon Hwy)

Southwest Naturals CBD (506 Burro Ave.)

Trestle Medical Services (1200 James Canyon Hwy)

Services

Atilier Art of Hair by Anna (505 Burro Ave.)

Bhair Neccessities (202 Burro Ave.)

Cloudcroft Fitness (cloudcroft-cycling.punchpass.com)

Cloudcroft Village Office (201 Burro Ave.)

Cloudsoft Laundry To Go (520-330-2613)

Crystal Tompkins Photography (crystaltompkinsphotography.com)

Green d Mountain Construction (500 Burro Ave.)

Pre-School and Extended Care (50 Chipmunk)

Rick Roger’s Auto & Equipment Repair (72 James Canyon Hwy)

Sacramento Mountain Senior Services (212 Glorietta Ave.)

U.S. Post Office (20 Curlew Pl.)

1CAT Trap & Release Program (100 Glorietta Ave.)

1st National Bank (301 Burro Ave.)

Play

Elevation Park (230 Mescalero Ave.)

James Sewell Ice Rink (751 James Canyon Hwy)

Pickleball Addicts of Cloudcroft (pickleballaddictsofcloudcroft.com)

Ski Cloudcroft (1920 1/2 Hwy 82)

Deer Park Playground (30 Swallow Pl.)

The Lodge Golf Course (703 Corona Ave.)

Zenith Park (1001 James Canyon Hwy)

Visit Cloudcroft

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

Sacramento Ranger District Forest Service Ranger Station (4 Lost Lodge Rd.)

The Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce (1001 James Canyon Hwy)

Michael Nivison Public Library (90 Swallow Pl.)

Cosmic Adventures (cosmicadventuresnm.com)

Cloudcroft Fitness (90 Swallow Pl.)

Sacramento Ranger District Forest Service Ranger Station (4 Lost Lodge Rd.)

The Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce (1001 James Canyon Hwy)

Michael Nivison Public Library (90 Swallow Pl.)

Fill Up/EV Charge

Allsup’s (10 Curlew Pl)

High Rolls General Store (845 U.S. 82)

Mayhill Country Store (3497 U.S. 82)

Otero County Electric Co-op (404 Burro Ave.)

Church Directory

Anglican Church of the Epiphany (400 Chipmunk Ave.)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter

Day Saints (198 Heather Way, Waterfall Estates Subdivision)

Cloudcroft Church of Christ (40 Swallow Pl.)

Cloudcroft United Methodist Church (50 Chipmunk Ave.)

Mountain Bible Fellowship (33 Haynes Canyon, High Rolls/ Mountain Park)

Mountain of the Lord Faith Fellowship (6 Sawmill Trail)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church (205 James Canyon Hwy)



Mountain Monthly

THE SOUTHERN SACRAMENTO MOUNTAINS

Cloudcroft, New Mexico



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GRATITUDE.



LEAVES.



LEAVES.



BLESSINGS.

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-Coco, Blu & Carolina B.

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Coco Blu

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Mountain Life

Folks caught on camera living their best “mountain life”



Dwayne Apprill (L) and Danny Hardwick (R) chat at Dusty Boots Cafe before the meet-and-greet campaign event for Wiley



Ari Hanna (L) and Miyah Beug (R) on shift at black Bear Coffee Shop



Joe Zeigenfuss crafts specialty cocktails at the Distillery



New biz at the former Tunnel stop in High Rolls: Levain It Up Sourdough bakery, owned and operated by Las Cruces transplants Garrett Barnett (L) and Steven Jackson (R) offers sourdough bakes, craft jellies, and more.



KK and Laura pass out apples at Instant Karma during Burro Avenue’s trick or treat after the pumpkin roll and costume parade.



The PAC (Pickleball Addicts of Cloudcroft) on a beautiful fall day at Zenith Park. Find them on Facebook to follow their playtimes



Superintendent Jocelyne Gillespie snuggles former student Kylie Adams’ daughter, Presley



Cloudcroft Elementary/Middle School and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Volunteers brought the Scholastic Book Fair to the school library in October. Pictured L-R: Mechelle Navarette, Cara Couture, Natasha Meszler, and Christina Sullivan



Trustee Keith Hamilton presents his campaign swag



Rand first came to Cloudcroft in the early 80s when he was Graphics Editor for the El Paso Herald-Post. “I was an outdoors guy and the Franklin Mountains had nothing for me. I saw this and fell in love with the Lincoln National Forest.” He graduated from the University of Arizona in 1979 with a degree in philosophy. “My favorite joke about that is; How do you get the philosophy grad off your porch? You pay for the pizza.” After graduation he became an art director for newspapers and magazines. In 1986 he started Random Arts, an illustration and graphic design studio. Rand was also a cartoonist for the Tucson Weekly for 35 years. When I retired, I remembered my time here, so I revisited this place and knew Cloudcroft was the place for me. I bought the old Kemp family cabin in 2023 and totally restored and winterized it.” “I have always been a painter too, and now I can spend more time doing what I love.” You can find Rand most mornings walking his dog Abbey around the Lodge.

