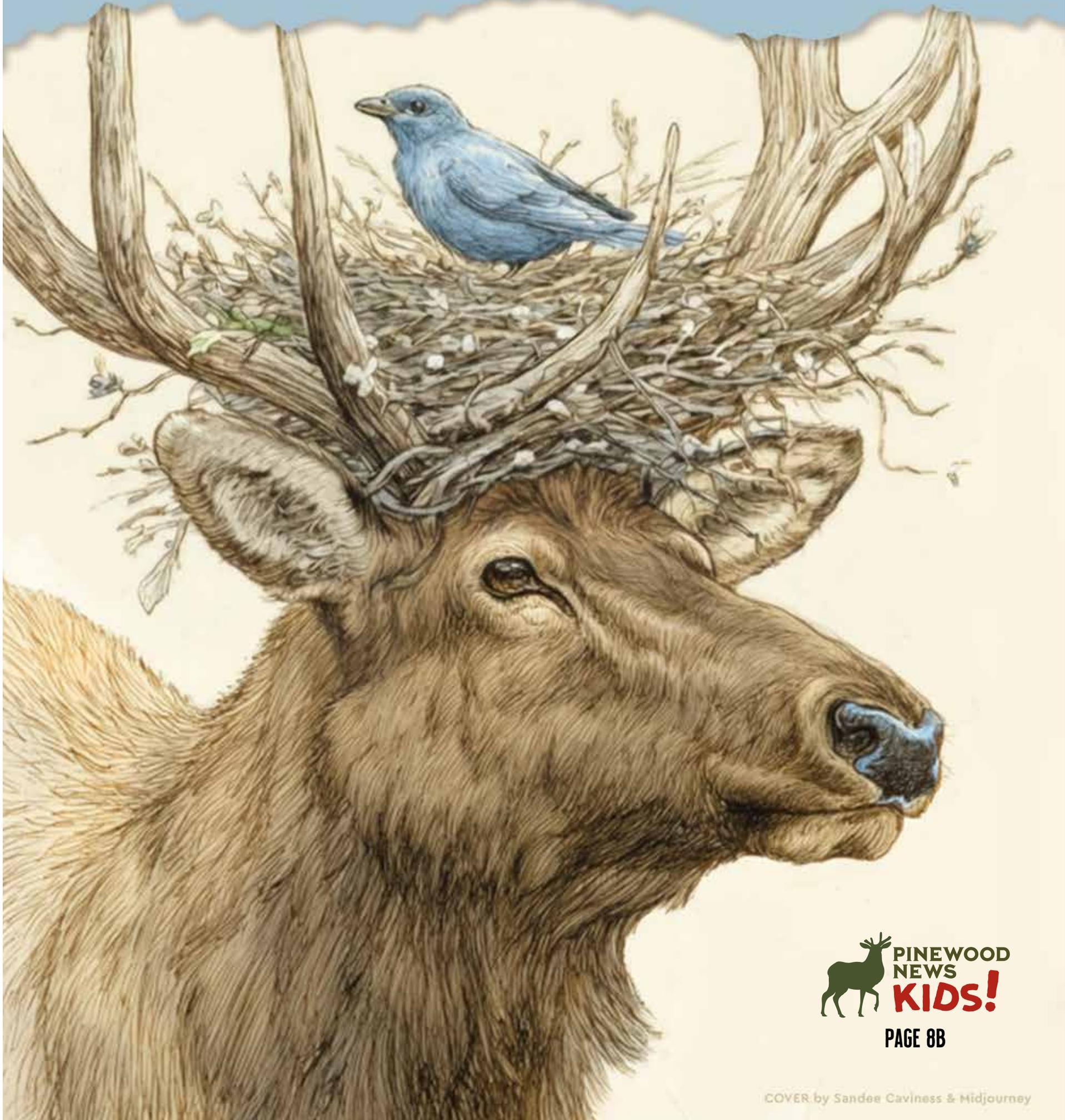


PINEWOOD

THE GOOD LIFE, COMMUNITY, AND MOUNTAIN LIVING IN MUNDS PARK SINCE 1993

VOL. 33 NO. 3 MARCH 6, 2026

COMPLIMENTARY



 **PINEWOOD
NEWS
KIDS!**

PAGE 8B

COVER by Sandee Caviness & Midjourney

CELESTIAL EVENTS

THE SKY THEY TRAVEL TO SEE

Dark sky tourism is no longer a niche hobby. Travel writers are now calling astrotourism and noctourism a major travel trend, with people planning trips to places where the dark still holds and the heavens still show themselves.

That is part of what makes Munds Park such a blessing. People are traveling to find what we already have right here at home. Our elevation, clear mountain air, and lower light levels give us access to something many city dwellers no longer see. For them, a sky full of stars has become a destination. For us, it is still part of daily life, if we are wise enough to protect it.

And that is exactly why the night sky deserves our care. Not because we need to sell it, but because it is a gift. Under a truly dark sky, the noise of the world quiets down. You can look up, see the stars in full, and feel connected to something far greater than yourself. That kind of perspective grounds you. It humbles you. It reminds you that creation is bigger than the worries we carry each day. Out here, under a sky full of stars, that truth feels plain: we are part of something greater, shaped by a hand far beyond our own. We are blessed to live with that kind of wonder right outside the door.

What to watch for in the night sky.

MARCH

Venus-Saturn Conjunction: Around March 7–8. Venus (very bright) and Saturn appear close together in the evening sky. Easy to spot naked-eye or with binoculars low in the west after sunset.

March Equinox: March 20. Marks the start of astronomical spring in the Northern Hemisphere—equal day/night lengths and a good time for balanced stargazing.

APRIL

Lyrid Meteor Shower: Peaks April 21–22. Expect ~10–20 meteors per hour under ideal dark skies (higher possible with fireballs). The radiant is in Lyra (high overhead in the north), and the Moon is waning crescent/not too interfering—excellent conditions in northern Arizona. Best after midnight until dawn.

Mercury at Greatest Elongation: Around early April (e.g., April 3–4). Mercury reaches its farthest from the Sun, making it easier to spot low in the western sky after sunset—worth a look if you're out for evening viewing.

MAY

Eta Aquariid Meteor Shower: Peak: May 5–6
Fast meteors before dawn. It's stronger farther south, but Northern Arizona can still catch plenty of bright streaks under dark skies.

Blue Moon: May 31

A Blue Moon is when there are two full moons in one calendar month. The second full moon is called the Blue Moon. It doesn't usually look blue.

It's just a name for something that doesn't happen very often. That's why people say "once in a blue moon" when they mean something is rare.



*It is a lovely thing to be still
and look at the stars.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR & STORY TIPS!

The *Pinewood News* welcomes feedback and story tips from our readers. We encourage comments on any subject or article we publish. We will consider publishing received letters, except those that invade privacy or are libelous.

All letters must be signed and include an address and phone number for verification. Note that letters may be edited for space and clarity.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Shell Gas Station

The Outpost (Post Office)

Bashas - Camp Verde

Camp Verde Community Library

The next issue of the *Pinewood News* will hit the stands, **Friday, April 3**





COLDWELL BANKER NORTHLAND



SALE PENDING!



\$429,000
17810 S WALAPAI RD • UNIT #: 55

Exceptional townhome! Spacious treed area on south of unit. Vaulted ceilings and cozy pellet stove insert in fireplace provides warmth and ambiance. New flooring, refrigerator, portable air conditioner and dishwasher. This home comes furnished and ready for your summer and winter enjoyment.

SALE PENDING!



\$1,295,000
17612 E FAIRWAY DR
MUNDS PARK

Closed restaurant with HUGE potential! Includes land, building, and all contents. Community is eager for a great eatery! Call Bill Spinat at 602-622-1196. Owner may carry with strong terms.

REDUCED



\$475,000
17165 ELK PL

Tucked beneath the towering pines, this cozy mountain retreat blends rustic charm with modern comfort. Vaulted ceilings, open living, wood-burning fireplace, and a large deck create the perfect space to relax and enjoy.

SOLD!



\$475,000
17380 CRYSTAL BROOK PL

Move-in ready Munds Park cabin with modern upgrades, vaulted ceilings, and cozy charm. New roof, floors, kitchen appliances, and more. Ideal for weekends or year-round living. Great community amenities.

SOLD!



