Visit Smart: DiscoverCloudcroft.com • Ice Rink • Mountain Life • FREE

Mountain Monthly

Your Guide to Cloudcroft and the Sacramento Mountains | OCTOBER 2026



Fright Stuff

Sacramento Mountain Museum Comes Alive With Halloween Thrills and Chills

BY **HILARY KITZMAN**

The **Sacramento Mountains Museum & Pioneer Village** is one of Cloudcroft's most immersive stops for visitors, a walkable collection of historic cabins, artifacts, and stories tucked beneath the aspens. It's the kind of place where you don't just see history; you step directly into it.

Museum Director **Neila Farmer** says, "The history here is just unbelievable. Visitors don't realize what else is here because they just see this small building from the road. They can't imagine what's back there. People call it a little gem."

Spread across 2.5 wooded acres, the museum features over 15 structures including a fire barn, caboose, a pioneer cottage and chapel – each restored and decorated to reflect the era in which Cloudcroft was built. Visitors can take self-guided tours through stories of the Mescalero Apache homeland, the timber boom, and the railroad era that shaped the village.

Neila says, "When they do come through, they are shocked that we have all these different homes, blacksmith shop, schools, barber shop and church. It's all time period and decorated that way on the inside."

Museum Treasurer **Lynn Melton** agrees that the museum's charm lies in how the stories come alive. "I'd like them to have a sense of not the objects, but how things were done. And I think we'll be moving towards much more telling that story as the years go on."

continued on p. 2

INSIDE

FOOD

Flavor Lab

CHS Homecoming Queen Gena Davis shares Culinary Program favorite, *p. 25*



Skate Expectations

Village Ice Rink Gets a Refresh

MOUNTAIN NEWS, *p. 6*

REAL ESTATE

How's the Market

Get the data, *p. 7*



Venetian in the Village

Bob Shepard's Artist Retreat, *p. 30*

SPORTS

CHS Homecoming

Paula Finch reports, *p. 22*

Connect to **Mountain Monthly** online.

www.MountainMonthly.com



Scareologist Brent Kass haunts the museum all October

Every October, the Pioneer Village transforms into the Haunted Village: a spooky, family-friendly walk-through experience that has become one of Cloudcroft's biggest seasonal draws.

Haunted Cloudcroft Tradition

Now in its 15th year, the October Haunted Village event continues to grow in scale, creativity, and attendance.

Taking place from 7-10 PM on eight nights in October at the museum, the event takes visitors of all ages back into spooky history for an entrance fee of $15 per person.

Visitors wander through eerie vignettes, glowing lantern paths, and handcrafted sets built inside the historic cabins themselves. It's atmospheric, immersive, and unlike any other Halloween event in southern New Mexico.

The idea began in 2012 when **Brent Kass** and his friend **Dan King** saw the potential in the museum's historic grounds. Brent says, "It's already a ghost town before you even start decorating. So you couldn't really ask for a better palette to work with."

Neila remembers Brent's first visit clearly: "When he came here to look at the museum and the property, he thought this would be a magical place for Halloween."

Behind the Spooky Scenes

The Haunted Village doesn't appear overnight.

Preparation begins in July, and the museum closes for August and September so Brent and team can build sets, install lighting, rehearse characters, and transform cabins into spooky scenes.

Taylor Rogers, who has worked with Brent for six years, has a long history with the event. "I was in eighth grade in school here in Cloudcroft when I first came to the event, and I remember bugging Brent about helping volunteer with scaring. And ever since then, it went from helping out with scaring to helping him put on the whole show."

Brent adds, "if you come here, you're going to see $80,000 worth of Halloween now." Brent gets much of his inspiration from high-end special effects from all over the country, including Walt Disney World's Haunted Mansion and Universal Studios.

Taylor says the buildout is his favorite part. "We have a great time putting this all together. So for me it's building it, not really seeing it."

"I think what makes this a big deal is that there's no one else in the area really doing this...We're pretty much the only Halloween entertainment that's up on the mountain or really in the area," he says.

Essential Scares

For the museum, Haunted Village isn't just fun; it's necessary. The event has become the museum's largest fundraiser, supporting exhibits, maintenance, and year-round programming.

Neila says, "People love it. They don't believe that something in a town this small could put on something this big."

The turnout speaks for itself. "It's been amazing really," Neila says. "We've had such great reviews, and people love it. And in terms of numbers, we have people out the door around the block...I know we have had over 2,000 people during the times we have done it."

"Those are the satisfying moments for us, that we can stand back and be happy that it worked the way we wanted to do it," Brent says.

"We want people to come because it's a great benefit and it supports the museum, and it gives me more money for next year's event," he grins.

Plan Your Visit

Whether you're here for the history or the haunts, the Sacramento Mountains Museum & Pioneer Village offers one of Cloudcroft's most memorable experiences. Bring cash.

Haunted Village 2026

October 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30, 31
7 – 10 PM
$15 per person

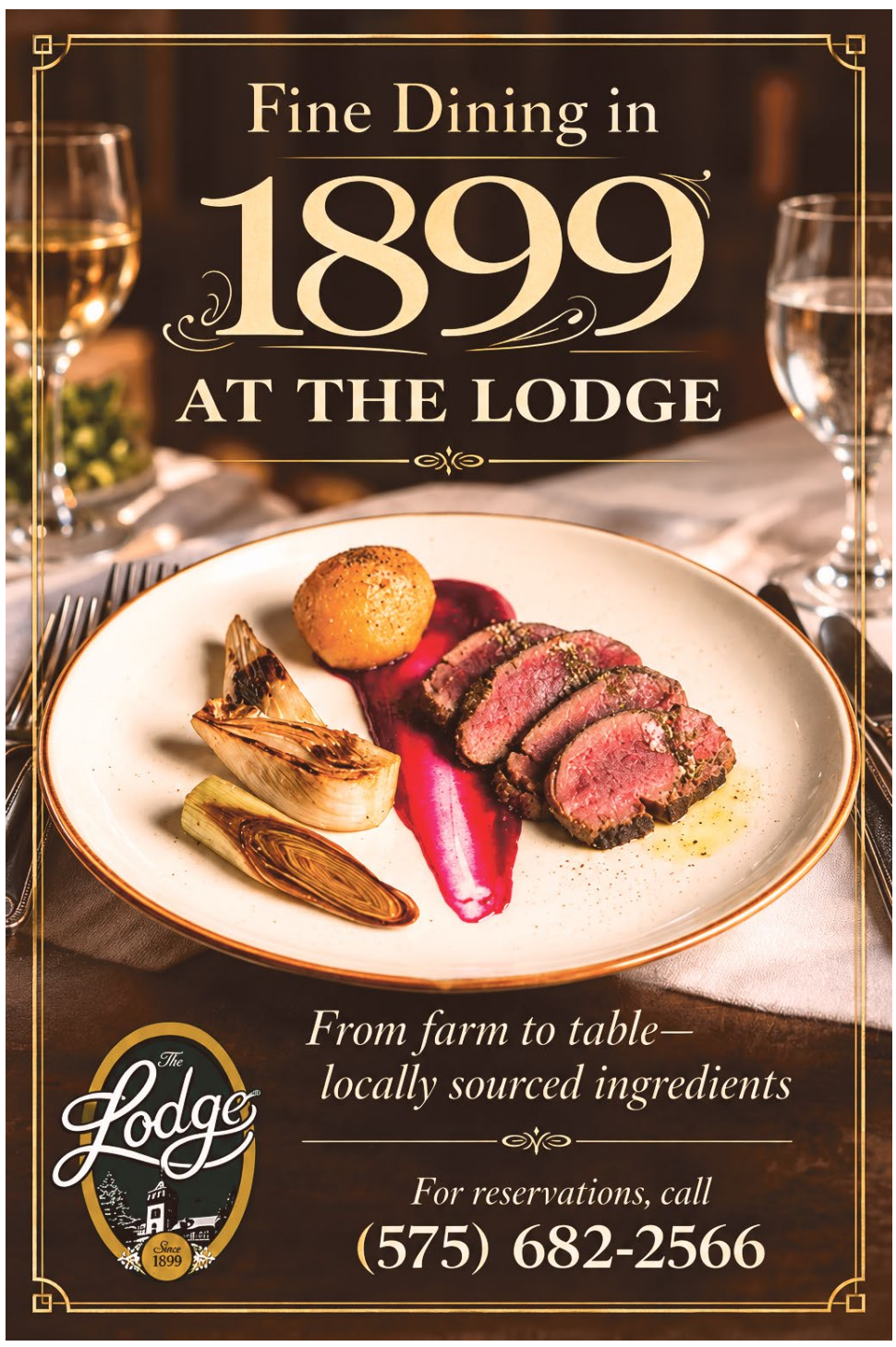
Museum Hours

1000 Highway 82, Cloudcroft

Winter (weather permitting) – 10:00 – 4:00 PM, Friday and Saturday
Summer (effective Memorial Day) – 10:00 – 4:00 PM, Wed to Saturday
Closed Sunday, Monday, Tuesday

Adults $5.00 · Children 6–12 $3.00 · Military discount $1.00 with valid ID





1401 James Canyon Highway (82), Cloudcroft · 575-682-7778

Aspen Trails Realty

Located on Highway 82, east side of Cloudcroft just past the Dusty Boots Cafe

Your Connection to Local Real Estate Experts

Over 75 years of combined Mountain Real Estate Experience!

Experienced, Trusted and Ready to Work For You!



Joey Pacheco	Judy Whaley	Nikki Harrell	Thomas Mack	Christine Barry	Cindy Preslar	Miyah Beug	Denise Hux
Owner/Qualifying Broker	Referring Specialist	Associate Broker	Associate Broker	Associate Broker	Associate Broker	Associate Broker	Associate Broker
575-937-3928	575-430-3671	505-715-8326	575-491-4347	575-921-1577	575-430-7634	575-551-8159	903-790-9447

Whether you are buying or selling, call one of our Mountain Real Estate Specialists today for all your real estate needs, or just come on by for a cup of coffee and shoot the breeze! Our goal is for you to have a pleasant real estate experience and to find your mountain dream property.

ASPENTRAILSREALTY.COM

CLOUDCROFT BREWING COMPANY

1301 Burro Avenue - 575-682-BEER



Home Front

The view from here



Miles Willett trains for his Mountain Monthly paper route at the High Altitude Classic

Dear Readers,

The paper in your hands is our 12th issue of ***Mountain Monthly***, a full year, under the leadership of Hannah Dean, Justin Muñoz, and me.

We bought the 38-year-old newspaper last fall because we believe its best years are ahead. The ***Monthly*** is how this mountain talks to itself. It records the people and businesses that make up this community, and it's a space shared by many voices. In our first year, we tried to stay true to that mission while broadening and deepening our coverage.



We covered the village budget and the meetings where it got made. We followed the fight over the future of the Sunspot Observatory. We looked at the school cell phone ban and what changed in the classroom. We rode along with the High Altitude Classic. We introduced you to the two bakers behind Levain It Up sourdough bakery, the new STEM lab, Kira's Angel Tree, and the people behind the counters on Burro Avenue.

The best story in any issue usually shines a light on a person. Cloudcroft is a special place to live and to visit because of the people who call it home, the places they built, and the businesses they keep open through mud season and snow.

Covering an area as big and interesting as this mountain takes a small army of reporters, photographers, and artists. Under the leadership of our talented editor **Hannah Dean**, the ***Mountain Monthly*** has built a strong bench of contributors: **Drew Gaines, Jonny Coker, Hilary Kitzman, Vivian Barreras, Rand Carlson, Wells Viana, Paula Finch, Bre Kincaid, Christina Olvera**, and more.

We've amplified community Voices, spotlighting **Lyn Canham's** seasonal musings, the VFD, Scouts, VFW, local history, artists, and Cloudcroft Schools.

Our team helped us expand our print and online coverage. Our social media reach has grown as people share our video reports in Facebook groups across the greater Cloudcroft community. Expect more of this.

The timing is right. It feels like a new chapter is underway in Cloudcroft.

In just the last year, Zenith Park, once a quiet green space, has come alive. On the east end, the new pickleball courts draw dozens of players every day, morning and evening. Three tournaments this summer brought hundreds of players from as far as El Paso and Carlsbad. On the west side, the ice rink opens in October and runs through March, with figure skating classes and hockey tournaments on the calendar. (See p. 6 for more on that.)

Those are not the only signs of fresh energy. Since June, we have had a real grocery store, **Cloudy's**, and residents who wanted good food without driving down the mountain have filled its aisles. Find stories about all these new village endeavors in the ***Monthly***.

Print reaches locals, seasonals, and visitors well. But it couldn't reach the person who hasn't been yet and is scouting for trip ideas. So in May, we launched ***DiscoverCloudcroft.com***. It answers the questions a first-time visitor asks: where to stay, where to eat, what to do this weekend, what the weather is doing up top. It runs the lodging and attraction listings in far more depth than a print page can hold, and it is open all day, every day, to anyone with a phone.

A business profile that runs in the ***Monthly*** becomes a listing on ***DiscoverCloudcroft***. An event on our calendar shows up on the ***DiscoverCloudcroft*** calendar the same week. A visitor who finds Cloudcroft through the website picks up the paper at the front desk and learns what the town is actually like. Same team, same standards, two doors into the same place.

The ***Monthly*** also now publishes a digital edition. Every issue is available as a PDF, delivered by email on the day it goes to press, page for page the same as the print copy. It was built for the people who cannot get to a rack: the second-home owner in El Paso, the grandparent in Las Cruces, the family that moved away and never stopped caring. It also reaches Alamogordo, where many consider this mountain their own backyard. Get in touch at **mountainmonthly.com**.

So what comes next? Two things. More coverage and more places to find it. We want more stories from Timberon, Weed, Mayhill, High Rolls, and Mountain Park. We want the paper on more counters along U.S. 82, down the hill in Alamogordo, and in more inboxes as a digital edition. The mountain and the basin share a road, a school district, a hospital, tourist attractions, and a lot of family. They should share a newspaper.

From the clouds to the sands. That is chapter two. Thank you for reading chapter one. Stay with us. It is only getting better.