Find his debut cartoon for the Mountain Monthly in the Reflections section.



Jules on his favorite perch, Berle Van Zandt.

Voices

Dispatches from the mountain community

Butter-Churning, Soup Cook-Offs, and New Leaders: Cloudcroft Scouts Launch Strong Fall Season

It's been a great start to the school year for Cloudcroft Scouts, with both Troop 958 and Pack 958 making history and memories as they kicked off the fall season.

At our first combined Pack Meeting and Court of Honor of the school year, families gathered to recognize achievements. Along with the usual potluck, awards, and rank advancements, the evening marked a major leadership change.

Four former Scoutmasters — **Paul Benshoof, Erich Weursching, Greg Crinklaw, and Andy Kitzman** — were on hand to ceremoniously pass along the Scoutmaster patch, ending with our new Scoutmaster, Tyler Norred. In a special moment, outgoing Scoutmaster Andy Kitzman presented Mr. Norred with a framed scouting photo that had been given to him by Lance Wright, one of the founders of our current Pack and Troop.



Scouts flip flapjacks at recent campout

We're also excited to welcome our new Cubmaster, **Billy Coyle**, who steps into the role as Sharon Smith transitions into the position of Webelos / Arrow of Light Den Leader. We're grateful for their leadership and excited for what lies ahead.

Several scouts were recognized for rank advancement: Kelton Farmer earned his Tenderfoot rank, and Connor Smith, who is working steadily toward his Eagle, advanced to Star. In the Pack, Aubrey Norred moved up to Webelos 2.

The scouts also enjoyed a fantastic two-night joint campout near Timberon at the Southern Rockies Camp. From outdoor cooking to patrol competitions, the weekend was packed with activity. Scouts churned their own butter and cooked meals together, including a friendly soup cook-off between the boy and girl patrols. Each team made chicken soup with dumplings from scratch, and both turned out superb. Outgoing Scoutmaster Andy Kitzman judged the contest a tie, awarding the win to the girls for their strong teamwork.

In another outdoor milestone, the Troop completed a five-mile backpacking prep hike on Aspen Trail with 10-pound packs. At the halfway point, they stopped to make gourmet ramen before finishing the loop. This hike is one step in their preparation for a longer backpacking trip planned for spring 2026.

Scouting in Cloudcroft is off to a strong start this year. If your family is interested in joining, we meet most Sundays at 4 PM at the Cloudcroft United Methodist Church.

To learn more, reach out to info@CloudcroftScouts.org
— *Greg Crinklaw*

Check it Out: Library Corner

Checking in with Library Director Sandra Barr and the Library Advisory Board

In the month of October, Cloudcroft's Michael Nivison Public Library visitors averaged around 20 per day—a decrease from busy summer months, and an older crowd, too.

Attendance steeply changed the night of the Tiny Art Show awards and reception, with a packed house to see the massive showing of petite works on display. Folks of all ages gnoshed on a great spread, congratulated the local artists, and brought life into the library—filling every room and hallway with the fantastic turnout.

Nearly 100 works were submitted, boasting an array of materials and media: painting, drawing, embroidery, collage, assemblage, sculpture, stop-motion animation, Lego, and more. **Susan Mack** took Best of Show with her alcohol ink sunflower painting.

“Storytime with Paige” on Fridays from 10:30-11:30 a.m. will continue this month.

The Old Red Brick Schoolhouse kitchen is nearly done with renovations, paid for by a Rural Library Grant.

The **Library Advisory Board** met on Monday, September 29th, where they shared that village grants writer Lauren Groesbeck ensured the library's grant funding was saved in the aftermath of last year's turnover and extended library closure.

Window repairs and the kitchen update to the tune of \$43,859.65 are paid for through a one-time grant. The General Obligation (GO) Bonds of \$11,545.82 need to be used by April of next year for library resources and equipment.

A State Grants-in-Aid and Rural Library Program Grant, combined at over \$25,000, must be spent on collections, salaries, and professional development by June 30, 2026.

The Library Advisory Board has three open seats. Submit your letter of interest and apply online through the Cloudcroft-Village.com website.

NM Ag Dept. Warns Against Moving Firewood

New Mexico's Department of Agriculture is asking residents, retailers, and visitors to help stop the spread of invasive pests by buying firewood locally.

The agency warns that moving untreated firewood—even short distances—can carry tree-killing beetles, caterpillars, and other destructive species that threaten New Mexico's forests, including those around Cloudcroft.

“Something as simple as moving untreated firewood can have long-term impacts on New Mexico's forests, farms, and communities,” said Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte. “By buying and burning local firewood, each of us can help protect our state's natural resources.”