\$400,000
1170 E COUGAR ST

Cozy 2-bed, 2-bath home among pines and oaks, bonus room, private deck overlooking Munds Canyon, fenced yard, gazebo, bunkhouse, garage, granite upgrades, mostly furnished. Peaceful mountain retreat.



Becky McBride
Designated Broker/Owner
928.606.1385
Becky@flagstaffrealestate.com



Regina Bailey
Associate Broker
928.699.7069
Regina.Bailey@ProvidentAZ.com



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Natalia Robles
REALTOR®
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Aaron Lewis
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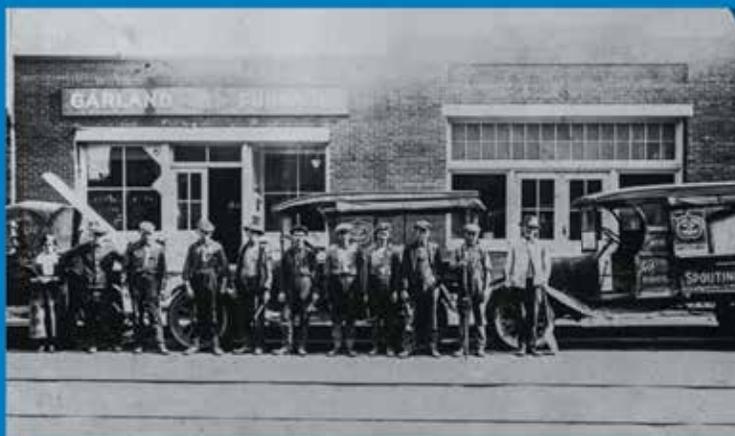
We're here to protect your investment.

For many families, a mountain home or cabin isn't just a weekend retreat. It's where holidays are spent. Where grandchildren learn to fish. Where memories turn into traditions.

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- ✓ They deserve quality systems.
- ✓ They deserve work that lasts.

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PINEWOOD

THE GOOD LIFE, COMMUNITY & DESERT MOUNTAIN LIVING

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

AA Meetings - Feel Better!

Munds Park Community Church

Every Monday, 6 pm
17670 S Munds Ranch Rd

Munds Park Community Church Services

Services Sunday, 10:45 am
17670 S Munds Ranch Rd • Munds Park

Munds Park Town Hall

All residents are encouraged to attend.
Stay informed. Your presence and participation is essential!

Thursday, May 21, 2026
6:30 pm • Pinewood Country Club

Pinewood Fire Department Auxiliary meeting

The Community is Welcome!
Tuesday, April 7
6:30 pm • 17670 S Munds Ranch Rd
Munds Park

Pinewood Fire District Board Meeting

Public Welcome
Tuesday, March 17
3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr • Munds Park

Pinewood Sanitary District Board Meeting

Public Welcome
Thursday, March 12
3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr • Munds Park



Get the Pinewood News first!

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When a Trusted Contractor Gets It Wrong

THINGS TO DO & SEE 12A

Local events, holiday activities, and outings to make the most of your time in the pines.

WEEKEND WORTHY 15A

A Toast to Arizona Wine Month

MUNDS PARK MARKET REPORT 17A

Buyer, Seller, and Pricing Reality

A FOOD JOURNEY THROUGH DONEGAL 19A

How Meals Tell the Story of a Place

A BUNNY MARY 20A

Bright, Savory, and Slightly Wild

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The High Price of Making Winter



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YOUR LINK TO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUNDS PARK

BEAR JAW INTERAGENCY FIRE & FUELS CREW UNAVAILABLE THIS SEASON

The Pinewood Fire District would like to inform our community that the Bear Jaw Interagency Fire and Fuels Crew will not be available for the upcoming season. The annual Green Waste Clean-Up will continue as it has the last several years, but this year with the help of Fire Crews from the Arizona Department of Fire and Forestry Management.

Due to a combination of funding limitations and staffing shortages, we are unable to support the Bear Jaw Fuels Crew program safely and effectively.

This will be the last year we will be supporting the Green Waste Clean-up. These efforts have played an important role in reducing wildfire risk and supporting community preparedness. We recognize the value of these programs for wildfire mitigation and community safety and continue to explore opportunities for future funding and staffing solutions. Pinewood Fire District will provide updates to our community should circumstances change or alternative options become available.

The timeline for the Green Waste Clean-up will be similar to previous years with bag distribution coming soon, and the pick-up of the bags scheduled for the week of April 27th through May 1st.

We appreciate our community's understanding and ongoing support. Pinewood Fire District will provide opportunity to address any questions or concerns at our next Community Watch Meeting on May 21st, 6:30pm at The Pinewood Country Club.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

Fire Chief Josh Tope

928-286-9885

jtope@pinewoodfire.org



PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE

Willard Springs Reopening & Community Cleanup Days

CHRISTOPHER TRESSLER,
DIRECTOR COCONINO COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

Willard Springs Reopens April 3 for Summer 2026 Season

Public Works is preparing to reopen the Willard Springs Green Waste Site on Friday, April 3 for the 2026 summer season, once again offering free green waste-only disposal to help residents clear pine needles, branches, and other yard debris from their properties.

Creating defensible space and reducing combustible materials around your home can help slow the spread of wildfire — and spring is the perfect time to get started.

The Willard Springs Green Waste Site will be open Fridays & Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. until Saturday, October 31 when it will close for the 2026-2027 winter season. The last load of green waste is accepted through the gate at 4:30 p.m. each day the station is open. Please note that the site does not accept bulk or household waste.

2026 Community Cleanup Days

Coconino County's Community Cleanup Days are back this spring. The bulk waste voucher and informational flier for the 2026 Community Cleanup Days will go out to property owners towards the end of April. As always, bulk waste vouchers are only good for depositing bulk waste at the City of Flagstaff Cinder Lake Landfill during Community Cleanup Days, which this year will run during the following dates and times:

Friday, May 29 - Saturday, June 6, 2026

Monday - Friday: 7:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

Saturday: 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Sunday: Closed

City of Flagstaff Cinder Lake Landfill

6770 East Landfill Road • Flagstaff

We'll also be publishing more information about the 2026 Community Cleanup Days in upcoming editions of The Pinewood News, and fliers for the event will be available at www.coconino.az.gov/CommunityCleanupDays.

Stay tuned for Bear Jaw community cleanup days.

MUNDS RANCH

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HONOR ON THE OVERPASS

The loss of Arizona DPS pilot Robert Bruce Skankey and Trooper/Paramedic Hunter Bennett hit hard. Both were killed in the line of duty when their helicopter crashed during a law enforcement response in Flagstaff. When the procession came through, the Pinewood Fire Department did what they always do. They showed up with respect and heart, standing above the highway in salute as our Munds Park firefighters honored the two men on their way home.

There is something especially moving about seeing our own fire department pay tribute like this. Quiet respect on an overpass, an American flag in the wind, and a reminder that those who serve understand loss in a way most of us never will.

Our thoughts are with the families of Robert Skankey and Hunter Bennett, and with every first responder carrying this loss.

From right to left: Derek Day, Tyler McCoy, unknown, Josh Doak and Matt Burns

PINEWOOD SANITARY DISTRICT SETS MARCH 12 PUBLIC HEARING SYSTEM REPAIRS & WIFA LOAN COSTS

The Pinewood Sanitary District will hold a public hearing on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at its District office as part of the Board meeting on that date, inviting residents and property owners to attend an important discussion regarding upcoming District matters.

The hearing will provide an opportunity for the public to learn about District plans going forward for operations, fiscal planning, and ongoing infrastructure needs, which are tied to the requirements of satisfying the ADEQ consent judgment and use of the WIFA loan funds that were approved by a public vote in November of 2023.

While the full agenda will be released in advance of the meeting, District officials intend to discuss WIFA loan repayment, fee structures, capital improvements, and long term planning for wastewater management within the community. Residents are encouraged to attend and ask questions.

The Pinewood Sanitary District emphasizes that public meetings play a crucial role in maintaining transparent governance and ensuring that infrastructure decisions reflect the needs of Munds Park.

The public hearing will be part of the Board meeting that begins at 3 pm on March 12. For more information, community members can visit the Pinewood Sanitary District website or contact the District office directly at 928-286-9166.