—Chris Hearne
hello@mountainmonthly.com

Switchbacks by Rand Carlson



Mountain Monthly

Editor: **Hannah Dean**

Contributing Editor: **Drew Gaines, Jonny Coker**

Contributors: **Rand Carlson, Lyn Canham, Damon Marez, Christina Olvera, Paula Finch, Lynn Melton**

Community Voices:, **Sandra Barr, Katie Grabowski, Greg Crinklaw, Paul Benshoof, Paula Finch, Jorden Scott, Katie Jones, Dylan Smith, Samantha Stubbs**

Multimedia storyteller: **Hilary Kitzman**

Editorial Photography: **Bre Kincaid, Sam Seth, Crystal Tompkins, Dwight Raulerson, Bobby Moberly, Terry Snoody**

Cloud Puzzle Constructor: **Wells Vaiana**

Social Media: **Ray Media**

Distribution: **Miles o' Paper Distribution Co, Stevie Dean, Rian Whisenhunt**

Mountain Monthly, PO Box 495 Cloudcroft, NM, 88317

Mountain Monthly LLC Members: **Justin Muñoz, Chris Hearne, Hannah Dean**

The publisher reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason. We are not responsible for unsolicited materials. First copy of each issue is free to an individual; each additional issue of the same issue is $1.

Copyright 2026 Mountain Monthly LLC

For Subscriptions:

VILLAGE OF

CLOUDCROFT NEW MEXICO

YOUR OCTOBER PLANS



Photo: 2024 Burro Ave. Costume Parade

OCT 30-31

PUMPKIN ROLL & HALLOWEEN WEEKEND

Swallow Place, Burro Avenue & Zenith Park

Pumpkins roll down Swallow Place, costume parade on Burro, shops open for trick-or-treating.
Details: discovercloudcroft.com

OCT 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 & 31

HAUNTED VILLAGE

7–10 PM • Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum & Pioneer Village

Family-friendly after-dark fun for four weekends.
$15 admission.
The museum's biggest fundraiser of the year.
Info: (575) 682-2932.

OCT 10

BUCKET GOLF TOURNAMENT

Elevation Park

A fundraiser for Cloudcroft Village Parks and Recreation.
To play or sponsor, ask for Bri Jonnes at High Altitude on Burro Avenue.

OCT 17

CACTUS TO CLOUD SKY RACE

Cloudcroft, NM

Sky Race 50k and Cloud Run 32k trail runs.
Info: wanderlust.run

OCT 9

MICHAEL NIVISON PUBLIC LIBRARY – BINGO NIGHT

Cloudcroft, NM

Make a Halloween weekend of it with Spooky Story Time the weekend of October 30–31.
Details: (575) 682-1111.

OCT 8-11

XTERRA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (RUIDOSO)

Ruidoso, NM

The world's top off-road triathletes compete. Free public events including yoga, guided hikes, and a welcome celebration with live music.

OCT 30

CLOUDCROFT SCHOOLS FALL FESTIVAL

5–7:30 PM • Middle School Commons & Gym

Carnival games, bouncy house, bingo, raffles and a cakewalk.
A fundraiser for Cloudcroft Schools.

OCT 31

JAMES SEWELL ICE RINK GRAND OPENING

Noon–10 PM • Zenith Park, Cloudcroft

Skating, face painting, costume contest, trunk-or-treat, and giveaways.

OCT 31

FALL FESTIVAL AT SUMMIT CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

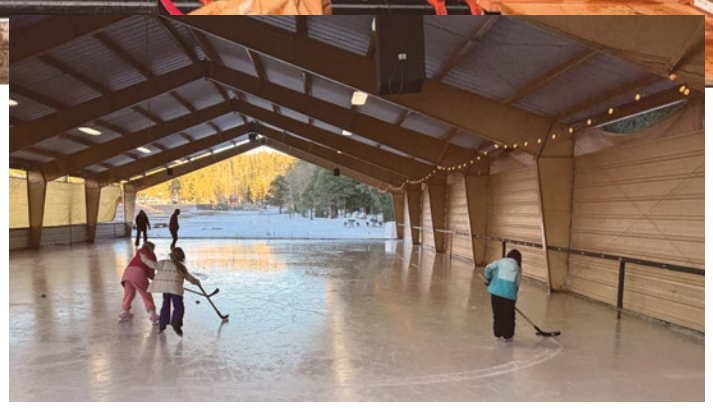
1 PM • Burro Avenue

Games, food, prizes, bounce house.

PAID IN PART BY
CLOUDCROFT
LODGER'S TAX

CLOUDCROFTVILLAGE.COM





Plans and floor laid: the glycol cooling system is in the rink

Skate Expectations: Village Ice Rink Gets a Major Renovation

With a 20-year lease, the Hermans look to turn Zenith Park's ice rink into a six-months-a-year skating and hockey mecca for the desert Southwest **BY HANNAH DEAN**

Cloudcroft's winter tourism calendar has long leaned on something the village can't control: snow.

When it doesn't show, neither do the sledders, skiers and day-trippers who fill Burro Street on a good weekend.

That uncertainty may soon be a thing of the past.

Cory and Shea Herman committed to a 20-year lease for a regular draw: a refrigerated ice skating rink that can give the village a winter anchor that doesn't depend on the forecast.

Last year, the natural rink at Zenith Park could not open due to warm weather, low moisture, and water restrictions, familiar frustrations after decades of hand-laid natural ice in a warming environment.

The switch to glycol-cooled ice should guarantee a 6-month season, during the months when the village's tourism usually sags.

The Ice Man



Shea and Cory Herman, Cloudcroft's ice investors. (Pictured at Chicago's Wrigley Field, where Cory worked on the ice crew for the Winter Classic.

Cory Herman's credentials are hard to top. He has built ice for NHL outdoor games on New Year's Day and Thanksgiving, most recently for a Tampa Bay game last January.

The Saskatchewan-raised former hockey player got his start running El Paso's youth hockey program out of the Coliseum. When the ice plant failed five years in, he moved the program to a nearby equestrian center and built it into the El Paso Rhinos, adding a junior team of 18-to-20-year-olds to build a fan base. He says the Rhinos now sell out about 95% of their games at a venue that seats close to 3,000.

The NHL connection came out of a near-disaster. About a decade ago, the Rhinos' rink was nominated for Hockeyville USA and hosted an NHL game that monsoon weather nearly canceled days beforehand. The two NHL ice technicians who helped Herman save it invited him to join their crew, and he has worked on league outdoor games ever since.

Shea Herman is director of operations for both the Rhinos and the Cloudcroft rink. Cory is overseeing the technical build-out through the couple's company, Southwest Sports Solutions.

Years of visits to the village, encouragement from the Adams family at Ski Cloudcroft, and a drive past the old rink set the project in motion. Herman signed the lease last fall, and the Village Council approved the ordinance unanimously in October 2025. Trustee and Parks and Rec. Chair **Matt Willett** confirmed the 20-year term, long enough, village officials say, to treat the rink as a fixture rather than a seasonal experiment.

The Hermans are financing the renovation themselves, and their improvement costs count as credit toward the lease. By late August they had repainted the rink and built a rain catchment system.

Weatherproof Plans, Ice on Demand

For decades, the rink ran on hand-laid ice and hope.

In an interview with the Reader before he stepped away, longtime rink lessee **Donald Wiklund** described the trial and error of tending outdoor ice at 8,676 feet: checking overnight for the rare cold snap that would let him spray thin layers of water and hope they held. He called the operation "a lot of luck and logic."

Last winter, the luck ran out. Warm weather, low moisture, and water restrictions kept the rink from opening at all.

The new system removes the guesswork.

A chiller plant cools glycol pumped beneath the ice slab, fed by on-site rainwater. The ice stays thin, 1.25 to 1.5 inches, groomed by a propane-powered mini-Zamboni sized for the rink. A heater in the glycol lines holds the surface near 26 degrees, because colder ice actually skates worse, Herman said.

Warm spells won't end the season, either. If temperatures spike mid-tournament, crews can roll an insulated tarp over the ice, like a rain tarp at a baseball game, while the chillers catch up underneath. Play continues instead of getting called off.

Beyond the chiller plant, upgrades include a higher-amp electrical transformer, full glass hockey boards, LED lighting, a renovated concession stand, rubber restroom flooring to protect skate blades, spectator bench seating, and 200 new skates. Concrete work between the skate shack and the rink is underway.

Everything stays within the rink's original footprint.

What to Expect

The chiller plant is running late. Shea Herman told the Reader last week that the unit has hit a one- to two-week delay with the manufacturer; it had been expected by September 1.

Installation dates are being adjusted, and it's not yet clear whether the delay will push back the start of skating, which is targeted for early to mid-October.

The grand opening will go on regardless: October 31, noon to 10 p.m., with free open skating, face painting, and a costume contest.

Once open, the rink plans five programs for its first season, slated for this October through next March—public skating, learn-to-skate (starting at age 2), learn-to-play hockey, an adult recreational league, and figure skating—a far longer season than the two-to-three-week runs the rink saw in its final natural-ice years.

At the recent August 20 Leadership Cloudcroft tourism think tank, Herman told the group that the rink secured its affiliation with USA Hockey and the Land of Enchantment Amateur Hockey Association, clearing the way to certify coaches, run background checks through USA Hockey's Safe Sport program, and insure players. The figure skating program will operate under the International Skating

Institute (ISI) and be geared toward beginner-level instruction.

Village leaders and business owners point to the rink, along with events like Ullrfest, as part of the push to give visitors a reason to come up the mountain, even in a dry, brown winter.

Sas-sy Mascot

The rink's youth and adult hockey program will skate under a new name and identity: the Sasquatch. A logo and full brand were revealed alongside the rink's website at cloudcrofticeskating.com.

After the grand opening, the rink will host the Mountain Top Classic, its first ages-8-and-under hockey tournament, on November 7 and 8. For more info, email **cheon@elpasorhinos.com**.

With an underwriting sponsor in place, the rink is finalizing a free six-week learn-to-skate course for all 467 Cloudcroft Municipal Schools students, scheduled around class periods so kids can walk over during the day.

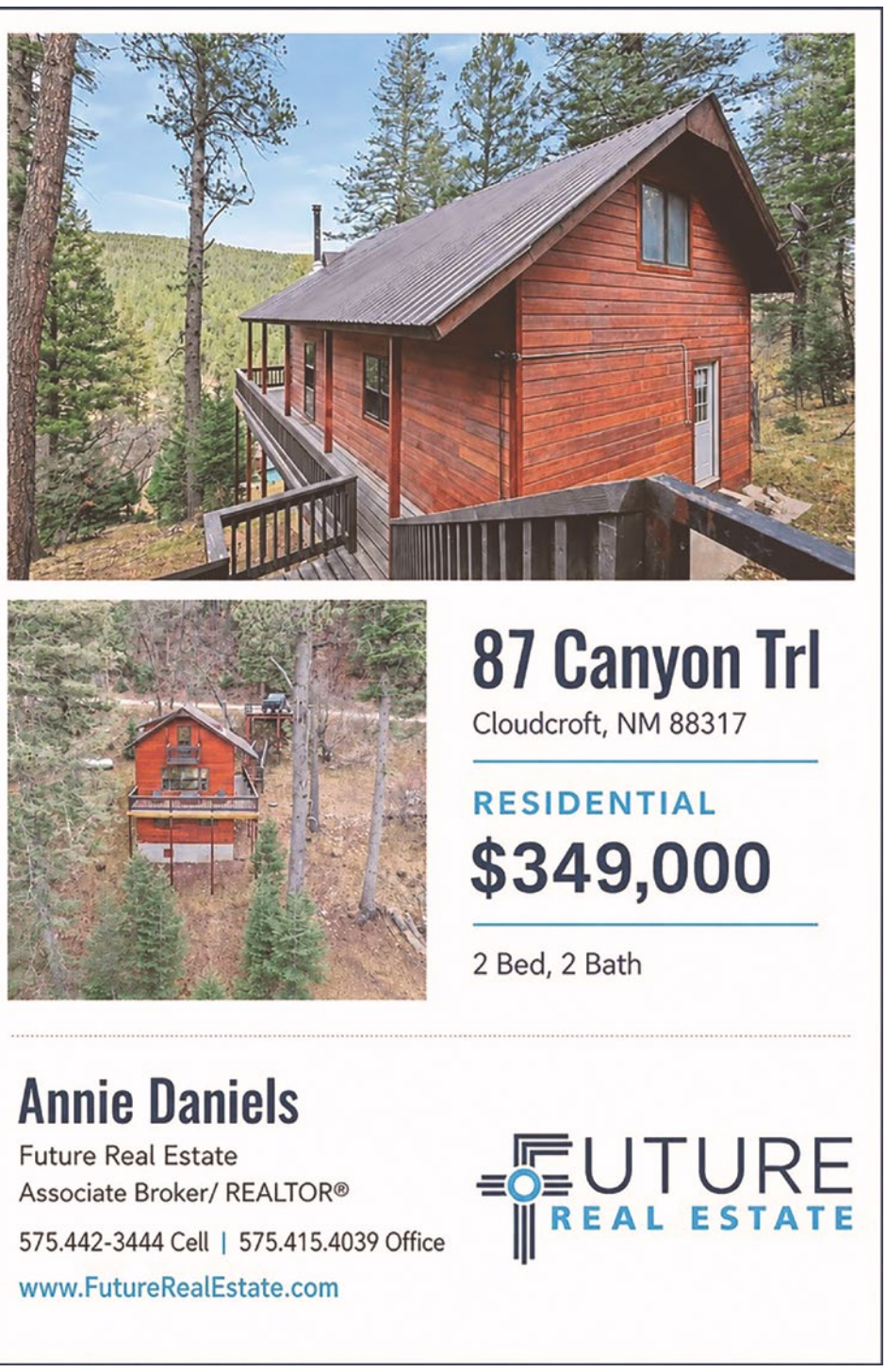
This is a first step toward Herman's longer-term hope of eventually fielding a high school hockey team out of Cloudcroft. A regulation-size ice sheet would be required for official high school games, though not for practice, so that goal remains years out; Cory's rougher roadmap has a house league, potentially with cross-over weekends between El Paso and Cloudcroft teams, arriving in years two or three.

With their recent purchase from **John and Michelle Tatum**, the Hermans also recently diversified their investment in Cloudcroft by acquiring the Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop at the Burro St. Exchange.

The *Monthly* will continue to report on paninis, pucks, and this 20-year bet on the village.

SASQUATCH

Go to web site



HOW'S THE MARKET?