If you must move firewood, be sure it's heat-treated and sold with certification. Firewood in New Mexico must also be advertised and sold by the cord or fractional cord—128 cubic feet—to comply with state law.

For details on invasive pest prevention, visit DontMoveFirewood.org. For questions about sales or pest regulations, contact NMDA at 575-646-1616 or 575-646-3207.

VFW Post 11999's Roadside Cleanup Keeps Cloudcroft Beautiful

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 11999 members joined forces with Cloudcroft's local Scout Troop 958, parents, and leaders to clean up litter along Highway 82.

Donning reflective vests and braving the brisk October air, volunteers gave their morning to a cause that helps keep Cloudcroft beautiful.

Working between mile markers 17 and 18, the team filled and removed 17 bags of trash during this semi-annual effort.

Cloudcroft's local VFW Post “adopted” this one-mile stretch of Highway 82 from the New Mexico Department of Transportation 13 years ago. Since then, Post members, families, and friends have faithfully maintained it twice a year—helping keep our mountain community

clean and scenic.

Years ago, the state relied on inmates to clean up highways, but the cost of transportation, supervision, and restrictions on where inmates could work made that approach unsustainable. The shift to volunteer programs like Adopt-a-Highway has proven far more effective—reducing costs and allowing more miles of roadway to be cleaned more frequently.

Cloudcroft's beauty is part of what makes it so special—its stunning forest vistas, open pastures, and cozy mountain village charm attract residents and visitors alike. However, litter continues to be an unfortunate problem. State and local governments simply don't have the resources to address roadside trash, so volunteers play a vital role in maintaining our community's appearance.

A clean village not only supports tourism and local pride but also reflects the respect we hold for the natural environment that surrounds us.

VFW Community Events

Next on the calendar for VFW Post 11999 is one of our favorite annual traditions—the Veteran's Day Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, November 8th, at the Cloudcroft Senior Center from 4–7 p.m. The meal includes spaghetti, dessert, and a drink, with both dine-in and carry-out options available. Be sure to mark your calendars—tickets will be available at the door while supplies last!

During the dinner, we'll also draw the winning ticket for our much-anticipated Henry VFW .22LR Tribute Edition Rifle, complete with a handsome display case. This collectible has generated a lot of excitement, and all proceeds from the raffle—and the dinner—support veteran assistance and community service projects right here in Cloudcroft.

To wrap up November, the Post will once again partner with Summit Christian Fellowship to deliver Thanksgiving blessings to local families in need. We'll be donating turkeys to accompany the well-stocked food baskets prepared and distributed by the church. Together, we hope to ensure that everyone in our community enjoys a warm meal and a reminder of the blessings we share—even in challenging times.

VFW Post 11999 is deeply grateful for the continued support of the Cloudcroft community. Your encouragement and generosity enable us to serve—not only our fellow veterans but also our neighbors and friends. We look forward to carrying this spirit of service into the holiday season and beyond.

— Paul Benshoof
Commander, VFW Post 11999

Keep Cloudcroft Clean Wraps Up a Record Year

From highway shoulders to trailheads, Keep Cloudcroft Clean (KCC) has logged another impressive year of service in 2025—tackling litter, removing graffiti, and helping keep local hot spots pristine while seeing record-low trash totals across their cleanup sites.

This year, KCC has beautified Zenith Park, the Adopt-A-Highway on Hwy 244, Burro Avenue, Dry Canyon, and Sleepygrass Campground—hitting some spots several times.

Their final community event of the year is tentatively set for Saturday, Nov. 8, at 11 a.m. Follow Keep Cloudcroft Clean on Facebook for updates.

You can also sign up to volunteer at www.KeepCloudcroftClean.org or email Alex and Sonnie at alex@KeepCloudcroftClean.org and sonnie@KeepCloudcroftClean.org.

FUN FACT:: Berle Van Zandt and Donna Rand find Joy Off the Beaten Path, pg 26. Both Berle and Donna worked at the Mountain Monthly from 1989 to the early 2000s. Donna wrote articles and did minor editing, while Berle was the proofreader.

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Photo by Guilaune Bigot

Lost Lodge artist Drew Gaines works locally and exhibits nationally

Recently, he showed in the Marfa Invitational, and his work is published in the New American Paintings collection.

Gaines’ work stands out through surrealist treatment of ordinary subject matter, often painting what you see when you slow down. Beach-goers, dust devils on a lonesome plain, chopping wood, and hikers appear in his symbolic yet highly expressive works.

Drew Gaines is a painter who strives to be a chronicler of everyday life and everyday people.

His art is an extension of his studies in photojournalism in which he holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas. This subject taught

him the importance of observation and to create an engaging scene that tells a story or hints at the modern human condition.