EASIER PET CARE FOR MUNDS PARK FAMILIES

For Munds Park pet owners, avoiding an extra trip to town is always a plus, especially when it comes to the everyday essentials that keep animals healthy. Midtown Animal Clinic offers a fully stocked online pharmacy that lets families order pet medications and prescription diets from home and have them shipped directly to their door.

That kind of convenience can be especially helpful for mountain residents, where a simple errand often means extra drive time. The clinic's online pharmacy also offers competitive pricing, manufacturer guarantees, and is currently advertising up to 50% off a first autoship order.

Midtown Animal Clinic says the goal is to help families get safe, authentic medications in the way that works best for their needs and budget. While the clinic offers its own trusted online pharmacy, the staff is also willing to work with outside services such as Chewy, giving pet owners flexibility and more options.

For a community full of animal lovers, it is a practical service that makes caring for pets a little easier and saves one more trip off the mountain.



...Local Highlights Continued on page 9A

Midtown Animal Clinic
www.midtown.vet
928-440-4020

Best Veterinarian in Flagstaff

VOTED Best of Flag 2021-2022-2024-2025

★★★★★
"From the minute you walk in the door through the interactions with the techs and Dr. Mac...I felt heard and that they were willing to take time addressing my concerns and the needs of my kitty. Everyone is incredibly friendly and genuinely seems to enjoy what they do. Absolutely appreciate the experiences I've had."
-Tory M.

★★★★★
"Midtown has made caring for our dog so easy - from reminders and the friendly front desk staff, to caring techs, to time with the Dr. Holly. We feel like he couldn't be in better hands as he grows up!"
-Caitlin O.

★★★★★
"This is my favorite vet I've ever taken my dog to! My dog is very shy but they were so accommodating and sweet to him, Dr. Mac Kenzie really took the time for my dog to get comfortable with him. It was so sweet and they go above and beyond not only to provide great veterinary care but also an environment my dog won't be scared of. They also offer free visits without veterinary care, called a Victory Visit, for socialization for shy dogs. I will definitely be doing that with my pup. I'm so appreciative of the staff at Midtown, could not recommend them more!"
-Shanna N.

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- ✓ 30 Years of Experience
- ✓ Munds Park Resident



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- Toilet Repair
- Water Heaters
- Water Softeners

...Continued from page 7A

CREATED BY PAUL MASON • SOLUTION PAGE 14B

LOVING MUNDS PARK MEANS SHOWING UP FOR IT

As the season begins and more people return to the mountain, it is a good time to remember that enjoying Munds Park is only part of the picture. This is a community people come to for the pines, the trails, the fresh air, and the fun that comes with mountain life. But keeping this place special also means pitching in.

That is exactly what the Munds Park Trail Stewards continue to do, season after season, by helping maintain the trails that so many residents and visitors love.

The first 2026 MUTS volunteer event is set for April 11, with trail maintenance planned for Crystal Point Trail. Volunteers should meet at the Pinewood Trailhead turn-around area at 8:15 a.m. Work will wrap up around noon, followed by a free lunch. Participants are asked to RSVP by April 4 at mundstrailstewards@hotmail.com.

Volunteers should wear long pants, sturdy shoes, dress for the weather, and bring a smile. Water and trail tools will be provided.

Upcoming MUTS volunteer dates are April 11, May 2, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12, and October 10. Readers can always find MUTS volunteer details, including upcoming dates, in the Things to Do & See page. As always, check for updates, as event dates may change or be postponed.

More information is available at the MUTS website: mundsparktrailstewards.com

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A LITTLE LOVE, WELL SHARED

On Valentine's Day, the ladies fellowship from Munds Park Community Church shared a simple act of kindness that carried real heart. They visited residents at The Peaks, including those in senior living and memory care, delivering handmade cards, carnations, and most importantly, their time. It was a thoughtful gesture that lifted spirits on both sides of the visit, brightening the day for those who were remembered and for those who came to give. It is a lovely reminder that whether through a church, a club, or simply on our own, taking time to reach out to others still matters. A small act of kindness can go a long way, and our community is better for it.



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MOUNTAIN DESERT



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Scan to see property details and photos.



WE TRUSTED THE STARS & GOT BURNED

A New Series on Protecting Your Home Before, During, & After the Job

BY SANDEE CAVINESS



This year, we're skipping the usual seasonal home maintenance checklist. We are launching a summer series for homeowners on how to choose the right contractor or home service company, spot warning signs sooner, understand the permitting process, and know what to do when a project starts to go wrong, because we got burned even after what we believed was a thorough vetting process.

This series comes from more than a year of costly, stressful firsthand experience.

Genna and I purchased a fixer-upper in Rimrock, and it needs a great deal of work. Whenever possible, we choose our own advertisers to help care for our home. As our readers know, we vet our advertisers. We check reviews, verify licenses, and do a first round of screening so readers can make a more informed first cut.

That is why what happened next hit so hard.

A longtime advertiser, with hundreds of Google reviews and a 4.9 rating, seemed like someone we could trust completely to handle an important job. We thought we had done our homework. What followed proved that homework alone is not always enough.

After more than a year of problems, Genna and I kept asking ourselves the same question: How does this company have such strong Google reviews? That is when we really started asking questions, and we learned a great deal.

We learned so much from that experience that we believe it can help others avoid the same kind of trouble. We are not interested in publicly attacking any one company. The company involved no longer advertises with us, so our readers do not need to worry about choosing them through Pinewood News. What matters now is using what we learned to help readers ask better questions, spot warning signs sooner, and protect themselves before a bad hire turns into a major financial, legal, and emotional mess.

We have heard this story too many times. A repair goes wrong, the contractor points fingers or rushes in with a fix that only makes the problem worse, and before long the project is a mess. Costs pile up. Stress takes over. The peace you should feel in your own home starts to disappear.

That is not a small inconvenience when the work involves your roof, your wiring, your plumbing, your heating and cooling, or anything else tied to the safety and value of your home.

Our mistake cost us both.

So we are breaking this series into the questions that matter most: How much should you trust online reviews? What should you know during the permitting process that most homeowners are never told? What happens when you need to file a complaint with the Arizona Registrar of Contractors? When is it time to stop waiting and call a lawyer? And what should homeowners know when a

locally owned business is bought up by investment groups but still trades on its old name? Investment groups often keep the trusted name long after the original owners are gone or

no longer in control. Independent owners are often proud of what they've built and focused on doing the work right, not just ringing the cash register.

We are starting this series with the first thing most people do before hiring anyone: checking Google reviews.

And yes, reviews matter. But the stars can lie, and they should never be the only thing you trust.

A high rating can be useful, but it is not proof that a company is the right fit for your job. A near-perfect score, especially with a very large number of reviews, should make you slow down and look closer. No company is perfect. Even good businesses run into delays, miscommunication, and unhappy customers.

The smarter move is to read beyond the stars and look for the real story.

Start with the newest reviews, then read the lowest-rated ones. Look for patterns, not just one-off complaints. If a company has a sudden wave of glowing five-star reviews posted close together, especially after long quiet stretches, that can be a sign of a review push rather than a natural flow of customer feedback. Watch for vague praise that sounds more like ad copy than a real customer experience. If review after review says the same thing in slightly different words, names the same employee in a scripted way, or sounds overly polished and generic, slow down. Real customers usually mention specifics: what was done, what went wrong, how long it took, what it cost, or how the company handled a problem.

If a review feels off, it is also worth clicking on the reviewer's profile to make sure it appears to be real. If the account is new or based in a town that does not make sense for a local job, take a closer look. If you see a cluster of brand-new accounts posting vague reviews, that can be a sign the review activity is being manipulated.

And yes, paid reviews can be part of that picture. Sometimes that means fake reviews bought outright. Sometimes it is more subtle: a marketing campaign pushing hard for five-star ratings, incentives for positive reviews, or employees being rewarded for collecting them. That does not mean every review is fake. It does mean the rating itself may be less meaningful than it looks.

Also pay attention to how the company responds. A thoughtful response that addresses the actual complaint can be a good sign. A canned response repeated over and over is not. If serious complaints get polished public replies but no real substance, that can tell you as much as the reviews themselves.

The safest approach is to treat reviews as a starting point, not a green light.

