

Prairie Times

Postal Customer

PRSRT STD U.S.
Postage Paid
The Prairie Times

Elbert County
Connection
Page 23

Free Classifieds
Back Cover

April 2024

Bridget Cole

Birding *with gram*

I find solstice in casual bird watching.

I can identify many local birds by sight and a few by sound. Every winter I lure flocks to my backyard with feeders full of sunflower seeds. During the summer, I have my morning coffee on the porch with the finches and juncos. From a young age, I found serenity in bird watching,

This passion took root under the guidance of my father's mother. My grandparents lived a short walk up the dirt road from my house. We lived so close in the winter we could see their log cabin through the bare tree branches. Being on the porch of their rustic home, under the watchful eye of my bird-loving grandparents, cultivated my enjoyment of this peaceful hobby.

Every day, before the sun broke through the trees or he drank his coffee, Grandpa filled the bird feeders. He carefully filled one feeder with Niger seed for the goldfinches. The other two got sunflower seeds. Grandpa slathered peanut butter on a head-shaped rock that sat on the edge of the porch. He'd lugged it up from the field, painted on a face, and named it Emily. The peanut butter was for the squirrels. Up they came, their bushy tails flicking as they greedily nibbled.

As a child, I'd walk up the road to visit them. Initially, my trips were to trade a handful of freshly picked wildflowers for some of Gram's homemade cookies. I handed her the flowers; she put them in a vase, then offered me cookies. My mouth watered for her Snickerdoodles. She'd pour us tea and together we sat on the front porch chatting. One day as I got up to leave, she said, "Stay awhile and feed the birds with me." Until then, I'd not paid much attention to the feeders that hung from the porch.

Gram filled a small coffee can with sunflower seeds from the tin barrel beside her. "Now watch," she said. She scooped up a handful of seeds, walked to the porch edge, and held out her hand. She held her wrinkly palm still and pressed the fingers of her other hand to her lips, ordering me to shush. She needn't have bothered. I watched in fascination as a chickadee flew in from the pine tree and landed on a clothesline above her head. The little bird swayed slightly, eyeing Gram's offering. Down it hopped with hardly a flap of its wings and landed on her hand. Its beak closed around a sunflower seed and it flew back to the pine tree.

"Here, you try," Gram said.

I copied her motions and waited. Birds flitted past my hand to land on hers. I got impatient. I might have whined. I know I complained.

"Patience" was her one-word response.

Day after day, I trudged up the hill to sit on the porch with her. Sometimes she'd be outside waiting, bundled up in her long wool coat, a hand-knit scarf wrapped around her neck. We stood



with outstretched hands, waiting for the birds. My grandmother and I. Chickadees came and so did the nuthatches. My patience and silence paid off.

The days grew longer, the yard greened, and the summer birds returned. We heard the distant call of the Canada Geese before we saw their V's flapping and honking north to their summer residence. Gram delighted in these sightings of the season's firsts and inscribed the date in her birding notebook. In the margins, she drew little M's that formed a V as if recording what she'd seen. Gram marked when the first robin hopped across the lawn, and when it took up residency on the cabin porch. The notebook and all her bird books lived on her bookcase, the one right beside the window that looked out on the porch.

One summer, Gram and I watched a pair of robins build a nest on the porch rafter. Right before our eyes, the nest grew as the birds flew back and forth with grass and sticks. Then we saw the mother robin's head peering over the edge of the nest as she warmed her newly laid eggs. Gram and I watched and waited. Within a few weeks, the eggs hatched, and then the next round of excitement began as the adults flew back and forth with food for their new brood.



One day, I arrived at the cabin to find Gram not in her usual rocker on the porch. Taking advantage of this, I scaled the logs for a look at the nesting bird. Hand over hand, I climbed up to the nest. As I set my hand on the top log, I felt a sharp peck and heard an angry squawk from the mother. I quickly retreated and found Gram standing there, hands on her hips and a stern look on her face. "Patience," she said. "When they're ready, you'll see them, but not until." Sure enough, within a few more days, the birds were ready to leave the nest. Gram and I sat and watched their tentative first flights from the nest to the pine tree and back.

As the days warmed, and Gram's garden was in full bloom, I often found her sunning herself in her garden. I sat down beside her and waited for the birds. "Ruby-throated hummingbirds," Gram told me as the pair buzzed from one red bee balm to another. We saw a pair of bluebirds in the next box in the pasture behind the cabin. She and I gazed up at the blue summer sky where a pair of red-tailed hawks circled the pasture.

Her love of nature extended beyond the two-legged ones that flew to the feeders, to the four-legged ones that came to the porch after dark. "Patience," she told me one evening as together we sat on the porch. We waited. I fidgeted. Her warm hand came to rest on my leg. I stopped.

"Sit still," she whispered. "Here he comes."

I froze, barely breathing. I waited but saw nothing. Then, a rustling in the ferns, and they parted. A pointed nose appeared. Step by timid step, the raccoon walked out across the lawn, up the three steps to the porch, and right up to my grandmother. She sat deathly still, with a big smile on her face.

Ricky (as Gram called her frequent visitor) lapped up the milk and cat food she'd set out for him. He finished, wiped his face with his front paws, and walked back through the ferns.

My grandmother is long gone, and so is the cabin that kindled these memories. I have the bookcase she once owned. On it sits my bird books, my binoculars, and the old pair she once lifted to her eyes. I too have my version of Gram's bird notebook, where I list dates and birds I've seen visiting the feeders. I wish I'd kept hers to compare.

Today I sit watching the birds at my feeders thinking of my grandmother. She's been gone for over thirty years, but if I listen carefully, I can still hear her telling me to be patient. In traffic, I too can hear my grandmother's voice. Her calm voice returns to me through time and years, calm and reassuring. Reminding me to be patient. ♦

Prairie Times

www.prairietimes.com

303-621-2325

P.O. Box 880

Byers, CO 80103

Established in December of 1991

Helping Businesses Succeed

Prairie Times has lots of options and will work with any budget.

Call us today and let's get started.

Circulation - Elbert County, and areas along I-70

Email Contact Info

Advertising:

Jerrybishop@prairietimes.com

Ad Copy:

Susan@prairietimes.com

Editorial:

Charity@prairietimes.com

CLASSIFIEDS

Simple Rules: 3 classifieds (or less) per month.

25 words (or less) per ad.

Phone numbers are one word.

Businesses classifieds pay \$3 per word.

By mail to:

Prairie Times Classifieds

PO Box 880, Byers, CO 80103

By phone: 303-621-2325

Preferred Method by e-mail:

classifieds@prairietimes.com

(You cannot click into a link on our website.) Type the address into your email and put the ad in the body of your email.

Classifieds go on the website when they come in, then into the next Prairie Times.

If you want it to run longer, you must resubmit it the next month.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

1 year \$39 — 2 years \$65

For those outside our mailing areas:

Call in your order (Visa/MC)

or mail your check with address info to the address above.

WRITERS

We pay for stories.

The Prairie Times is always looking for new writers! Send your manuscript in

Word format (or in the body of the e-mail) to charity@prairietimes.com.

We want clean, funny, touching material that leaves our readers inspired.

No hunting stories. Preferred length is 600 to 850 words. Remember to always include your name, address, and phone number on all submissions.

We do not accept advertising from any entity we feel is in bad taste, does not fit our image, or which we feel is not legitimate.

We are not financially liable for any mistakes or omissions made in any ad copy published.

Prairie Times Publishing © 2024

FROM THE EDITOR

CHARITY BISHOP

Lessons from a Mouse

I knew the morning I awoke to find my orange and black “tortie” cat staring under my nightstand that we had a mouse in the house.

Callie is a “good” mouser in the sense she loves to chase them, but never kills them; she plays with them for hours and hours, until they finally escape or I rescue them and take them outdoors. I had no choice but to go off to work, and returned in the mid-afternoon to find her staring under the couch. Sure enough, the mouse, Callie, and I played several rounds of “chase it” to no avail. So I went to bed, knowing the mouse would show up before long.

It did. I got lucky, grabbed it with a towel, and took it outside. The poor thing got quite a culture shock.

From a warm house and the eager paws of a cat into the cold air. I felt bad about it, but what else could I do? Leave it inside to be chased or pestered or tortured?

Callie hunted around for it for a bit, then had her dinner and went to sleep. This morning as I left, she was happily curled up in her bed in front of the big sliding glass door, sunning. Not a care in the world.

I figure there’s something to learn from this incident, however small.

That mouse came into the house and found a cat there, rather than

staying out in the barn where he had a better chance of survival. It’s only by my intervention that he (or she) will live to squeak another day. But that mouse probably is not thinking about his misadventures in the house. He is out looking for food or a nice warm place to build a nest. The scary part is over. A big hand scooped him up and deposited him outside.

There are a lot of people in this world, including me, who seem to worry about more than is their fair share. I used to think if I thought carefully enough, I could avoid trouble. And to some extent, that is true. But I wound up thinking a lot more than I needed to, about things that were not my problem to solve. Can you relate? Let me share a few examples.

A friend wanted to buy a house, so I thought about whether her credit was good enough, and how the neighborhood might depreciate in time and how expensive houses are right now.

None of that was mine to think about, since I was not the person moving.

Another friend intended to move across state lines, so I thought about how to get there, how to transport her pets, and the best deals on moving vans.

Not mine to think about.

I can’t solve the world’s problems. I can’t solve world hunger. There is nothing I can do about corruption. Why, I can’t even change my friend’s mind about the decisions she intends to make. A friend told me, “What will happen, will happen whether you fear it or not, so why worry about it?”

Last year, I decided to take her advice to heart and... focus on *not worrying*.

Each time I had a fearful thought come up, I noticed it, sat with it, held it

in my thoughts, and then told myself to let it go. I chose not to worry. And you know what? All the things I *could* have worried about and didn’t, *did not happen anyway*. This has been a process, and it will take a lifetime, but I am getting better at it.

Another example. In a couple of weeks, *Gone with the Wind* is turning 85 years old and coming to theaters for a short time. It is such a grand film to see on the big screen, I recruited a friend and bought my tickets. But you know how “iffy” April can be in Colorado. Five years ago, when I went to see its 75th birthday, it dumped four feet of snow on us three days before, and my dad had to plow me out with a tractor and lend me a four-wheel drive so I could go.

This is a prime time to worry. To try to think about what I could do if it rains or snows, and whether I might have to cancel. To figure it all out in advance. I am choosing... not to.

It will snow/rain or it won’t. Nothing I can do about it. So why worry about it? Whatever happens will happen. So I put it out of my mind and stay in the present rather than steal from it, by borrowing concerns from a

future that may never exist. I need to be more like the mouse, focused on the here and now, and not worrying about the cat. (But maybe staying out of the blue house where the cat lives.)

When you start over-thinking, or thinking for other people, or worrying about how to keep your loved ones safe, stop. Take a deep breath. Ask yourself, “Is this mine to do / think about?” If it does not belong to you, or you can’t do anything about it, let it go and choose peace instead.

Happy spring! ♦



Get Lost in a Supernatural Thriller!

It’s 1920 in San Francisco. Raven is in a real mess this time. She hooked up with a gangster who turns out to be working for a demon named Moloch. And she soon attracts the attention of Byron Hayes, a supernatural investigator with a dark past.

To save her own skin, Raven has to convince him of a sob story, and get him to find an artifact that can kill her boss, or she might wind up dead. Or worse.

Moloch ain’t the kind of demon who takes “no” for an answer, but... neither is Byron.

Come along on a swell time full of supernatural suspense in *Byron*, the first thrilling entry in *The Byron Trilogy*.



Now Available on Amazon.com.

Man and Dog Kimberly Hamelin

In the beginning, there was Man and Dog. It was no ordinary Man, and no ordinary Dog. Man and Dog had jobs.

Man's job was to do exactly as he pleased, when he wanted to do it, and make money from it. Dog's job was to chase deer away, bark loudly at intruders, patrol the perimeter, sit on the barstool to watch Man's wallet when he went to play pool, and keep Man's feet warm at night. What a Man! What a Dog!

Enter Woman. She had an ordinary job and life...

except for the layoffs, foreclosure, car wreck, and beater truck that brought her into this story. But she found Man and was happy. Sadly for Dog, enter Little Cat, a six pound, high-strung calico with a tendency to scratch your eyes out first and forget to ask questions later.

Woman had worked with Little Cat to establish acceptable behavior. Little Cat knew she could go outside as long as she obeyed the command of "back in the house!"

Dog got along with Little Cat because Man told her to, but Dog didn't like it. Dog's new job was to see to it Little Cat behaved. Dog's prompt to go inside was "back in the box" so it didn't take long for the two commands to mesh. Before long, Dog and Little Cat came to understand one another. Little Cat wouldn't sleep on the Big Bed with Man and Woman because that was Dog's territory, but Dog would occasionally sleep on the Other Bed where Little Cat slept, just to show her dominance. They respected each other and got along tolerably well together.

Enter Big Cat, a sweet cat that hates the crate (or the "Cat Transport System," depending on which brand of cat carrier you have). He's a Siamese mix who gossips constantly (although no one but another cat understands), grunts when he eats (which is whenever food is available), is a little cross-eyed (so he runs into stuff all the time), and weighs in at twelve flabby pounds. Little Cat and Big Cat are brother and sister, but because of a Veterinary Altercation hadn't been living together for a couple of years.

Dog got exasperated!

Another one? is what her look said. *This is above my pay grade!* but she committed to her job.

Woman got worried and wanted to separate them for a while but Man said, "they'll figure it out." Woman agreed and sat back to watch. It was amusing seeing the soap opera of animal

dominance. The Cats tried to get the attention of Man and Woman, but Dog wouldn't allow it. Dog intervened at each opportunity by protecting

them from Little Cat, who ran off, and Big Cat, who would give up and saunter away as if he had no intention of reaching Man and Woman in the first place.

The two cats also disputed dominance. Little Cat, who had always been with Woman, and Big Cat, who remembered Woman from the Before Time, vied for the role of Top Cat.

The game was on. Dog's job now included being a referee between cats. Hissing matches started and there was Dog, breaking up the fight. Big Cat was winning the battle, as evidenced by the scratch mark across Little Cat's face.

One night, everyone got tucked up safe and warm in bed, or so it seemed. Man had gone to bed earlier and was fast asleep. Woman was in the dreamy half-aware state that precedes deep sleep, and Dog was

in her own bed guarding Man and Woman when the battle began. Hissing and spitting went from a minor annoyance to a full-blown fight. Cats were bouncing off the walls, knocking knick-knacks off shelves, spilling water and food bowls, tearing up the carpeting. It happened so fast, even Dog was slow to respond.

The brawl was approaching the proportions of World War Cat when Man awakened. Man simply

clapped his hands three times, shouted "NO!" and the war was over.

Just like that. The combatants skulked off to their respective corners, and peace reigned in the house... until Big Cat jumped on the Big Bed to sleep next to Woman, Dog jumped on the Big Bed to warm Man's feet, Little Cat sat in the doorway to watch the show, and the fun began again. But that's a story for another time. ♦



POLE BUILDING CONTRACTOR

- ★ 3D Renderings
- ★ Over 13,000 Buildings Built
- ★ In-House Design & Engineering
- ★ We Match Any Siding & Roofing
- ★ Pole Buildings & All Steel

24/7 AVAILABILITY
CALL US TODAY
970-489-7339

(800) 833-9997 ★ STEELSTRUCTURESAMERICA.COM

POLE BUILDINGS / GARAGES / SHOPS / BARNs / COMMERCIAL

Join us at the **Hilltop Fair**

Music, Hilltop History, School Art Show,
Craft Booths, Silent Auction & More!

Sat, May 4, 10-3pm

Historic Hilltop Schoolhouse &
UCC Parker Hilltop

Between Parker & Elizabeth at
5748 Flintwood Road

hilltopsocialclub.org / uccparkerhilltop.org
303-841-2808 / Hilltop Schoolhouse on FB

Tired of Mowing & Trimming?

Elizabeth, Kiowa, Franktown Residential/Business Properties www.BTHMowing.com Starting at \$65	<p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Let Ben Do It!</p> Free quote 303-710-2064 BTH Mowing Est. 2018 Owner/Operator Ben Hicks (17 years old) Reliable-Competent
---	--

ELBERT COUNTY NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Thursday, May 2nd

Old Kiowa Courthouse
215 Commanche St., Kiowa

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Bring Chairs

Charles Oz Collins

WAR ON WEEDS

Pick one issue, promotion, or campaign and someone has declared war on it.

Most of us have survived. But I want to discuss a much older, more insidious war. The War on Weeds. If you did not grow up on a family farm in the 1950s, you may be painfully unaware of its history and gravity.

My Father conducted a decades-long campaign to teach me the necessity of combating weeds. He took a direct approach. I can still hear him say, "Son, rather than walking around that weed, cut it!" Interaction with vile uninvited vegetation got up close and personal when we irrigated. Irrigation ditches were a favorite haunt for an amazing variety of green invaders.

Since work caused us to spend a lot of time along those ditches taking care of irrigation, this was a primary battle zone. I felt inclined to take a "live and let live" approach to our sprouting adversaries and thought Dad's admonition ("cut that weed or soon it will poke you in the eye") was extreme. It didn't take long for his weed wisdom to

penetrate my hard young head without a poke in the eye. Weeds had many other ways of complicating my young life.

My chief weapon in the War on Weeds was an irrigating shovel. I could slip it beneath the base of any weedy foe, severing it from the



roots that robbed precious water and fertility, space and sunlight from the good plants. The secret was to cut a weed the first time you saw it. If you didn't, its compatriots would join it, all bent on the same goal—global domination, starting with our modest family farm.

The first weed to incur my youthful wrath had a variety of names, each preceded by an expletive. It was a low growing little vine bearing

innumerable "stickers" or thorns and tiny yellow blossoms. We called it "bullhead," but others preferred goat head or puncture vine. All three names fit. The individual seed looked like a bull or a billy goat with two sharp symmetrical thorns for horns. It had the nasty habit of germinating after most other weeds put in their appearance. After waging war on other weed types for several weeks, my vigilance and fighting spirit had diminished a tad when Mr. Bullhead showed up. Usually, it showed up first in my bike tire. I hated having a flat tire. Nor did I enjoy patching them. The only thing worse was falling off the bike into a patch of bullheads. Those horns carried a venom that left my wounds stinging for hours.