Some of Drew’s paintings use subtle symbolism to connect a local subject to larger human issues. His work is a representation of the small slice of America which he occupies and he hopes it speaks truth to its diverse, ever-changing, conflicted and beautiful nature. He often works in plein-air (painting outside on location), which allows him to immerse himself in a subject.

Drew currently lives in a small cabin near Cloudcroft, New Mexico with his wife, their two dogs and cat. It’s a rustic lifestyle. They heat their home with a wood stove, use an outhouse and collect rain water for household chores. He paints every day in a once derelict old cabin he converted to his studio. Their way of life brings them closer to nature and to the people in their community.

P.S. Drew serves as Contributing Editor at the Cloudcroft Reader and the Mountain Monthly, where his observational skills lend excellent portraits of people, places, and issues through written word.

Find his work online at drewgaines.com

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Sacramento Seasons with Lyn Canham

Our friend and regular contributor, fine artist **Lyn Canham**, has been on an inspired journey this month – traveling through the Swiss Alps and into northern Italy on a Plein Air adventure that blends travel, art, and friendship.

With fellow painters, she’s been capturing alpine villages, sweeping peaks, and Venetian canals while exchanging new ideas and painting techniques with artists from around the world.

This trip has been not only about creating art, but about finding renewal in nature, laughter, and shared creativity. Lyn tells us that many in her group plan to turn their small on-location studies into larger works once they’re home – tangible memories of mountain mornings and lakeside light.

She’ll be back soon as a regular voice in our newly named section, Sacramento Seasons, where she writes about life and landscape here in the Sacramento Mountains – from gardening and local flora to wildlife and the subtle shifts that mark each season.

We can’t wait to have her back on the mountain and on our pages.

Page 22

(RANGE REPORT, from p. 9)

“Her combined expertise in history, preservation, and museum leadership, paired with her lifelong passion for space history, will help inspire future generations through the remarkable story of New Mexico’s role in space exploration.”

Kincaid Brady brings more than a decade of experience in museum management, historic preservation, and public programming. She most recently served as business and programming director at the Neill-Cochran House Museum in Austin, Texas, where she oversaw daily operations, staff and volunteer management, fundraising, and community partnerships. Prior to that, she was project manager and historic preservation lead at R&K Solutions, Inc., directing preservation projects that culminated in museum exhibitions, including one at the Museum of Science and History in Jacksonville, Florida.

“My love for space history began during my childhood visits to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum,” Kincaid Brady said. “Joining the New Mexico Museum of Space History feels like coming full circle. I’m excited to continue advancing the museum’s mission to share the stories of innovation, exploration, and discovery that define both New Mexico and our journey into space.”

As executive director, she will oversee the museum’s operations, exhibitions, research, and educational programs, ensuring its continued role as one of New Mexico’s premier cultural institutions.

Located in Alamogordo, the New Mexico Museum of Space History is dedicated to preserving and sharing the state’s contributions to space exploration and research. It is a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs.

Kincaid Brady has master’s degrees in historic preservation from the University of Texas at Austin, and in history from the University of Texas at San Antonio, as well as a graduate certificate in historic preservation from UT San Antonio. Her ac-

ademic work includes Preservation Moon: Defining and Preserving the Cultural Landscape of Tranquility Base, a study that reflects her deep interest in the heritage of space exploration.

The New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo is a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. A Smithsonian Affiliate, the museum showcases the significant role New Mexico has played in the development of the U.S. Space Program and features the International Space Hall of Fame, and New Horizons Dome Theater.

NM FAIR Plan Expands Insurance Options

The New Mexico Office of the Superintendent of Insurance (OSI) has expanded the state’s FAIR Plan, offering higher coverage limits for property owners who have struggled to find insurance in high fire-risk or rural areas.

The update is particularly relevant for mountain communities like Cloudcroft where wildfire danger and insurance cancellations have become a constant concern.

Under the new limits, homeowners can now receive up to \$750,000 in coverage for properties in Protection Classes 1 through 7, and up to \$500,000 for those in Protec-

tion Classes 8 through 10. Commercial coverage has also doubled, increasing from \$1 million to \$2 million across all protection classes. A New Mexico Property Insurance Program representative said the expansion provides more options and peace of mind for families and businesses navigating fire-related insurance challenges.

The FAIR Plan offers basic property insurance that goes beyond fire coverage alone.