Before hiring anyone for major work on your home, especially anything involving your roof, structure, or mechanical systems, verify that the company is licensed where required, properly insured, and bonded when applicable. Ask for proof. Check the license for yourself. Make sure the name on the paperwork matches the name of the business you are hiring. Ask who will actually be doing the work. Get the scope in writing.

For smaller routine tasks, the level of risk may be lower. But the moment the work can damage your home, create liability, or affect safety, those protections matter.

Yes, hiring a licensed, bonded, and insured company may cost more up front, but this is your home. It is better to pay for proper protection now than to pay dearly for mistakes later.

This series is built around one simple idea: the best time to protect yourself is before the work begins.

In the weeks ahead, we will walk through the warning signs, the paperwork, the agencies, and the practical steps that can help you make better decisions before you hire and know what to do if things go wrong after the fact.

Because in a place like Munds Park, your home is not just a structure. It is your retreat, your investment, and, for some, a legacy. And if someone is going to work on it, they had better earn that trust.

Note to our readers: We do a first round of vetting for our advertisers. That includes checking reviews, verifying licenses, and looking at the public-facing information available to us so readers can make a more informed first cut. We value businesses that have earned strong customer feedback over time. But when it comes to major work on your home, no review, ad, or screening process should be the only factor in your decision. Always do your own due diligence before hiring anyone.



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THINGS TO DO & SEE!

MUNDS PARK

SATURDAY, APRIL 11



MUTS VOLUNTEER TRAIL DAY

Join the Munds Park Trail Stewards for Crystal Point Trail maintenance, then stay for a free lunch after the work is done. Please RSVP by Friday,

April 4, if you plan to attend.

Time: 8:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Location: Pinewood Trailhead turnaround area

Details: RSVP by email to mundstrailstewards@hotmail.com. Bring long pants, sturdy shoes, dress for the weather, and a smile. Water and trail tools will be provided. Check for updates at www.mundsparktrailstewards.com, as the event may change or be postponed.



FRIDAY, APRIL 17 OPENING DAY! PINWOOD COUNTRY CLUB

BEGINNING JUNE 1ST BINGO AT THE COUNTRY CLUB

Bingo at the Pinewood Country Club! This event is open to everyone—no membership

required. Come enjoy a fun night with neighbors!

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Pinewood Country Club,

THURSDAY, APRIL 9 - 12



NORTHERN ARIZONA BOOK FESTIVAL

Four days of readings, workshops, performances, and literary mayhem across downtown Flagstaff, with a walkable Saturday takeover in Heritage Square

packed with publishers, makers, and live sets.

Time: Varies by event. See website for the full schedule.

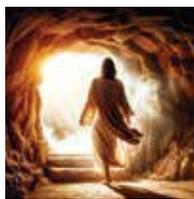
Location: Heritage Square, Flagstaff, AZ

Details: noazbookfest.org

Admission: See website for details.

EASTER CELEBRATIONS

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5



EASTER SERVICE AT MUNDS PARK COMMUNITY CHURCH

If Easter morning feels better with familiar faces and a welcoming room, this is a lovely way to spend

it. Join your neighbors for fellowship at Munds Park Community Church.

Time: 10:45 a.m.

Location: Munds Park Community Church,
17670 S Munds Ranch Rd, Munds Park

SATURDAY, APRIL 4



EASTER EGG HUNT AT ARIZONA SNOWBOWL

Let the kids loose in the Little Spruce Learning Area for a fast, free egg hunt with prize-filled eggs and a visit from the Easter Bunny. Show up early, because eggs have

a habit of disappearing.

Time: 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (hunt begins at 12:15 p.m.)

Location: Arizona Snowbowl, Little Spruce Learning Area, 9300 N Snowbowl Rd, Flagstaff

Details: snowbowl.ski/event/easter-egg-hunt-3/

Admission: FREE

SATURDAY, APRIL 4



EGGCELLENT- EGGVENTURE & PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Roll into Pioneer Park for pancakes, an egg hunt, games, prizes, and a cameo by the Easter Bunny. Hunts

begin at 10 a.m., so arrive early if you want first crack at the good eggs.

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (hunts begin at 10:00 a.m.)

Location: Pioneer Park, 1200 Commerce Dr, Prescott

Details: prescott-az.gov/rec-services/special-events/

Admission: FREE

LIVE MUSIC & THEATER

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2026



BRENTANO QUARTET

Spend your Sunday afternoon with one of the best-known string quartets around, bringing Schubert, Beethoven, and a modern twist to Sedona.

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: Sedona Hilton, 90 Ridge Trail Dr, Sedona

Details: chambermusicседona.org

Admission: See website for details

EVERY FRIDAY!



BARN DANCE

Kick off the weekend with live music, dancing, and a farm-night crowd that knows how to have a good time. Dinner is available if you want to make a full evening of it.

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Location: Mortimer Farms, 12907 E. State Route 169, Dewey

Details: mortimerfarmsaz.com

Admission: See website for dinner and ticket details

THURSDAY, APRIL 2-SUNDAY, APRIL 19



THE MARVELOUS WONDERETTES

Take a cheerful trip back to the prom era with this jukebox musical packed with more than 30 hit songs from the 1950s and 1960s. It is a fun

pick for anyone who likes live music, big harmonies, and a little nostalgia with their night out.

Time: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Location: Theatrikos Theatre Company, 11 W Cherry Ave, Flagstaff

Details: theatrikos.com/events/the-marvelous-wonderettes/

Admission: See website for details

MARKETS

SUNDAYS THROUGH MAY 31

SEDONA COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKET

Stock up on local produce, baked goods, and treats, then call it lunch with a coffee and something delicious you did not have to cook. Winter season runs weekly on Sundays.

Time: 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Location: Wells Fargo Bank parking lot, 2201 W State Route 89A, West Sedona

Details: sedona-farmers-market.com

EVERY SATURDAY

PRESCOTT FARMERS MARKET

Support local farmers, enjoy seasonal flavors, and help grow a healthier, stronger local economy with every purchase.

Time: 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Location: 900 Iron Springs Rd, Prescott,

EVERY DAY

GREEN MAGIC GARDEN FARMSTAND

If you enjoy fresh goods, and the kind of farmstand that still runs on trust, and worth the drive. Stop in for eggs, local honey, nuts, herbs, baked goods, pantry staples, ice cream, gifts, and garden supplies, then try not to leave with more than you planned!

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. daily; fresh baked goods and special items Friday–Sunday only

Location: 1068 S Canal Circle, Camp Verde

Facebook: @green.magic.garden

WINDMILL PARK FARMERS MARKET

Shop fresh and local every Thursday at Windmill Park! Find farm-to-table produce, sprouts, fruits, nuts, eggs, vegan organics, fresh bread, and honey—straight from local growers.

Date: Every Thursday

Time: 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Location: 9950 E Cornville Rd, Cornville,

FESTIVALS

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Sedona hosts its annual St. Patrick's Day parade with local groups, floats, and plenty of green on display. A lively morning tradition that draws a friendly crowd.

Time: 10:30 am

Location: Jordan Rd in Sedona,

Details: sedonaaz.gov

Admission: Free

SATURDAY, MARCH 21 -22

CAMP VERDE PECAN & WINE FESTIVAL

Downtown Camp Verde turns into a two-day snack-and-sip stroll with vendors, live music, and plenty of pecan goodness. General admission is free, and wine tasting

tickets are available. No pets, service animals only.

Time: Saturday 11:00 am – 7:00 pm; Sunday 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Location: 75 E. Hollamon Street, Camp Verde

Details: visitcampverde.com/pecan-and-wine-festival

Admission: FREE

SATURDAY, MAY 9

VERDE VALLEY WINE FESTIVAL

Sip local wines, browse vendors, and enjoy live music at Riverfront Park in one of the Verde Valley's signature spring events. It is a good

excuse to spend a Saturday outdoors with a glass in hand and no guilt about it.

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location: Riverfront Park, 1284 E. River Front Rd, Cottonwood

Details: verdevalleywinefestival.com

Admission: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door

FRIDAY, APRIL 23 - 26

SEDONA YOGA FESTIVAL

Soak in four days of yoga, meditation, workshops, music, and mindful experiences set among Sedona's stunning red rocks. All levels can explore breathwork, kirtan, excursions, conscious talks, kids yoga, and more in this immersive wellness gathering.