Then there's the Sandbur, the "Colorado diamond." It appeared like an innocent bit of grass at first. Left long enough, it produced a tiny version of a medieval weapon, the mace covered with tiny, needle-sharp points. Burrs can't jump, but it seemed as if they could. A kid in jeans had merely to walk through a patch to have his cuffs filled. It's impossible to pull them out by hand without getting tiny spines in your fingers. But you had to get them out of your cuffs and pant legs, otherwise the next time you squatted, you'd have one or more stuck near your hind end. A dangerous business.

Many of my foes were invaders. Russian thistles did not roll to our little farm from Asia, but roll they do, leaving a colony of seed with each tumble and bounce. Likewise, Scotch thistle had to hitch a ride. Japanese knotweed and Bermuda grass were stowaways. Jesuit agricultural advisers gave the worst, a Canada Thistle, free passage as "good hog feed."

Kochia would grow on every square foot of our farm if we let it. When young and tender, it was not a great task to cut it. Heaven forbid

- clip this coupon to save -

25% off

One regularly priced item
Expires 4/30/24

Present this coupon at checkout

Browse our selection of products from



Barnyard Boutique

M-Sat 9-5
303-
345-4460

56551 E. Colfax Strasburg

you let it reach 3-4 feet in height. At that point, it resembled a small spruce tree. Europeans introduced this Asiatic native as an ornamental. By the time it was tree sized, it was tree hard and for that reason we called it Iron Weed. The roots sneered at an irrigating shovel wielded by a kid. Sadly, Iron Weed predated my chainsaw days. The only "good" thing I have to say about Iron Weeds is in the spring the previous year's crop made wonderful fires and gave our ditches a momentary clean appearance.

We called the native weed known as

THE GAC CREW
303-243-1424
FENCING, STALLS, HAULING

Redroots pigweed. Hogs love it, but then they love to eat anything green. This weed we cut easily unless allowed to grow tall and thick. In dry ground, the root held well, but after a rain pulling them was easy. After the rare good rain, when we thought it a good time to go fishing, Dad thought it a good time to pull weeds.

Undisturbed, Redroots could grow thickly and choke out other vegetation, but cultivation and a ready irrigating shovel kept them in check. Like Kochia, Redroots coexisted with crops on the family farm, but we kept an eye on them.

Canadian Thistle may be the most tenacious, harmful weed I know. It is never content to coexist with other vegetation, to share space or to exist as a single plant or even as a small clump. Its abiding intent is to take over. What weed can choke out other growth, even other weeds and release a chemical into the soil that prevents other weed and crop species from germinating on that soil? None that I know of, apart from the thistle family.

I attacked small clumps of Canada Thistle with my trusty irrigating shovel, in vain. This

Don't Forget Mom

For the best selection, shop early.
Mother's Day is May 12



Jewelry,
Purses,
Home Décor
& Garden
Spinners

Bring movement to your yard with garden spinners



We stock what you need to care for your animals.



M-F 9-6 Sat. 9-4 Family Owned & Operated
303-261-7743

Your Pet & Large Animal Health Center
1 mi. west of Watkins on old hwy

Like us on Facebook, and visit us at www.omalleysmercantile.com

Limited Time Offer

Volume Discounts

\$1.799 per Gallon for 500 Gallons

Global Propane

(303) 660-9290

Family Owned Business

plant possesses multiple ways of surviving and spreading, via extensive horizontal root systems, and windborne seed. Even chopped up chunks of plant can survive and take root. When God punished Adam, He did so by making him a farmer who, until the end of his days, had to deal with "thorns and **THISTLES.**" It was and is a life sentence.

My war on weeds escalated from shovel to machines pulled by tractors. Not only could you sever the weed's roots with a plow, you buried it under eight inches of dirt, but you had to attack weeds before

they had a chance of making seed, otherwise you were planting a new crop of your tormentors. I favored the disk because you could cover more ground and it chopped weeds into small pieces. There was something satisfying, almost delectable, about that. But for some weeds, like the despised Canada Thistle, each segment of the severed stem was potentially a new plant, conveniently buried and ready to take root.

For tenacious weeds, a mower was a cosmetic treatment. Roots survived and prompt regrowth assured. Dad invested in a weed burner to pull behind the tractor. He did this after his experience burning a ditch with gasoline and a match. Water grass had overgrown the ditch. Prior to turning water into the ditch, Dad walked along the grassiest portion of the ditch, pouring gasoline from a five-gallon can into the ditch bottom. This was an era when gasoline cost cents a gallon. He stepped back and flicked a kitchen match toward his final pour. The gas evaporated rapidly, but the overhanging grass held some of it in the ditch. The instant the match met gas fumes, there was a WHUUUMP audible a quarter mile away. Grass fragments filled the air, but there was no lingering or consuming fire. It was the most exciting thing that happened that day and the last time we tried to napalm a ditch.

The weed burner used forced air over a diesel-fed flame to torch weeds. Passing quickly over weeds left them gray and limp, like a battlefield. The burner was effective when cleaning ditches so water could flow freely, but would damage crops. It satisfied us to burn out the weeds, but within a week, new ones would sprout.

Science got busy post World War II to devise

means of mass destruction of vegetation. It took a little longer to create so-called "selective herbicides," chemicals that would

kill certain weeds but not harm nearby crops. One early distinction was between broadleaf plants and grasses. You could save an entire field attacked by weeds by a single quick spraying from the ground or the air.

While I dispensed death to weeds by piloting the H Farmall tractor through the field, pulling a tank of liquid herbicide and spraying a fine mist on all the plants in the field, airplanes did the same to a neighbor's field much faster. The real breakthrough was the genetic engineering of plants to create resistance to selected herbicides. Now we are operating in the era of laboratories, white smocked weed scientists, test tubes. We are manipulating the very nature of nature.

The first time I heard the phrase "Roundup ready," it puzzled me. Roundup was a potent herbicide capable of killing any type of vegetation. If you sprayed it on weeds in a cornfield, beet field, or field of alfalfa, and some of the spray landed on the crops, it killed or harmed it. Now they have seeds resistant to Roundup. As I studied this development, I recalled a lament I had heard among farmers for many years. Some weeds seemed to require heavier and heavier doses of herbicide to be killed or to show effects. Could it be Nature had its own plant engineering, a means of hardening the target? How

Strasburg Auto Parts

1313 Monroe St. Strasburg 303-622-4211

\$17.29

Valvoline Premium Blue SAE Motor Oil



Offers good through May, 2024.

YOUR CHOICE \$6.99

Royal Purple TruFuel Engineered Fuel + Oil Ready to Use



\$2 off haircut or \$5 Off Chemicals New Customers Only
with this coupon



Barr Bear
Country Cuts & More
Expires 5/1/24 **303-905-8246**

Full Service Salon: Tues-Sat 8-5
312 Comanche St Kiowa
Walk-ins Welcome; Evenings by Appt

amazing that in the natural order of things, developing "Roundup Ready" weeds is an ongoing process.

Where does this War on Weeds end? I have one suggestion for a de-escalation. Here are two of the most "ready" and effective weed whackers known to man: sheep and goats! ♦



CUSTOM ENTRY GATES



If you can dream it, we can build it.

- Uniquely designed and custom built entrance gates.
- Commercial grade gate operators.
- Increase your security, curb appeal, and home value.
- Video call box without recurring fees.



Enhance your design with custom airbrush painting!

Front Range Industrial Services Co Inc

720-281-9217 ♦ frindsco.com

Locally Owned in Elizabeth, CO.



Free Glass Shower Door with any tub or shower remodel or conversion.

Get the bathroom of your dreams!

We offer Bathroom Remodels, Tub-to-Shower Conversions, Tub Replacements, and Walk-in Tubs.

0% Financing for 24 months!



Let our family serve your family.

303-418-7736

www.MyBathColorado.com



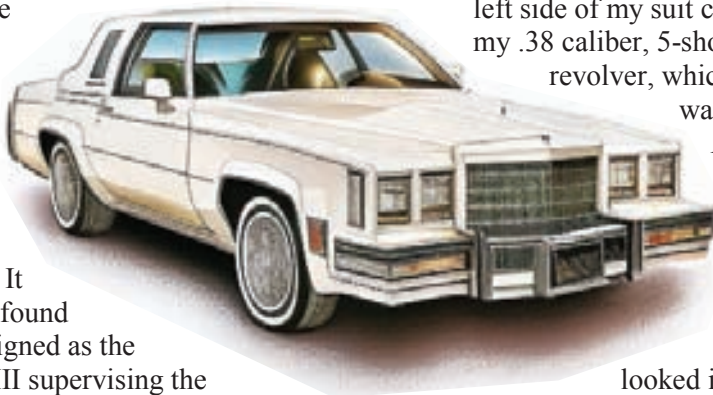
Exp. 3/30/24

Richard Whitaker

A Tap on the Shoulder *and a whisper in the ear*

The Northeast Division of the Los Angeles Police Department found itself housed in a structure built in 1925.

Fifty-six years had passed since its dedication and little changed over the years. The exterior wood was rotting, and the bricks were deteriorating at a faster pace than the city could handle. The detective bay occupied much of the first floor behind the front desk. It was here I found myself assigned as the Detective III supervising the Auto Theft unit.



On a beautiful day in May 1981, just before noon, two members of my unit asked if I would join them for lunch. Being new to the division, I accepted. They mentioned afterward they needed to stop by the local Radio Shack to pick up flashlight batteries, to which I agreed.

After lunch, we drove to a Radio Shack near the station. As our unmarked Plymouth pulled into the front parking area, I glanced out the left rear passenger window and noticed an old white Cadillac sitting in the middle of the parking lot a short distance from the store. It sat unoccupied, and it lacked a front license plate. As my partners walked toward the store, I went over to the Cadillac for a closer look. It also had no rear license plate.

A perfect getaway car, I thought.

Feeling uneasy, I trailed after my partners. I entered behind them and stopped behind a display case. Two males stood on our side of the counter, with the clerk in front of them. Although my partners paid no attention to the

men at the counter, the two men shot them a quick glance and became nervous. The men watched my partners, but failed to see me. Slowly, I slid my right hand underneath the left side of my suit coat jacket and felt for my .38 caliber, 5-shot Smith and Wesson revolver, which sat in an inside waistband holster.

Not a lot of firepower, I thought.

Cautiously, I moved toward the rear of the store, unnoticed by the suspects.

As I moved, the clerk

looked in my direction. As our eyes met, an expression of fear crossed his face and with eyes as big as silver dollars, he opened his mouth, but uttered no words through his quivering lips. I slipped down a side aisle and stood behind another shelving unit.

We had interrupted a robbery in progress!

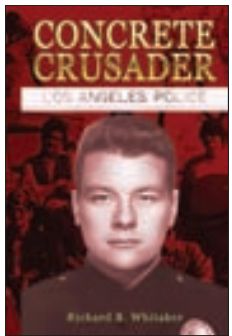
While my partners shopped, I remained in an area that provided me cover should a gun battle erupt. Well hidden, I decided not to yell or move. If I alerted the bandits, a gunfight could ensue, and if any of my five shots failed to stop the shooter, I might hit the clerk. If I fired first, my partners could mistakenly shoot at me, not the suspects.

The two men remained facing the clerk, with their bodies still pressed against the counter. The suspect on the left was tall and slim while his partner was short and squatty. Without turning, Squatty started to shuffle toward the front door, followed by Slim. As they slowly inched their way sideways, the volume of their conversation increased and they acted as if they had decided not to make a purchase, but just leave. Once outside the door, they sprinted for the Cadillac. Slim threw open the driver's door and jumped behind the wheel while Squatty ran to the passenger side, opened the door, and then turned and faced the store.

I ran after them. As my right hand slipped around the small wooden grip of my revolver, my left hand reached for the door handle just as Slim turned the ignition key. I hesitated.

Read the true adventures of a retired Los Angeles Police Department Detective.

Concrete Crusader by Richard B. Whitaker will grab you from the very beginning. Brace yourself for a gritty, "in your face" ride that will have your jaw dropping, laughing, and reaching for a tissue when you least expect it.



Order today at Amazon.com.

Click...click...click!

It's the battery, I thought.

Click...click...click!

Squatty went to the front of the car and popped the hood. In less than a heartbeat, he slammed the hood, and then ran back to the open passenger door. Again, he turned in my direction. As I pushed open the plate glass door, the Caddie started.

Squatty whipped out a large handgun. As our eyes met, I slipped my revolver from its holster. He aimed it in my direction. I judged the distance to be about twenty-five yards.

Adrenaline pumped through me. As my fingers touched the cool glass of the door, I felt three light taps on my right shoulder. Then I heard the warning. *Richard, if you go outside, you will die.*

I need to do something! I thought.

As my upper body leaned forward in anticipation of stepping outside, my feet remained planted on the floor. The angel tapped me again twice on the shoulder and repeated his warning, more forcefully than before. I slid my revolver into its holster and looked for my partners. Not seeing them, I looked out the door just as Squatty jumped into the Caddie. With a thunderous roar and violent shake, the car flew backwards through the parking lot and, in a cacophony of squealing tires, burning rubber, and billowing smoke, it fishtailed into traffic and disappeared.

All remained silent until the door to the store flew open and

two men rushed in from the ice cream store next door. They'd left just as the two men entered and saw the gun, so they ran into the shop next door to call the police. My partners walked around a display and stood next to the counter. As he flashed his badge, one of them said, "Everything is under control, gentlemen, we are the police."

As I later reflected upon that experience, I knew had I not heeded the tap on the shoulder and listened to that warning, I would have died that afternoon. ♦

QUALITY

LANDSCAPE & SOIL PRODUCTS INC.

LARGE SELECTION OF:

Top Soil, Sand, Compost, Mulches, Rip Rap, Decorative Rock, Moss Rock, Cobblestone, Gravel, Fill Dirt, Recycled Asphalt, Flagstone, Roadbase, Planters Mix, Edging and Fabric



Ask about semi loads & volume discounts.

THE PERFECT MATERIALS FOR ALL YOUR LANDSCAPING PROJECTS:
Driveways-Dog Runs-Gardens
Lawns-Playgrounds
Soil Prep for Sod-Construction-Retaining Walls-Walkways-Patios

5% OFF all materials

(excluding hardware & firewood)

Retail Price Only

Must Present Coupon

Expires 5/1/24

Not valid with any other offer

303-688-4946

2977 N. Hwy 83 Franktown

qualitylandscapeandsoil.com

Family owned & operated since 1993

Mon-Sat 8-5 Hwy 83, 1 mi N of Franktown

Eastern Colorado Steel Supplier

Angles-Flats-Solid Rounds & Squares-Expanded Metal
Channels-Beams-Square Tubing
Rectangular Tubing-Sheets-Plates Pipe-Round Tubes-
Mechanical Tubing- Purlins
Rebar Contractor Pricing

WE ARE A FULL STOCKING STEEL WAREHOUSE

- *Spool Roll Tarps
- *Trailer Supplies
- *Welding Supplies
- *Welders & Torches
- *Bales Spears
- *Portable windbreak panels
- *Welding Job Shop
- *Chisholm Trail Bale Beds

www.steelcornerinc.com

Open Mon- Fri 7-12; 1-5



970-664-2626



Farm, Homes & Cabins, Commercial, Horse, Garage, Wood Shop

Custom Designed & Value Engineered

Get started at ClearyBuilding.com

- Financing available
- Digital Floor Planner
- Customized, in-house Engineering and manufacturing to suit your needs

Call us for a FREE consultation
 FRANKTOWN, CO • 303-660-0420
 FT. MORGAN, CO • 970-542-0648



Featuring:  
 800-373-5550 • ClearyBuilding.com



Springtime Surprise

Avis Jaenson

A springtime ritual would happen like clockwork in my mother's yard when I was a child.

We had a small plot of land in the back of our meager acreage set aside for Mother's garden. She buried all our food scraps there all winter and in the spring, had Dad spade it for her. That was all the involvement she'd let him have in her project. She shared the experience with me. We had the privilege of digging our fingers deep into the composted loam. The smell of moist earth wafting into our senses told us the earth was ready to receive.

Each year, we ordered from the seed catalogue. Mother let me choose some seeds. I liked that, particularly when my sister got old enough to care more about boys than about gardening. Mother was in charge of the tomatoes and had sprouts coming up in our east-facing windows. She had saved these seeds from a tasty hybrid she'd served the previous summer. Tiny shoots popped their heads out of the warm starter soil and faced towards the sun in their little peat pots, soaking up the rays and growing faster than we could keep up with. In the week it took to get our seed order, we fertilized, dug a border and put rocks around the garden plot. After we strung up string staked out for straight lines, we surrounded the garden with chicken wire to protect our crops. Ducky and my dog Teddy loved to dig and forage for goodies after we'd gone in for the night, so the wire was a necessary evil and it kept out the rabbits as well.

My duck kept to himself unless there was something exciting going on. It was the second summer I'd had him. He had a personality all his own. "Ducky" followed us around the yard,

hoping for any tender shoots of grass we'd leave behind. Mother threw him a few handfuls of grain and what he didn't eat, the dog did. Teddy wasn't partial to eating grain, but he knew if Ducky wanted it, he had to have some as well for the principle of the thing. He had to show dominance over the yard and most definitely over that darned duck!

Mother and I took our seed packets and garden spades to our plot to begin our ritual.

Poke a finger, drop, poke, drop, poke, drop and label. This went on all morning and by lunchtime, I felt ready for a break. I took

off my gloves and whacked the dirt off onto my jeans. It was strange that

Ducky had quit early and gone to rest under some big-leafed ferns.