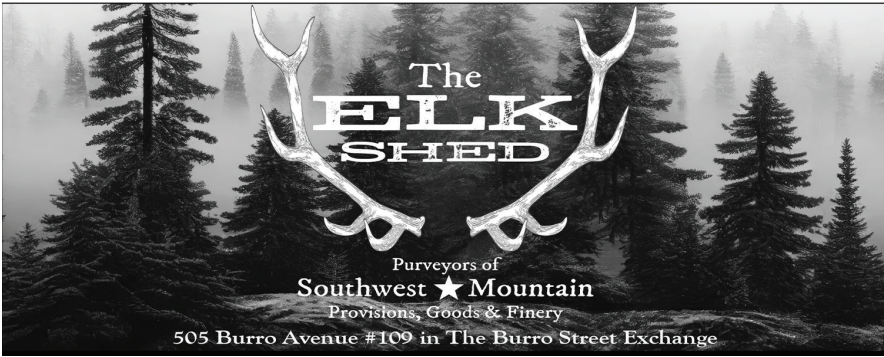
Policies may include protection for damage caused by lightning, wind, hail, explosions, smoke, vandalism, or malicious mischief—providing a broader safeguard for property owners in at-risk regions.

To apply, clients must work through a licensed insurance producer approved to write FAIR Plan policies. Interested homeowners and business owners can locate an approved producer and request a quote or use the Quick Quote tool at www.nmpropertyinsurance.com to determine eligibility and pricing.

The program is intended for res-

idents and small business owners in wildfire-prone or remote areas who have faced coverage cancellations or non-renewals. For many in forested mountain regions, the FAIR Plan offers a critical insurance safety net when private providers pull back from high-risk zones.

Questions about eligibility or coverage details can be directed to Melissa Robertson, Property Bureau Chief at OSI, at melissa.robertson@osi.nm.gov or through the agency’s website, www.osi.state.nm.us.



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Tom Taylor in his yurt. (Photo and art by Drew Gaines)

Tom Taylor, Eccentric Veteran and Cloudcroft Icon, Dies at 77

Remembering “One-Arm Tom” with the help of his daughters, family, lovers, neighbors, and friends. By Drew Gaines

Tom Taylor, a fixture of Cloudcroft and the Lost Lodge community, known for his alternative lifestyle, quirky personality, generosity and unfiltered humor, has died. He was 77.

Tom died of cancer. His final moments were spent in his yurt in Lost Lodge, surrounded by his daughters.

Perhaps no other event impacted Tom's life greater than the Vietnam War. A former athlete and already a father, he was drafted into the Army at the age of 21 and was shipped off to combat.

Tom walked point as a grunt, or infantry soldier, and was wounded by a rocket-propelled grenade. The event nearly killed him, and Tom would say that he died the day he was shot. Doctors amputated his left arm below the elbow. He later traded a prosthetic arm for a hotel stay while in Mexico.

The Army recognized Tom with a Purple Heart and multiple Bronze Star medals for “heroic and meritorious deeds during combat.” He described himself as a good soldier but always shied away from being labeled a hero.

The horrors of war followed the veteran for the rest of his life. While he struggled with PTSD and his amputation, the experience of combat put Tom on an unconventional path.

He became an accomplished artist, gardener, performed stunts in movies, worked undercover for law enforcement, grew cannabis, remodeled homes, and

dabbled in the occult.

Backwaters are where Tom found peace, he would say. They were places off the beaten path where people lived close to the land and prioritized community over material possessions.

He later found such a place in Lost Lodge, outside of Cloudcroft, where locals joke that any HOA would require a junk car in every yard.

“He had a death wish,” says his daughter Meagan Taylor about her father's life during the early years after the war. He traveled through Mexico and Latin America, and settled into an indigenous community in the Mexican state of Chiapas. Tom wore a hook on his stump, like a pirate, which often frightened the locals.

“Tom was in a very unique experience because he was supported because of his military injury, and it gave him the ability to really dig down deep into all sorts of things. I mean, that gentleman knew a lot about a lot of things and we've had conversations that were very deep, and he was very deep,” said Bill Niffenegger, Tom's friend of fifty-plus years.

Raised in Marion, Iowa, Tom briefly returned to the Hawkeye State and reunited with his first wife Thilieu and their two daughters Meagan and Rachel. He then bounced around the upper Midwest and hung out with the hippies.

He met Bill and his mentors Eli and Uncle Mac. He described Mac as a warlock who would sometimes place his glass eye on Tom's dinner plate. The girls were scared of Mac and still don't know his real name.

It was during this time that Tom met his second wife, Toni, and had his third daughter, Brooke.

The gang traveled west to the once sleepy fishing village of Port Townsend, Washington. Tom and Toni delivered Tom's fourth daughter, Taya, inside a converted school bus there at the gates of Puget Sound.

Tom began acting in independent movies. He also carved wood sculptures. Great hunks of cedar were transformed into towering depictions of snakes, hawks, sailors, and local wildlife. Many were sold to wealthy patrons in the Pacific Northwest.

Tom played Hugh Kelso, a down-and-out dad and police detective, in the indie comedy-thriller *Love and Dynamite* (1992). He starred alongside Dan Haggerty who was famous for the *Grizzly Adams* series. The movie is available on YouTube and is one of a handful of small productions that bear his name.