Time: Varies by session (festival runs daily)

Location: Sedona (various outdoor sites)

Details: sedonayogafestival.com

Admission: www.sedonayogafestival.com

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BIRTHDAY**

In The

MUNDS PARK

★ 4TH OF JULY PARADE ★

The Munds Park 4th of July Parade is a tradition we look forward to every year, but this one carries extra meaning. In 2026, America celebrates her 250th birthday, making this year's parade part of an historic celebration. If you have ever thought about joining the parade, this is the year to start early. Talk it over with family, neighbors, or your favorite group of volunteers. Simple or elaborate, big or small, every entry adds to the spirit of the day. Our annual cover competition is back for the fourth year. The winning float will be featured on the front cover of The Pinewood News, giving one standout entry top billing, hometown bragging rights, and a keepsake place in this once-in-a-generation celebration. Mark your calendar and start planning now. Let's make this 4th of July Parade one to remember. Kick the 4th of July off early with the Electric Light Parade on the evening of July 3. It will follow the same route and guidelines as last year, so start planning something bright, festive, and fun. Stay tuned for updates and parade entry details.



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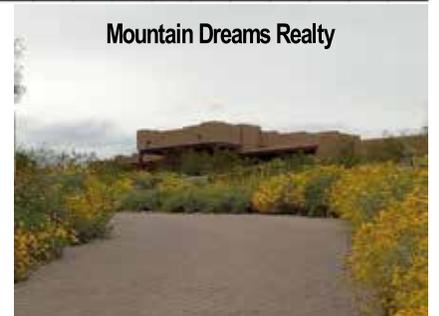


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A TOAST TO ARIZONA WINE MONTH

Four Beautiful Stops Worth the Drive

March is Arizona Wine Month, which makes this the perfect time to head for Sedona and the Verde Valley, where the wine scene has grown into something polished, welcoming, and very much its own. The Verde Valley earned federal AVA status on November 10, 2021, a sign that this is no side hobby with a cork in it. It is a recognized wine region with real character, and it shows.



Courtesy photo Merkin Vineyards Hilltop Winery & Trattoria

For an upscale afternoon with a little swagger, Merkin Vineyards Hilltop Winery & Trattoria in Cottonwood is one of the area's signature stops. It pairs estate-grown Arizona wine with a stylish food experience in Old Town Cottonwood, making it a place that feels just as suited for a celebratory lunch as a leisurely tasting that somehow turns into dinner.

Page Springs Cellars, in Cornville, remains one of the most dependable favorites in the region. Open year-round, it offers a refined but relaxed setting that makes visitors feel comfortable whether they know their tannins from their tea leaves or are simply there for a good glass and a pretty afternoon.

D.A. Ranch brings a quieter kind of luxury. This boutique, family-owned estate vineyard in Cornville sits on a broad, scenic property and is the kind of place that invites you to slow down, breathe a little deeper, and pretend you are the sort of person who always chooses the correct wine glass on the first try.

Then there is Alcantara Vineyards near Camp Verde, a longtime favorite known for its setting at the confluence of the Verde River

and Oak Creek. It is scenic in the way that makes people suddenly start speaking in soft voices, as if the view might charge extra. It is a lovely stop for anyone who wants beautiful surroundings with their tasting.

If you are planning a wine-country outing this month, these four are among the region's finest: warm, memorable, and distinctly Arizona.

Wineries to Know

Merkin Vineyards Hilltop Winery & Trattoria

770 N Verde Heights Dr., Cottonwood, AZ 86326

Website: merkintrattoria.com

Page Springs Cellars

1500 N. Page Springs Road, Cornville, AZ 86325

Website: pagespringscellars.com

D.A. Ranch

1900 Dancing Apache Road, Cornville, AZ 86325

Website: daranch.com

Alcantara Vineyards

3445 S Grapevine Way, Camp Verde, AZ 86322

Website: alcantaravineyard.com



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MUNDS PARK MARKET REPORT

Prices, Days on Market, Buyer & Seller Reality



If it feels like you are hearing two different stories about Munds Park real estate, you are. One says prices climbed sharply over the past several years. The other says prices are down from a year ago. In a small market, both can be true at the same time. A handful of sales can make one month look dramatic, even when the broader trend is more stable.

Zillow's Home Value Index currently puts the average Munds Park home value at \$573,830, down 0.6% over the past year. That is a mild year-over-year dip, not a collapse. Because Zillow's index tracks monthly changes across many properties, it usually gives a steadier picture than a single month of closed sales.

The confusion usually starts with monthly median sale prices. Redfin reports that in January 2026, Munds Park's median sale price was \$340,000, down 26.5% from a year earlier. That sounds steep, until you see the sample size: only two homes sold that month. In a market that small, the mix of homes matters a lot. If the only two sales were smaller, older, or in rougher shape than the homes that sold a year earlier, the median can swing hard without proving the whole market suddenly lost that much value.

A wider look helps. In ZIP code 86017, which includes Munds Park, Redfin shows a January 2026 median sale price of \$530,000, down 2.8% year over year, with 19 homes sold. Zillow's 86017 index shows the average home value at \$575,248, down 0.5% over the past year. That broader view supports the same conclusion: the market looks softer than it did a year ago, but not broken.

Where the slowdown becomes more obvious is selling time. Redfin's January closed-sales report shows Munds Park homes averaging 108 days on market, up from 84 days a year earlier. But again, that figure is based on only two sales. Realtor.com reports Munds Park at 126 median days on market in December 2025, up 93.85% year over year. That suggests the slower pace is real, and possibly more pronounced than the two-sale January snapshot alone.

For buyers, that usually means more leverage. They have more time to compare homes, ask tougher questions, and negotiate harder, especially on homes that need repairs or feel overpriced.

For sellers, it means realistic pricing, good maintenance records, and clear documentation matter more than ever. In a slower market, uncertainty can cost you time. This buyer-seller dynamic is an inference drawn from the longer days-on-market data and softer price trends.

Mortgage rates are helping a little, but not enough to erase buyer caution. Freddie Mac says the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate was 5.98% as of February 26, 2026, down from 6.01% the week before. That is better than earlier highs, but still high enough to keep many buyers selective about price and condition.

The national mood also matters. The National Association of Realtors reported that existing-home sales fell 8.4% in January 2026, with declines in every region. Munds Park is its own market, but broader caution helps explain why fewer buyers are rushing and

why sellers are seeing fewer quick offers.

The bottom line is this: Munds Park's long-term rise in home values is real, but the market has cooled from its peak. "Down year over year" does not mean values suddenly fell apart. It means buyers have become more cautious, homes are taking longer to move, and small monthly sales counts can make price swings look more dramatic than they really are. In plain

English, the market looks slower and more selective, not shattered.

Source: Zillow, Redfin, Realtor.com, Freddie Mac and the National Association of Realtors.

Munds Park Real Estate is its Own Animal

Work with a local realtor who understands this market, the homes here, and the unique challenges that come with buying in Munds Park. It's important to hire a realtor that knows our market. Before you make a move, check the Pinewood News for some of the longest-serving, most seasoned realtors in town, along with insurance agents who specialize in helping residents find coverage in an area where wildfire risk and floodplain concerns can matter.



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17010 TEAL PLACE

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\$750,000

1350 E THUNDERBIRD TRAIL

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110 E OAK DRIVE

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17615 S MUSTANG RD \$275,000

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17375 CRYSTAL BROOK PL \$192,000

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A SLOW FOOD JOURNEY THROUGH DONEGAL, IRELAND

BY "UNSTOPPABLE STACEY" WITTIG

Photos by UNSTOPPABLE Stacey



Oysters at Arnolds Hotel in Donegal



Horn Head on the wild coast of Donegal



Des Gallen, cheesemonger and storyteller

As St. Patrick's Day approaches, a food-focused journey through northwest Ireland shows how lingering over local meals reveals the deeper story of a place.

Around St. Patrick's Day, Ireland naturally drifts back into conversation and into memory. Last fall, I spent time in County Donegal, not rushing between attractions but lingering at local cafés, farm kitchens, and village restaurants. What I discovered there reminded me how deeply food connects us to place.

Donegal is dramatic country, Atlantic light shifting by the minute, hills rolling toward sea cliffs, villages where conversation still outranks schedule. It's also quietly becoming one of Ireland's most interesting food regions, thanks largely to chefs, farmers, and food artisans who've returned home after working abroad. They bring new techniques and global perspective, yet their ingredients remain unmistakably local.