From my vantage point, I could see him lying under the fronds and figured it was too hot for him. I took a minute to fill up his small swimming pool with fresh water and thought that would help him. I devoured a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, drank my juice, and headed for my room. Truth be told, I really needed a nap, but never wanted to let on to my mother that's what I was doing. What if she told the neighbors I was still taking "baby naps"? I turned on my small metal fan and curled up on my bed. My dreams were of giant plants producing four pound tomatoes. I was standing on the grandstands at the State Fair receiving the blue ribbon for best vegetable crop.

I woke up to Teddy barking in the yard in the general area where Ducky had taken his



nap. I yelled for Mother as I headed out back, the screen door slamming. It scared me to death that something had happened to my beloved little duck. Going down on her knees, Mother pulled the fronds aside while I covered my eyes, fearing the worst had happened to my beloved pet. Tears slid down my face while I waited to hear the news. "Mother, is he okay?" I sobbed, then started nervously laughing when I opened my eyes. There in my mother's hands was the largest duck egg I'd ever seen. I couldn't believe something the size of her palm had come out of my duck!

"Guess your boy's not a boy after all, Sport!"

I reached in and scooped my duck close to my chest, stroking her pretty white head and talking soothing words to her. "I didn't know he was a girl," I said with a giggle.

"Neither did I, but I've got a plan for this lovely egg to star in my next angel food cake. Wow! It is huge!" Mother got up off her knees and took that prize egg into her kitchen. I heard her laughing as she told the story to my dad. I continued to sit in the cool grass, holding my sweet duck and thanking her for the great contribution she'd given us that day.

As I stroked my dog and petted my duck's head, I looked around the yard at everything in bloom. Springtime was full of surprises. ♦



It's Spring!

Head to the hardware store

We have gloves, ammo, clip this coupon for paint, plumbing, electrical, heaters, the tools to fix what's broken, and much, much more.

10% OFF
 one item*



*Limit 1 per visit. Not valid for sale items. Exp. 4/30/24

Western Hardware
 303-622-4414
 56640F E Colfax Ave,
 Strasburg, CO 80136

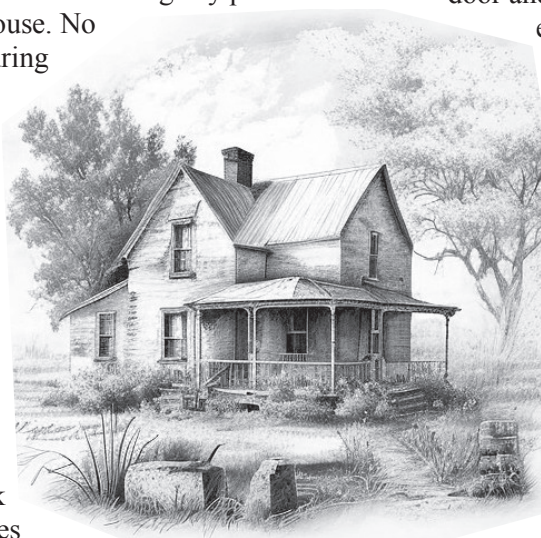
Berene H. Ingram

The Storm

Whenever our house wrestled the wind in tornado alley, we went to the cellar.

The storm arrived at bedtime as we sat dressed in our rooms, lights out, shoes on, and pillow in hand. We listened to the thunderstorm as it gained energy. Rain pummeled the house, which shook as thunder bellowed and rolled in heavy waves. Long fingers of lightning hissed along with sheets that flashed across the clouds. We felt the wind's gusty pushes against the house. No one talked during storm protocols.

The storm moved fast. Before dad closed the electrical breaker, lightning attacked the house with a deafening air-cutting crack where the lines entered on the second floor. My bed stood against that wall. I felt the jolt, an involuntary bump against my body. Thunder followed with an obedient grumble. I skittered off the bed and ran for the stairs, thankful for dad's call from downstairs. "Let's get out of here."



Fear propelled me down the staircase. The storm met us at the back door, where we waited for Dad to carry us to the cellar. Darkness enveloped us until a lightning flash gave us a glimpse of the closed wooden cellar door. We edged out the back door and went to the edge of the porch. Dad stepped off the porch onto the mud and slippery grass.

I felt the wind suction working to grab me from Dad's arm. He held me tighter. The driving rain hurt my skin and obscured my sight. As we grew older, he guided us to the cellar with a strong hand holding ours. Mom greeted us in the cellar, her flashlight on and blankets piled on the two-level bunk bed. At least twice a year during storm seasons, the cellar became a safe harbor. Mom and Dad sat on chairs. I felt a watchful unease.

Mom awakened us. "Let's go to the house." We listened to the quiet, no storm. When the cellar door opened, cool, clean nighttime air greeted us on the way back to the house. The refrigerator motor whined on from the electrical breaker power. Dad's flashlight

Call us for your free, no obligation roof inspection!

GOT ROOF DAMAGE?

Roof Damage from HAIL? Water Leak? Missing Shingles?



ALL ROOF Can Have it Replaced in a Day!

All Roof Specializes in Residential and Commercial Roofing Solutions

- NO DEPOSIT required! We work with all insurance
- Dimensional Shingles and Tile Roofs
- Metal Roof Installation and Services
- Flat Roof Installation and Services
- Architectural Sheet Metal

**LOCALLY OWNED
303-646-3530**

35572 County Road 13, Elizabeth, CO 80107 ♦ allroofsofcolorado.com

the house and through the wiring, attacking the refrigerator and everything plugged into a socket. The bathtub stopper chain became green and crusty. We had no lightning rod on the house.

We made another scary trip to the cellar in this ferocious storm. The closed cellar door bounced from wind suction. The storm wanted to be let in. Dad double latched the cellar door to prevent the wind from yanking it open and flinging it away. We talked in hushed voices, our flashlight off. It was too early to sleep. My eyes couldn't penetrate the thick darkness. My ears saw and heard the storm stomping through the farm. Its volume increased with each thunder roll like concert music instruments. Wind directed the rain, lightning, thunder, and hail. The sounds increased, subsided, and increased again. It lulled me to sleep. I don't know how long. We sheltered in the cellar.

After we returned to the house from another storm cellar trip, a large black snake laid on the landing where the steps turn upward to the second floor. My older brother almost slipped on it, yelled "snake," backed up and pushed us down the stairs. The storm had dislodged the snake from within the house walls. What else lived in our walls?

We enjoyed a few weeks' respite from storms. The cellar, a grassy mound with a roof lying on it, became a refuge in our absence, including spiders, lizards, frogs, and maybe a snake or two. Not a play area.

Our venerable house fought its last windstorm battle a few months before I went to live at university. It arrived near dinnertime. We gathered in the living room and listened. A strong wind blast grabbed the house, twisted, and nearly decapitated its upper portion. The house emitted a loud, nail-wrenching screech as nails ripped out of boards. I grabbed my ears. The fracture appeared where the upper floor attached, across the width of the front living room, through the next room to the other side of the house.

"Let's get out of here!" Dad called.

We went to the cellar. The house wouldn't survive another windstorm. A few months later, dad found us a new house. No sirens warned of coming storms. We studied the sky for developing squall lines, height, and color of cloud formations, and noted wind direction. We observed the cows which became belly to the ground in the field during approaching storms. And if one came, we activated the family storm plan. ♦

accompanied our weary walk upstairs to our rooms. Sleep still gripped us. We laid in bed and slept again. Daylight brought sun, blue sky, and calm winds. Broken tree limbs, roofing materials, and other debris littered the ground.

Several days later, another storm arrived at dinner time, just before sunset. The clouds turned a deep gray, almost black, and became a curtain closed against the daylight. The wind left the area. We gathered in the living room, lights out, and waited. After lightning had hit the house several times during previous storms, we turned off the electrical breaker at the first sign of a storm. This prevented it from feeding on electricity as it danced around



Kubota Together we do more.

From mowers to track loaders to utility vehicles, it's a lineup built to build your business. Stop by for a closer look at the Kubota commercial landscape lineup today.

- Highly maneuverable, professional-grade mowers easily mow around obstacles
- Powerful, comfortable track loaders can do it all
- Heavy-duty utility vehicles have the strength to haul and tow heavy loads



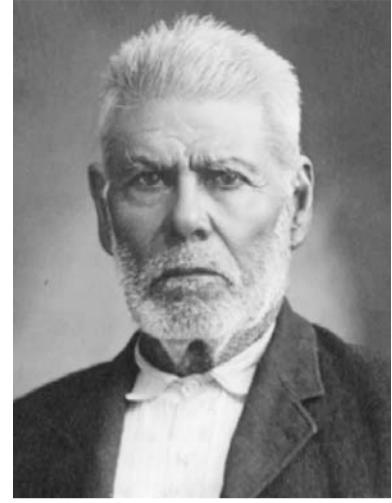
Front Range Kubota Inc.
7983 Cherrywood Loop
Kiowa, CO 80117
(303) 625-9811
www.fronrangelkubota.com

KubotaUSA.com

© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2023. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, safety, incentive offer and product information, consult your local dealer or go to KubotaUSA.com.

THE WEST OF YESTER-YEAR

Rachel Kovaciny



Enrique Esparza

Gregorio Esparza intended to send his wife Ana and their children away from San Antonio, to somewhere safer. Most of the married Texas soldiers did this, and the Esparzas bought a wagon and supplies for the family's escape. Before Ana and the children could leave, the Mexican Army arrived and cut off all clear escape routes. Gregorio and Ana felt it would be safer for the family to stay inside the fortified Alamo rather than for Ana and the children to flee.

mission's walls. They allowed nearly twenty women, children, and slaves to live. After the Alamo fell, the Mexican Army held Enrique, his mother, and his siblings prisoner for a short time.

Enrique Esparza really *could* "remember the Alamo." The famous rallying cry called for all Texans to remember the Battle of the Alamo and those who died there.

It was supposed to encourage them while fighting for their independence from Mexico in the 1830s. But few Texans could literally remember the Battle of the Alamo, because the Mexican military killed every single defender. Still, there were a handful of survivors, all women and children. Enrique Esparza was one of those. It's thanks to him we know quite a bit about what the defenders endured during the siege and battle.

Enrique's father, Gregorio Esparza, was a soldier in the Texan army. When stationed in San Antonio, his wife Ana and their children accompanied him. The Mexican Army arrived at San Antonio on February 23, 1836, determined to wipe out the Texas revolutionaries there.

They proclaimed any white Americans who had joined the Texan Army could leave without being pursued or harmed. But the Mexican Army vowed to execute any revolutionary soldiers with Mexican heritage, which included Gregorio Esparza. The Texas soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William B. Travis, refused to be divided up along racial lines that way. As a group, they made the Alamo mission their fortress.

More than a dozen noncombatants took shelter in the Alamo, along with the soldiers, including the Esparza family. Other Texas revolutionaries had fortified the mission buildings a few months earlier, and it provided the best means of defense in the area. Enrique was eight years old and shared his memories of the Alamo's siege and battle with others many times during his adult life.

For thirteen days, the Mexican Army, under the command of General Santa Anna, laid siege to the Alamo. Led by Lt. Colonel Travis, Davy Crockett, and Jim Bowie, about two hundred Texans defended the mission-turned-fortress and kept three thousand Mexican soldiers busy. While Santa Anna got stalled outside San Antonio for nearly two weeks, the rest of the Texan Army could gather strength and supplies elsewhere.

In the end, the Alamo got overrun, and the victors killed every combatant within the

Eventually, they gave each woman a few dollars and let them leave. The Esparza family stayed with relatives in San Antonio for a time before making a new home for themselves elsewhere.

In the early 1900s, Enrique shared his reminiscences about the Battle of the Alamo with the newspapers. His accounts gave historians clear and vivid details of what the defenders endured. He remembered meeting Davy Crockett but did not interact with the other celebrities, Jim Bowie and Lt. Colonel Travis. His memories included information about where the noncombatants sheltered, who defended which parts of the fortress, and how the combatants were supplied with water and food.

As an adult, Enrique Esparza was a farmer in the San Augustine area. He married Gertrudes Hernandez and raised seven children. The family later moved back to the San Antonio region and farmed there. Enrique also worked transporting goods between San Antonio and Indianola, Texas. He died on December 20, 1917, in San Antonio. ♦

COMING SOON

In this old west retelling of *Sleeping Beauty*, a good-hearted midwife rushes to warn friends about the gunman hired to force them from their home, but can't prevent the catastrophe ahead.

The Man on the Buckskin Horse, Illustrated Edition
Available April 30.



Purchase at Amazon.com
or visit www.rachelkovaciny.com.

Hair Snake!?

Adele Seward

When I was in the fifth grade, I walked to school on a muddy dirt road.

It had rained the night before. My two brothers and I came upon a huge mud puddle. We loved to play in them! To our surprise, we saw a snake the size of a hair from the mane or tail of a horse. Twelve inches long with a head half the size of a grain of rice. We were so fascinated, watching it flip and flop around in the puddle, that we were late getting to school. In excitement, we told the teacher and our classmates about our find. No one believed us, especially the teacher. The kids all wanted to go see our "snake," thinking they could prove we were lying.

The teacher said we'd wasted enough class time already, but if anyone wanted to go see our fantasy, we could go after lunch. By the time we got to show off our snake, the sun had dried up the water and there was nothing left of our mud puddle except hard, dried up mud crusts. Our friends all called us liars.

When we went home that evening, we told Mom about our find. She told us she had seen several of those snakes. She didn't know how it happened, but old time farmers told her what they thought the snakes were. They believed the small amount of tissue clinging to a horse's tail where it's attached to their body has bacteria on it, which causes a short time of life. It creates a small, snake-like creature that never lives long. It had no eyes, mouth, or brain, so it isn't really a snake, just an unexplainable phenomenon. After that explanation, our classmates wished they could have seen it, and no longer called us liars. ♦



Elbert County Self Reliance Market Expo

Saturday, April 13, 2024
9am to 5pm Elbert County Fairgrounds
95 Ute Ave, Kiowa, CO



Join us for a fun and informative day that can help prepare you to be more self-reliant and ready for any kind of emergency in the days to come. **Admission \$10, under age 12 free.**

This 3rd Annual Expo provides outstanding exhibitors, informative workshops, and great demonstrations. Special speakers include Tammy Garcia (radio host), Robert Sterling (Survival Dispatch), Dr. JB Hixson (pastor and national speaker) and Sheriff Tim Norton.

Learn about

Firearms/Ammo/Personal Safety, Ham Radio Communications, Gardening, Greenhouses, Growing Fruit, Food Preservation, Raising Livestock/Chickens, Home Medical Emergency Supplies, Healthcare Info, Spiritual Preparedness, Home Made Remedies and more.

Four Local Food Trucks on hand for your needs during the Market Expo.

El Chamaco
Celtic Chicken
Catalinas
Smokey Trail BBQ

Proceeds of this event will be donated to the Victim's Assistance Program, administered jointly by ECCO (Elbert County Coalition Outreach) and our Sheriff's Department



Want more info? www.ElbertCountySelfReliance.com

Sponsors of this event: Colorado Greenhouse Builders, Elbert County Government, Patty Ann's Restaurant, Farmers State Bank, Prairie Times Publishing

Homegrown Harvests

Julia McMillie

Taking care of the food harvests all year around is an extremely satisfying reward.

Yes, it's a lot of hard work, but this kind of work pays off handsomely. It's reward enough getting to enjoy the fresh fruits, nuts, veggies and honeys in season, but when you open a jar of home-canned watermelon pickles on a somber wintry day, that sweet ginger smell and satisfying taste of those luscious pickles on your dinner plate have no equal.

When I was young, during the rationing years, our family was fortunate to have farming friends in the hills along the Missouri River in Iowa who supplied us with fresh eggs, milk, cream and an occasional chicken or pheasant. I wasn't old enough to appreciate the goodness that came with those commodities, but when I think about it today, I realize how blessed we were.

My grandparents lived near the Missouri River in Nebraska and ran a fresh fruit stand. Grandpa would make a trip to Nebraska City for his supplies every Saturday. We didn't live close enough to them to take advantage of that array of goodness every day, but during the one week we visited them in the summer, we took advantage of the melons and pears and everything else in their bins and on their shelves. Raised in Kansas, my mom taught us kids how to hunt for lamb's quarters for a nice fresh salad in the spring, and to harvest mushrooms we found along the river banks.

My early adult life in Nebraska's Sandhills taught me a lot about growing crops and gardens. I quickly learned how to preserve the "fruits of our labor." Canning and freezing every vegetable we harvested, and taking advantage of the fruits grown locally by other farmers and their wives, provided us with a year-long succulent menu of homegrown foods second to none. We were proud of the loaded shelves in the basement or cellar that held the endless Mason jars filled with our goodies. Not proud in the sinful sense of the word. We were proud to be the provider of all the good things these jars held. It was rewarding, year after year.

When I lived in Texas, we had a pecan tree in our backyard. What fun that was! There was plenty of pecan farming in the area where we lived. The pecan harvest usually took place in late November or early December. We were so happy to fill our freezer once again with small packages of sweet, crunchy pecans. We spent our January and February shelling nuts in front of the TV, a mixing-bowlful at a time. I learned to add pecans to almost every dish I cooked. They are a delightful addition, both in the beautiful



look they give food and in the distinctive taste they add.

While living in Texas, I learned how to harvest food from the cactus plant. It's an art, and quite tasty and refreshing. I learned how to cook with chiles. My first encounter with chiles was a potluck dinner where every dish contained some kind of chile. Taken aback, I asked if there was any "Nebraska food" on the table. The longer I lived in Texas, the more fresh green chile I used in everything I cooked. Today I love the taste chile gives my recipes.

Life in Montana taught me to relish the huckleberry. Through the years, I had used fresh sand cherries and garden huckleberries and mulberries in my cooking and baking. I often wondered if these fruits would become domesticated during my lifetime so we could buy them by the can, or

Gotta Trust Yer Ride!



Bumper to Bumper Service Center for light duty diesels & pickups
Diesel Repair & Performance

It's all about Service & Horsepower, Pal!