AUGUST 2026

CLOUDCROFT MOUNTAIN AREA	
Homes Sold	12
Median Sales Price	$319,245
Average Days On Market	121 Days
All Active Listings	328
Current Price Ranges	
Residential:	$65,000 - $3,995,000
Land:	$4,000 - $2,895,000
Commercial:	$320,000 - $3,200,000

RUIDOSO MOUNTAIN AREA	
Homes Sold	47
Median Sales Price	$315,000
Average Days On Market	168 Days
All Active Listings	913
Current Price Ranges	
Residential:	$59,900 - $5,900,000
Land:	$9,500 - $1,900,000
Commercial:	$250,000 - $3,650,000

ALAMOGORDO & BASIN AREA	
Homes Sold	45
Median Sales Price	$285,000
Average Days On Market	48 Days
All Active Listings	271
Current Price Ranges	
Residential:	$70,000 - $843,000
Land:	$18,000 - $5,000,000
Commercial:	$90,000 - $950,000

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







Erosion, Access, and Fire Risk: Inside the Toboggan Canyon Vegetation Project

Years of wash-out in the canyon below the village have triggered a larger push to protect the transmission line that powers the Sacramento Mountains from wildfire and outages **BY HANNAH DEAN**

A washed-out trench near Toboggan Canyon cut off **Otero County Electric Cooperative**'s large equipment access to its main 69kV transmission line for years, forcing the cooperative to build a new road.

OCEC's new Vegetation Management program also set the stage for a major fire-mitigation push now underway on the 69kV line that energizes thousands of mountain residents.

It's the main transmission line powering members in Cloudcroft east through Timberon, Piñon and Mayhill. The line feeds 6,066 meters, nearly a third of OCEC's total active coverage.

The *Monthly* rode along the access road in mid-August with OCEC Vegetation Management and Right-of-Way Supervisor **Janscen Davis**, who emphasized why the work in this particular location matters.

"It's below the village, and so there's a huge community risk if a fire were to get started from the line, from an ignition; it would spread uphill," Davis said.



The washout below Toboggan Canyon, where the utility road used to be. Erosion has blocked large-equipment access to the 69kV line since 2018.

Davis said much of his work involves fostering partnerships between the coop, the Forest Service, the Village, property owners, and other local partners.

The stakes aren't hypothetical. Power lines have ignited some of the country's most destructive fires in recent years, including the 2025 Eaton Fire near Los Angeles, which killed 19 people and destroyed more than 9,400 homes after electrical arcing on an idle Southern California Edison tower sparked dry brush.

It's the kind of scenario OCEC's clearance work is designed to prevent.

Entrenched Problem

Erosion below the Toboggan area has cut off crews' access to the line for years. Former **Mayor Tim King** repeatedly raised the issue at village meetings in 2025.

"We've been unable to access that line for years, since 2018," Davis confirmed.

Growing development — more pavement and rooftops in the village — has increased runoff into aging drainage infrastructure built decades ago, worsening the erosion, Davis said.

"As this ripped through our access, it's just, you know, we've had to adapt to find another way to get in here," Davis said, standing at the edge of the washout, a steep drop-off where the utility road used to be.

To restore access, crews installed a new culvert and built an access road through the right-of-way — work Davis said will also give line crews, Forest Service personnel and vegetation crews reliable access going forward.

Managing Fire Risk

The access project ties directly into a larger vegetation management effort on the line. The work is expected to include:

- Clearing hazard trees and vegetation within OCEC's 60-foot right-of-way along roughly 2.5 miles of line.
- A helicopter operation to remove trees from hard-to-access terrain — tentatively set to begin mid-September, weather and FAA clearance permitting.
- A fire-retardant steel mesh, already installed on every pole along the line. "It's a steel mesh with a rubberized spray on it that, if it does get hot, actually melts and creates a coverage and becomes retardant from the fire crawling up," Davis said.

OCEC moved away from contracting vegetation management to an in-house program nearly two years ago, led by Davis and arborist **Tim Marshall**. Marshall and his crew continually work to keep right-of-ways surrounding the coop's lines clear, remove problem trees, and work outages.

What's Next

Because of the work, all trails leading into the Toboggan area — including access from the Trestle Trail and pedestrian bridge — will be closed for about a month. Check the USFS website for current closure status.

Crews have already begun cutting down trees, and Davis said the project is underway. The timeline for the helicopter phase remains weather-dependent, with mid-to-late September as the target window.

Trees aren't being technically logged, which would imply sales of the wood. Davis says many of the trees being removed are too dead for commercial use anyway. Some of the large trees in hard-to-drive spots will be removed by helicopter. And the rest will be masticated, the vegetation chipped up, and left behind.



Tick, Tock: Cloudcroft's On the Clock for Wastewater Plant Funding

The WWTP needs more funding than the village can afford. Plus: the FY 24-25 audit report, water restrictions, critical library funding at risk, and more at the September 8 council meeting **BY HANNAH DEAN**

Cloudcroft's sewage treatment plant is running on borrowed time, and the Village Council has yet to vote on the paperwork to replace it.

At Tuesday's meeting, **Chad Johnson** of CDM Smith laid out a master plan to tear out the aging plant, a rusted-through trickling filter paired with an aging membrane bioreactor (MBR) system, and replace it with a new MBR package plant.

"Package plant means that a lot of it is manufactured and assembled off-site, so that reduces the construction timeline," Johnson told the council.

The price tag: $15 million to $17 million. Construction to update the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) will run 12 to 18 months once it starts, weather allowing.

Over the past few years, the village has operated on around or less than a $2 million annual budget, nowhere near the $15 million required to update the WWTP.

Next Steps

After his inaugural meeting as trustee, **John Snook** spoke with the Reader, Johnson, and WWTP Operator **Scott Powell** outside the village chambers. Snook noted that to even compete for state funding, the Village must first authorize a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER). Johnson said the required document takes four to six weeks to complete.

The timeline is tight. The council needs to approve the PER, send it to the state, and get it back before trustees travel to Santa Fe in January to lobby for money. Miss the window, and the ask slips a year while the plant keeps aging.

A report from **Robert George**, an independent expert contracted by the state, warned in an April 2026 letter to NMED's Construction Programs Bureau that corrosion "has reached the point that catastrophic failure of one (or several) of the key components is imminent," calling the situation an emergency.

If the state funds arrive in pieces, $5 million one year, $5 million the next, the project gets more expensive, not less, according to Snook. Engineering and construction crews get pulled off once the money runs out, then have to relearn the site when funding resumes. Without state money at all, the fallback is what the Village has been doing: nursing an aging plant along and hoping it holds.

"We need help, and we need it now," Powell said.



Outside village chambers after the meeting: engineer Chad Johnson of CDM Smith, WWTP Operator Scott Powell and new Trustee John Snook.

Audit Flags Nine Problems. Eight Old, One New

The Village's finances got a formal grade Tuesday with improvements since the last audit.

Hannah Lee of Beasley, Mitchell & Co. presented the audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. The result: a qualified opinion, meaning auditors couldn't get enough documentation to sign off cleanly on several account balances. Still, an upgrade from the previous year's "disclaimer."

New staffing and procedures are addressing many of the issues. Trustees **Hamilton**, **Hardwick**, and Snook, all in attendance, voted unanimously to approve the resolution to accept the audit.

Nine findings in all. Eight were repeats from the prior year. One finding from previous years explains why the others linger: a previous Village Clerk deleted documents including receipts, invoices, and financial records from the Village's digital storage system, leaving no way to verify what the money actually paid for. Auditors wrote that the missing paperwork meant the "financial statements were materially misstated."

That position also controlled every financial step: entering transactions, printing accounts-payable checks, and reconciling bank statements, with no one checking the work. Auditors called that setup an "increased possibility of misstatement or fraud."

The village now has Village Clerk **Jini Turri** and Deputy Clerk **Barbara Garcia** in office, though the segregation of duties won't be reflected until after the next audit cycle.

The one new finding: Village bank deposits were under-collateralized by

Cloudy's
MARKET

Cloudcroft's neighborhood grocery.

Fresh produce. Local vendors. New Mexico favorites.
Real groceries, real neighbors, right here in town.

NOW OPEN

102 Mexican Avenue, Cloudcroft NM
Open Daily • 10am - 6pm

cloudysmarket.com
Facebook • Instagram • TikTok • YouTube
@cloudysmkt



$38,412 at fiscal year-end. New Mexico law requires financial institutions holding public deposits to pledge collateral worth at least 50% of anything above FDIC insurance limits. Lee told trustees it's a shared responsibility: the bank's obligation to post it, the Village's job to confirm it did. She said it's often triggered by a late, unanticipated deposit landing right before the books close, and that the issue has since been addressed.

Trustees also pressed on budget overruns from FY '24-'25 across several funds in a total excess of $1.1 million. During the audit presentation, it was clarified that these "expenditures in excess of budget" were primarily accounting and classification issues, meaning funds were recorded or paid out of the wrong accounts without formal end-of-year budget adjustments being submitted to the state, rather than actual unauthorized overspending.

This finding was no surprise to the council — Turri had raised the same issue during the budget workshop weekend in May.

Lee told trustees the money wasn't misspent so much as misfiled, paid out of the wrong account rather than actually exceeding what the Village had. "Those over-expenditures are all listed," she said. "They were just not accounted for properly, for the most part." Fixing it requires a formal budget adjustment at year's end.

Holiday Weekend Drain

Public Works Supervisor **JJ Carrizal** told the council that the busy village burned through roughly 700,000 gallons over the holiday weekend, dropping the water tank down to about six feet. Cloudcroft remains under Water Restriction Level 3.

Library Board Down to Two Members, Risking State Funding

Library Director **Sandra Barr** made an urgent plea for volunteers: the Library Board has only two of its five required members, and neither the board nor the Friends of the Library can hit quorum.

"We need the library board, I plead with you," Barr told the council. "We don't have a quorum...we need five people, we only have two."

The stakes go beyond bylaws. Under state rule 4.5.2.9 NMAC, a public library needs an active board meeting at least twice a year to qualify for State Grants-in-Aid, and it needs current accreditation and a certified director to draw state aid and General Obligation Bond funding.

Barr also flagged the library's food and clothing drive ahead of fall programming. "Twenty-one percent of the population up here are below the poverty line," she said. "People need food and clothing."

Send Offs & Service

Mayor **Dusty Wiley** began the meeting by presenting a plaque to former trustee **Gail McCoy** for her years of service on the council. Barr announced in her report that the McCoys' 75th birthday will be celebrated at the library on September 18 from 5-6 p.m., coinciding with the return of the historic schoolhouse bell.

Wiley proclaimed September 11, 2026, as Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance in Cloudcroft.

And a special thanks from the *Monthly*: resident A/V volunteer **Grover Sterling** keeps the Village's YouTube stream running at @CloudcroftNewmexico, giving anyone who missed the room a way to watch it all happen.

This report was written through in-person and phone interviews, meeting livestreams, audio recordings and transcripts, audit and engineering presentation materials, independent research, and previous reporting.

———————————



Council Appoints Engineer John Snook to Fill Trustee Seat

Mechanical engineer joins the Council days before the wastewater master plan lands

Tuesday night September 2, the Village Council elected, by a vote of 3-0, resident **John Snook** to serve the remainder of the Trustee position occupied by **Gail McCoy** after her resignation on August 20, 2026.

Snook, a mechanical engineer licensed in both New Mexico and Texas, has been a Cloudcroft seasonal for roughly 35 years and became a full-time resident with his wife **Kerri** in 2023. Though retired, he said he continues to work remotely and has flexibility to serve the community.

He says he volunteered for the trustee position because of the village's urgent infrastructure needs.

"Without wastewater or water, there's going to be no village," Snook said. "I want to try and help the village solve those problems."

Snook was one of three applicants for the seat. All were male. Trustees cited Snook's familiarity with the village's water systems and the immediate challenges facing the village's water and wastewater systems.

Cloudcroft's wastewater system is already creating high operating costs as it struggles with aging equipment. The village is currently hauling liquid waste at an estimated cost of about $20,000 per month because existing equipment cannot sufficiently dry the material.

Near-term plans include purchasing a fan press to dewater sludge for roughly $725,000 to $750,000, covered by an existing grant, though installation could require another approximately $150,000. The village may also need additional membranes, previously quoted at about $130,000, because it would change the current treatment setup.

A larger decision is expected soon. Engineering firm CDM Smith is scheduled to present a wastewater master plan to the Council next week that considers repairing the existing system or installing a factory-tested package plant.

Installing a new package plant for waste treatment and disposal seems to be the option preferred by the staff and mayor. The full wastewater replacement project is estimated at $15 million to $16 million and could take about four years.

Snook said his experience can help plan a workable transition: coordinating inlet and outlet tie-ins, preparing the site and foundation, timing construction around Cloudcroft's seasonal population, and ensuring the system is practical for village staff to operate.

The village also faces broader water-storage needs, including building a 500,000-gallon storage tank.

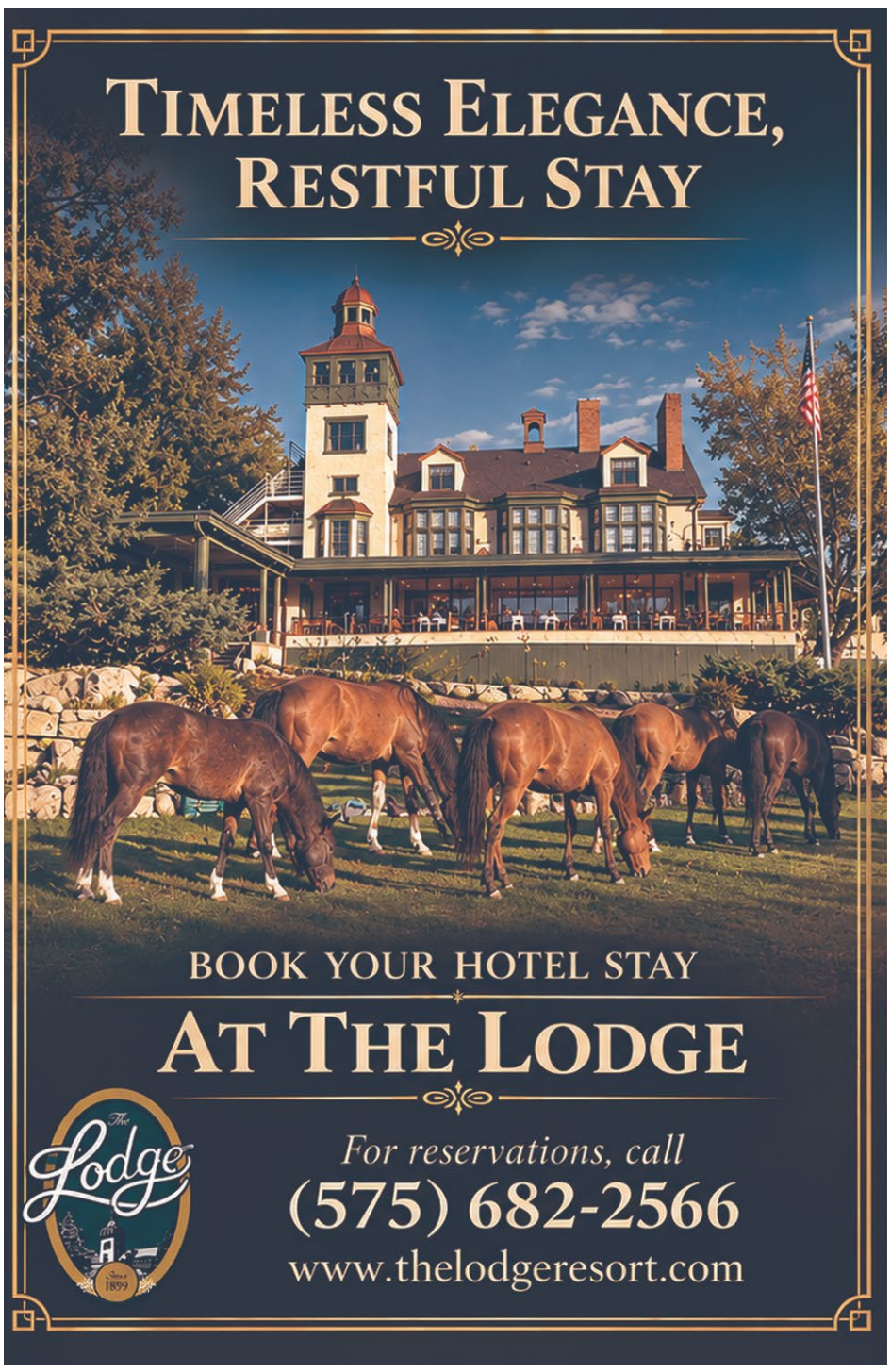
With solid plans in hand, Mayor **Wiley** and the Council must lobby the state for the grant money needed to fund the water and wastewater plans and keep the village in compliance with state regulations in the years ahead. Making a credible pitch will be crucial to their success.