My first morning in Letterkenny began with the soft hiss of an espresso machine inside a small coffee roastery. Burlap sacks of beans lined the wall. The owner spoke about visiting growers overseas, then about Donegal water, how its mineral balance produces a clean cup locals swear by. Outside, mist blurred the street. Inside, warmth came from conversation as much as coffee.

Later that day in Ramelton, a riverside village that feels almost painted into the landscape, I stepped into a cheese shop that doubled as a gathering place. Wheels of farmhouse cheddar shared space with natural wines and easy humor. Tastings unfolded more like storytelling than retail. Strangers chatted. Advice flowed freely. Nobody seemed in a hurry.

Just around the corner, dinner arrived without theatrics yet full of quiet confidence. Vegetables tasted freshly lifted from soil still holding autumn warmth. Seafood carried the clean Atlantic edge. Nothing complicated. Nothing masked. Just ingredients treated with respect.

That respect surfaced everywhere.

Seafood, of course, anchors Donegal's table. Irish salmon arrived coral-bright and silken, tasting clean rather than rich, as if the cold Atlantic itself had been distilled into each bite. Oysters needed little more than a squeeze of lemon, briny, mineral, unmistakably fresh. You didn't just eat them; you tasted tide, temperature, and place.

One evening, I followed the scent of wood smoke to a restaurant blending Irish produce with South African braai traditions. Flames flickered behind the grill while cooks worked with practiced calm.

Local meats met global technique, the result was both worldly and firmly rooted in Donegal. Travel shapes chefs, then chefs reshape home.

Another memorable meal unfolded at a historic country house surrounded by kitchen gardens. Gravel crunched underfoot on arrival. Inside, candlelight warmed stone walls. Staff spoke about herbs clipped that afternoon, recipes refined across generations, hospitality viewed less as service than stewardship. Dining there felt like briefly joining someone else's ongoing story.

Between these anchor meals came smaller moments that often linger longest: a roadside honesty box filled with fresh eggs, bakery windows fogged from soda bread cooling inside, chocolates infused with locally harvested sea salt, milk so fresh it hinted at pasture.

And always, conversations.

A fisherman describing that morning's catch. A chocolatier experimenting with unexpected flavor pairings. A farmer explaining how Donegal's shifting light influences crops. Nobody rushed. Pride showed up naturally, without performance.

That's the quiet magic of slow travel. Give a place time, and it reveals itself through scent, taste, shared tables, unplanned conversations.

Donegal isn't chasing food-destination status. Instead, it leans into authenticity, strong local sourcing, hospitality traditions, openness to new ideas grounded in old ones. Spend time there, and you begin to taste the landscape itself.

If Ireland is calling to you, perhaps sparked by St. Patrick's Day, consider heading northwest and letting curiosity lead. Skip the rush. Stay longer. Follow the smell of bread or peat smoke. Ask locals where they actually eat.

If you'd like the specific cafés, restaurants, and food stops that shaped my trip, I've gathered them into a detailed self-guided Donegal food tour you can explore anytime at

unstoppablestaceytravel.com/best-places-to-eat-in-donegal-tours, it's a wonderful starting point if Ireland is on your horizon.

Because what I carried home wasn't just memorable meals. It was laughter across wooden tables, smoke clinging lightly to a jacket, stories shared generously with a traveler passing through.

And if Ireland finds its way into your celebrations this March, don't just wear the green.

Go find it.

CARROT JUICE BRUNCH WITH A BACKBONE

A Bunny Mary



Then there's the rim. Pimentón salt, smoked paprika, salt, and cayenne. That's the detail that turns this from "interesting idea" into "make another one." Every sip hits spice first, then citrus, then that savory briny finish. No garnish tower required. A parsley sprig is plenty.

Ingredients (serves one)

- Pimenton salt, to rim glass*
- 1 1/2 oz aquavit or vodka
- 3 oz carrot juice
- 1/2 oz honey syrup
- 1/2 oz lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- 1 teaspoon caper brine
- 1 teaspoon Crystal hot sauce
- Garnish: parsley sprig

Somewhere between the first yard cleanup and the first weekend brunch invite, you start wanting the same kind of drink every year. Something bright, a little spicy, and not overly fussy. A cocktail that welcomes the weekend and still makes sense mid-morning.

That's where the Bunny Mary comes in. It's a Bloody Mary riff that drops tomato juice and swaps in carrot, which sounds like a health kick until you taste what it actually does. Carrot juice brings an earthy sweetness and a clean, orange snap. Lemon keeps it honest. Honey syrup rounds the edges so it stays smooth, not thin. Then caper brine and Crystal hot sauce bring the savory punch that makes a Bunny Mary worth ordering in the first place.

The Bloody Mary has always been a traveler. Its creation is often credited to Fernand Petiot in 1920s Paris at Harry's New York Bar, then carried across the Atlantic and sharpened into a spiced brunch classic in New York. The Bunny Mary is what happens when bartenders treat that drink as a template instead of a rule. Swap the base, keep the structure. Salt, acid, heat, something briny, and a spirit that can carry flavor.

If you have aquavit, use it. Vodka will behave, but aquavit actually contributes something. It's a Scandinavian spirit that's been produced since the 15th century, and those herbal, caraway-and-dill notes play beautifully with carrot, honey, and lemon.

The Method

1. Coat the rim of the glass with the pimenton salt and fill with ice.
2. Combine the aquavit or vodka, carrot juice, honey syrup, lemon juice, caper brine and hot sauce in the glass and stir until chilled. Add more ice if needed.
3. Garnish with a parsley sprig.

Pimenton Salt

Combine 1 tablespoon smoked sweet paprika, 1 tablespoon salt and 1/2 tablespoon cayenne pepper in a small bowl. The mixture will create enough to rim at least a dozen glasses.



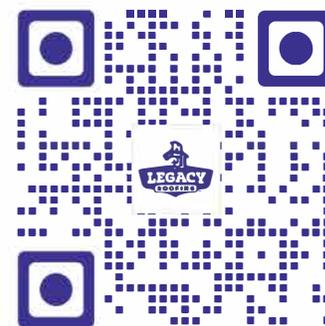
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56	57	58						59			60	61	62
63					64		65			66			
67					68					69			
70						71				72			

ACROSS

1. Tool building
5. Large stringed instrument
9. Whip
13. Theater section
14. Twinkle-toed
16. Think tank nugget
17. Sweeping story
18. John Updike's "Rabbit ____"
19. Earthy deposit
20. Removes weapons from
22. More than a few
24. Dairy farm sound
25. "Aquarius" musical
26. Bellyaching
30. Tarnish
33. Resistance unit
34. State flower of New Hampshire
37. Small islands
39. Plumbing problem
41. Chocolate substitute
43. A contemptuous term for a Jewish person.
44. An Italian, Spanish, or Portuguese-speaking person.
45. Joltless joe?
47. Capitol V.I.P.: Abbr.
48. Flies alone
51. 'Side by side
53. Flight org. (anagram of CIAO)
55. Mire
56. Pedicure focus

DOWN

1. Musher's transport
2. Western tribe
3. Support
4. Leave quickly
5. Pleasing, musically
6. Years and years
7. Purged
8. Luxurious
9. Irish poem
10. Sixth Jewish month
11. Vaccines
12. Place for portraits
15. Permission to leave granted by a bishop
21. Stir up
23. Through
26. Pot of found at the end of the rainbow
27. Flightless birds
28. Insect stage
29. Pleased
31. Monetary unit of Nigeria
32. Small fry
35. Verb for you

36. ____-Cola
38. Fall mo.
40. Asian mink or its fur
42. Flagstaff Backcountry Outfitters
46. Pond croaker
49. Wood sorrel
50. _____Patrick's Day
52. Christmas drink
54. Martini garnish
56. Argentine timber tree
57. Responsibility
58. Carve in stone
59. Sharpen
60. Mischief-making Norse god
61. Sandwich man?
62. Spawning fish
65. Cookie-selling org.



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MULCH, PLAN & PLANT WITH CONFIDENCE THIS SPRING

BY MISTI WARNER-ANDERSEN, CO-OWNER, WARNER'S NURSERY & LANDSCAPE CO.