303-841-6527

6250 E. Pine Lane Unit B
Parker, CO 80138

from the freezer section of the grocery store, but these are area-specific fruits. They're hard to farm, so they remain just as they are: seasonal, regional, useful when ripe, and often rare. Nebraska's sand cherries only produced heavily every few years. I always looked forward to the year my family would

go out checking pastures and come home with their hats filled with freshly picked sand cherries. Montana huckleberries are more available, plumper and more abundant some years, but almost always a person can find a few to pick.

I rely on a good

old recipe a friend gave me years ago. It's called "End-of-the-Garden Soup" and it's made of every vegetable you might have available. You begin by boiling beef ribs and using the meat and juices to cook the veggies in. What a delight it becomes, depending on the availability of your favorite vegetables in the correct amounts. It's fun to experiment with. Some years we had an abundance of carrots, other years potatoes, often cabbage or onions, and the soup was always delicious.

I know this story is a piece of historic nostalgia. People don't preserve fruits and vegetables like we did a few decades ago. Most people don't have time to make dishes from scratch day after day, nor do they have time to raise a vast garden and harvest and preserve the veggies they grow. But it's fun to think about, and I'd do it again in a heartbeat if I could.

I urge you to take advantage of every growing thing you can find to help feed yourself, your family, the nation and the world. Every effort counts, and you can have fun doing it! ♦



**97 N Main
Byers, CO
303.822.8333**

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Tire Repair</u></p> <p>\$20 Cars \$25 Light Duty Pickups \$35 1-Ton Pickups \$40 Implements \$60 Semi Tractors</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Balancing</u></p> <p>\$15/tire Cars \$20/tire Light Duty Pickups \$25/tire 1-Ton Pickups</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mount & Balance</u></p> <p>\$30/tire Cars \$35/tire Pickup, Implement, Semi</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Rotation</u></p> <p>\$40 Car/Single Rear Wheel Pickup \$50 Dually Pickup \$25/wheel Steel on Alloy \$70 Rotation and Rebalance</p>

APRIL SPECIAL
Purchase Set of New Tires and
Receive FREE Mount and Balance



**1 Free Car Wash
With Oil Change**

**5 Free Car Washes
With Purchase of
4 New Tires**

Mon thru Fri 8 - 5
Closed Sat & Sun

Watch For Upcoming
April Auctions

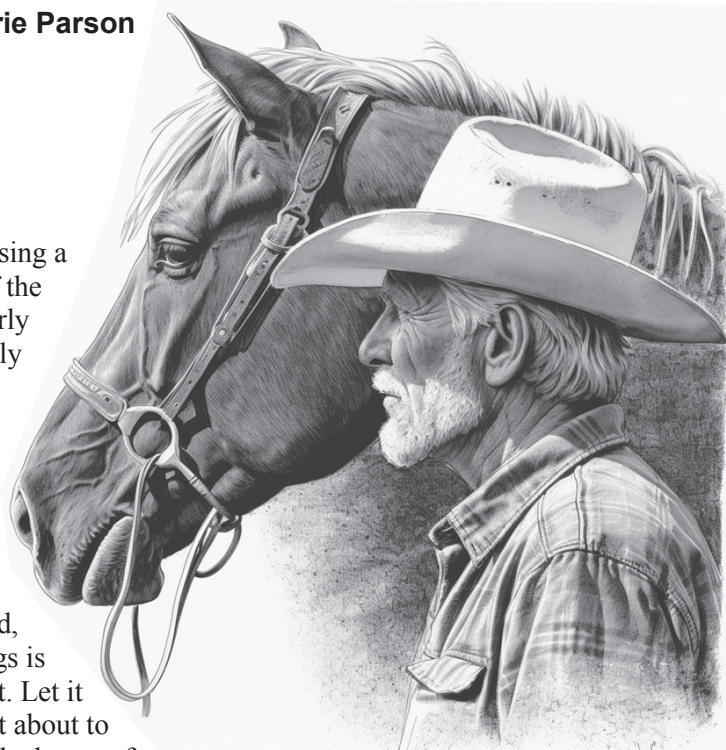


Office 303-822-9298 Steve 303-548-4042 Alice 303-549-6552

www.linneburauctions.com

The Rusty Post

Prairie Parson



My dad was many things, but a good fence builder wasn't one of 'em. Every fence he put in, I've had to replace.

He used an old, crooked, rusty post driver that rattled around in the back of his beat up truck on every post he drove. It didn't matter if the fence was straight or not, so long as it stayed up. He got real creative with fence posts, too, from petrified timber to rusty iron rods. You ain't had no fun in life 'til you've had to take out one of those suckers.

Last summer when we were takin' out the old fence, we left one post stuck deep in the earth, out in the middle of our pasture. I knew just by lookin' at it it'd be a beast to get out. But one day, after a real tryin' time of dealin' with folks that just don't get along, I decided rather 'n' get mad, I'd pull it out. So I let it soak awhile, wound a chain around it, told our dog to get in the truck cab so's he wouldn't get hurt, and pulled. The wheels spun, the truck traveled sideways, and that stubborn old post stayed put.

I didn't get mad, I just decided to get even. I got out a shovel and started to dig. The further down I went, the more annoyed I got. That rusty post wasn't no five footer; it looked like a twelve-footer, with most of it underground. How or why Dad decided to put it there, I don't know but I imagine he was lookin' down on me from heaven and laughin'. I'm not much for swearin' but I laid down the Law real good with some choice words from the Psalms. That post wouldn't come out, no matter what I

did. I tried layin' down planks and using a jack on top, to wench the post out of the ground with a chain. The planks nearly split and the chain slipped. It was only the grace of the Lord that I didn't brain myself. I tried soakin' it and tryin' again, but that rusted out old post was stuck there good.

Right about then was when Dad would have shoved his cowboy hat back on his forehead and said, "Son, some things is meant to stay put. Let it lie." But I wasn't about to let that post get the better of me. I spent all day out there, my face gettin' redder and redder, my temper gettin' shorter and shorter, until finally I got so hot the sweat was drippin' off me and the dog wouldn't let me alone. Just to get him to stop barkin' and gettin' mud all over me, I sat down for a spell. Soon, my wife came over the hill with a bottle of water. She eyed the hole and with a good deal of tact, asked, "Do you want some help?"

I thought about sayin' no. It takes a real man to own up when he's beat. I took a swig of water 'n' thought about it while she stroked the dog. Then, I nodded. She said, "I figure the tractor might work better, Hon." Soon, she had on her best work gloves and held the planks steady while I winched that rusted iron post up high enough to wrap the chain around it and pull it out with the tractor bucket. It came out just as the sun was settin'. I'd spent all day tryin' to pull it out myself, gettin' madder and madder, when all I really needed was some help.

Drivin' home with that twelve foot rusty post in the back of the truck gave me time to do some thinkin'. I'd spent all day cussin' my

dad's sorry fence buildin' skills and not noticin' the beauty of the prairie, unlike my dog, who dug plenty o' holes, chased plenty of jackrabbits, and gave me nice muddy paw prints up my backside fer ignorin' 'im. More 'n' that, I saw quite a lot of myself in that post—stubborn, set in my ways, and not interested in movin'. Leave me alone long enough and I'll sink

deeper and deeper into the dry soil of my own self-righteousness. But just because I'd never drive in a post like that don't make me a better man than Dad. He made a lot o' mistakes in his day, but where I was sweatin' and swearin', he'd'a been laughin'. Puttin' up a bad fence ain't a sin, much as I'd like it to be. Rusty fence posts don't come up on their own. They sink deeper, get rustier, and their edges get sharper. It takes the Lord comin' along to soak me in the Living Water (His spirit and mercy), and slowly pull me up to make me change. It ain't fun. I like bein' stuck in my ways, but to put a new fence in, the old one has to come out. The Lord doesn't just remove a post or two; he tears the whole fence down and puts up a newer and better one. That's the last time I'll stand in judgment of my dad, cuz when you're the oldest, rustiest, orneriest, most crooked post in the pasture, you'd be pretty darn stupid to criticize the other posts. ♦

Dr. Larry J. O'Neill,
DMD, MAGD, ABGD

Running Creek
DENTAL AND LASER CENTER

A great smile starts here.

Here, at Running Creek, you'll find high-quality dental care that focuses on your family's needs and goals. Call now.

Our hygienists and team are focused on supporting you and exceeding your expectations. Zero pressure. 100% Kindness.

303.646.3935

779 Crossroads Circle Elizabeth, CO
Tues 8-5 • Wed 8-5 • Thurs 8-5 • Fri 8-1

RunningCreekDental.com

No Job Too Big or Too Small
720-505-9393

OLDE TOWNE
HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING

Local to Elbert County Licensed/Insured
Honest. Trustworthy. Reliable.
www.oldetownehvac.com
Read our rave reviews online on Google & Yelp!

PROPANE TANKS

Buy, Lease, or Rent



1000 Gallon: \$5,500
500 Gallon: \$3,400

Bottle Refills:
20#, 30#,
40#, & 100#
(Within Expiration date)



Roggen Elevator

M-F: 8-4:30pm
roggenfarmerslev.com

555 Colfax Ave.
Bennett, CO

303-644-3251

10% off for Elbert Co Residents
Mention this ad!

Wood for all your projects!

Smooth or planed, tongue & groove, or rough sawed for exterior siding, woodworking, flooring, fireplace mantles, interior trim, paneling.

303-621-2120 or 303-653-7646

Mon-Fri: 8-5:30
Sat: 9-3

**MOUNTAIN HEART Woodworks**

South on CR 17 outside Elizabeth. 7 mi. West side.
www.mountainheartwoodworks.com

FULL-GRAIN LEATHER

Booker Ultra Western

- Lightweight Midsole
- Fits Cleanly Under Slim Jeans

\$139⁹⁹ (Compare to \$149.99)

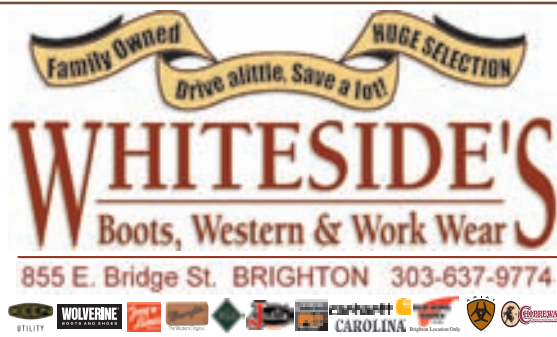


10031452

Family Owned Drive a little. Save a lot! HUGE SELECTION

WHITESIDE'S
Boots, Western & Work Wear

855 E. Bridge St. BRIGHTON 303-637-9774



BOA FIT SYSTEM

Stump Jumper BOA

- Comp Toe Protection
- DRYshield Waterproof

\$239⁹⁹ (Compare to \$269.99)



10048061

Linda M. Gandy

Pickles

On a lovely, sunny day, I put on my wide-brimmed hat, picked up my basket, and headed for the garden to pick cucumbers.

I hoped there would be enough to start a batch of pickles. When I looked under the leaf of a cucumber plant, I jumped. There lay the biggest cucumber I had ever seen. I had just picked them two days before.

I looked around. There were cucumbers everywhere. How in the world did so many appear in such a short time? Most of them were three to four inches long and less than an inch across. Walking back to the house with a basket full, I called a longtime family friend to ask if she'd share her recipe for sweet pickles. I had eaten some she had made, and they were crisp and delicious.

She gladly shared her recipe. I found an earthenware crock in our basement. After cleaning it up, I washed the cucumbers and dumped them into it. I poured the brine of pickling salt dissolved into boiling water over them. I kept the cucumbers in this solution for seven days. They had to remain completely covered with brine. I found a dinner plate that was a perfect fit in the crock, but a few cucumbers floated to the top. Shucks. I needed something to keep the plate weighted down. I went outside and found a suitable rock. After I gave it a good scrubbing, I placed it on the plate. I used a tea towel to cover the top.

A week later, I poured off the brine, washed the cucumbers, and because I was going to leave them whole, used an ice pick to make a tiny hole in both ends. Next, I put them back in the crock and poured an alum solution over them to make them crisp. This step took twenty-four hours. The next day I made the syrup. For three days, I heated the syrup and poured it over the pickles. On the third day, I packed the pickles into sterilized canning jars, poured the



piping hot syrup over them, and sealed them.

I felt like a full-fledged gardener, sharing a bond with all those who had gone before me in producing and processing healthy, tasty foods for their families from their own gardens.

Before I packed them, I sampled one. It did not taste like my friend's pickles, and they looked funny, too. I could not be worried about that now. I had a job to finish. Anyhow, maybe pickles needed a few days for the flavor to develop. Proudly, I lined up the eight jars of pickles in a row on a side table in the kitchen.

As I washed the crock and other utensils in hot, soapy water, the thought kept lingering in the back of my mind that those pickles did not look right. We'd open the first jar when my husband came home that weekend from his job on the railroad. I could hardly wait to show him my achievement. I pondered the various ways he would shower me with praise.

After I handed him one jar, he turned it around and asked, "Where are the bumps?" While I recovered from his question, not to mention the lack of any praise or compliments on his part, he asked again, "Where are the bumps? Pickles have slight bumps on them. These are smooth."

It was obvious he was losing the struggle to keep a straight face, but he was trying. I could tell. He was trying. Bumps, indeed. With my hands on my hips, I retorted, "I peeled them."

As Lee turned to look at the other seven jars, I saw his shoulders shaking slightly. I might have thought he was sobbing except for the giggles that erupted. He took several moments to gain his composure, then said, "That must have been some task to peel one gallon of gherkin sized cucumbers. Why did you peel them?"

Mental pictures of pickles leaped into my mind. Pickles in jars, pickles in pretty little dishes served with a meal, pickles everywhere. All of them had bumps on them. I felt foolish. I mumbled, I replied, "I peel nearly everything I pick in the garden. Besides, I peel the cucumbers for a salad. I thought I was supposed to peel cucumbers for pickles too."

Lee chuckled again. "I am sure they will be delicious. Let's eat supper." I called our children to come in and wash their hands for supper. I passed the newly opened pickles around the table along with the rest of the food. Everyone took one. I was the first to bite into mine and from my expression, the rest of the family pushed theirs over to the edge of their

plates. No one said anything. I stood up, got the pickles, and took them to the kitchen. As I returned to the dining table, I saw Lee take a tiny nibble from his. He coughed twice and his eyes watered, but his only comment was, "Bit tart."

After we finished the meal, with my recipe in hand, I called the lady who gave it to me. I told her of the reaction Lee and I had experienced when we sampled the pickles and related to her how I had done each step of the pickling process. She went straight to the cause of the problem by asking, "Linda, how much vinegar did you use?"

For All Your Real Estate Needs

Nancy Dixon, Real Estate Broker

Elite Real Estate Services

303-570-7163

Nancyd.dixon@gmail.com

Residential, Business, Large Acreages

I replied, "Eight cups."

She assured me that this amount was correct. "How much sugar did you use?"

I answered, "One cup."

I heard a gasp. "I am sure I told you to use ten cups of sugar. Look at what you wrote when I gave you the recipe several days ago." I scrutinized my copy of the recipe and, sure enough, there it was, a small, almost indivisible zero which would make it ten cups.

She remarked, "I am sorry about your pickles, especially since this is not an inexpensive recipe, but you will have to throw them away."

Feeling I had lost any claim to call myself a gardener, I emptied all the pickles into a pail. I carried

it outside and walked across our backyard. The children followed close behind. As I approached the fence, I noticed our neighbor's thirty-year-old mule, Toby, grazing nearby. With a sigh, thinking of all the wasted time and money, I tossed the pickles over the fence. Toby loped over to investigate. He took one quick whiff and kicked both hind legs skyward. He galloped off at a gait that would have put a mule half his age to shame. It took three days before Toby would venture over to that spot again.

In the following years, I won several blue ribbons at our county fair for my sweet pickles, but my first attempt at making them was a disaster. ♦

Kim's Handyman Service



Carpentry, Windows, Doors, Siding, Decks, Painting, Drywall Repairs, Barn Repairs, Gutter Cleaning, Remodeling

All Home Repairs
Kim Stanfield

303-841-4935 / 303-358-9379

\$5 OFF YOUR PURCHASE OF \$25 OR MORE *



Exp 5/1/24. Present at check-out.



Your Hometown Grocery Store & Pharmacy! We work for you!



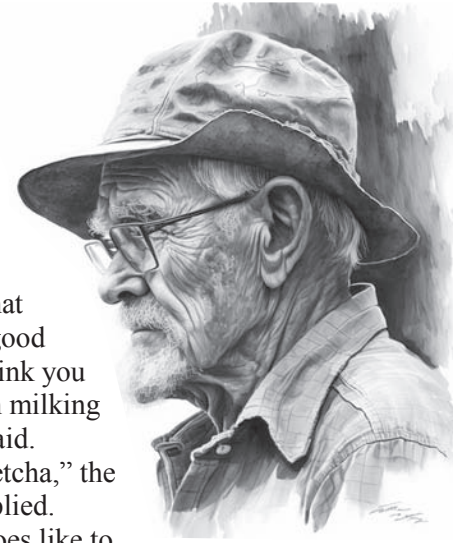
Byers General Store 303-822-5325

* One coupon per customer per day. Excludes all tobacco, lottery items, money services, postage stamps, gift cards, and prescriptions. Customer is responsible for all applicable taxes.

Reproductions of this coupon prohibited. No cash value.

Three Old Farmers

Susan Davis



There once was a senile farmer who mixed two types of seed together as he filled his planter.

It wasn't long before a fine stand of leafy, green alfalfa burst through the soil, as did another plant that grew much faster than his hay crop. "Pesky weeds," he muttered.

However, he was a very busy farmer who had acres of corn needing harvested, so he forgot about those "weeds" in his hayfield.

The time came when he caught up with his work and went for a walk in his hayfield on a beautiful November morning. "Sure don't look like any weed I've ever dealt with before," he groaned. "Must have blown over from that lazy neighbor's field." He grumbled as he bent over to pull it up by the root.

What a root that weed had! Purplish around the top and a white plump, "Turnips!" he exclaimed.