Facials • Waxing • Brows
Alamogordo NM
Blushing Yucca
Esthetics
Est 2023
Find your inner peace, and outer glow
Book your glow up here


Timeless Elegance, Restful Stay
BOOK YOUR HOTEL STAY
At The Lodge
The Lodge
Since 1899
For reservations, call
(575) 682-2566
www.thelodgeresort.com


Registration Is Open
Kira's Angel Tree 2026
Helping local children and seniors in need across the Sacramento Mountains
Families with children from newborn through age 18 and seniors in need can register on our website: www.kirasangeltree.org. Our volunteers match each participant with a sponsor who provides clothing and Christmas gifts.
Communities served: Cloudcroft • Mayhill • High Rolls • Timberon • Sacramento • Weed • Pinon • La Luz
Questions? Call 575-285-4205
Want to sponsor an angel?
Shop a personalized wish list or make a donation and let our elves do the shopping, wrapping, and delivery. Business sponsorship packages are also available.



welcome to the Village

Let us show you around

A
Off the Beaten Path
Cat Trap & Release Program
Summit Christian Fellowship
Sacramento Mountain Senior Services
Black Bear Coffee Shop
King's Treasure
Bhair Necessities
The Fat Rabbit
The Little Gallery
Aspen and Ivy Boutique
Samantha Odom Art Gallery
Dave's Cafe
Higher Grounds
Instant Karma & Chai Bar
Base Camp 9k

B
Western Bar and Cafe
Western Package Store
Hotel Cloudcroft
Kennabelle's Kreations Bakery
Gary Mack Real Estate
The Bear Track
High Altitude
High Altitude Bike Shop
Scotty's Propane

C
Elevation Park and Disc Golf Course

D
Otero County Electric Cooperative
Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage
Cloudcroft Archery
Cloudy's
Crystal Tompkins Photography
Coco Blu
Green Mountain Real Estate & Construction, Skywater
Shelley Hughes Architecture PC
Osha Trail Depot
Osha Trail Lodging
Cloudcroft Souvenirs
Laughing Leaf Dispensary
Eight the Cake
Mountain Magic
Poke the Bear

E
Burro St. Boarding House
Cloudcroft Brewing Company
The Distillery
Sparks and Rec

F
Ski Cloudcroft

G
Aspen Trails Realty
Big Daddy's Diner
Tularosa Communications
Cloudcroft Animal Hospital
Dusty Boots Cafe & Taco Cantina and Motel

H
The Lodge Resort
The Lodge Golf Course
1899 and Saint Andrew's Lounge
Seasons Boutique Gift Shop
SugarPines RV Park

I
Grand Cloudcroft Hotel
Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce
Cabins at Cloudcroft

J
Zenith Park and Playground
Pickleball and Tennis Courts
Zenith Park Pavilion
Byron Ligon Disc Golf Course
James Sewell Ice Rink
Anglican Church of the Epiphany
Family Dollar
Brother-N-Law BBQ
Magnum's Guns II
Crofting Bed & Breakfast

K
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Village Plaza
Homee
Be in the Mountains Yoga & Massage Therapy
Road Runner Cannabis
High Rollin' Coffee

L
Mad Jack's Mountaintop BBQ
Roots Flower Co.

M
New Village Hardware
Pre-School and Extended Care
Cloudcroft United Methodist Church
Summit Inn
The Lodge Pavilion

N
Presbyterian Medical Center
Rick Roger's Auto & Equip Repair
Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts
Cloud 9000 Coffee
Fernando's Burritos

O
United States Post Office
First National Bank
Village Office

P
Allsups

Q
Future Real Estate
The Highland

R
Deer Park
Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop

S
Cloudcroft Schools

T
Burro Street Exchange
The Elk Shed
Atelier Art of Hair by Anna
Red Wall Jewelry
Burro Street Bakery
Tree Top Teez
Noisy Water Winery
Burro Street Trading Post
Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy
Old Barrel Tea Co.
Turquoise Shop
Cloudcroft Church of Christ

U
Old Red Brick Schoolhouse
Michael Nivison Public Library
High Valley Weaving School
Cloudcroft Fitness
Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op Gallery

V
Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum and Pioneer Village

W
Cloudcroft Fire and Rescue Station
Trestle Medical Services

THRIVE IN SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO

CORKS & SHELLS WINE FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 17

ALAMOGORDO, NM

ALAMEDA PARK | 11 AM - 6 PM

FOOD TRUCKS • WINE • ART & CRAFT VENDORS • LIVE MUSIC • FAMILY FUN

$20 ENTRY FEE | UNDER 21 **FREE**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: Visit Alamogordo

PERFORMANCES BY:
CHRIS BAKER
RHIANNON LACE
DOSO DIRTBAGS
DJ DALE YOUNG

BUY TICKETS:

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THRIVE IN SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO WHICH IN TURN BENEFIT NON-PROFITS OF OTERO & LINCOLN COUNTY



The Listings

Find What You Are Looking For.

We'll Get You Started

Welcome to Cloudcroft, New Mexico--a mountain village with timeless charm and plenty to do. Here, we feature where to eat, sleep, shop and play. Go deeper online with our full guide, **DiscoverCloudcroft.com**, powered by the ***Monthly***. There, you'll find everything you need to plan your visit: An inside look at restaurants, stores, lodging, and up-to-date events.

Where to Eat

Big Daddy's Diner

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

Black Bear Coffee

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

Cloudcroft Brewing Company

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

Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop

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

Cloudy's Market

102 Mexican Ave. Cloudcroft's neighborhood grocery with discovery goods, locally sourced produce, and the essentials. Open daily from 10 am- 6 pm.

Dave's Cafe

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

High Rollin' Coffee

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

Instant Karma Chai Bar

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

KennaBelle's Kreations Bakery

308 Burro Ave., 575-682-2712 Follow your nose to this pink patisserie. Custom cakes and orders. Gluten-free options. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Closed Sunday.

Mad Jack's Mountaintop Barbeque

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

Noisy Water Winery

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

Old Barrel Tea Co.

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

Saint Andrew's Lounge and 1899 at the Lodge

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

The Distillery

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

Western Bar and Cafe and Package Store

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

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

Where to Stay

Burro St. Boarding House

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

Cabins at Cloudcroft

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

Dusty Boots Motel

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

Grand Cloudcroft Hotel

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

Osha Trail Lodging

102 Mexican Ave., 575-937-3767 Modern, conveniently-located suites. Book on AirBnB or **oshatraillodging@gmail.com**

SugarPines RV Park

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

Summit Inn

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

The Lodge

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

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

Where to Shop

Aspen and Ivy Boutique

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

Base Camp 9K

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

Burro Street Trading Post

505 Burro Ave.,

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

Cloudcroft Archery

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

Cloudcroft Souvenirs

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

Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts

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

Coco Blu

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

The Elk Shed

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

The Fat Rabbit

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

High Altitude

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

Homee

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

Instant Karma

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

King's Treasure

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

Mountain Magic

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

New Village Hardware

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

Poke The Bear

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

Red Wall Jewelry

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

Where to Art

Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op Gallery

90 Swallow Pl. Artist-run rotating gallery. Open seasonal Saturdays 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and for holiday sales. **ccartsociety@gmail.com**

Off the Beaten Path

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



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

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

Where to **Heal**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Where to **Play**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCOTTY'S PROPANE – YOUR LOCAL PROPANE EXPERTS

Now Delivering to:
- Cloudcroft
- Weed
- Sacramento
- Timberon
- And surrounding areas

✓Dependable Service
✓Residential & Commercial Delivery
✓Cylinder Filling Available (In Office)

CALL TODAY!
575-682-2321



CASA y TIERRA
Title Company

Providing the following services to all of Otero County

- Abstract
- Title
- Insurance
- Closing Services
- Title Search
- UCC Search



"YOU CAN REST ASSURE WE WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH PROFESSIONAL SERVICE."

- Fast, Accurate, Honest & Reliable
- Locally Owned & Nationally Underwritten
- First American Title Insurance Company
- Old Republic National Title Insurance Company
- Commonwealth Land Title Insurance Company



2420 N. White Sands Blvd. Alamogordo, NM 88310
(575) 434-6770 | www.casatierratitle.com



$87,000

CLOUDCROFT

12 Wildwood Loop
The lot includes an rc that will convert with the purchase, offering 2bds and 2bths for comfortable mountain vacations.

Debbie Tate - (575) 430-9511



$210,000

MAYHILL

4 Friar Tuck
Located in the desirable Robinhood subdivision of Mayhill, this cozy 3-bedroom 1,320 sq ft sits on a .28 acre lot.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



$89,900

CLOUDCROFT

207 Bell Canyon Road
Over 3.5 wooded acres offering privacy, mountain views, easy access from Bell Canyon Road, and several flatter areas with potential building sites.

Rebekah Graham - (575) 921-5517



$654,900

HIGH ROLLS

36 Old Railroad Drive
Pristine 3BR/2BA home with multiple living areas, pellet + wood stoves, remodeled kitchen/baths, landscaped yard, greenhouse, workshop, and barn.

Cori Abel - (816) 896-2674
Emily Kellam - (575) 214-9479



$689,000

TIMBERON

7 High Meadow Lane
Custom retreat on 6 acres with income potential & unmatched views. Beautifully custom built with the perfect blend of comfort and functionality.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



$24,000

CLOUDCROFT

27 Pondarosa Pines Trail
This beautiful lot offers the perfect setting for your dream mountain home.This property has the ideal blend of accessability, usable terrain and stunning natural surroundings.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



$195,000

CLOUDCROFT

99 Haynes Canyon Road
Mountain property featuring an unfinished site-built home, an older mobile home, expansive basin views, and ditch water rights to the Middle Fork of the Fresnel.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



$435,000

CLOUDCROFT

16 N Loop Road
True gem in the Twin Forks Area of Cloudcroft, NM! Escape to the cool mountain air and tall pines with this beautifully finished 3-bedroom, 2-bath mountain home situated on approximately .667 acres.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



FUTURE REAL ESTATE
RAISE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

(575) 415-4039
FUTUREREALESTATE.COM
Office locations in Alamogordo, Cloudcroft, and Ruidoso

REALTOR®



$649,900

HIGH ROLLS

128 Westside Road
Rare High Rolls farm & ranch property with direct National Forest access, nearly 12 flat, usable acres, updated home, and massive 40x80 shop.

Sylvia Humphreys - (575) 921-1094



$1,250,000

CLOUDCROFT

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

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



$499,000

CLOUDCROFT

5 Bear Spring Road
3 lots, 1.16 acres total, updated 3-bedroom mountain home with ground-floor primary suite, walk-in closet, deck access, garage.

Danica Shaw - (575) 302-8845



$299,900

HIGH ROLLS

14 Bootlegger Road
Welcome home to this beautiful 2-bedroom, 2-bath retreat nestled on 4.75 peaceful acres bordering the National Forest.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



$276,000

CLOUDCROFT

1001 Paqua Avenue
Beautifully refreshed 3-bed, 2-bath home on the sunny side of Cloudcroft. Features new carpet, paint, and lighting. Walk to town!

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



$265,000

CLOUDCROFT

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

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



$399,900

CLOUDCROFT

1008 Victoria Avenue
A rare find in the heart of the Village of Cloudcroft! This home is situated on the "sunny side" of the mountain. Enjoy natural light and warmth year round!

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



$259,000

MAYHILL

6 Will Scarlet
3 Bedroom, 2 bathroom home nestled on over 1 acre backing the Lincoln National Forest, located in quiet Robin Hood neighborhood. Carport and RV hookups!