Spring comes quickly in Northern Arizona. One minute your garden is resting quietly under a blanket of snow, and the next we are looking at longer days and can't wait to get our hands into the soil.

March is the perfect time to shift from dreaming to doing. And at Warner's Nursery, it starts with what we call Mulch Madness.

Why is mulch so important? Because your garden's soil isn't just dirt; it's a living system that supports every root and bloom. Mulch plays a critical role in protecting and improving that system.

First, mulch conserves soil moisture. It's a barrier against evaporation, and it also helps suppress the weeds that can compete with your plants for water and nutrients. Mulch also regulates soil temperature, keeping roots cooler during summer heat and providing insulation against chilly spring nights.

Organic mulches (such as wood chips, bark, and leaves) break down over time, adding organic matter back into the soil. This improves soil structure, fertility, and overall health. Mulch also prevents erosion and compaction by cushioning the impact of heavy rain and snowmelt.

And there's also the aesthetic benefit: a fresh 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch creates a clean, finished look in garden beds and around trees.

Mulch is foundational, but early spring is also the time to tackle other garden prep tasks.



Start seeds indoors for vegetables and annual flowers. Review last year's successes and challenges and sketch out any new projects. Early planning gives you time to source the right plants and prepare your soil properly before peak planting season.

If you're considering larger changes — new trees, structural shrubs, or redesigned beds — now is also the time to get expert input.

Warner's Nursery offers a professional Plant & Delivery service. Our landscape installation team handles the heavy lifting, ensuring proper planting techniques for long-term success. (Note: These services apply specifically to trees and shrubs, not perennials or annuals.)

If you're planning a landscape refresh but intend to plant yourself, or simply want a professional roadmap, Warner's consultation services may be the right fit. Customers meet on-site with our experts, who evaluate the space and develop customized plant lists suited to the property's conditions.

March is all about preparation. Healthy soil, thoughtful planning, and the right support can make the difference between a garden that is "meh" and one that blooms beautifully!

Whether you're spreading fresh mulch, starting seeds on the windowsill, planting new trees, or mapping out a larger project, the steps you take now will shape your garden for months, and even years, to come.

Mulch wisely. Plan intentionally. And if you need guidance, Warner's Nursery is ready to help you grow.



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WORD SEARCH

CREATED BY PAUL MASON • SOLUTION PAGE 14B

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|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Bagpipe | Green | Patron |
| Blarneystone | Harp | Pot of gold |
| Bog | Holiday | Rainbow |
| Celebrate | Irish | Saint |
| Celtic | Jig | Seventeenth |
| Clover | Legend | Shamrock |
| Coins | Leprechaun | Shillelagh |
| Donnybrook | Little people | Snake |
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| Gaelic | March | |



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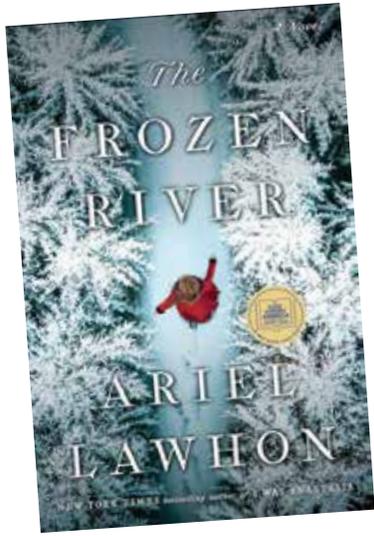
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THE FROZEN RIVER

BY SANDY WRIGHT



Maine, 1789: During the harsh winter, the Kennebec River freezes, entombing a man in the ice, Martha Ballard is summoned to examine the body and determine cause of death. As a midwife and healer, she is privy to much of what goes on behind closed doors in Hallowell. Her diary is a record of every birth and death, crime and debacle that unfolds in the close-knit community.

When the crime is linked to a prior brutal rape, Martha decides to uncover the truth behind both crimes, even though the local physician contradicts her conclusion, declaring the man's death to be an accident.

Throughout the winter, as the trial nears, and whispers mount in the town, Martha doggedly pursues the truth.

Layered and subversive, Ariel Lawhon's book introduces an unsung hero who refuses to accept anything less than justice, regardless of the cost.

Martha Ballard was a midwife of considerable accomplishment in real life. She delivered more than 1,000 babies, and faithfully recorded her daily activities in a series of daybooks from 1785-1812. The Frozen River is a gripping, tense and tender story based on a remarkable woman who had such a legacy, yet remains mostly forgotten to this day.

Lawhon creates a strong sense of place and time with solid historical details. Her characters are realistically crafted, which gives us the feel of actual people and events. Most important, the story is an easy read, and you will be able to feel like you truly know these people and can experience their lives.

I appreciated the emphasis on women's rights and their need for justice (although not always granted). The author brings early America to life with descriptions of daily routines, community dynamics, and midwifery, without letting the history feel dry. Martha is a dedicated and caring protagonist who drives the narrative, and her daily diary entries ground the story. At times the story may seem to linger on everyday details, but for a reader who enjoys character-driven fiction with a strong sense of place, it only added to the atmosphere for me.

I have immense respect for Martha. Her moral compass never faltered, even when speaking up put her family at risk. Her courage is amazing! I also fell in love with Martha's strong, loving husband. He stood up for what was right, and encouraged her work. He and Martha were true life partners, even when life was messy.

This is a novel I will long remember. Historical fiction mixed with mystery and a dose of suspense. Give it a read!

- by Ariel Lawhon
- Doubleday, 2023
- 448 pages



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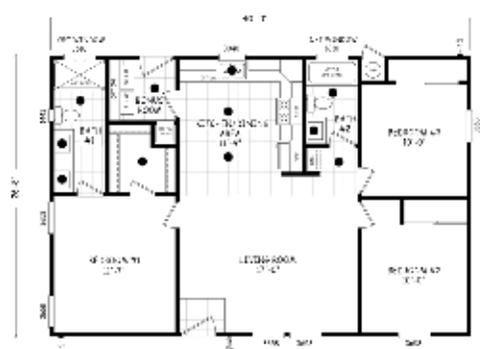


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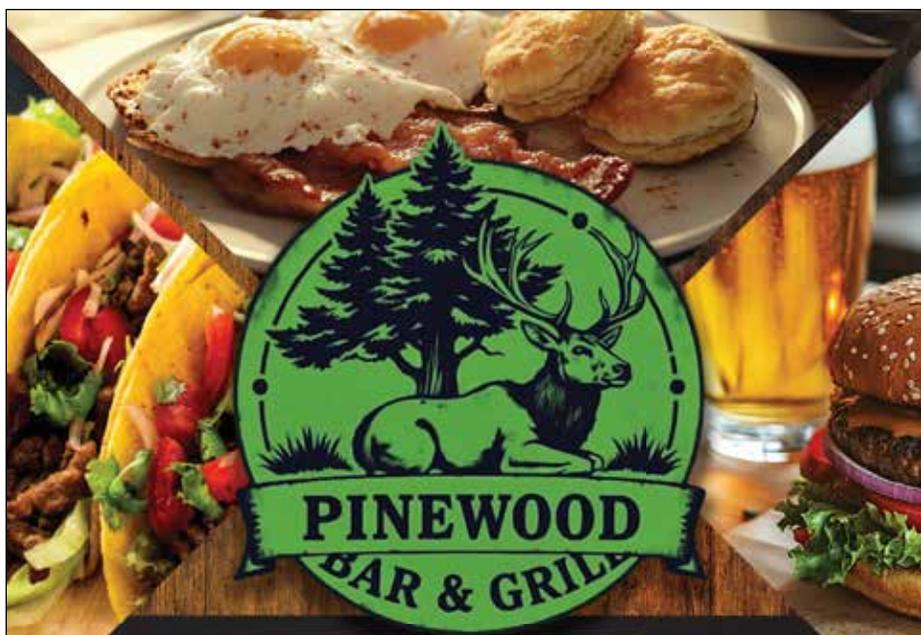
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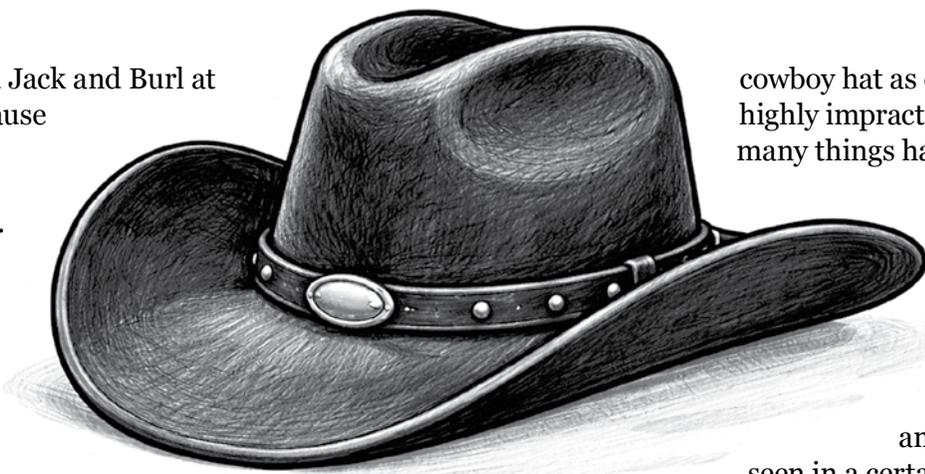
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COWBOY HATS