Suddenly, he remembered how good they tasted when grown in a hayfield during cool weather. He pulled out his pocketknife and

thoroughly enjoyed the sweet, juicy surprise that he "sort of" forgot about. He congratulated himself on planning ahead.

Another old farmer had a different experience when a lifelong city dweller friend of his visited his old-fashioned farm. When evening arrived, the two men ventured out to the barn and led the cows to their stalls. "Do you want to try milking her by hand?"

An uncertain look appeared on the city slicker's face, but he replied, "I guess so. How difficult can it be?"

The man with the rough hands, who had milked many a cow the old-fashioned way, passed the bucket to the greenhorn with a grin on his face. The novice approached the cow on her left side and was ready to try. "No, no!" exclaimed the veteran milker, amusement

sounding in his voice. "You need to be on ol' Bessie's udder side."

The newcomer switched sides and sat down on the stool, ready to squirt warm milk into the pail. He wore a puzzled expression as he asked his teacher, "Does it matter which I choose?"

"Nah, ol' Bessie's not particular. Do the front ones first or the back ones first. Or if you really want to be here for a while, milk one at a time," he said, stifling a chuckle.

The city man gave a tentative pull without squeezing. Bessie's full bag didn't release any milk. "You've got to give both a squeeze and a

pull," the darkly tanned farmer said, struggling to explain the art he knew so well. He reached down and showed him what he meant. "It's like riding a bicycle. Once

you learn, it's easy. You've got to get into a sort of rhythm."

With repeated efforts, a squirt finally sounded in the empty pail, then another. A few more streams of warm milk were added before the visitor said, "This is work! How much does Bessie give?"

"A whole pail!" the farmer said. "Good cow, Bessie is, especially when she's fresh."

"Fresh? What's that?"

"That means she had her calf about a month ago, so she's at her peak production level," the farmer explained.

"Oh," the rookie replied, standing up quickly. He started to

wipe his hands on his pant leg, but decided that

wasn't a good idea. "I think you best finish milking her," he said.

"You betcha," the farmer replied.

"Bessie does like to graze in the pasture after her evening milking. Why, she expects to be back here first thing in the morning and give another bucketful!"

Within a short time, he stripped Bessie's bag dry, and the city dweller was "udderly impressed."

Then there was the farmer of many years who retired and moved into town. One winter day, when his hands began itching for the feel of soil again, he found a corn seed and slipped it under a layer of dirt in his wife's flower pot. Soon he found a tiny green shoot growing in the shadow of the much larger plant. He grinned from ear to ear as he went back to his easy chair.

A few days later, he went to see how much his corn had grown, but to his dismay, it was gone! When he questioned his wife about this, she said, "I'm sorry. I thought it was a weed!"

He groaned, thinking a thought he'd had many times during his farming days. "Better luck next time." ♦



Amy Shroff
Financial Strategist
- Partner

Phone: 720.458.6843

Amy@PRISMFinancialStrategies.com
www.PRISMFinancialStrategies.com
**Real People, Giving Real Advice,
Tailored Around Your Needs**
Proudly Serving Elbert County Since 2011





Day Care & Boarding

- ★Part of our family while they're here
- ★Friendly, professional staff
- ★Clean facility on 60 beautiful acres
- ★On-Site Family owned/operated
- ★Personal attention and service
- ★Day, month, or your whole vacation

**Elizabeth Country
Kennels Pet Resort**
(303) 646-8400

6213 Hwy. 86 Elizabeth, CO

Elect ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HERB HIGGINS

County Commissioner, District 3

Herb Higgins has the Right Priorities for Elbert County

Improve Community Safety

- In the last three years, Elbert County has experienced a 30% rise in criminal incidents.
- The Sheriff's Department budget needs to be increased – without raising taxes – to combat rising crime.
- We must hire 5 new deputies – 3 to patrol our communities and 2 to work in the jails.

Handle the Growth Problems

- The County must revise its policies and procedures for development that have become outdated.
- To maintain our rural lifestyle, I propose a cap on new housing construction for 2 years at 350 total homes.
- 50% of our aquifers have fallen to 40 feet in surface water in the last ten years. We need a Water Conservation Plan to ensure an adequate water supply.

True Government Transparency

- All public business must be conducted in the open – not behind closed doors.
- The County must be completely transparent about all of its financial activity.
- I will personally hold twice monthly meetings in different areas to hear citizen concerns.



Learn more at
ElectHerbHiggins.com



Susan Sundwall

Daffodil Man

For some guys, the adage, “in the spring a young man’s fancy turns to love,” is a truism.

For my guy it is too, but not for the love of me. Nope, it’s for the love of daffodils. The wheels turn in his head with the first garden catalogs that pop up in the mailbox early in the year. Every nursery in the country must have our address. But, oh, the glory! I must admit, it’s an exciting time for plotting and planning.

Why daffodils? Deer. Out in the country, they’re everywhere. One year, a doe and two fawns made a beeline for our yard every morning for months. Wonderful to watch unless you’ve nearly broken your back planting flowers. When given a wooden garden wishing well a few years ago for my birthday, I took great pains to fill the empty center with pansies and odd green bits. It was lovely. I patted myself on the back for doing such a good job. People coming up the walkway would stop to admire it and ask who on earth had such skills in floral design? I was still smiling at bedtime. Then the morning came.

“Do you know what they did?” I screeched to my husband. I’d gone out early to admire my masterpiece and my heart nearly stopped. Hand on chest, I went storming back into the kitchen.

The man looked up from the “new variety of green bean” page in his favorite catalog. “Who?” he answered, sipping his coffee.

“The deer! I worked my tail off yesterday planting an arrangement in my new wishing well.” Steam rolled out of my ears and up to the ceiling. “They sheared it off down to the edge of the container, like it was a deer salad bar I planted especially for them.” I was dancing mad.

“You must have planted stuff they love,” replied Captain Obvious.

As I gradually calmed down, I understood planting flowers deer loved, like tulips and pansies, was a bad idea. Our county is famous for the number of deer that roam the woods, after all. We once had gorgeous red and yellow tulips planted in front of the rail fence along the road. People would slow down to admire them. That only lasted a few years. The word got out in downtown Deerville the pickings were pretty good at our place and the invasion began. I think they whispered into the ears of

their chipmunk cousins, too, as they love flower bulbs in all their vast array. Goodbye to my purple crocus!

Not long after, the man, who I thought had been unsympathetic, did serious research. He opened garden catalog upon garden catalog to the flower pages. Conducted internet searches. Sought opinions from friends, neighbors and those enjoying the ambiance at the local Elks Lodge, where he’s been a member in good standing for forty years. The judgment soon came down. Deer hate daffodils.

Not too long after, the orders showed up.

Oh, the bargains he found. “If I order twenty-five dollars of seeds, I can get a deal on some daffodils.”

“Nice,” I said, oozing encouragement. “How many in an order?”

“About eighty.”

“Wow, where are you going to plant them?”

Little did I know those eighty would turn into many more over the years.

He didn’t answer clearly. “I’m not sure yet.”

I knew some would replace the tulips we’d tried in so many places on the property. A few

spots were available under one of the maples, and there was a strip of dirt under some bushes right out the back door. I let him have at it.

That was eight years ago. You should see our “no deer allowed” property now. The yellow glory is a sight to behold and every year it gets better.

I love tulips, hyacinth, lilacs, violets and all the lovely spring flowers. But the “daffys” are my favorites now. Their bouncy yellowness cheers me after the long slog of winter. Since I don’t know every spot he has planted them, it’s an extra delight to come around a corner and see a burst of sunshine there. I express a little gasp of pleasure and want to pass out hugs. And I do. Guess who’s first in line?

Deer also hate marigolds. We love them and they love us. We’ve pinned down a couple of varieties and the edges of the vegetable garden have never been the same. No deer salad bar there, either! ♦



10% OFF PARTS WHEN YOU mention this ad *

Complete auto repair towing services

Advanced Quality Auto Repair

*Expires 5/1/24

Napa Auto Care Center offering a 24 month, 24,000 mile Napa peace of mind warranty!



www.advancedqualityautorepair.com • 303-621-1000
600 County Road 45 Kiowa, CO 80117 • OPEN M-F: 7:30am-5:30pm

Nancy Fischer

Who Am I Hugging?

My loving grandfather welcomed me into my step-grandparents’ world as a little girl.

He immediately held me on his lap in his warm, supportive embrace and reassured me I was not only welcome, but wanted. Having lost not only my father but also my paternal grandfather by the early age of four, it comforted me. I knew right away this new person in my life was very special.

Grandpa Miller was a hard-working Kansas crop farmer. He came to the desolate southwestern Kansas area during the dust bowl and began his life in a sod shanty on the plains. He later married a young schoolteacher, and they had two sons. His youngest son became my stepfather after my birth father passed away at thirty-four.

Grandpa had the most beautiful grey wavy hair and a lovely sense of humor. His pleasant demeanor contrasted nicely with Grandma’s stern temperament. The twinkle in his eyes and his subtle smile won my heart and everyone else’s that had the pleasure of knowing him. He loved to play the fiddle and often entertained us, along with my father and my uncle. Grandpa raced me to the windmill in the farmyard. He took my hand and showed me the world of his animals and the workings of his shop. Grandpa let me ride with him on the tractor when he ran the planter or the combine when he harvested wheat. He was always patient and kind.

One spring day, we arrived at the farm to help with some of the early plantings that needed done. As was my usual habit, I raced into the kitchen of the two-story farmhouse and saw my grey-haired grandpa sitting with his back to me. I threw my arms around his neck and squeeze him tight. I looked up to see who else was at the table and I looked straight into the eyes of... GRANDPA!

Horror! If he was over there, then who was I hugging? I soon discovered Grandpa was the middle child of three boys. I was hugging his brother Pete. Everyone had a good laugh about it (except for me). I made sure I hugged no one again without first confirming their identity! ♦



Lost in the Medicare Maze?

Turning 65? Ready to retire? Leaving employee coverage? Wondering if you can still change plans? Questions about Part B premium and rebates, Rx help, or maximizing dental, vision, and hearing benefits?

No need to be confused. Talk to a knowledgeable Advisor/Advocate! No cost!

Local, Trusted, Personal Care & Attention to find your Health and Life Solutions

785-821-3647



Brenda Flipse

A Saddle for His Pillow

Victor T. Anderson

“A saddle for his pillow.” How many times have you heard that in a cowboy lament?

Western song after western song tells of using a saddle for a pillow. Take it from me. It's not that comfortable and there's no romance involved. I've tried it; it didn't work. I'm a slow learner. I tried it twice. If you have to use your saddle for a pillow, it's because you're on the prairie or the mountains where you were working cattle. Something has gone wrong, or you'd be in your own bed, whether it be in the bunkhouse or your home. Whatever the reason, using your saddle for a pillow is not in the least comfortable.

You'll start by laying it on the ground, saddle horn up, at the head of your bedroll. If you have a bedroll, which is doubtful. Otherwise you'd have a pillow with it. Cowboys like comfort too, you know. Placing the saddle on the ground like it was on a horse leaves the stirrups either lying under you or under the saddle. Under the saddle is the most desirable.

Lying on one of them is extremely uncomfortable. So if you have not already put the stirrup on your side under the saddle, do it.

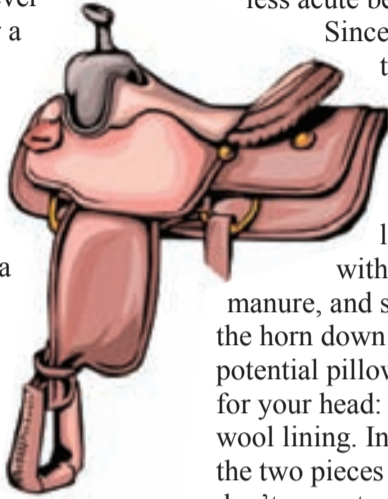
With the stirrup out of the way, you can now lie down using the saddle for a pillow. If you lie on your side or your back, the seat is too high for comfort.

Lying on your stomach is out of the question. The seat is nearly as hard as a rock, even if it's padded. The padding on a saddle seat is about 1/4" thick. Glued to the top of rawhide covered hard wood, 1/4" of foam doesn't provide much padding.

Then you try to slide down just a little. That puts your head nearly on the ground. The saddle skirts are also about 1/4" thick, same as no pillow at all. If they have a lot of fancy tooling on it, the design irritates whatever part of your head is against it. If it's your cheek, the lines you get on your wrist when it's against a wrinkled blanket are nothing to compare to the irrigation ditches embossed into your face. So you slide up further, which tips your head way back, about like someone is going to try resuscitation breathing on you. Uncomfortable.

You think it's because you tucked the stirrup underneath, making it so high. If you can't lie on it with the stirrups under it, you sure can't lie with the stirrup under your back. So you try to put it somewhere else. There is no place else except on the saddle horn. If you put it on the horn, it folds the stirrup leather under your

back. You can't put it on the seat because that's where your head is supposed to go. You check where the other one is. If it isn't under the saddle, you put it there to even things up. If it is under the saddle, you take it out to get things a little lower. Won't help. Now you spend a certain amount of time trying to put the stirrups exactly under the center of the saddle, hoping it will allow your neck to attain a much less acute bend. It doesn't.



Since it didn't work that way, you turn the saddle on its top to expose the wool lining, hoping it will be softer. It is. The portion closest to your bedroll is not too high and the wool lining is pretty soft. Covered with horse hair, hay, stick tights, manure, and sweat, but softer. While placing the horn down and the lining up makes your potential pillow softer, there is only one place for your head: in the middle, where there is no wool lining. Instead, there is a groove where the two pieces of wool covered wooden bars don't come together. The groove (2 to 3 inches wide depending on the saddle) is the only place you can put your head because the sides slope toward the middle. To stay in that notch, you must lie on your back, in a semi-reclining position, not really supine and not sitting up,

either. Not conducive to a good night's sleep. You can't sleep on either your right or left side because with your head in that groove, your nose gets pressed against the wood and wool on either side, which keeps you from breathing.

Well, that didn't work either.

Let's place the saddle on end, horn down. That makes it similar to trying to rest your head on a wool covered wall. Except unlike a wall, as soon as you lean against it, it tips over, leaving it in the same position as you just tried, except the lowest part is now away from you. Won't work.

It won't stand on its back end, either. Don't even think about it. Romantic? If one head can't sleep on it, two certainly can't. You'd be better off using each other for a pillow. My advice is, if you get caught in a situation where you need to sleep out and don't have a pillow, fold up your hat, roll up your jacket, cover a rock with your

jacket, use a sack of oats, or your boots. Just not your saddle.

Here's a thought. Carry a balloon in your saddlebag. Blow it up. It'll be great until it pops. Then back to trying to use your saddle. Next time we will discuss the comfort and warmth of using a sweat soaked saddle blanket for your bedroll. ♦

Plains
HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING

Repair or New Installation **Strasburg: 303-622-2914**
1506 Main St.
Strasburg, CO 80136
I-70: 719-775-2914
Elbert County:
719-749-2173
plainsheating.com

Furnaces, A/Cs; Heat Pumps; Boilers; Gas & Wood-burning; Inserts, Fireplaces, Stoves; Pellet Stoves, Inserts; Water Heaters; Geothermal Heat Pump System

Proud to support the neighborhood

Being a good neighbor means being there for my community. As your local State Farm agent, I'm ready to help whenever you need me. Give me a call.

State Farm

Neal Wilson Ins Agency Inc.
 Neal Wilson Agent
 209 E Kiowa Avenue, PO Box 1990
 Elizabeth, CO 80107
 Bus: 303-646-5353
 neal@nealwilson.net www.nealwilson.net



Heating or A/C Problems or New Installation? Call us!

Sales & Service
 Remodel
 New Construction
 Hot Water Heat
 Boilers & A/C



Visit our website to get a free quote or schedule a service
www.bcbuildingservices.com
303-646-9498
B.C. Building Services Inc. **24 hour emergency service!**

Cutting Edge Technology
 Superior Service Integrity
 Customers are #1



322 E. Kiowa Ave, Elizabeth 80107
M-TH 8-5; F 8-4:30



Wilma J. Whelden, 1946

my Own mother



She's always sewing buttons on and mending things I tear.
 I come home from school and I always find her there.

She's always doing little things
 That please me very much.
 Like making cakes and planning trips
 To Parks and Zoos and such.

She's always reading stories, too
 Or teaching me a game
 And whether I've been good or bad
 She loves me just the same.

Are you surprised that I find her
 dearer than any other?
 I am sure by now you know her name;
 Of course, she is my mother! ♦

 **Love**

Funeral Homes & Monuments

Limon, CO
 719-775-2333
Strasburg, CO
 303-710-4221
Burlington, CO
 719-346-8826
Cheyenne Wells
 719-767-5961

Funeral & Memorial Services, Online Memorials, Obituaries, Veteran's Benefits, Death Certificates.

www.lovefuneralhomes.com

Mourning Dove Blessings

Kathy Padgett

My friends believe spring begins when they see their first Red Robin bobbing across their lawn.

I believe the first hint of spring arrives when I hear the soft *whoo-ah-coo-coo-coo, whoo-ah-coo-coo-coo* of the blueish-gray, lightly tinted turquoise breasted, male Mourning Dove. He's singing a mating song or sending a "dove-love" message to his mate. The harshness of winter is gone and spring has sprung!

Now spring is truly here, the small flock of Mourning Doves (sometimes called turtle doves) that spent the winter in my Bristle Cone pine trees will serenade me at all times of the day. In the early morning hours, I enjoy taking my mug of hot chamomile tea outside, and sitting in my rocking chair as I listen to their soft *coos* blending into a calming melody of hope as a new day begins. Did Noah send a Mourning Dove out of the ark to search for a new beginning for him and his family? King Solomon, in his Song of Songs 2:12, wrote "Behold the winter is past . . . and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land." What a blessing for me to hear their soft, cooing sounds as they welcome a new spring time to my land!