Exasperated by the growing popularity of Port Townsend, Tom ventured to New Mexico and settled in Cloudcroft in 1995. He followed his friends Bill and Beverly Niffenegger, who later opened The Old Apple Barn emporium in High Rolls Mountain Park.

With Cloudcroft as a home base, Tom continued to travel. He ventured to Brazil with Bill, and later to Jamaica where Tom met his third wife Andrea. He and Andrea had Tom's fifth daughter Tommilee and he embraced Andrea's daughter, Stacy, as his own.

“It's the air. It's sweet,” he would say about Cloudcroft. Tom raised Tommilee here, and became a pillar of the village and the Burro Avenue Boardwalk.

“He loved Cloudcroft. He liked the Western Bar, and he started making friends and never stopped,” said Bill.

A woman approached him on the boardwalk and, thinking Tom was homeless, she tried to hand him some money. Tom smiled, looked at her, and pulled a wad of

cash from his back pocket, over \$2,000, which was part of his monthly disability payment from the Army.

By his own admission, Tom sometimes appeared a little desitute. “I smell like old meat,” he would say. His baggy Levi’s would be stained with cow manure that he used to fertilize the garden. He seldom left the house without his black felt hat with an Army Airborne pin stuck in it, and later wore a leather eye patch after losing sight in one eye.

He had T-shirts printed with his own humorous “Tom-isms,” sayings that often poked-fun at his amputation or the politics of the day. I don’t Clap, I’m Unarmed, I Love Clowncroft, and Too Many Subpoenises were some of the phrases he proudly wore.

“He had a chuckle and he had silly T-shirts, but let me tell you that was a very, very well-informed gentleman,” said Bill.

Tom would talk to anyone regardless of politics, social status or age. Complete strangers were greeted with a joke and a smile.

He wanted for nothing and would hand out money, loan tools, give away building supplies and befriend hitchhikers. He’d measure a person by their willingness to share.

“Counter-culture people, people who have a hard time getting along in the establishment, I find more people within that group who will share their last potato with you,” Tom said.

He attempted to “reorganize” water using neodymium magnets, drank his own urine after studying urotherapy, practiced sungazing, and created ormus—a kind of trace mineral extracted with alchemy. Everything he put ormus on thrived, from his hollyhock flowers to his chihuahua Clyde, who lived for over twenty years.

Many of his experiments took place at his tire-wall compound in Lost Lodge where he erected his yurt, held cookouts, and let the children run wild.

He hired locals (including this writer) during the summers to shovel gravel into old tires that were stacked to create terraces and castle-like structures.

He enjoyed cooking over a fire, drying clothes outside, using an outhouse, raising chickens and operating his chainsaw.

“That guy had one arm and did more work than most guys did with them and their neighbor,”

said Bill.

Friends recall when Tom attempted to render homemade biochar, a type of fertilizer that requires very high heat and low oxygen. He used a metal barrel, a hot fire and a butane torch. An explosion ensued when a rush of oxygen ignited unburned butane beneath the metal barrel and shot the container fifty feet into the sky with a ka-boom that shook the neighborhood.

“But when it hit the ground and he wasn’t decapitated, I just started dying laughing,” said Cassi Parvin, Tom’s friend and former girlfriend.

Despite his failed biochar experiment, Tom inspired a Clowncroft High School student to pursue making biochar, leading them to receive a college scholarship for their work.

“I just met him one little time in the bar, and I thought a one-armed man was going to make me uncomfortable; but I think I just met my new best friend and that’s how it was for 25 years,” said Cassi. “There’s so many beautiful moments, there’s too many to remember.”

Ex-wives, girlfriends, lovers, friends, neighbors would all stop to visit Tom during his final weeks. A dozen people at a time would sometimes shuffle through his tarp-wrapped, single-room home, a testament to all of the lives he touched.

Tom was born on February 8, 1948 in Ottumwa, Iowa to parents Iris and Merwen Taylor. He had a brother James and sister Jeanie. He is survived by his six daughters Rachel, Meagan, Brooke, Taya, Tommilee and Stacy, his eleven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He died during the morning of October 10, 2025.

He told his children “the circle is full” before he passed.

His daughters stood outside their father’s yurt before they all traveled home. They were asked what words described their dad. “Empathic, talented, incredible, patient, f***ing hilarious and scary sometimes.”

“He’s magic,” they said.