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



$90,000

CLOUDCROFT

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

Annie Daniels - (575) 434-3444



$285,000

CLOUDCROFT

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

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



$955,000

HIGH ROLLS

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

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



$382,000

HIGH ROLLS

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

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444

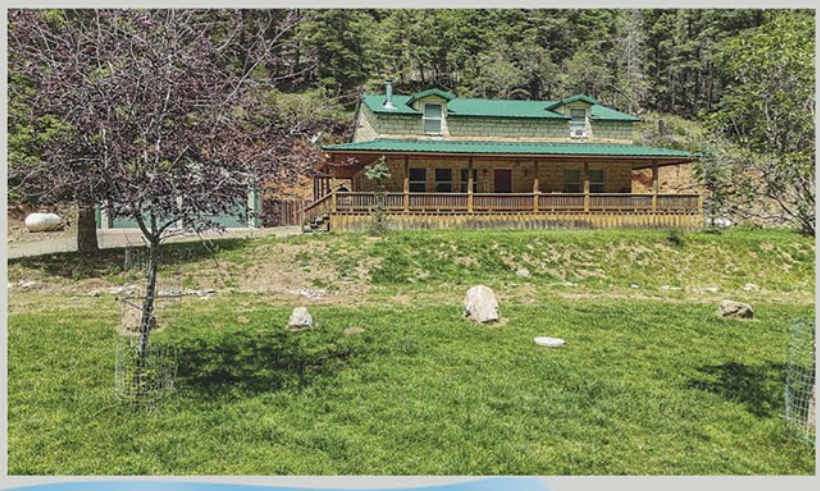


$24,000

CLOUDCROFT

27 Ponderosa Pines Trail
This beautiful lot borders the former Ponderosa Pines Golf Course and offers scenic beauty, privacy, and dual access points.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



$925,000

CLOUDCROFT

80 Mamaw Street
Spacious 4-bedroom, 2.5-bath home on over 6 acres backing directly to the Lincoln National Forest, offering privacy, mountain scenery, and abundant wildlife.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



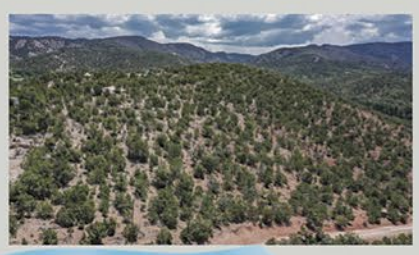


$354,000

MAYHILL

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

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



$320,000

HIGH ROLLS

00 Deer Haven Road
This exceptional 20-acre unrestricted parcel in High Rolls offers panoramic mountain views and total privacy.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



$260,000

CLOUDCROFT

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

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



$454,000

HIGH ROLLS

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

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



$285,000

CLOUDCROFT

12 Little John Lane
Charming 1,400 sq. ft. 2BD/1BA cabin on 0.25-acre. Features fireplace, pellet & wood stoves, new LVP flooring, epoxy countertops.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



$819,000

MAYHILL

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

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



$325,000

CLOUDCROFT

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

Sylvia Humphreys - (575) 921-1094

Scan Here!

for more listings & property details











OCTOBER 2026

Events



October's keynote event: The Haunted Village, every weekend

Community

Cloudcroft Schools Fall Festival
Thursday, October 30 | 5–7:30 p.m. | Middle School Commons & Gym
Carnival games, a bouncy house, bingo, raffles, and a cakewalk — a fundraiser for Cloudcroft Schools.

James Sewell Ice Rink Grand Opening
Saturday, October 31 | Noon–10 p.m. | Zenith Park, Cloudcroft
Skating, face painting, a costume contest, trunk-or-treat, and giveaways mark the rink's opening day.

Pumpkin Roll & Halloween Weekend
Thursday–Friday, October 30–31 | Swallow Place, Burro Avenue & Zenith Park
Pumpkins roll down Swallow Place, a costume parade takes over Burro Avenue, and shops stay open for trick-or-treating.

Haunted Village
October 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 & 31 | 7–10 p.m. | Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum & Pioneer Village
Family-friendly after-dark fun runs four weekends straight at the museum's biggest fundraiser of the year. $15 admission. Info: 575-682-2932.

Michael Nivison Public Library — Bingo Night
Friday, October 9 | Cloudcroft, NM
Make it a Halloween weekend with Spooky Story Time the weekend of October 30–31. Details: 575-682-1111.

Art and Music

Annual CAS Fall and Holiday Art Show
Every Saturday | 11 a.m.–3:30 p.m. | CAS Gallery, Old Red Brick Schoolhouse, 90 Swallow Rd. at Burro St.
More than a dozen local CAS artists exhibit and sell original work — framed paintings and photography, lithographic prints, pottery, pine-needle baskets, carved and painted gourds, art cards, digital and textile art, and folk art. The show continues into the holiday season with ornaments, decorations, and other nicely-priced gift items.

Blackbear Coffee Shop
200 Burro Ave. | regular business hours
Hosts an "artist of the month" on the gallery wall. This month, stop in to see artwork by local Harper Tompkins.

Frozen: The Broadway Musical
Oct. 16, 17, 23 & 24 at 7 p.m.; Oct. 18 at 2 p.m. | Flickinger Center for Performing Arts, Alamogordo
Children's Music Theater of Alamogordo brings Disney's Frozen to the stage. Tickets $12 adults, $7 children 12 and under (child tickets in-person only). Info and tickets: FlickingerCenter.com.

Get Outside

Bucket Golf Tournament — Elevation Park Fundraiser
Saturday, October 10 | Elevation Park
A fundraiser for Cloudcroft Village Parks and Recreation. To play or sponsor, ask for Bri Jonnes at High Altitude on Burro Avenue.

Cactus to Cloud Sky Race
October 17–18 | Cloudcroft, NM
Sky Race 50k and Cloud Run 32k trail runs wind through the mountain terrain. Info: wanderlust.run.

XTERRA World Championship
October 8–11 | Ruidoso, NM
The world's top off-road triathletes compete, with free public events including yoga, guided hikes, and a welcome celebration with live music.

WILDLIFE OF THE MONTH

Christina Olvera Talks Bats



Hoary bat. *Photo by Tanya Dewey, UNM Museum of Southwerstern Biology*

Bats are around all the time during the summer, though they're only seen at night and are especially active around sunset and dusk. Up here in Cloudcroft, we can potentially get 25+ different species of bats during peak migration season. The most common bats we typically see up here are the Mexican free-tailed bat, hoary bat, and big brown bat. While some species, like the Mexican free-tailed bat and cave myotis, like hanging out at lower elevations (think west of High Rolls), other bats, like the eastern red bat, prefer woodland ecosystems and snuggling into some lichen closer to the village.

Bats play an incredibly important role in the environment. Along with butterflies and other insects, they are fantastic pollinators, and they eat enormous numbers of insects. It is estimated that bats contribute around $3.7 billion in pest control services to U.S. agriculture every year! On a global scale, bats help protect the biodiversity of a vast array of environments, especially in tropical regions. They are also primary pollinators for over 1,000 plant species, including over 300 different kinds of fruit. The next time you bite into a mango or put some agave in your tea, thank a bat!

REMINDER: If you ever come into contact with a bat, or one becomes trapped in your house, it is important that you seek medical attention immediately.







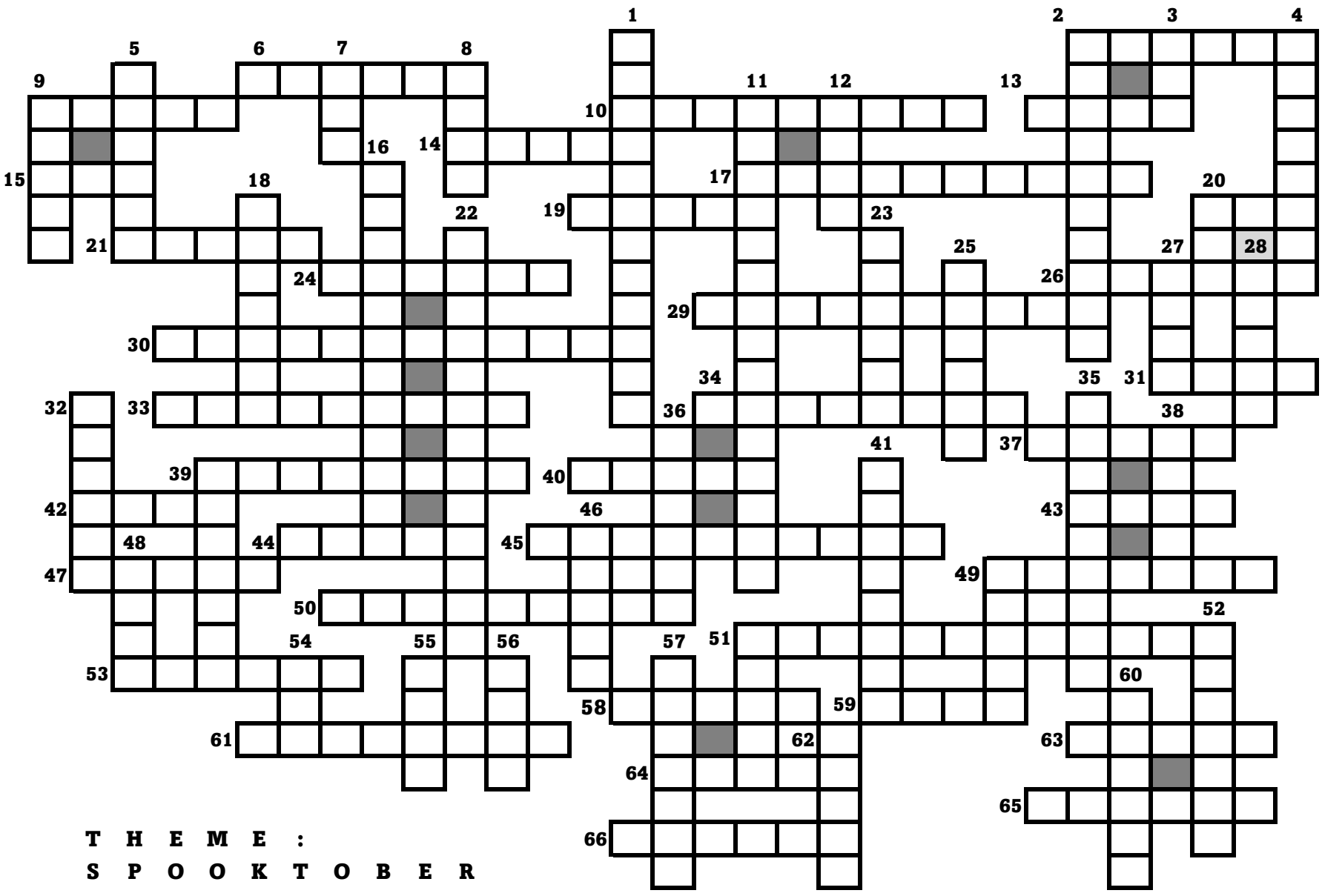
Want more business?

For advertising information,
contact Chris or Hannah at
hello@mountainmonthly.com





“Spooktober”



THEME:
SPOOKTOBER

Clues

ACROSS
2 – AN OUTDOOR LUNCH ATOP A BLANKET
6 – ABANDONED SPIDER HOUSES, NOW GATHERING DUST
9 – BILL MURRAY, DAN AYKROYD, HAROLD RAMIS BUSTED THIS IN 1984
10 – DISLIKED TRI-COLORED MINI-CONES
13 – WORD FOR MAMMAL TALONS/ A WHITE DRINK
14- A PRANK, AND FIRST PART OF THE QUESTION
15 – SPOTTED, BARN, SNOWY, GREAT HORNED e.g.
17 – AN APPEARANCE OF A THING NOT PHYSICALLY REAL
19 – FANGED SUCCUBUS’ INSATIABLE SNACK
20 – MASS OF HAIR CREATURES WEAR
21 - A BLACK SPIDER WITH A RED HOURGLASS
24 – WHAT A DEER OR ELK COULD STAB YOU WITH
26 – PROPER NAME FOR THE SEASON, OR A WOMAN PERHAPS
29 – BETT MIDLER, THORA BIRCH AND S.J.P. IN THIS 1993 FILM
30 – A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING LOUSY WITH THE SUPER-NATURAL
31 – A LARGE EXPLOSIVE. OR A COMPLIMENT “YOU DA _____!”
33 – “35 down ON _____ (backwards)”- 1984 FILM
34 – CELESTIAL CYCLE OCCURRING 13 TIMES PER YEAR
37 – A WICKED ONE WAS OF THE WEST
39 – THE COLLECTIVE SYSTEM OF BONES
40 – THORNY GREEN VINE
42 – DRESSING UP AND FIGHTING AT THE REN FAIR (abbv.)
43 – WHAT AN OWL SAYS / GIVES
44 – SHARP FRONT TEETH
45 – AN EVENT OR SIGHTING WHICH IS COMPLETELY UNEXPLAINABLE
47 – TO STARTLE, SPOOK OR CAUSE ALARM
49 – USED FOR PIES OR CARVING, OCCASIONALLY SMASHED
50 – WHERE THE DEAD PEOPLE LIVE
51 – THE QUESTION ASKED WHEN THEY OPEN THE DOOR
53 – “THE FRIENDLY GHOST”
58 – SUBJECT OF E.A. POE’ QUOTH
59 – GRUELING LABOR, ENDLESS EXHAUSTING STRUGGLE
61 – HAIRY LUNATIC
63 – FANTASY CLASS OF THEIVES / UNLEASHED i.e. “GOING _____”
64 – WHERE 40 across, 49 across AND SPUDS GROW
65 – “65 across, 65 across, 59 across, AND 52 down...”
66 – THE COLOR OF THE SEASON, HAS NO RHYME?

DOWN
1 – GOUGED GOURDS
2 – SLEEPING SACK FOR SERIOUS SUGAR SEARCHERS
3 – QUOTE THE CROW: ____
4 – LARGE POT FOR POTIONS, BREWS AND STEWS
5 – AN INDENT/ HOLE/ OR SMALL MEADOW - SLEEPY?
7 – FRIGHT INCITING YELP “!!!!”
8 – SOARING SONAR SCREECHERS
9 – LEGENDARY EVIL MONSTER, EATS CORPSES. ARABI-AN IN ORIGIN.
11 – NOVEMBER 1st (Spanish, 4 words)
12 – SHORT GARMENT WORN AT THE SHOULDERS OR A PENINSULA
16 – IS ACTUALLY THE DOCTORS NAME
18 – WHAT ONE WILL WEAR TO APPEAR AS ANOTHER
20 – ILLNESS COMMON DURING THIS SEASON
22 – OLDEN TERM FOR THE 31st (3 words)
23 – LOCAL EST. GETS HAUNTED UP ANNUALLY
25 – SEASONAL MOVIE GENRE
27 – EARTHEN / STONE RESTING PLACE, RAIDED.
28 – UNDEAD (bandaged)
32 – CASTED INCANTATIONS
35 – NOCTURNAL UNCONSCIOUS TORMENT
36 – MERLIN FOR EXAMPLE
38 – LONG GARMENT WORN AT THE SHOULDERS, CAN BE INVISIBLE?
39 – TERM FOR THE NON-PHYSICAL, RELIGIOUS ENTI-TIES OR ALCOHOL EVEN?
41 – A BAD OMEN IF CROSSED/ FAMILIAR OF 37 across (2 words)
46 – WHAT JASON HAS ON HIS FACE (2 words)
48 – LOCAL MELODRAMA ORG. (abv.)
49 – THE STATE OF BEING IN IMMINENT DANGER OR HARM
51 – PREFERRED SNACK AND LAST HALF OF THE QUES-TION
52 – “65 across, 65 across, 59 across, AND 52 down...”
54 – THE DAY BEFORE THE DAY
55 – LONG ANIMALISTIC CRY INTO THE NIGHT
56 – NICKNAME FOR THE SEASON / GRAVITATIONAL CONSEQUENCE
57 – UNDEAD (succubus)
60 – UNDEAD (walking)
62 – ADDING EYEHOLES MAKES A VERY BASIC 18 down OF A 9 down.