My beloved doves enjoy eating the white millet and sunflower seeds that fall out of my upper deck feeder box and land on the ground around the ornamental grasses that border my backyard deck. They don't have an appetite for insects and creepy crawlers. 99% of their diet is grain found in a variety of seeds from wild bluegrass, ragweed, and herbs. For a special treat, they eat an occasional berry.

Since they are ground feeders, I scatter a generous amount of shelled black-oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, and cracked corn around my ornamental grasses to make sure my flock has an adequate diet. Each member consumes 20% of its body weight each day as it swallows seeds and stores them in an enlargement of the esophagus, called the crop. Once it gets full, they fly to a safe place to enjoy a delicious meal. Amazingly, one ornithologist, a person who studies birds, found 17,200 bluegrass seeds in a Mourning Dove's crop!

To my delight, three lively squirrels and Mr. Chipper, my resident chipmunk, are meal time friends with my doves, who do not spread their wings and fly away when their chattering friends arrive. Since the four-legged intruders do not enjoy safflower seeds, they don't stay long. Once-in-a-while Mr. Shell-be, my resident land turtle, shuffles in for a refreshing sunflower snack on his way to the garden to find snails and slugs. Whenever a Blue Tongue Skink comes scurrying in for a quick seed bite, the Mourning Doves get alarmed, and make a loud whistling noise that sounds like a kazoo.



Air rushes through their wing feathers as they take flight. Their powerful wing muscles and long pointed tails let them cut through the air with minimal resistance, and if need be, fly as fast as 55 mph!

Since Mourning Doves lay eggs to produce their young, that means they don't nurse their young, right?

Wrong! Amazingly, two days before the eggs are ready to hatch, both parents have hormonal changes in their crops that cause the crop to switch from food storage to lactation and produce "crop milk" that looks like creamy cottage cheese. This "pigeon-crop-milk" is loaded with fat, protein and antioxidants. With mouth to mouth precision, both parents nurse their young birds with nutritious "crop milk" as each baby bird sticks their bill into the parents'

Sound Doctrine - Practical Application

Verse by verse teaching
Sunday 10am
7114 Sun Country Dr.
Elizabeth 80107
303-646-2728
Calvary Chapel Ministry
www.soncountrycc.com

mouth to stimulate the release of the milky treat. They nurse the young squabs like this for ten to twelve days before introducing seeds into their daily diet. In just fourteen days, the fledglings can fly, leave the nest, and puff up their chest, as if filling up a balloon, and send cooing vibrations into the air.

Mourning doves have unusual traits that set them apart from most other birds. They do not use the "sip and tilt" method of drinking water, where the bird sips up water with its beak, then tilts its head up to swallow the water. Their beak is like a natural straw, allowing them to sip up water and swallow it. When they sleep, they rest their head between their shoulders, close to their body, rather than tucked under their shoulder feathers like other birds. This lets them receive maximum heat from their bodies to keep them warm and cozy.

OUR SERVICE SETS US APART

One-size-fits-all doesn't apply to insurance. Our goal is to keep you and your loved ones protected with the right policies for your needs. Questions? Call or email our office. You will get our undivided attention.



Integrity Insurance Agency

303-644-4872

Julie Lewis, Agent/Owner
www.integrityinsagency.com
integrityins@gmail.com

They can enter a state of semi-sleep, where one eye is open and one half of their brain is awake, while the other eye is closed and the other half of the brain is asleep. They peacefully yet are alert enough to see potential threats and predictors. Whenever their environment is safe, they sleep with both eyes closed.

Mourning Dove couples mate for life, sleep side by side at night as they make soft cooing noises, preen each other's feathers, and playfully send love messages by touching and

Heating & Cooling

Repair or Replacement

Family owned and operated in Kiowa with over 30 years experience

All makes and types of HVAC equipment: furnaces, A/Cs, evaporation coolers, boilers, and water heaters. If possible, we'd rather fix than replace your equipment.



303-990-5268

grasping each other bills while bobbing their heads up and down in unison. They have remarkable parenting skills as they build their nest together, do 24/7 incubation duty for fourteen days, and take turns keeping two eggs warm and safe. Do "crop milk nursing" for twelve days, then make sure their little ones know how to fly and find seeds. Next, it's time to refurbish their nest and get ready for the next brood.

They can raise six new families from March through October every year! It's true, Morning Doves don't sparkle with brightly colored feathers. They dress in soft gray-brown colors adorned with a few black dots and dashes etched with quiet tinges of peach and baby blue. Yet their mellow dove music quiets my heart with a message of love and hope, saying welcome SPRING! ♦

Chunky's Towing

We buy junk cars and trucks!

720-560-6763

Se Habla español

Need New Window Screens?

Repair & Replacement. Affordable Prices, Customer Satisfaction, & Quick Turnaround

Just Window Screens

720-903-6933

Free Estimate



Wayne Carlson

Ticks and Mosquitoes and Millers, Oh My!

“Hold still! Don’t move! There’s something on your leg!”

I stood at the sink in the kitchen in my tennis shorts and T-shirt, fixing breakfast as my wife entered the room. “Sit down and let me see the back of your leg. You have something on it,” she said. Since I always do what my wife tells me to do, I sat down and let her examine the tiny black spot.

“It’s a tick!” she said in a much louder-than-necessary voice. “And it’s buried in the back of your leg!”

“Well, do something and get it out!” I begged. I knew all about Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Lyme disease.

Carol disappeared briefly into the bathroom and soon returned with her makeshift first aid kit. She coated the tick with rubbing alcohol, which seemed to detract it from its feast of me, and grabbed it with tweezers. She couldn’t remember if you’re supposed to rotate clockwise or counterclockwise. (I have since learned it makes no difference—you should pull it gently straight out). She got the tick out of my leg and it looked like it still had its head, so we (especially me!) felt much better.

Several days later, I was driving my car east of Brush and noticed something crawling on my hand. I thought it was a fly, so I swatted at it, but that didn’t seem to bother it, so I glanced down to see what was bugging me. Another tick!

A few days later, Carol sat at the kitchen table doing the morning crossword when she

felt something at the nape of her neck. I was sitting at the opposite side of the table so she knew the nibbler was not me. She reached around and retrieved another tick. It seemed like we had an infestation!

We had gone hiking down by the South Platte River north of Brush a week earlier. Springtime had arrived and the warmer temperatures awakened Mother Nature from her winter sleep. We walked along the river and took pictures with Carol’s new digital camera. Even though we periodically checked ourselves and each other and had changed our clothes and showered when we got home, apparently the little buggers had hitched a ride on one or both of us to the car and then hidden there, biding their time for rides into the house.

About the same time we were playing “tick tag,” another nuisance invaded us—miller moths. Over a period of a few days, we came under attack from these suffocating little airborne hairballs. Whenever we turned on any light source, here they came! Without even trying, they made our lives miserable. We learned to be judicious with our use of electricity.

I did a little Internet research about miller moths and found out some interesting facts. Millers spend the first part of their lives as larvae in the alfalfa and wheat fields of eastern Colorado. In the springtime, caterpillars (cutworms) emerge to feed. Moths emerge a bit later, the vast majority during a brief

period. Newly transformed miller moths give in to the

inexorable urge to migrate to the higher elevations of the foothills and mountains to find food. Unfortunately, many get distracted from this instinctive flight pattern by the lights of civilization and stop to socialize, especially at our house. Those that stay

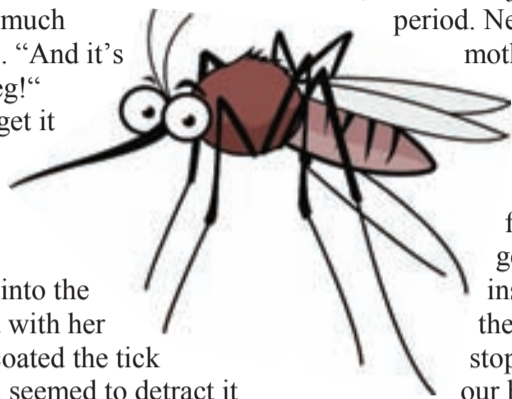
their original course spend the brief summer in the foothills and return to the eastern plains in early fall. These autumnal migrations have considerably fewer numbers and are not nearly as noticeable.

Even though millers can nearly drive one to distraction during the time of the spring migration, it is important to remember the problems they create are fleeting. They pose

no danger to humans, animals, plants, clothing, or fabric. Toward the end of the miller season, when we could finally see the light at the end of the tunnel (fortunately the millers didn’t see it too!), we started hearing persistent soft humming noises. Every time we ventured outdoors for our late afternoon

walk, another species of tiny monsters attacked us—mosquito season was here!

Late at night, usually somewhere between 11:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m., eerie droning noises interrupted our sleep. Nocturnal bug sprayers took to the streets of Brush. The annual crusade against mosquitoes had begun! The local newspapers began running informative and alarming stories about mosquitoes. They



CLARK'S
EQUIPMENT
SALES & RENTALS

**Tractor & Equipment
Rentals & Repairs**
Backhoes - Loaders - Trenchers
CALL US, WE CAN FIX IT!
Pick up and delivery available.
303-622-4012

Sick of Your Kitchen?

Time for your dream remodel!



Let a locally owned business make your dreams come true.
Quality, reliable, experienced.
(We also do bathrooms!)
HOME REMODEL SERVICES **720-935-8493**
Keith Dashnaw

2024 Chick Season is here!

Visit our website for arrival dates, breeds, and prices.
www.fortymilefeed.com

Many varieties!
90% sexing accuracy, guaranteed!
Turkeys & Ducks coming soon!



We have supplies for all your ranch needs.

Bulk pricing available.

Call-in & pick-up your orders. Fully stocked on hay, straw, Purina, Flagler, shavings and wood pellets!



Forty Mile Feed Store & More

Family owned and operated

10240 Hwy 86 Kiowa, CO 80117

Mon-Sat: 8am-7pm.

Sun: 10:30-5pm.

303-621-7763

encouraged us to minimize our exposure to the minuscule blood-suckers. They admonished us to use insect repellents with the right combination of chemicals. We were told to wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks outdoors. We learned about rare but potentially devastating diseases like the West Nile Virus and were warned to take precautions.

Back when I was a kid on the farm, I spent every waking hour out of doors. I rarely, if ever, used insect repellent and my neck and arms provided a veritable smorgasbord for flying and crawling critters, including the ubiquitous mosquitoes. I never could ignore for long the incessant itching and ended up scratching away, no matter how often my mom warned me about the dangers of infection. Scabs covered my arms. I looked like I had contracted an exotic tropical skin disease. I was a typical farm boy who enjoyed getting down and dirty and was definitely at home in my environment.

Now, I was being warned to stay indoors, or if I dared to venture outdoors to do it carefully. To minimize the miller nuisance, I should keep my doors and windows shut. Under no circumstance should I go near the South Platte River where the dangers posed by disease bearing ticks and blood-sucking mosquitoes did not justify the risks. This three-pronged attack was bound to make the average person more than a little paranoid. And I haven’t even mentioned the spiders, silverfish, centipedes, millipedes, and other creepy crawly things that lurk in our basement.

I started meditating on this phenomenon. Why was I suddenly under attack by bugs? Are there more insects around today than there used to be? Why do they all seem to want my blood? Whatever happened to the giant monsters that frequented my childhood nightmares, like King Kong and Godzilla? What became of the boogymen? Where are the lions and tigers and bears, oh my? ♦

A Tale Twice Told

Barbara Branch

You are probably familiar with the proverb, “Give wind and tide a chance to change.”

This is a story about their inevitable change. It all began one day in the early 1980s as I drove along the scenic road that hugs the shores of Clearwater Lake. I didn’t know the job I was about to begin would take unexpected twists.

I had an appointment at a newly renovated home on San Souci Beach. The home originally had been a turn of the century cottage; no

finished walls, primitive plumbing—the usual summer home used only in July and August. The affluence of the 80s had caused the owners of this simple cottage,

although somewhat now modernized, to go the whole nine yards as the saying goes and turn the simple cottage into a dazzling two story Greek Revival show place.

I pulled into the half circle drive and stopped in front of the white pillared porch. The owner, Kay, greeted me and was excited to see I’d brought a sample case packed with fabrics for her to examine. Kay, bottle-blonde and shapely, led me up the long staircase to the master

bedroom suite, explaining she wanted draperies at the windows with matching comforter, bed skirt, and pillow shams. Plus, she added, she’d like the antique round table in the corner covered with a quilted custom-made-to-the-floor table skirt.

While Kay sat on the bed looking at one fabric sample after another, I began my exacting job of measuring the three large floor to ceiling windows that faced the lake. I also measured for custom rods, the table skirt, the comforter, shams and bed skirt.

After more than an hour and a half of going over and over fabric samples, Kay decided on one. She had chosen an expensive Schumacher with a border design in an unusual mix of dazzling colors. It was beautiful and perfect for her room.

On the drive back to the office, I felt pleased. It had only been four months since I had opened this business. I’d been in the decorating industry about 15 years and had finally branched out on my own. This huge order of fabric, plus lining, labor, and rods would put me on my feet with black ink on the account

books to spare. It was a time to celebrate. By the next day, I had ordered the fabric, linings and rods and reserved time in the workshop. I got everything set to go. The fabric arrived a week later in a huge bolt I could barely drag to the table on one side of my office. I cut enough to send to the workroom waiting to do the pillow shams and table skirt. The job was on its first step toward completion. However, all would not stay sunny in my paradise. A strange and unwanted call came from Kay. She’d changed her mind. She canceled the entire order. She hung up. Could this really happen to me? I could have returned the bolt of fabric if were intact—but I had cut it. The lining bolt I could eventually use, but it would take several jobs in the future to



Fender Bender

Making Your Life Harder?



**We can get you
Back in the Driver’s Seat!**

Our ASE and I-CAR trained technicians use State-Of-The-Art Equipment to return your vehicle to pre-accident condition







Collision Repair & Paint
303-646-3378
Hwy 86 & CR 17
(Crossroads Circle)
Elizabeth

www.bendermenders.com

use it—and I had to pay for it now. And the rods! What could I do with custom sized rods? I felt sick and poor at the same time.

In less than a year, another strange incident occurred. This concerned Kay, too. I learned from a newspaper account she had died in her automobile from a heart attack at the side of a state highway. A sad way to end a life that included a lovely home at the lake.


For two years, I carried the large showy sample of Kay’s Schumacher fabric on every job I went to. I tried my best sales pitch to sell it whenever I thought it would be an appropriate addition to a home. It never sold.

One Monday morning, there was a message on my answering machine to call Lydia Barnes. The name rang a tiny bell, but I couldn’t bring to mind why I couldn’t place it. The address was unfamiliar. I phoned and confirmed with Lydia a date and time to see her. And yes, I’d bring samples.


The day of the appointment dawned cloudy and threatening rain. Lydia’s new home sprawled in all directions on the edge of a lush golf course. The luxury of the furnishings impressed me as she led me from room to room in one wing, which housed the living and dining rooms, and a large family room. I measured window after window as Lydia examined the fabric samples. I heard her exclaim, “I found it!” from the family room and went to see what she had chosen. Holding up my large, showy sample, she asked if I thought it was just right for all three rooms. I looked at the fabric, then at her, and said, “Lydia, it is perfect.”

However, another surprise awaited me. As I was putting on my coat to leave after repacking the samples, Lydia’s husband came home. I knew him the moment he stepped from his car. It was Kay’s husband now newly remarried.

It thrilled me both his wives had the same extravagant taste. And at last for me, wind and tide had finally changed. ♦

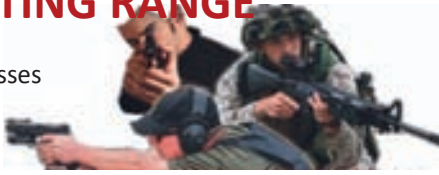


Range Hours
Monday thru Saturday
9:00 am - 5:30 pm
Sunday
9:00 am - 4:30 pm
Call now to reserve your spot!




INDOOR RIFLE/PISTOL TACTICAL SHOOTING RANGE

- * Conceal Carry Weapon Classes
- * Tactical Classes
- * Optics Classes
- * Fully Automatic Weapons Shooting (Class 3)
- * Pop-Ups, Turning Targets, Live Simulation
- * Gun Sight In
- * Hunting Scenarios/Games



MILO RANGE

SAFE AND TRUE-TO-LIFE TRAINING



Only range in Colorado to offer the “Milo” system.

True-to-life interactive shooting—live fire or laser.

Family Owned And Operated

45 N. Main Circle Byers, CO 303-822-5625

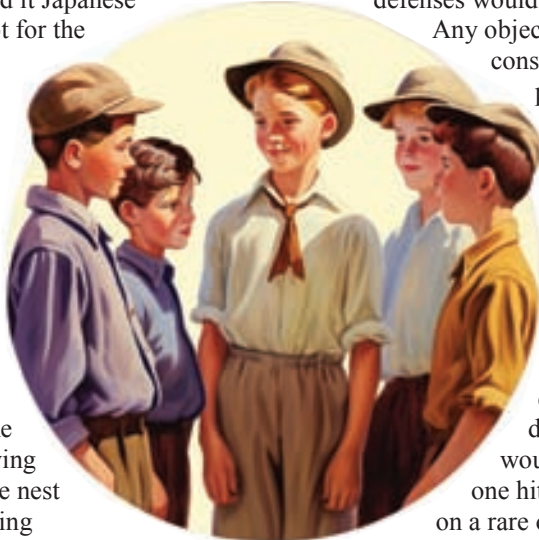
Gerald Webb

How We Helped Win the War

In 1944, World War II was in its full intensity. It was a scary and exciting time.

Everyone in our Ozark Mountain community of Maple Springs worked in full patriotic support of the country. My merry band of eleven-year-old warriors was no exception. We wanted to do our bit for the war effort. So we created a game and called it Japanese Zero. It was not for the faint of heart.

Near our community, a sandy road wound through a dense thicket of thorn trees and bushes. Large red wasps built many nests there. The game involved throwing a rock at a large nest and then grabbing handfuls of damp sand to serve as anti-aircraft flak against the immediate and furious onslaught of enraged zeros. Four players were necessary for this game in order to



curveball. The most dangerous was the Kamikaze who would go high and with the sun at its back dive almost straight down at us.