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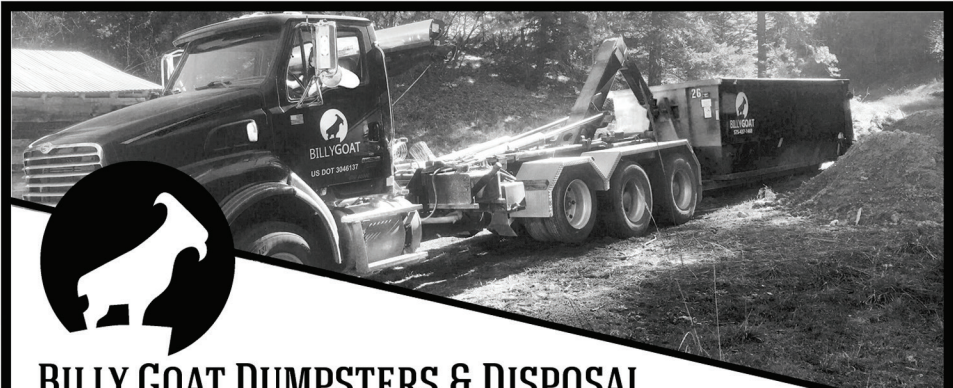


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Faces & Places



Finding Joy Off the Beaten Path

Local gallery owners and activists **Berle Van Zandt** (L) and **Donna Rand** (R) *and chat with* HANNAH DEAN *about art, community, and mountain life*

Donna Rand and Berle Van Zandt greet me in the patio and sculpture garden outside their pink-and-turquoise gallery, Off the Beaten Path.

The name fits. Tucked just behind Burro Avenue, Cloudcroft’s main street, the shop feels like a hidden find.

Off the Beaten Path carries a range of eclectic art and handmade gifts—wind chimes, paintings, sculptures, ceramics, metalwork—the list goes on.

Many of their artists use repurposed and unusual materials, an alchemic process resulting in fine arts, like Arizona-based artist Lorie T. Luipold’s “splashed” recycled metal copper waste sculptures. One sits on the wall like an iridescent lava flare.

Donna’s smile lifts her rosy cheeks as she tells their story. Berle arches one silver eyebrow, softening whenever a cat—or Donna—wanders close.

When the talk turns to Cloudcroft, Berle’s shoulders ease. “Good people,” she says, a mantra that captures how the pair have found their place here.

On the Mountain

“We’ve lived here for 38 years, we’ve had the shop for 29,” Donna says.

“When I came up, my mom was pregnant with me—I couldn’t see anything. But coming up here as kids, we loved it. We stayed muddy all summer, back then, because it rained a lot,” Donna remembers.

Donna grew up in El Paso, while Berle grew up in the Dallas area. Then, the pair met at Texas Tech University (TTU) in Lubbock, where Berle was seeking her degree in entomology, the study of bugs.

Donna, then Berle’s editor at the campus newspaper at TTU, introduced her to the area during spring break in 1983.

“We both liked Tech,” Donna remembers. “And then I said, let’s move somewhere where there are trees. We moved to Austin and spent some time there. Five years, very short.”

“We moved to the city for a while to make some money, so we wouldn’t have to work so hard when we got up here in our mid-20s. We did that, and moved up here a few years later,” Berle says.

The partners are now moving into the village proper—finding a single-level living space to ease mobility for Donna, who lives with Multiple Sclerosis.

Off the Beaten Path

Inside the gallery, a rainbow constellation of rooms display handmade, actually affordable art and artisan wares.

Joyous suncatchers, baubles like “contemplation rattles” and other oddities and one-of-a-kinds are surrounded by upscale fine art pieces.

Berle and Donna focus on local and regional artists. The “Unusual Beasts Lovable Art” plushie series by artist Galen Wales and dream-like paintings by Michael Copeland are sourced from Alamogordo.

Inspired by Cloudcroft’s artistic energy and a personal gift—a loan from Berle’s parents—the duo purchased and renovated a small cabin and launched their gallery.

“We decided we would have everything handmade in the U.S. But it’s all artists who are good people who create with love and passion, so it’s from the heart,” Berle says.

Over 29 years, the shop grew into a local landmark, cherished for its cheerful presence and annual return customers, even as Cloudcroft transformed with new businesses and a changing tourism landscape.

“High Altitude opened six months before we did,” Berle remembers. “The Bear Track and the Turquoise shop have been here longer—like 50 years? All the other businesses on Burro have changed.”

Desert Mountain Tourism

“You’ve got to concentrate when you’re busiest in summer, that’s when you’re going to make all your money,” Donna says.

“Tourists are the biggest customer base. We get a few locals who shop here,” Berle says.

While grateful for the economic boost from tourism, Berle worries about the effects on the village’s resources. “Why can’t we get a village ordinance that says any overnight rental—I don’t care if it’s a hotel, if it’s a cabin—to put signs in there. I know Teri Scott does, but put a sign in there that says, like the rest of the West, we are in a severe drought. Please conserve water.”

“The businesses are staying longer than typical now. Used to, they’d be maybe a year, at the most three,” Berle says.

While many businesses struggle, Off the Beaten Path is nearing its 30th anniversary.

“Somebody actually said, I thought it was a house,” Donna adds. “It took a while, but now we have returning people who come every year.”