Meet the Constructor

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





CLOC completes the 2026 season with The Inventor's Daughter at Zenith Park

Mountain Life

Folks caught on camera living their best mountain life



Homecoming Prince Parker Muncy and Princess Paula Finch



Aragorn and Vivian Barreras say "I do"



High Altitude Classic riders line Burro



Mr. Chris (L) and Mr. Dan (R) put a fresh face on CHS



Ridge Odom shows his school spirit



Harper and Nate Tompkins at the family coffee business



Powderpuff players take to the field



Mrs. Barnes and Mrs. Adams play the TBTC Golf Tournament



Birthday Girl Gail McCoy celebrates the Bell's return to the Library



Band marches on: under Ms. Drave's leadership, the music department grows

Peak Performance

Homecoming games kick off fall sports, cross-country runners prepare for races, and Cloudcroft cheer keeps showing up for the Bears.

By Paula Finch

Homecoming brought strong school spirit to Cloudcroft this September, kicking off an exciting fall sports season. From a volleyball victory over the Hagerman Bobcats and cross-country success in Ruidoso to a second-place finish at the annual Volleyball Mountain Top Tournament, Bear athletes, cheerleaders and sponsors have kept the spirit going all month.

Village Homecoming, Hometeam Cheer

Cloudcroft's homecoming week, Sept. 8-12, brought spirit, energy, and determination to the high school as students, athletes, cheerleaders, and community members came together to support their Cloudcroft Bears.

The celebration opened with home volleyball and football games, creating energy throughout the week. The Bears wasted no time making an impression, defeating the Hagerman Bobcats 3-0 at their first home volleyball game Thursday, Sept. 10. The victory reflected the team's preparation, communication and, most importantly, the unity the players have built with one another.

Homecoming was about more than one home volleyball game. It gave students the chance to show school pride, support their athletes and build spirit around the fall season–coming together at the first home football game against the Grady Bronchos. While the Bears lost 55-0, the packed schedule and excited fans made the week memorable for students, athletes, and the community alike.

At halftime, the drumline debuted along with the marching band under **Kathy Draves**' direction, a first appearance in nearly a decade.

Cross-Country Earns Top Finish

While home events were underway, the cross-country team traveled to Ruidoso on Sept. 12th to compete.

Fin Abel led the Bears with a top-10 finish, placing ninth overall in the boys 5K with a time of 19:40. His performance was a strong showing for Cloudcroft and reflected the commitment cross-country runners bring to every race.

The cross-country team continued its busy season the following weekend by supporting the annual Cloudcroft bike race, the High Altitude Classic. The team helped out as part of their annual fundraiser, preparing and selling burritos while cheering on the cyclists. Their work supported the cross-country program while contributing to one of Cloudcroft's most well-known community events.

Volleyball Brings Home Second

After the excitement of homecoming, the volleyball team quickly shifted its focus to the upcoming home tournament.

Through continued practice and preparation, the Cloudcroft Lady Bears earned a deserved second place at the Mountain Top Tournament. The finish was another strong accomplishment for Cloudcroft seniors and the team, who work hard to consistently represent Cloudcroft in their sport. The hosted tournament also gave the community a chance to show up, show spirit and support their Lady Bears as they competed on their home court.

Cheerleaders Keep the Spirit Strong

Cloudcroft's cheerleaders have played a major role in showing up for Bear athletes throughout the fall season. They have brought energy and enthusiasm to both home volleyball and football games–even when events are held on back-to-back days.

Their energy, school spirit, and commitment does not go unnoticed. They help encourage athletes throughout the season while keeping fans engaged from the stands.

The season is not over yet. The Bears will continue to host home volleyball and football games, giving the Cloudcroft community the chance to come together, show its spirit, and support the student-athletes.



The XC team slings burritos at the High Altitude Classic





The scouts and the VFW officially retire flags at the Blue Star Memorial

A Special Scouting Around

Scouts help VFW retire flags, and enjoy local hiking

A walk in the woods is a good way to get to know people. On August 23, Cub Scout leader **Billy Coyle** led Pack 958 and their families on the Osha Trail, with some new families joining the group. They had blue skies, the forest at its summer greenest, and even found elk along the trail.

These family hikes are one of the things I enjoy about Cub Scouting. The kids get to spend time together outdoors, and parents have a chance to get acquainted while walking along. Here in Cloudcroft, we don't have to go far to have an outing like that. Billy also showed off the new Pack shirts, featuring a mountain campsite and "Mountain Pack 958, Cloudcroft, NM."

On August 29, families from both Pack 958 and Troop 958 headed to El Paso for Scout Night at the Locomotives soccer game. **Sharon Smith** reported that she, **Dylan**, and the other Cloudcroft Scouts had fun watching the game. It helped that the Locos won!

Earlier, on August 21, both units joined our chartered organization, VFW Post 11999, for a flag retirement ceremony at the Blue Star Memorial in Zenith Park. Our Scouts served as the color guard and helped the veterans retire a record 166 worn U.S. flags.

Pack 958 welcomes girls and boys in Cub Scouting, and Troop 958 serves older youth. Because we're small, we sometimes get both groups together for activities, and although older youth can be dropped off, families are always welcome to participate. If your family would like to come along for some fun, contact us to find out what's next.

Contact us:
info@CloudcroftScouts.org

—by Greg Crinklaw









Poke the Bear
AN ECLECTIC MARKETPLACE

USED BOOKS, ART, UP-CYCLED FURNITURE, LAMPS, ANTIQUES, VINTAGE ITEMS, COLLECTIBLES, BLANKETS, KNIVES, OUTDOOR GEAR, HATS, SHIRTS, BIGFOOT ITEMS, SOUVENIRS AND MUCH MORE...

"AN ECLECTIC MARKETPLACE... SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE"

510 BURRO AVE, CLOUDCROFT, NM 88317
575-682-1341 · PTBEAR510@YAHOO.COM

DOWNTOWN CLOUDCROFT AT THE EAST END OF THE BOARDWALK



BLACK BEAR COFFEE SHOP

Craft Coffee-Chill Vibes-Good Times
Wed-Sat 8-4, Sun 8-3
You can order products and coffee beans online at www.mybbcoffee.com
Facebook: blackbearcoffeeshop
Instagram @blackbearcoffeenm
200 Burro Ave. 575-323-1089

JONTEL Septic LLC

(575) 434-2421

COMPLIMENTARY ESTIMATES

SERVICES:
- SEPTIC SYSTEM PUMPING
- SEPTIC SYSTEM INSPECTION
- PROPERTY TRANSFER INSPECTIONS
- CONVENTIONAL SEPTIC TANK SERVICES
- ADVANCED TREATMENT SEPTIC TANK SERVICES
- LEACH FIELD SERVICES

SERVING: OTERO, LINCOLN & DONA ANA COUNTIES

CALL TODAY!



Life in the Sacramentos

Autumn reflections on nature, art, and the impulse and techniques required to create

BY LYN CANHAM

While observing and writing on a lovely autumn afternoon, I was captivated by the tantalizing qualities of sunlight at this time of year. The lengthening and reddening rays paint the mountainsides in rich, warm tones. Sunlight sparkles behind late-season grasses and wildflowers and glitters through the golden oak leaves. The cloudless sky is a deep, clear blue, what I always call "New Mexico Blue", or "October Blue".

What do you find beautiful? What would you want to capture if you took a photograph at this time of year, and why? Or, how else would you choose to represent the most attractive things about our mountain forests in sculpture, pottery, wood-carving, macramé, weaving, quilting, garden flowers, home décor, drawings, or paintings? What about creations using the written word – poetry, prose, essays, stories, scripts, non-fiction?

We can ask, why create? Why make something original?

Some would say that creating an object, a solution to a problem, or a work of art reflects who a person is. The process of creation is self-discovery, and when you share it, you let others get to know the core of you.
Being in touch with yourself can help you be more in touch with others. Being creative can mean getting lost in the process, being "in the zone" as you work on something, and it can be akin to meditation, all of which are considered healthy for us. For me, making art is a kind of service – I make it and then share it, to help others feel better, to make others happy. Service to others is also known to be good for our health.

Creating artistic form is an amazingly complex topic and can occupy a lifetime. Color seems integral to beautiful subjects; it is certainly integral to the essential allure of leaf changes in the fall, and color alone includes several challenging, interrelated concepts, like hue, value, temperature, harmony, and the special features of color complements and color antagonists. Color is best understood with reference to the science of light, or at least to one of the artistic community's accepted color wheels.

Learning to create a good composition for a photograph or a painting is difficult, but over the years I have tried to stick to the simple, foundational basics one sets out in the earliest design stages. The creator decides how to 'crop' a scene, or what to focus on, chooses and arranges the primary shapes, assigns a range of darks and lights (values), and lastly, hues (colors) to them that instruction and experience have taught will convey the intended meaning, or look most pleasing together, or follow another attraction principle of design. Of course, it can get much more complicated than this.

Success comes from keeping it simple, drawing in a viewer, often employing a focal point, and holding interest. Much of this effort involves learning whether and when to introduce those interesting scene details, because they can distract from a work's central point(s) and muddy its beauty. The best-designed work will lead the eye into it, maybe using a triangle arrangement of key objects, encourage continued viewing, help the viewer appreciate the story, and not lose them.

The leaves on our area trees are turning so fast; the changes are evident almost daily. It makes an artist like me who likes to paint on location, "plein air" style, very antsy.

The Osha Trail beckons with some of the best array of painting spots. This year, it hasn't been particularly cold yet, and the wetting rains have been interspersed with periods of drought caused by high-pressure systems. Perhaps some of the area aspens will show tantalizing vermilion colors high in their foliage. The maple trees off the Sunspot Highway will soon be sporting their spectrum of roses, reds, and plums. We have Gambel oaks on our property, and they are displaying colors of pungent olive-oil greens, silky honey-golds, and bright daisy yellows.



JV Lady Bears take on the season

Middle School Sports Update

Fall Sports are in full swing, Seniors are gearing up for their final year.

The 2026-2027 middle school athletic seasons have started on a great note. Our Cloudcroft A-Team girls won the away game on Aug. 20 against Chaparral, 15-8. The A-Team's star player was #14 **Ivy McMillan**; she finished the game with the winning Ace serve. B-Team volleyball may have lost, but they showed great Bear Spirit. The star player was #7, **Holly Douglas**. Holly was a good team player and helped to keep the team's spirits up. In addition, the MS Football team won their first game against Hollman on Aug. 27, 16-6. Our star player, #29 **Hayden Hall**, made a one-handed catch and scored the two-point conversion.

On Thursday, Sept. 3, both middle school volleyball teams played at home against Tularosa. Although they gave it their all, the B-Team lost both games, 25-10 and 25-20. The second game was heated, and our players never gave up. The A-Team played three games, winning the second, but couldn't pull off a win in the third, 15-7.

—Samantha Stubbs





Burnt Basque Cheesecake

Cloudcroft High School senior Gena Davis shares her favorite recipe she's made so far this year with the Cloudcroft Schools' Culinary Program, led by Ardia Gray.



Ingredients

- 24 oz Cream Cheese
- 1 1/4 Cups White Sugar
- 4 Eggs
- 1 1/2 Cups Heavy Cream
- 1 tsp Vanilla Extract
- 1/4 Cup Flour
- 1/2 tsp Salt

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 210C / 410F and let all of the ingredients come to room temperature.
2. In a large bowl, if you are using a hand mixer or the bowl of your stand mixer, add the cream cheese and sugar.
3. Beat on medium speed for about 3-4 minutes or until light and fluffy.
4. Crack in the four eggs, one at a time, beating well between each addition.
5. Scrape down the sides of the bowl a few times to make sure everything is evenly incorporated. The batter should thin and become creamier.
6. Pour the cream and vanilla essence into the cheesecake mixture and mix again on medium speed for about a minute or until evenly combined.
7. Sift flour and salt into the batter, making sure there are no lumps. Give everything a final mix together until well combined.
8. Prepare a 20cm or 8'' springform cake pan by greasing and placing 2 layers of non-stick paper in the pan, letting it come up each side so the cheesecake mixture won't overflow.
9. Pour the cheesecake batter into the cake pan and place it in the oven for about 50-55 minutes. It will puff up and develop a lot of color.
10. Check the cheesecake after about 45 minutes; it's finished baking when it''s developed a deep dark shade and the center still jiggles slightly. Baking times can vary depending on your oven.
11. Let the cheesecake cool completely before placing it in the fridge for 4 hours to set.
12. Remove the cheesecake from the fridge and let it warm to room temperature for an hour or two. Then remove the sides of the cake pan and peel back the non-stick paper. Slice and enjoy!





9/11 in Otero: The Story of After

Area VFDs honor fallen firefighters on the 25th anniversary of the September 11th attacks

On the eve of Patriot's Day, 9/11, there's a frenzy of activity in the fire stations, washing trucks before the evening procession with apparatus lights flashing against the darkening sky. The lead firetruck is a 1968 Mack from Pennsylvania that lives in one of La Luz Volunteer Fire Department's bays. Inscribed on the truck are the 3 locations impacted (WTC, Pentagon, and Shanksville, PA) and the names of 9/11 victims.

Archie Koenemund won't let me forget.

I've been assigned the official bell ringer at the annual 9/11 ceremony for the past few years. I've worked with Archie since I started at the La Luz Volunteer Fire Department in Otero County, shortly after he became assistant chief.

He's held many roles there and at Boles Acres, including training and safety officer. Following in his father's footsteps, Archie became a firefighter. He and his brother both volunteered at the West Hamilton Beach FD in New York before becoming FDNY firefighters. They both responded to the World Trade Center on September 11th. After 6 months of funeral processions for 343 firefighters, it was time to retire from the fire service professionally.

New Mexico was where they returned. Archie had served at Holloman Air Force Base (AFB), worked at New Mexico's State Fire Marshal's Office, Sandia National Lab as a fire inspector, and Otero County as a fire service coordinator in the 1970s and 1980s. He was also a founding member of the Otero County Firefighters' Association (OCFFA).

Now, his front yard is a growing year-round tribute to those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, and people he worked alongside in the FDNY.

Though Archie spearheaded this event, he would be the first to tell you he didn't do it alone.

———————

"When a man becomes a fireman, his greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What he does after that is all in the line of work."