It was a tribute to the eternal optimism of youth that at the beginning of each new match, we felt our defenses would be airtight.

Any objective consideration of past experiences would have proven otherwise. A game ended when one player left the fray. A near miss could cause some to do that. Most would take at least one hit. A very few on a rare occasion would take two, but no more.

On one unforgettable day, Vaughn, not one of our best thinkers, became a living legend among us. He took three blasts before hastily and

unceremoniously beating a panicky retreat to his home bunker. That the last two came simultaneously did not in our minds change his heroic status. None of the rest of us ever matched his record, and he didn't expand it, as he never played the game again. We did not consider him a slacker for this. He retired with military honors. Sometimes a combatant could become so busily engaged that he wasn't

immediately aware his companions had been routed, leaving him alone and vulnerable. This perceived desertion often led to temporarily lowered morale and no little dissension among the troops.

Now you may ask how our game helped win the war. Think back, friend, and you will remember in all of World War II, not a single Japanese Zero got past Maple Springs, Arkansas. They could never crack our secret code. ♦

24 HR TOW TRUCK SERVICE

SHERER Auto Parts & REPAIR






710 Colfax Bennett, CO
Locally Owned & Managed

303-644-3311

cover all directions. Five or more crowded the action and increased the amount of collateral damage. With that number, someone would slip, make a wrong turn or get overly excited and a fellow soldier would receive face and eyes full of friendly fire.

Someone might yell, "Japanese Zero at three o'clock!" We didn't know where three o'clock was but it didn't matter; one had to be alert to all directions all the time. Some zeros were devious and would circle to attack from the rear. An occasional daredevil would come jitter-bugging, bearing a charmed life, through a hail of our shrapnel that would darken the sky. Some would give the appearance of establishing a predictable flight pattern to suddenly veer toward us like a Sandy Koufax sinking

Elbert County Abstract & Title Co.



Title Insurance
Property Searches
Closing & Escrow
Notary

303-621-2079
305 Comanche St.
Kiowa, CO
elbcntyab@aol.com



HOURS:
Sunday 8am - 9pm
Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 8am - 10pm
Tuesday 3pm - 10pm
Friday & Saturday 8am - 11pm

HAPPY HOUR DAILY 3pm - 6pm
\$3 Pint Drafts and Bottles
\$1 Off Well Drinks
\$2 Hard Seltzers

NIGHTLY DRINK SPECIALS 7pm - Close
MONDAY: MARGARITA MONDAY
\$1.00 Off All Margaritas
WEDNESDAY: LADIES NIGHT
Ladies Enjoy Half-Priced Drinks* & Appetizers
*2 Drink Max
THURSDAY: THIRSTY THURSDAY
\$1.00 Off All Premium Cocktails
FRIDAY: FINALLY FRIDAY
\$1.00 Off Smoked Old Fashioneds

PRIME RIB THURSDAYS
Salad, Loaded Mashed & Vegetable
Every Thursday from 5pm til 9pm (while supplies last)
\$27

Follow us on Facebook for daily lunch and dinner specials

Pool Tables | Huge Bar | Big Screen TVs

25 W Highway 40 Byers, CO 303.822.5002

Little Tag-a-Long

Norma Pflager

As a child, my older sister and I cut out paper dolls from the Montgomery Ward catalog and supplied them with luxurious clothing and grand furnishings.

Evelyn, being two years older than I, was a much better "Cutter Outer" than I was. She had a shoe-box full of these lovely treasures.

When she left to play with her friends, I would sneak out her shoe-box and play with her collection until she came home. She put things away neatly, but I had not learned that yet, so when I piled them back in the box, it was a dead give-away I had been playing with her shoe-box collection. She would get furious with me and chase me around the house. Once I fooled her by stopping dead in my tracks. She bumped into my elbow and got a bloody nose. Poor Evelyn... she had to put up with a lot from her spoiled little sister. Finally, with Mom's coaching and threats of the willow switch, I learned Evelyn's things were off-limits to me.

I'm sure Evelyn felt like the girl in "Mary had a little lamb that followed her everywhere" for that's what I did to her. Most of the time, she was patient with me. We roller-skated around the Library Park, which had the smoothest sidewalks in town. Mom took a picture of us in our overalls and floral print shirts wearing our roller-skates. Mom and Dad belonged to a lodge, and for entertainment, all the children were to speak poems or sing. I was four and Evelyn six. Evelyn spoke her piece and did fine until she looked around to see her little "Tag-A-Long" sister right behind her—and it wasn't even her turn! I always thought I had to be right after Evelyn!

My little verse was: "Fishie, Fishie, in the brook, Daddy caught him on a hook. Mama fried him in the pan, And baby ate him like a man!"

I grew up to realize I couldn't be with Evelyn all the time. She grew up to be a patient and kind person. Her little pest of a sister had trained her well! ♦



Country Schools

Author Unknown

Driving the country roads, you can often spot a one room country school sitting in a corner of a pasture or field.

Many have sat on the spot for over a century. They stand as a testimony of the determination of early American spirit. These tiny schools stretch from coast to coast. The school house was only second to building a church for the settlers. Out of them came our "can do" nature. Two of the more famous people to get an education in these little buildings were Abraham Lincoln and George Washington Carver.

Heritage parks and museums preserve some of these buildings, others remain in the countryside, maintained by locals. Still others were torn down or are prone to the elements. Nearby may be an old homestead where the teacher boarded. Maybe you can still see a playground, a swing set or merry-go-round.

Out of these schools came our parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. There were struggles to get to school. Having to walk a couple of miles across the fields or pasture carrying a sandwich for lunch in a hankie or bucket and a slate. The image lingers in our mind and reminds us of a much earlier and simpler time.

By today's standards, would we consider having to walk that far in a howling wind, rain, sleet, or snow abuse? Probably. There was also no early childhood

education during this era but everyone managed. The parents, school board and teacher worked with what they had to do the best for the children. There were lists of books

and worksheets to select from for a curriculum. One teacher taught first through eighth grades. There was no superintendent or secretary to help, nor was there a janitor. The teacher took care of attendance, tests, grading and assignments, cleaning the classroom and bringing coal in for the stove the next day, and did whatever else was needed. If there were repairs, one of the local parents would fix things. It was a small community working together to educate the children.

Our government today would consider these people incompetent. There was no kindergarten, head start or special Ed programs. No testing for seeing how the students were doing and to gauge how much money the school could get from the government. No teacher's aides, athletic directors, program directors, or assistant superintendents. Looking at the schools of today, it is amazing what they accomplished.

Out of these little schools came the scientists and engineers that built the machines that led to our high-tech world. The farmers and ranchers that produce the abundance of food for our tables also went to the schools in the country.

The employer today laments a job applicant that can't fill out the paperwork because they can't read or write. In a little country school, the student did not go on to the next grade level unless he passed the requirements. The teacher would spend time with a student that struggled to read and write or in arithmetic. There were no special classes or teachers. Search out the folks that grew up in the country and went to one of these schools. They are now in their 80s and 90s, but are very clear and articulate. Listen to their stories of growing up.

An old one-room schoolhouse stands in the pasture corner. Windows gone, door flapping in the breeze. Inside is a bare floor. On the wall is an outline for the absent chalkboard. Out back are the ante building's footers where they once stood. Bits of coal linger in the dirt. Out of this school came the soldiers of the big wars, the people that worked in the factories, mechanics to fix the machines and the people of the earth to provide food, the rancher and farmer.

Even though they did not have running water or other luxuries, they learned much in these quiet ghosts of the past. They stand to remind us of the hard work and selflessness of our forefathers. ♦



Mom's Easter Hat Surprise

Suzan L. Wiener

"How do you children like my Easter hat?" Mom asked, pleased with her purchase.

It was a pink straw hat with a simple darker pink bow to match her pink suit. Mom loved pink.

My sister and I nodded our approval, but we looked at each other, knowing the hat would have to be adorned somehow for the special occasion. She would wear it at our town's Easter Parade. Unfortunately, to us, it was way too plain for such an important holiday. We knew we needed to rectify the situation. A little while later, Mom went to cook dinner, and we started thinking of what we could do to spruce it up.

"I know," said Shari excitedly. "We can make tissue flowers, and paste them to it. Talk about an improvement. I learned how to do it in school!"

"That's a great idea, Shari!"

We were thrilled knowing Mom would be happy with her renovated hat, and we had a nice project going. We got to work right away. Shari got the tissues, spray paints and perfume. I got the cloth to protect the sheets on my bed. Shari taught me how to make them. It was fairly easy. Practice made perfect. I finally got the hang of it after lots of wasted tissue. My 5-year-old hands weren't as dexterous as Shari's, her being nine years-old and all.

We made fifteen flowers, each one better than the next, and the colors were vibrantly terrific. Reds, blues, yellows and pink. Once happy with the results, we taped them to Mom's hat.

"Wow, is that beautiful, or what?" I asked Shari.

"Yep, beautiful, for sure!"

Mom called us when dinner was ready, so we gently placed her hat back on her dresser.

"Do you think she'll like it?" I asked excitedly.

"Like it? She'll love it!" Shari answered, proud of our handiwork.

During a delicious roast-beef dinner, we told Mom we had a surprise for her. "A surprise?" she asked nervously.

"Yes, it's really great," Shari said, hopeful our mom would feel the same way we did.

"Okay, show me, girls."

"But we're not finished with dinner yet."

"You'll finish it after I see your surprise," she replied.

We trudged upstairs. Mom's eyes widened with shock at the sight of her toilet-papered flowered hat! Fearing the worst, we were worried about what she'd say, but Mom, the trooper that she was raved about it! "That was so sweet of you both and it's fabulous!" She gave us hugs and wore her "designer" hat with pride at the Easter parade. Shari and I had new pink outfits.

Everyone looked at it. Some snickered and whispered, but Mom wore her hat as proudly as if it were a Dior original. I don't really think Mom loved what we did, but she loved us—that was quite clear. ♦

Get Ready for Spring!

15% off Discount for New Clients in April!
Shellac, Dip, Nail Art, Paraffin Pedicures. Prices start at \$40.



Brandiwine Nails • 720-220-9535
Just Peachy Day Spa • 320 Comanche Street Kiowa, CO

SELLING or BUYING CATTLE? Consign With Us

Wed April 10
Special Bred Heifer, Cow & Pair Sale & Clark Saler /Hereford Bull Sale w/reg sale
Wed April 17 Back to Grass Calf & Yearling Sale
Sat April 20
Fillmore Limousin Bull Sale
Wed May 1 Bred Heifer, Cow & Pair Sale w/Regular Sale

Your only Home Owned/Operated Livestock Auction in Southeast Colorado
La Junta Livestock Commission, Inc.
719-384-7781
1-800-748-1795
24026 County Rd 30.25
La Junta, CO
www.ljlivestock.com
Email: lajuntalivestock@gmail.com

Buddy Johnson Field Rep 719-338-0576

Larry A. Gappa

Melodies of the Old Home Place

The sounds of spring differed from those of summer, fall, or winter, yet were consistent throughout the years.

The day-to-day melodies changed slightly with each year as I grew up and heard them a little differently. Then there were the harmonies that never change and only God can orchestrate.

From the solitude of dead-of-night, there was no need of an alarm clock, for each day began like a symphony. I heard a subtle stirring as Dad moved around in the dark. He opened the door on the old pot-bellied stove to build a fire to take the chill off. The metal doors opening were like a drumbeat as they screeched and clanked, metal against metal. I heard the rattle of the grate being shaken to sift the ashes down from the previous night's fire. A brief silence, then the soft rustle of paper crumpled and smashed to make a bed for the wood, followed by a swoosh, then a snap, crackle, pop of the fire catching. Finally, the metallic sound of the doors being shut properly and the damper screeching as he adjusted it just right to mute the roaring fire and control it to produce the most heat.

Next came a repeat of the first chorus as Dad started the fire in the kitchen stove so Mom could prepare a hot breakfast. His deep voice three times at the different doors. "Get up" sounded more like "geddup" once, then a second time, "I said get up! Now! I will not tell you again." The grumbling, moaning, whining, and complaining with a cough or a snort thrown in from the three older boys came in unison. They shoved and stamped feet into shoes and boots. The daily sounds were now in full orchestration.

A new orchestral score of more urgency



and volume came from the enclosed back porch as Dad put the old cream separator together. Its dozens of pieces, all made of stainless steel, produced a percussion session to compete with the best orchestra. Occasionally, there was a different tinny cymbal sound of galvanized milk pails being rinsed and gathered to be carried to the barn for milking. Finally, the banging of the back door once, twice, three times, depending on how fast the older boys got into the day. The first stanza was over and the second had begun.

After the doors quit banging and the boys left, the true music began. Between nature, wildlife, and livestock, there was a medley of sounds. It began with the crow of a rooster and the low, mournful cooing of a mourning dove. Chickens squawking and clucking for feed and the pigs grunting and squealing for their share. The mellow lowing of a cow or calf with the

Seniors Get \$700 OFF

Safe Showers, Tubs or Bathroom Remodels

No need to slip and slide in your bathroom. We offer Remodels, Tub-to-Shower Conversions, Tub Replacements, and Walk-in Tubs.



Combine this with our other ad for more savings!

Let our family serve your family.



303-418-7736
www.MyBathColorado.com Exp. 3/30/24

snorting and stomping of the horses letting you know they were hungry. Mixed in were the cats begging for milk and the dogs barking.

As one stood quietly and listened to the early morning melodies, the trill of the meadowlark, accompanied by the chirping and twittering of small birds, finches, sparrows, robins and chickadees, pushed back the night. I heard the strident screech of a hawk high overhead and the chatter and noisy scolding of the crows and magpies from every large cottonwood around.

The workday began with the buzzing of the honeybees as they went about nectar gathering, punctuated now and again by a louder, lower rumble of the bumblebee as it made its way from flower to flower at a slower pace. It reminded me of a symphony of nature that never grew old as it varied from day to day, yet always with the same participants, identifiable by their respective sounds and songs. Because of the many fruit trees and flowers in our yard, the bees and other insects were a low, consistent background melody to the rest of the chorus when you took the time to listen.

As the summer grew warmer, every little breeze "let you hear the corn grow." Afternoon thunder and lightning storms with hail guaranteed to give an impressive light and sound percussion performance that sent chills up your spine. A quietness would follow this, absent of all sound

Windows • Siding • Doors

Quality
Exterior Home
Improvements



Specializing in any and all types of replacement windows, siding and replacement doors. Locally owned with over 28 years experience Licensed and Insured

Home Improvement Brokers

John K Carollo
Cell 303-907-4185 Byers 303-822-5252

Decks • Sunrooms

but the sighing of the wind in the trees and the dripping of the rain, slowing everything. There hasn't been an orchestra arrangement written to match the beauty of the many melodious sounds of nature that surrounded us as we grew up.

The music didn't stop at the day's end. With the birds chirping quietly, crickets and frogs formed a chorus to the beat of owl wings and the flutter of bats. A coyote's lonesome call or the

Prairie Creeks Living Center

Assisted Living
Just east of Aurora off I-70

24-Hour a Day Staffing, Assistance with Medication, Bathing, Dressing, Eating, and other Personal Services



56175 Sunset Ave.
Strasburg, CO
(303) 622-6262

Residences at Prairie Creeks

720-412-6718

One Bedroom, One Bedroom w/ Multi-Purpose Room, Garages, Handicapped Accessible Units, Pets Allowed



Senior Apartments



PrairieCreeks@outlook.com
www.prairiecreeks.org

muted bawl of a calf looking for its mama. For many years, the long, drawn out lonely whistle of the night ore train coming down Ute Pass on its last run of the day to the mill punctuated the end of the day. They would blow the steam whistle way up Ute Pass, where it was barely audible. Then several times more; each time with more intensity and volume until it reached the mill three miles south. This steam whistle in the dead of night had to be the most desolate and lonesome sound I have ever heard outside of the coyote's howl. And when you put the two of them together in the same chorus, you will feel the isolation of the night.

I have often wished I had a recording of these many sounds and melodies, especially that ore train whistle with the howl in the background. But no recording equipment could do them justice. ♦

Elizabeth Barber Shop

251 E Kiowa Ave Elizabeth

Old School Barber Shop

Hot Lather Neck Shave included w/Cut

Call for prices or appointment

A common place to see old friends & to meet new ones.

Stop by our unique shop

Thank you for your continued support **303-646-4805** Service since 1992

\$2.00 off with this coupon through April



Auto, Home, Farm, Business, Work Comp, Life, Specialty, Crop



Dana Johnson, Agent
56770 E Colfax Ave
PO Box 800
Strasburg, Co 80136

303-622-4717

Fax: 303-622-4716

dana@wellerinsuranceagency.com
www.wellerinsuranceagency.com

Oscar's Animal Farm

B. B. Bunting

He had been our neighbor for years, and he'd moved to be near his niece in the winter.

Now he contacted us with an invitation to visit his new home. We were happy to see him and his wife after a year away.

"You left us with a considerable chore, Oscar," we told him.

"Oh, which one," he smiled, "the garden, or the neighbors?"

Oscar had regularly visited the neighbors with flowers or vegetables from his garden, and knew everyone for blocks around. He also knew all the creatures for blocks around as he fed and watered most of them, too.

"Well, the one I am thinking of is the squirrel."

He had a concrete patio at his home and put out a small heap of food suitable for squirrels. One in particular, older and bolder than the others, came every day at the same time to be fed. When they left town, the squirrel felt lost—for one day.

On the following day, the perky creature showed up at our door and patted the glass door. We didn't understand the effort, so we ignored it. The squirrel was persistent. He swung onto the windowsill and tapped for our attention. Once he realized we knew he intended us to notice, he swung down and tapped on the glass door.



We learned fast.

That squirrel came to us every day, demanded food, and left after eating it. It returned to Oscar's old house once the new neighbors moved in and they fed it.

Now in their new home, Oscar and his wife were entertained by the new habitat: snakes, jiggers, owls, and wild turkeys.