One Cat at a Time: 1CaT

“Whensomebody comes in and just looks at you, you know they have a cat,” Berle says.

As we walk through the gallery, we’re followed by a mobile exhibit—Mazie, a slinky black kitten happily springs from room to room as we explore the gallery, followed by a fluffy orange critter named Jules.

Jules occasionally hitches a free ride, scaling Berle like a tree, turning her into a makeshift pirate, complete with a living shoulder accoutrement.

Jules stretches out on his favorite perch, Off the Beaten Path owner Berle Van Zandt.

While their trademark penguin serves as the gallery mascot, cats call upon Berle and Donna’s passionate activism.

With no animal control in the village, Berle and Donna have taken up the challenge of managing Cloudcroft’s stray and feral cat population. The 1CaT (One Cat at a Time) program, which they began in 2011 and turned nonprofit by 2017, relies on trap-neuter-release (TNR) system to keep numbers stable and protect local birdlife.

At any one time, their “cat house” shelters 15–30 cats—many feral, some adoptable.

Volunteers and donors sustain the effort, with fundraising through raffles, auctions, and a humble donation can on the gallery counter.

The program also serves as a support hub for neighbors needing help with spay, neuter, adoption, or rescue, filling a vital need for animal welfare on the mountain.

“The two of us do the boxes. Also, Maryann Bigelow helps. Susan Difani volunteers two days a week, and we have another volunteer, Cheryl Puterbaugh, who does one day a week. Bodhi West, who just graduated from CHS, has done one day a week since he was 14. Lately, he’s been doing three days a week,” Berle says of the program’s demands. “It’s just killing me because I don’t have the time.”

They’re looking for an employee to help manage the 1CAT program—reach out for details and to apply.

Finding Good People

“One of the biggest fights I ever had with my mom—we were really close—one time we were talking and I said I’m not Texan, I’m New Mexican. I chose to live here,” Donna says.

“She said I’m sorry you had a miserable childhood. My mom had such a good sense of humor. And I said call ‘em all up, talking about my siblings—my brother Pat’s in L.A., he’ll probably say ‘California’. My sister’s in Phoenix, she’ll say ‘Arizona’. There are six in the family, all over the country. And damn it, when she called them, if they didn’t all say they were Texan.” Donna laughs.

Later, Donna fills out the rest of the story.

“When I said I wasn’t Texan, I

thought I’d be taken out the will. There was no will, but I told mom: you know, I told you I was gay, it was no problem.”

“And growing up Catholic, she told her she was an atheist, no problem,” Berle adds.

“And I tell you I’m not Texan, and you blow a gasket!” Donna says.

Here in Cloudcroft, Donna and Berle have found their community.

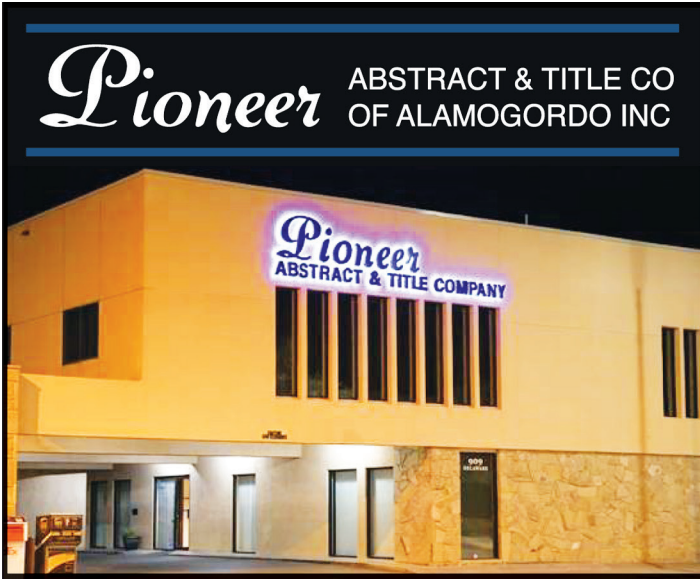
“People will go out of their way to help you,” Donna says.

“Like when Dave’s burned down. The whole village was up there, and it was a sad day and everybody could feel it. Immediately, everybody was like let’s figure out how to get money to these people that are losing their livelihoods. The community was just there for you,” Donna says. “I remember when I was in a really bad ac-

cident. The real estate agent was driving, and we were hit head on. She (the driver) passed.”

“I was behind and saw the whole thing,” Berle says.

Donna remembers, “The community was so amazing afterwards. I love my family, but these people are family. And I still feel that way.”



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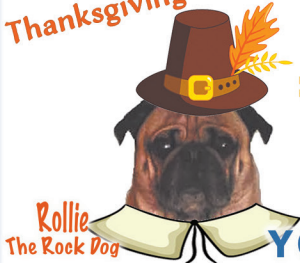
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