———————

Fire chiefs and captains, every rank in between, neighbors, and friends made the memorial a community event. Neighbors provided food. Emergency response vehicles of all kinds lined the roadway, processing from the college parking lot to the memorial in Archie's front yard. The procession was supported by both local (Cloudcroft, Mountain, and Basin) and distant (Tularosa, Holloman AFB, and Mesilla) department fire apparatus, along with the Patriot Guard and a helicopter crew from Native Air. Chief **Bill Farmer** read a poem, "Never Forget."

One of the most poignant moments is the ringing of the "four 5s." In New York, the bell signal 5-5-5-5 indicates a line-of-duty death: a firefighter who passed away while working at a fire and isn't coming home. Archie incorporated this solemn New York tradition into the annual memorial.

Archie and the partner he worked with on 9/11 still call each other on the anniversary. 25 years of phone calls. In pictures, **Billy** is one of the firefighters in the old-style turnout gear, with boots that go up to the hip and a long coat covering the rest. Retired firefighter **John Martin** of California has traveled across the country in memory of fallen firefighters. This year, John biked across the country, placing mementos for all lost on that day. He reached New York City on 9/11 but had never been on a subway until he and Archie's son went to the fire station Archie's brother and neighbor-turned-fellow-firefighter **Ray York** worked out of to present dog tags and a plaque on 9/12/2026.

The NM Museum of Space History and Alamogordo Fire Department host a "Climb the Cube" event, the equivalent of climbing 110 stories of the World Trade Center buildings. Each year I attend, I learn about more of Archie's friends and coworkers as we carry their badges up the stairs with us. Last year, they also started adding the rescue dogs.

There were people of all ages, athletes and a good showing of firefighters, both groups admiring the other for either ease and speed, or slow, heavy dedication to keep going up. Two-in, two-out, so most firefighters found a buddy to climb with, stopping when we saw others who needed a break. I walked alongside a volunteer county firefighter who attended the event last year to cheer on other firefighters and community members, but put on her bunker gear and air pack and climbed the stairs, completely different than what we train for. There's something powerful about talking to strangers in the stairway. Firefighters we overlapped with in training months ago, or the same department at different times. Sometimes we only see each other on incidents and events like this.

The fire service changed after 9/11, not just because ~10% of the casualties were firefighters of every rank, but because of how we operate. Lessons from the incident help us scale our response structure to match the emergency. With so many responders that day, 10 codes meant different things to different groups, so today's fire training and communication requires plain text

so everyone understands the message.

9/11 means something different for me as a firefighter now than it did that day. Firefighters knew their job and did it until they couldn't. It's a day to commemorate others in the profession who died that day, who did what they were trained to do. How they kept going back in again. How many keep dying from illnesses related to the work they've done. How many they saved that day – those are stories we tell too.

FDNY Chief **Edward Croker** said, "When a man becomes a fireman, his greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What he does after that is all in the line of work."

Archie has brought more meaning to the memorial each year. 343 firefighters or 3 thousand people. There will never be too many memorials and ceremonies to honor them and those still falling, even 25 years later.

Get Involved

Contact the Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department at **info@cloudcroftfd.com**. Upcoming fire events include National Night Out on Friday, 10/9, from 6-9 p.m. at the Otero County Fairgrounds.

—Katie Grabowski

THE CABINS AT CLOUDCROFT

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



3, 2, 1 Bedroom Cabins
Fire Places ! Kitchen
575-682-2396
www.cloudcroftnm.com

Cloudcroft Reader

Fair local reporting that answers to the Cloudcroft community.

The Voice of the Mountain
CloudcroftReader.com

Bulletin Board

THE JAMES SEWELL ICE RINK
IS OPENING THIS FALL!

JAMES SEWELL ICE RINK · CLOUDCROFT, NEW MEXICO

10% OFF | A BIRTHDAY PARTY PACKAGE!

Valid til March 15, 2027

HIKES
Shenanigans

OUTDOOR INSPIRED APPAREL
Trail-specific hats & shirts.
Online, Locally-owned.
Scan to shop.

https://hikesandshenanigans-shop.printful.me

A
ATELIER
Art of Hair
By Anna

ASPEN & IVY
CLOUDCROFT, NM

Nicole Alcorn,
Owner
206 Burro Street
Cloudcroft, New Mexico 88317
(512) 788-1349
@aspenandivyboutique
@aspenandivyboutique

Woo Woo Massage
Feeling the healing experience!
Reiki Master/Teacher
Kyle Darrah L.M.T. MT-2023-0105
575-302-7051
Text for appointment or book directly @ QR on back

靈氣

THE LITTLE GALLERY
206 BURRO AVE BLDG 2
CLOUDCROFT, NM 88317

TREY MCCURLEY
ACTOR/ARTIST
LATREY@GMAIL.COM
575.491.1855



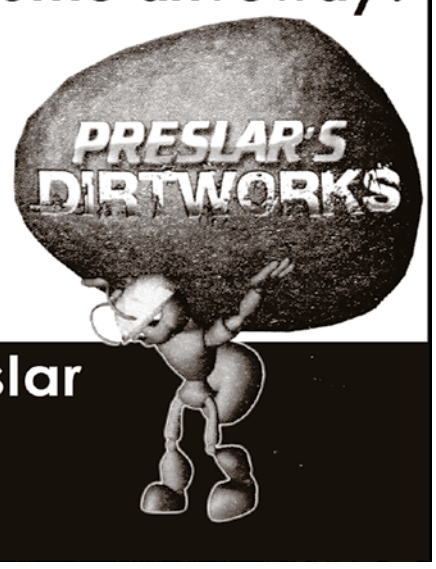
BILLY GOAT DUMPSTERS & DISPOSAL
11, 18 AND 30 YARD CONTAINERS
Call for pricing info.
575-437-1468 www.billygoatllc.com

MOUNTAINSIDE
GROOMING
(575) 687 3523
842 US HWY 82
High Rolls, NM

Preslar's Dirtworks is your local asphalt contractor

Do you have a troublesome driveway?

Have You Considered Paving It?



Call or text Matt Preslar for a quote at 575-430-7631

OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Otero County Electric Co-op

AFTER-HOURS OUTAGE ASSISTANCE
Call
1-800-548-4660
www.ocec-inc.com

OFFICE
(575) 682-2521
P.O. Box 227
Cloudcroft, NM 88317

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

The First Alamogordo Lumber Company Timber – The Finale

This story starts where the "First Sacramento Timber" story ends. Readers may wish to access that story via the Mountain Monthly archives at mountainmonthly.com, May-June-July 2026.

BY LYNN MELTON

The author has chosen to create an imaginary interview with **W.H. Bailey** that took place in 1924. In this interview, the author fills in gaps between facts. In doing so, he may be wrong, but he never intentionally creates false statements, and the words he puts into W.H. Bailey's mouth are realistic.

The Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountains railroad used timber from the Baird sawmill near Wooten until it could cut timber on land acquired from the U.S. government, north from present-day Bailey Canyon.

Lynn Melton (LAM): That is great. You made it work. I guess the rest was pretty routine.

W.H. Bailey (WHB): Keep your seat, young man. There is a lot more.

If you look at the land at the camp, there are three canyons leading out of the camp. The one on the northwest is an easy way to get to a lot of timber. But a wagon road ran from LaLuz Canyon through our camp and down the canyon until it went up Little James Canyon. We couldn't build over that road. We had to take the middle canyon and use a switchback to get up and around the hill between the two. That took a lot of extra work.

After we fixed that, we did pretty much OK. Of course, when you build a shoddy railroad, you spend a lot of time fixing it. There wasn't enough room at the camp to have a wye. But you make do.

On the logging side, I got tired of making do with God's leftovers. I went to **Eddy** and hammered on him until he gave me the OK to bring in twenty-five real Maine loggers. That set things going pretty well.

Until July 24, 1899. I can't get that date out of my mind. The Heavens opened up, and there was a first-class thunderstorm. Huge flood.

It washed out our track, and the AS&M tracks all the way to Wooten. Since the A&SM track was pretty well built, they got back to running in a few days.

I don't know the whole story, but I think **Sumner** must have laid it out to Eddy. More or less, "With the shoddy track from Toboggan to Bailey's Camp, unless you pay to build the spur right. Every time there is a thunderstorm, logs will stop coming to the big time sawmill in Alamogordo."

Anyway, they did it right that time. Moved the spur up the hillside a few yards, which meant they had to cut into the hillside. But Sumner's crews were used to doing good dirt work.

LAM: You were in good form until 1903, when your timber ran out?

WHB: Sort of. But Sumner gave us a curse and a blessing. You know, he built to the Salado coal field.

I'll tell you a good story; it doesn't have anything to do with Bailey's Camp, but it is a good story. There was a fancy ceremony on September 30, 1899, when they shipped the first car of coal. At Salado, they were going to drive the "last spike." Like the golden spike on the transcontinental railroad in Utah. They handed the spike mallet to the money men. They swung, and they couldn't hit the spike straight. Finally they had to get a guy from Sumner's crew to drive it home.

The first week in October Sumner's crews are back at Toboggan to build the A&SM from there to the summit – much more timber up there.

He used our spur to get supplies to Bailey's camp so he could build east and west. East toward the summit and west to hook up with his switchback. We were already real cramped in the camp, and here comes Sumner moving dirt and building two trestles there. That's the curse.

Well, actually Sumner gave two curses. His main camp was at Toboggan, "Slabtown," everyone called it because it was built with sawmill slabs. There were two saloons at Slabtown, and our crews used to hoof it to Slabtown and get stinking drunk. The best we could do was pay them on Saturday and hope they would be sober enough on Monday.

The blessing is that Sumner cut a spur off his mainline – just before the big trestle at Bailey's --to our logging spur that headed north toward LaLuz Canyon. That gave us an easy way to connect our log cars to the A&SM, and after his extension was finished in January 1900, we didn't have to trundle down the Fresnal Canyon spur and work our way through the wye at Toboggan.

LAM: The camp closed in 1903. You set up another camp?

WHB: No. I cashed in during the summer of 1900. New Mexico lobsters aren't nearly as good as Maine lobsters.

I wish you well in telling my part of the story.

In Memoriam:

Jodie Ann Ussery



Jodie Ann Ussery, 74, of Cloudcroft, NM, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at her son's residence in Buckhorn, NM. She was born October 19, 1951, in El Paso, Texas, to Lewis Ussery and Margaret Olsen.

Jodie was our devoted mother and grandmother, and her life was defined by hard work, kindness, and a deep, steady faith. From an early age, she worked alongside her parents in their dog boarding business, where she learned to train, groom, and show dogs, a love of animals that never left her. In 1990, Jodie made Cloudcroft her home, and over the next 35 years, she became a familiar and beloved face across the mountain community. She worked in food service at Cloudcroft Elementary School, behind the bakery counter at Mountain Top, and as a barista. She also built a trusted reputation providing professional housekeeping and property turnover services for vacation rental owners and homeowners, helping prepare homes for new guests and new beginnings.

Jodie's faith was a constant source of strength, shaping the way she loved, supported, and showed up for all of us. We will remember her resilience and the enduring love she gave her family.

She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Priscilla and Glen Keener; her son and daughter-in-law, Sonny and Janean Garney; her son, Neil LaSalle; her brother and sister-in-law, Danny and Priscilla Ussery; and five grandchildren, Aidan and Charlotte Murray, and Takota, Austin, and Makaio LaSalle.

A memorial service was held September 27th at James Canyon Cemetery. Thank you to all who knew and loved Jodie and who join us in celebrating her life.

ART IN THE WILD

16-year-old painter Harper Tompkins displays his work at Black Bear Coffee Shop throughout the Month of October.

From the Artist:

I'm Harper Tompkins, a 16 year old artist inspired by ancient Greek art and mythology, the surreal art of Salvador Dali, and the layered work of the Symbolist movement. Some of my biggest influences are Francisco de Goya, Franz von Stuck, Zdzislaw Beksinski, and Gustav Klimt. I also like mixing those older influences with styles of our time, such as spray paint.

I'm drawn to Greek mythology because the stories are so old and diverse, and artists have interpreted them for hundreds of years. Most Greek gods aren't necessarily good or evil, but somewhere in the middle. Even the characters portrayed as good or evil could be argued either way.

I've been making art for as long as I can remember, but I think it became more than something I did for fun once I was faced with more complex feelings like the kinds you can't just name. Art gave me a way to express those feelings and interpret certain characters, situations, and ideas.

Every color, shape, and value in my work means something. Some symbols I repeatedly use are upside-down triangles with a dot inside, circles, columns, a single eye, black and white, and the color red.

I want people to feel intrigued, curious, and maybe a little confused when they first see my work. If they look closer, they might understand what each painting is hiding and even use one painting to help piece together the others. I don't want to give away too much, but the smallest hint I can give is that many of them are about some of our most primal emotions and the age-old questions that have always been and probably always will be relevant.

I've been lucky to have great teachers, including Cheryl Kaufman. Next year, I hope to attend art school in Santa Fe and continue developing my skills and finding my own voice as an artist. My art will be hanging for the month of October in Black Bear Coffee Shop.



Harper Tompkins (image: Crystal Tompkins Photography)



Painting by Harper Tompkins.

Bulletin Board

CISCO BOB, JR'S EXCAVATION & UTILITIES

Sand & Gravel
Material Hauling
Demolition
All Types of Dirt Work
Trenching • Tree Removal
Road Building
Lot Clearing & Leveling
Septic System Installation

FREE ESTIMATES

(575) 464-9173
(575) 937-2355

Lic. #86344 | Insured & Bonded

R&L SERVICES

Welding
Home Maintenance
Tractor / Brush Hog Work
Minor Mechanical & Trailer Repair
Junk Removal

Ralph Shoemaker
575-491-8301
9 Saxon Ln
Mayhill, NM 88339
RafterR3@gmail.com

High Valley Weaving School

Weaving & Spinning Classes
Workshops in All Fiber Arts

Sales:
• Yarn & Fiber
• Handwoven Garments
• Rag Rugs • Hand Towels

Lower Floor of Cloudcroft Library
Thursday - Friday - Saturday | 10 am to 4 pm
Joan Nussbaum • 575-921-1020

RICK ROGERS AUTO REPAIR LLC

47 years of experience

COMPLETE AUTO REPAIRS
Diesel & Gas • Foreign & Domestic
Standard & Automatic Transmissions
Engines • Tune-Ups • Brakes
Electrical • Heater & A/C • 4-Wheel Drive
Oil Changes • Flat Tire Repairs
D.O.T. Inspections

LATEST DIAGNOSTIC EQUIPMENT
Autos, Light & Heavy Trucks
Gas & Diesel • Foreign & Domestic

ROGERS WRECKER & ROADSIDE SERVICE
NOW AVAILABLE • 24/7
530-551-1780 or 575-682-3352

MOBILE TRUCK & EQUIPMENT REPAIRS
575-430-0914

Serving Cloudcroft & the Mountain Community for 31 years

Rick & Teresa Rogers, Owners
Hwy 82, Cloudcroft, NM
575-682-3352
Visa & Mastercard accepted

HELPER NEEDED
Experience a plus
• Apply in person

OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
1939 - 2014
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Touchstone Energy®
www.ocec-inc.com
Office
575-682-2521
Outage Assistance
1-800-548-4660

VFW

NEED HELP WITH VA BENEFITS OR PROOF OF SERVICE?