Oscar enjoyed the farm creatures his niece's husband reared, even though the farmer didn't approve of Oscar's wild friends. He readily assisted with calving, bottle fed the lambs, and tenderly nursed a raven back to health and splinted its leg when it fell from the nest in his yard.

Although he wouldn't hear of joining in the turkey shoots, he joined in the resulting banquet, even to the extent of helping with the cooking.

At the feast the family held with the turkey shoot, Oscar and his wife's life story held everyone's attention. She had stayed at home, while he became a tool and die maker after leaving the Navy. He married over the strong objections of the young girl's parents, when he knew he would be called into the Navy. Later,

RELIABLE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET

STARTING AT JUST \$29⁹⁵ PER MONTH

From Watkins to Limon, we've got you covered.

Call 303-822-5400 for a FREE quote!

traveling to various companies with his skills, he become a real estate wheeler. He'd made money at it, and enjoyed a comfortable life, but the young couple were very disappointed to be unable to have a family.

In typical fashion, he and his wife had taken in the orphaned daughter of a cousin. He became a father figure to all the young girl's friends. His home was always alive with young people—whom his wife fed, clothed and advised unstintingly.

We left him, his wife, and their family the day after this special occasion. The visit had been both fun and educational. What made it so? His family had arranged the party and invited us to Oscar's seventy-fifth wedding anniversary. His stint in the navy had been during the first World War and the orphan they had raised had been the daughter of a fallen comrade. ♦

The White Gardenia

Marsha Arons

Every year on my birthday, from the time I turned twelve, one white gardenia got delivered anonymously to me at my house.

There was never a card or note, and calls to the florist were in vain because the buyer paid in cash. After a while, I stopped trying to discover the identity of the sender. I just delighted in the beauty and perfume of that one magical, perfect white flower nestled in folds of soft pink tissue paper. But I never stopped imagining who the sender might be.

I spent some of my happiest moments in daydreams about someone wonderful and exciting, but too shy or eccentric to make known their identity. In my teen years, it was fun to speculate the sender might be a boy I had a crush on, or someone I didn't know who had noticed me.

My mother contributed to my speculations. She'd ask me if there was someone for whom I had done a special kindness, who might show appreciation anonymously. She reminded me of the times when I'd been riding my bike and our neighbor drove up with her car full of groceries and children. I helped her unload the car and made sure the children didn't run into

the road. Or maybe the mystery sender was the old man across the street. I often retrieved his mail during the winter so he wouldn't have to venture down his icy steps.

She did her best to foster my imagination about the gardenia. She wanted her children to be creative. Mother also wanted us to feel cherished and loved, not just by her, but by the world at large.

At seventeen years old, a boy broke my heart. The night he called for the last time, I cried myself to sleep. When I awoke in the morning, I found a message scribbled on my mirror in red lipstick: "Heartily know, when half-gods go, the gods arrive." I thought about that quotation from Emerson for a long time, and I left it where my mother had written it until my heart healed. When I finally went for the glass cleaner, she knew everything was all right again.

But there were some hurts my mother couldn't heal. A month before my high school graduation, my father died of a heart attack. My feelings ranged from simple grief to abandonment, fear, distrust, and overwhelming anger that he was missing some of the most important events in my life. I became completely uninterested in my upcoming graduation, the senior class play and the prom—events I had worked on and looked forward to. I even considered staying home to attend college instead of going away as I had planned, because it felt safer.



SAG-CO Excavating

Serving Douglas & Elbert Counties
General Construction Services

- Backhoe Services
- Skid Loader Work
- Small Foundations &
- Additions
- Building Pads
- Driveways
- Trenches
- Arenas
- Hauling

Greg 303-944-0343

My mother, amid her own grief, wouldn't hear of me missing out on any of these things. The day before my father died, she and I had gone shopping for a prom dress and had found a spectacular one—yards and yards of dotted Swiss in red, white and blue. Wearing it made me feel like Scarlett O'Hara. But it was the wrong size, and when my father died the next day, I forgot all about the dress. Mother didn't.

The day before the prom, I found that dress waiting for me in the right size, draped majestically over the living room sofa. She presented it to me artistically and lovingly. I may not have cared about having a new dress, but my mother did. She cared how we children felt about ourselves. She imbued us with a sense of the magic in the world and she gave us the ability to see beauty even in the face of adversity. In truth, she wanted her children to see themselves much like the gardenia—lovely, strong, perfect, with an aura of magic and perhaps a bit of mystery.

My mother died when I was twenty-two, only ten days after I was married. That was the year the gardenias stopped coming. ♦

Limited Time Offer

Volume Discounts

\$1.799 per Gallon for 500 Gallons

Global Propane

(303) 660-9290

Family Owned Business



PAID FOR BY ELBERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Elbert County Connection

Keeping citizens informed and up-to-date on county government

Elbert County Elected Officials' Departments & Services Provided

Assessor

- Valuation
- Agricultural Classification
- Notice of Values
- Appeal Process and Abatement
- Assessment Rate
- Certification of Value & Recertification for Taxing Authorities
- Senior Exemption
- Veterans Exemption
- Situs Address Application
- Personal Property & Declarations
- Oil & Gas & Declarations
- Title Conveyance- Ownership Records (We do not provide legal advice regarding conveyance or the forms)
- Manufactured Home Ownership Change, Purge, movement, destruction
- Radius Reports

<https://www.elbertcounty-co.gov/264/Assessor>
303-621-3101

Sheriff's Office

The Sheriff of a county has many duties and responsibilities, but the primary focus is on the safety of the residents of the county. State statute requires the Sheriff, through his or her deputies, to operate a jail. We typically have prisoners awaiting trial if they are unable to post bond, those who have been adjudicated and are serving their sentence, and those awaiting transport to other facilities that have been arrested in the county. We are responsible for the safety and welfare of prisoners. We have a part-time medical staff and mental health professionals. We oftentimes have many prisoners needing to be transported to a hospital or even for dental care. This requires posting deputies to guard the prisoner if they are in the hospital.

Civil process service is also a required task. We serve a variety of civil papers to citizens and businesses throughout the county.

The Sheriff will act as the fire warden. The Sheriff acts as the Fire Warden in all unincorporated areas for prairie, forest, or wildland fires outside the boundaries of a fire protection district or where the fire exceeds the capabilities of the fire protection district to control or extinguish.

It is the duty of the Sheriff to transport prisoners to a correctional facility or other place of confinement.

The Sheriff will execute writs-attend court. The Sheriff, through his undersheriff and deputies, shall serve and execute all writs, processes, precepts, and orders issued by a lawful authority.

The Sheriff is to preserve peace and command aid. It is the duty of the sheriffs, undersheriffs, and deputies to keep and preserve the peace in their respective counties, and to quiet and suppress all affrays, riots, and unlawful assemblies and insurrections. For that purpose, and for the service of process in civil or criminal cases, and in apprehending or securing any person for felony or breach of the peace, they, and every coroner, may call to their aid such person of their county as they may deem necessary.

The Sheriff is responsible for court security. We have full-time deputies that screen every person and package that comes into the courts. We additionally provide security during court proceedings.

The Sheriff is responsible for all search and rescue activities in the county. There are many other commiserate activities that the Sheriff, Undersheriff, and deputies do during their duty day to provide safety and service to all members of the public. Additionally, we assist, and handle calls in incorporated towns during their off time or when they have no one available.

The Sheriff's Office is available and operational twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.

<https://www.elbertcounty-co.gov/181/Sheriffs-Office>
303-621-2027

County Development and Home Construction

Annual Growth Rate and Projections Remain Near 2%.

On March 27th, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) was presented with an in-depth analysis of the current status of development and the pace of new home construction within the county. Delivered by the Community and Economic Development Department, the presentation offered a comprehensive review of the major subdivisions currently underway. The presentation revealed that approximately 2,800 building lots are fully entitled and available for sale to builders across various projects. This is far less than the 10,000 number often quoted on social media.

Among these, the Independence Community stands out with 839 entitled building lots. However, only 300 homes have been constructed over the past seven years. The project still has a long way to go. At this pace, an estimated 25 years remaining to complete its total entitlement of 1,400 homes. Similarly, Spring Valley, initiated in 2000, has 1,782 fully entitled building lots, but only 525 homes have been constructed over the past 24 years. Even with the increased pace of construction in recent years, it is anticipated to take at least two decades to achieve full build-out for this community.

While there are other significant projects in the pipeline, none have received approvals that allow the development and sale of lots to builders. For example, EC West is in the early stages of approvals, with only zoning and a Preliminary Plat in place to potentially support 2,850 homes. However, no lots are approved until Final Plats are presented to the Planning Commission and BOCC. Consequently, even once construction begins, this project is expected to span decades before completion.

Elora, a significant project comprising 308 homes and a retail complex in the northwest corner of the county, is currently in the entitlement process. Despite receiving zoning approval as "Sterling Crossing" over a decade ago, not even a Preliminary Plat has been submitted for consideration, highlighting the lengthy process involved in large-scale developments.

While additional projects are on the horizon, many are in the very early stages of design, with some yet to submit applications or possessing incomplete ones. These must be considered almost only "conceptual" at this time.

Actual construction of homes is a better measure of current and future growth than simply looking at actual or requested entitlements. Economics and the ability of the market to absorb new homes—the decisions of actual buyers based on interest rates, job availability, and other factors, is what actually drives the pace of construction. Despite the increase in growth compared to the period following the Great Recession, where construction was mostly stagnant, the current growth rate has remained relatively modest, averaging under 2% for the past decade.

In fact, in 2023, only 241 new permit applications were received for home construction within the unincorporated parts of the county, with 218 for Single Family Homes and 23 for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). ADUs, commonly known as "mother-in-law" suites or separate cottages, contribute to the overall growth rate, which hovers slightly above 2%.

This manageable growth rate, coupled with the ongoing development of the County's Transportation Master Plan and Water Master Plan, positions the county well for sustainable growth that does not strain existing resources.

As your Board of County Commissioners, we do our best to support current residents and plan for the future. This presentation and the discussion with the Community and Economic Development Director provided valuable insights and context for discussing growth and its impacts on Elbert County. Despite ongoing development, the county remains committed to responsible growth management to ensure the sustainability and well-being of its citizens.

Respectfully,
Chris Richardson, Commissioner District 1
Dallas Schroeder, Commissioner, District 2
Grant Thayer, Commissioner, District 3

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

25 word limit. Free to private parties only. **Land for Sale Ads \$3/word. Business ads: \$3/word.**

E-mail text of ad to: classifieds@prairietimes.com or mail to
 Prairie Times Classifieds P.O. Box 880 Byers, CO 80103
 New classifieds posted daily at www.prairietimes.com

Premium horse hay: grass, alfalfa and mixed. Also have cow hay most of the year. Delivery options available. Fast loading and can load after dark. Dennis 303-822-5564

1999 Chevrolet Suburban K2500 LS, 3rd row seat, 7.4L gasoline V8, 4x4, 130,000 miles, trailer towing pkg, well maintained, clean inside and out. Clear title, \$9600 leave msg 303-600-0221 or text 720-436-4610

Room for rent: Furnished. Private bath. Small acreage. No smoking, pets. Utilities included. Must apply, pass background/credit check. Damage deposit. \$950 mo-to-mo. 720-201-2475

2015 COTC 6' x 8' utility trailer, 2" ball, metal floor with built in drop down ramp, Colo title \$950. 303-621-2325 ask for Jerry

In Person/ Online Tutoring: Certified teacher, 10+ years, K-12 grades: (Math, English, Writing, Science, Spanish, Art, Piano, ACT/SAT, Time Management/Organizational Skills). Flexible hours/rates. 720-218-1519

Ibex TX31 Mini Twine Wrap Round Baler. 45# bales. Moving Must sell. Only used 1 season. \$4,800 Robert 303-261-7771

Food Bank of Kiowa Creek Community Church
 231 Cheyenne Street, Kiowa
 303-243-6500
 Mon 9-1; Tues 3-6, 2nd Fri 9-10.
 An Equal Opportunity Provider.

CDL Driver Wanted \$50-70,000 DOE

OT, Holiday, Vacation, Benefits, Class B, Tanker, Hazmat, Local Propane Delivery, Non-Smoking Environment, Work Where You Live!

303-870-2804
 call or text
 719-960-3321 FAX
 anthony@globalpropaneinc.com
 Global Propane
 PO Box 583
 Franktown, CO 80116

Puppies: Purebred Akita, family protector, family pet, smart, quick learners, great kisses/huggers, potty trained, working on basic commands, 1st shots. Text 303-217-3340

Ibex TX80 48" Belt Rake/Tedder Combo. Only used 1 season. Moving Must sell. \$2500 Robert 303-261-7771

Ammo cans, some call them 50 cal, some 5.56 and others .223 All are empty and good sealing lids \$10 each Kevin 720-908-8821

I will pay \$100 for someone to rake my lawn and pile rubbish between snows in April. Take about 2 hours. Near Kiowa: Call 303-621-2817

Basement to rent. Furnished, utilities, high speed internet. 2 bedrooms, bath, living area. \$1200, use of kitchen, common areas. Elizabeth/sun country 720-422-8200

Looking for vinyl records. Son and I got my old turntable running. Trying to collect some. Can pay or clear em out for ya. 720-938-6699

HELP WANTED Roggen Farmers Elevator 303-644-3251

Seeking **Propane Services Full-Time Driver, Tech qualified, self-motivated, career-oriented person with strong work ethic to help us provide exceptional service on the Colorado Front Range.**

Qualifications and Requirements:
 * High School Diploma or equivalent
 * Obtain Class A CDL license with air brake, hazmat, & tanker endorsements
 * Must possess a clean driving record
 * Must pass a background check and drug screen
 * Must be able to lift up to 75 lbs. and work in all weather conditions
 * Meet all DOT requirements

Elizabeth United Methodist Church
 Come As You Are
 We Aren't Perfect Either
 Sunday 9 am
elizabethunitedmethodists.org

Master bedroom for rent. \$900/mo. Furnished, utilities and high speed internet. Walk in closet. 5 piece master bath. Elizabeth/sun country. 720-422-8200

Flat Bed Utility Trailer 5X11 2" Ball Very clean trailer, 3500# axle, Tie downs all the way around, New Pressure treated deck, New lights, bearing repacked. Kevin 720-908-8821

Bedroom for rent. Furnished, utilities, walk in closet. \$650. Elizabeth, Sun Country. 720-422-8200

Free: King-Size Sleep Number Bed-disassembled, and Oak Entertainment Ctr/ Bookshelf. Elbert. Come and get. 817-527-3051. Ed.

Lawn and garden help mowing, trimming weeds, leaves, raking and more \$25/hr text Justin 720-477-3772

Lease Pasture Available: 10 Acres close to Elizabeth, AG qualified Livestock. Text 303-870-0576 or Email: jnjfarms@aol.com

Alcoholics Anonymous
 Monday 7:00 p.m.
 231 Cheyenne St (Ch. bsmt)
 Kiowa. For other meetings go to: aa.org/meeting-guide-app

TLLC Concrete:
 Specialize in barn floors, driveways, and remove and replacement. Any job over 400 SF. Call 303-646-2355

Food Bank of the Rockies
 2nd Friday 10:30am
 Franktown SDA Church
 905 N. State Hwy 83 Franktown
 Jack 303-688-8730
 Irishura 319-536-6664

Elizabeth Presbyterian Church, Helping People
 Walk with Jesus
 Sunday 9 am
<http://elizabethpc.org/home>

Elbert Women's Club -DINNER & BINGO-
 1st Monday of the month
 Dinner (6-7) Bingo (7-9)
-MONTHLY BREAKFAST-
 All you can eat Every 4th Sunday thru Oct. 8am-Noon
 Adults: \$12.50 Children \$6.25
 3 yrs old and under free

Russell Gates
 Mercantile
 Comm. Hall
 24223 Eccles
 St. Elbert.
 Questions:
 Wendy
 303-243-1308

Big Sandy School District
 in Simla is accepting applications for an Elementary Teacher for the 2024-2025 school year. We also have openings for a Concession Stand Coordinator and immediate substitute teachers. Please e-mail Danni Hankins, dhankins@bigsandy100j.org, or call 719.541.2292 for more information. Open until filled.

AD INDEX

Our advertisers are the reason you receive this publication for free. Make sure to thank them!

Advanced Quality Auto	14	Cleary Building	7	Front Range Kubota	8	Love Funeral Home	15	Running Creek Dental	11
All Roof	8	Diesel Repair	10	GAC Crew	4	Maverick Auto	10	SAG-Co	22
Barnyard Boutique	4	EC Nat Day of Prayer	3	Global Propane	4, 22, 24	Maverick Mercantile	18	Sherer Auto	19
Barr Bear	5	EC Self-Reliance Expo	9	Higgins 4 Commissioner	13	Mountain Heart	11	Shooters	19
BC Building	15	El Co Abstract	19	Hilltop Fair	3	My Bath Colorado	5, 21	Son Country Church	16
Bender Menders	18	El Co Connection	23	Home Improvement	21	Neal Wilson Ins.	15	Steel Corner	6
Big Sandy School	24	Elite Real Estate	12	Home Remodel Services	17	Olde Towne HVAC	11	Steel Structures	3
Bijou Telephone	22	Eliz Barber	21	Integrity Insurance	16	O'Malley's	4	Strasburg Auto Parts	5
Brandiwine Nails	20	Eliz Country Kennel	13	Just Window Screens	16	Plains H& A/C	15	Stratton H & A	16
BTH Mowing	3	Elizabeth Presbyterian	24	Kim's Handyman	12	Prairie Creeks	21	TLLC Concrete	24
Byers General Store	12	Eliz United Methodist	24	La Junta Livestock	20	PRISM Financial	13	Weller Insurance	21
Chunkys Towing	16	Forty Mile Feed	17	Life & Health Solutions	14	Quality Landscaping	6	Western Hardware	7
Clark's Equip.	17	Front Range Industrial	5	Linnebur Auctions	10	Roggen F. Elevator	11, 24	Whiteside's Boots	12