If you are a Veteran or a Veteran's family member requiring assistance

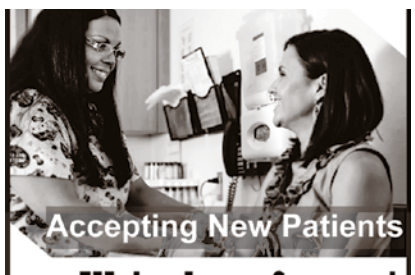
CONTACT
CDR John D. Rider VFW Post 11999
in Cloudcroft at (806) 763-3010
or VFW11999PSO@gmail.com

Our trained Service Officer will assist you confidentially and at no cost

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

SACRAMENTO MOUNTAINS
Senior Services

575-682-3022
Facebook
Mtnseniors.com



We're here for you!
Sacramento Mountain Medical Center
Primary Care Services - serving our community for over 20 years!
Call for an appointment!
575-682-2542
pmsnm.org
PMS
PRESBYTERIAN MEDICAL SERVICES
Our purpose is you.
Medicare, Medicaid, and Private Insurance Accepted. For the uninsured, a sliding fee scale is available based on income.
Sacramento Mountain Medical Center
74 James Canyon Highway
Cloudcroft, New Mexico 88317

Gravel **Batte Enterprises, LLC.** *Excavation*
Since 1987 *NM Lic #396213*

Proudly serving the mountaintop for 38 years



Base Course • Clean Rock
Gravel Trucks • Excavators • Dozers
Driveways • Home Sites • Heavy Hauling



www.battegravel.com
batterocks@yahoo.com
575.495.2186
575.682.2006

We Cover the Mountain

Let us help you get noticed

To learn how, contact us at hello@mountainmonthly.com



Shep in his Cloudcroft studio

Blue Jeans to Blue Ribbons: Bob Shepard's Artist Journey

A former Wrangler jeans sales executive, now an artist and instructor, Bob Shepard teaches masters' methods in the mountains as part of a short-term rental experience.

BY HANNAH DEAN

On a sunny Cloudcroft afternoon, I found **Bob Shepard**, a.k.a. "Shep", in his backyard studio, surrounded by canvases in every stage of becoming.
A few glow with the vivid green of underpainting, a signature step in the centuries-old method he's spent two decades chasing.

On the easel: a tropical flower, sectioned into three subtly different color schemes, patterned and bold, a departure from the classical portraits that made his name. "Everybody who's seen it so far has gone crazy over it," he tells me, grinning.

Shep is 79, a former Wrangler jeans sales executive with the easy cadence of someone who has told a story or two in his time. Ask him a simple question, and you get a full life in return, complete with punchlines, digressions, and a cast of characters. It's how he ended up here, painting five-hundred-year-old techniques in a mountain village forty-some years after he first laid eyes on it.

A Late Start, and a Wake-Up Call

"I started drawing when I was nine," Shep says. "I drew my grandfather. Nobody believed me. So then I drew everybody else in the family."

Technical drawings won him citywide school contests as a teenager, but the artist's path gave way to a business degree at Texas Tech, then seven years at JCPenney, three in real estate, and finally three decades with Wrangler, where he rose to oversee the company's largest national accounts. "Didn't do anything in the way of art, ever," he says of those years.

Then, in 1997, newly fifty, he had a health scare he wasn't expected to survive. "I was supposed to have died," he says, "but I didn't."

Not long after, he came home from work to find a community college catalog open on the kitchen table. "There's a catalog for Lone Star College — then it was called Montgomery Community College — and it was opened and highlighted in bright yellow for beginning oil painting. Thirteen hours credit."

He signed up, and it set off a chain reaction. His instructor pulled him aside early on. "Shep, you got real potential as a portrait artist, as a figure artist. I think you need to go to Glassell School of Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston," he said.

He got in, took life drawing alongside students half his age, and kept going.

A canceled Caribbean cruise and a rerouted vacation on a whim to Santa Fe put him in front of the teacher who would change everything: **Geoffrey Lawrence**, who taught him the Venetian tradition. "His class just changed my life," Shep says. "I'd already been exposed to traditional oil painting, but I never knew where it came from."

Painting Like It's 1492

The Venetian painting method traces back to Titian, Michelangelo, and Da Vinci. "Da Vinci will tell you that Titian was going to hell because he used too much red," Shep says. "But Titian was famous because he really developed transparent red oxide. It's a marvelous color — the greatest color as a foundational color for skin tones."



Shep can do, as well as teach.

The process unfolds in five stages, the same ones Shep now walks his own students through in a single week. Day one is the full compositional drawing. Day two is grisaille. "You're painting a value study, simply," worked entirely in burnt umber, coal black, and white.

Day three is what he calls the dead color stage, warm against cool with no true color yet: "it's almost a clown look," he says, "but that's kind of what they thought dead people looked like back in Italy." Day four brings in the yellows and local color, built from the same pigments the old masters used: burnt umber from Umbria, burnt sienna from Siena, ochres, iron oxides. "All these are elements and crap you can find in the world," he says.

Day five: glazing. In Shep's words, "the start of the rest of your life." Thin layers, "about ninety-five percent liquid" to "just a drop of paint," built up again and again, with no real end point. "You can put it, you can hang it up above your mantelpiece, and at some point in time you'll see something you don't like, bring it down, start painting on it."

He's tested that philosophy on two full master studies, recreations of Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*.

"A master study is not a copying," he says. "It's where you become it." The real *Mona Lisa*, he notes, carries an estimated seventy-three layers of paint; his own approaches that depth in places. And because the blues available in 1492 were poor — "smalt," he explains, "neither one's a good blue; that's the reason the sky looks like hell" — he believes his version comes closer to how the painting actually looked the year da Vinci died: "as close to what it looked like in 1516."

Coming Home to Cloudcroft

Shep's connection to the mountain goes back to 1971, when his in-laws bought a lot in Timberon. It was sold to them, he laughs, by a late-night television commercial. "Her mom couldn't go to sleep at night, and so she sat and watched the late movie in Lubbock. And every break was a thirty-second commercial for Timberon. They came and bought a lot."

He and his wife **Donna** visited as newlyweds. "We dreamed about — you think we'd ever own a cabin up here?"

Decades of career and family pulled them elsewhere, until a colleague's cross-country drive nudged them back. "One of my bosses bought a Corvette and drove Route 66 from Dallas to LA," Shep says. "I thought, that's damn cool."

His own trip, in 2011, brought them back through the Sacramentos. And this time, they stayed. They bought their cabin in 2013, and by the first or second summer, Shep was already teaching.

Twelve summers running now, he's kept his classes small. "I like to do it two to four," he says, "and I have once done five." He's sitting this summer out while recovering from a recent heart procedure. "I'm feeling the best of my life right now," he says, "at least the best for the last two years." Classes are set to resume in August, as always. He's also a longtime member of the **Cloudcroft Art Society** and teaches adults at **Camp Sunshine** at the Sacramento Camp and Conference Center.

Shep can do, as well as teach. He took Best in the State of Texas in a Lone Star Art Guild competition judged from 617 entries and picked up second place in the same show. A piece from his newer, color-layered series — built up in intense passes of red, green, orange, and blue before the Venetian glazing begins — was recently the featured painting in Austin Fine Art Gallery's ColorPop show, hung "in space number one."

Shep's stories and laughter fill his studio with the sheer joy of a man who found his calling.

"We just have a blast," he says. "We love the place. We love Cloudcroft. We love everybody in it."

You can book your own stay and class at Shep's Art Retreat on VRBO and AirBnB: airbnb.com/rooms/26748464

Homee

The One Company For All Of Your Real Estate Needs

Have Your *Cake*...

...and Let It Pay for Itself.



OWN A BEAUTIFUL GETAWAY AND EARN INCOME WHILE YOU'RE AWAY.

WE FIND IT.
We help you find the perfect mountain investment property.

YOU ENJOY IT.
You enjoy it with family whenever you'd like.

WE HANDLE THE REST.
While you're away, we market, book, clean, maintain, and manage everything.

YOU EARN.
You earn income without the day-to-day work.

It's ownership without the headaches.



MEET YOUR HOMEEE TEAM



Christina Sanchez
Qualifying Broker
Lic.No. REC-2025-0335



Matthew Lockner
Associate Broker
Lic.No. Rec-2025-0038



Millie Portocarrero
Head of Operations



VISIT US
109 James Canyon Hwy #A
Cloudcroft, NM 88317

Ready to Own Your Mountain Escape?

1-877-55-HOMEE | sales@inhomeee.com | www.inhomeee.com

Dive in at THE GRAND!

Our indoor pool and hot tub are open to the public Wednesdays & Sundays! *Based on availability.

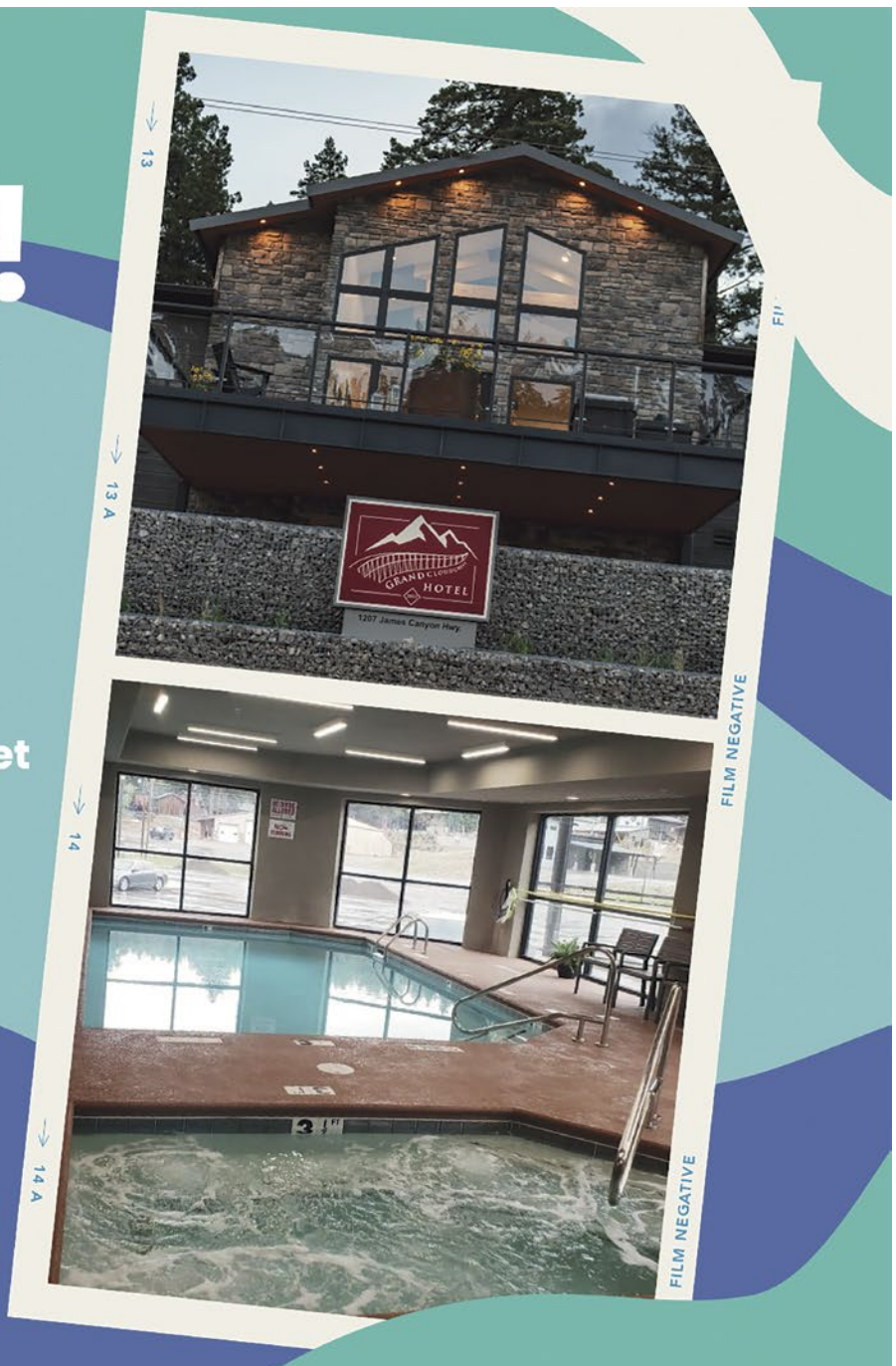
12 PM-2 PM

2 PM-4 PM

$10 + tax per person; per 2-hour block

$5 + tax for ages 5 & under

Whether you're looking to cool off, relax, or get moving with some water aerobics, come enjoy the pool right here in Cloudcroft!



GRAND CLOUDCROFT HOTEL 2022

Call (575)601-2202 for more information, or stop by 1207 James Canyon Hwy, Cloudcroft, NM

THE DISTILLERY @ CLOUDCROFT BREWING

SERVING NEW MEXICO'S FINEST SPIRITS, BREWS AND WINE

MOUNTAINTOP GIN - SKYWATER VODKA - MOUNTAIN SMOKE WHISKEY- PROUDLY DISTILLED ON SITE



Now Open!

Mon - 4-9pm
Tues - Closed
Wed - 4-9pm
Thurs - 4-9pm
Fri - 4-10pm
Sat -11am-10pm
Sun - 11am-9pm

1303 BURRO AVE - CLOUDCROFT, NM

SHELLEY M. HUGHES ARCHITECTS PC

575.551.1080 - shelley@greenmnt.com
smharchitect.com
500 Burro Ave. Cloudcroft, NM

COMMERCIAL
RESIDENTIAL
DESIGN-BUILD
DIRT WORK

GREEN MOUNTAIN CONSTRUCTION INC.

575.682.2537 - dan@greenmnt.com
www.greenmountainconstr.com