BY ROBERT RACZKA



cowboy hat as one goes about one's daily life can be highly impractical. It takes up a lot of space and makes many things hard to do including kissing someone, especially someone wearing a cowboy hat, or driving a car, though a pickup truck is easier. A cowboy hat takes up a lot of space and if you take it off, it can be hard to hold and even harder to find a place to set it where someone isn't liable to sit on it. In short, it's a commitment and wearing one means that you want to be seen in a certain way. Much like Big Al did.

Standing at the bar talking to Mad Jack and Burl at Agee's, I was the odd man out because I was not wearing a cowboy hat. This set me to ruminating on the presence of cowboy hats in my life.

In the 1950s of my youth, cowboys were a master meme, from John Wayne to fried baloney "cowboy hats." I recall a toy cowboy hat with a string under the chin and the signature of Roy Rogers on it, possibly a souvenir of a tourist trap like Spur City, attractions that were well-advertised on billboards and the kind of places my parents considered enriching.

The only real cowboy hat that I owned was brown felt, broad-brimmed-a real beaut. While we were visiting relatives in Oklahoma, Uncle Dan bought them in the up phase of his cycle, which sometimes manifested itself in shopping bags. It was an expensive hat fit for a real cowboy and it was one of a set for each of "the boys" and one for my father and Uncle Dan himself. My younger sister didn't get one. Even I sensed that they were too much. What was I supposed to do with it, we didn't play Cowboys and Indians, we played Army. Back in Pennsylvania mine went into the attic, possibly made a brief appearance on Halloween, and then vanished.

A decade later, displaced from his hometown and recently divorced and in search of a new identity in Flagstaff, my father Al was renamed Big Al more-or-less simultaneously with donning the cowboy hat that became his default headwear. Could it have been the one that Uncle Dan bought? It's unlikely that Al would have kept that through a divorce and multiple changes of address before he settled in for an extended stay at the Downtowner Motel ("Weekly Rates"). I remember Big Al's hat which was customized with a hatband studded with Mercury dimes which echoed the turquoise and silver belt buckle he also had custom-made. Big Al especially liked to wear his cowboy hat to the Indian bars (so-called at the time) and cowboy bars along Santa Fe Avenue, Flagstaff's public facing gateway where they were considered a civic embarrassment for tourists passing through on their way to the Grand Canyon. Those "nuisance bars" were ultimately displaced without leveling the buildings which have been adapted to new uses in a double win of civic improvement and historic preservation.

Years later when my father was visiting me in Philadelphia, we stopped at The Italian Deli. The guy at the sliced meats counter later asked me if my father was a rancher since he couldn't tell the difference between a rancher and a retired construction worker in a cowboy hat, though admittedly my father did have a weathered open-range look from a lifetime spent working outdoors without sun protection. But as an actual rancher would have said, my father was "all hat and no cattle." Given that my father spent the remainder of his life in Northern Arizona he never felt any pressure to give up wearing that cowboy hat. He wasn't done with it until he was done.

When I started returning to Arizona after a long hiatus, I noticed that cowboy hats were less common. There were cowboy hats on the remaining ranchers and farmers and they were still mandatory for country music performers and optional for used car dealers and politicians while being favored by a surprising number of Native American and Latino men. Though sometimes practical, wearing a

Having spent my formative years in Flagstaff, there's more than a little Westerner in me. I wouldn't go shopping for a cowboy hat but if I stumbled across one at a yard sale, who knows? A cowboy hat doesn't have to be a ten-gallon hat like the one Hoss wore on Bonanza but rather a Stetson of which there are a variety of shapes and brim widths, one of which might suit me. I wouldn't wear it in Phoenix but maybe I'd wear it to Sportsmunds. It wouldn't be the first time I wore a cowboy hat in public. Then again, I think I'll stick with tukes and trucker caps.

Local Ink is open to anyone in our community who enjoys writing, whether you've been published or not. If you've got a story, memory, opinion, how-to, or a bit of Pinewood life to share, we'd love to read it. Keep it simple, keep it real, and have fun. Send your piece to Hello@ThePinewoodNews.com with "Local Ink" in the subject line.

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IT'S A BUGS LIFE

STINKY THE PINACATE BEETLE

In the high desert near Camp Verde, where the sun shines hot and the sand is warm under tiny feet, there lived a beetle named Stinky. He was a Pinacate beetle, very black and shiny, with six sturdy legs and a round back that looked like a small polished stone. Stinky was not very big. He was about the size of a button. But he had a Very Important Secret.

Most days, Stinky walked slowly across the desert floor. He looked for bits of dry leaf or a dropped seed or sometimes a bit of old cactus. "Breakfast is important," Stinky would say to himself. "And lunch. And tea. And supper." He said it in a thoughtful sort of way, because that is how beetles think.

One morning, Stinky was out for his walk when he met a curious lizard. The lizard was green and quick, with eyes that darted this way and that. "Hello, little black fellow," said the lizard. "You look tasty. May I have a nibble?"

Stinky stopped. He thought for a moment. Then he thought for another moment. "No," he said politely. "I do not think that would be a good idea."

The lizard laughed. "But why not? You are slow. And I am fast."

Stinky considered this. He considered it very carefully. Then he did what he always did when things became A Bit Uncomfortable. He put his head down on the sand. Very slowly. Very deliberately. And he lifted his tail end high into the air. It was quite a splendid headstand. His legs waved a little in the breeze.

The lizard blinked. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"I am standing on my head," said Stinky. "It is my Special Position."

The lizard came closer. "That looks silly," he said. "Does it help?"

"Just wait," said Stinky.

From the end where his tail was now pointing at the sky, there came a small puff. Then a bigger puff. A Very Strong Smell filled the air. It smelled like old socks mixed with burnt toast and a dash of very sour milk. The lizard sniffed once. His eyes watered. He sneezed. Then he sneezed again.

"Oh dear," said the lizard. "That is not at all nice."

"No," agreed Stinky. "It is not meant to be nice. It is meant to be Useful."

The lizard backed away. "I think I shall go and find something else for breakfast," he said quickly. "Something that does not smell like that."

And off he went, very fast indeed.

Stinky lowered his tail and stood up straight again. He brushed a bit of sand from his shiny back. "Well," he said to no one in particular. "That was exciting. But now I am rather hungry after all that thinking."

He continued his walk. Soon he found a nice dry leaf under a rock. He nibbled it thoughtfully. "Leaves are good," he said. "They help keep the desert tidy. And when I eat them, I help turn them back into earth. That is my job. A small job, but an Important One."

As the sun climbed higher, Stinky met a little ant. The ant was carrying a crumb much bigger than herself. "Good morning, Stinky," said the ant. "You saved the day again with your Special Position."

Stinky nodded modestly. "It is only a puff," he said. "But it works."

The ant smiled. "You are brave in your own way. And funny, too. Everyone laughs when they see a beetle doing a headstand."

Stinky thought about that. "Laughing is good," he decided. "As long as no one gets too close afterward."

They walked together for a while. The ant told stories about her colony. Stinky listened politely. Then he said, "Would you like some of my leaf?"

"Thank you," said the ant. "But I must hurry home. There is always work to do."

Off she went.

Stinky sat in the shade of a small bush. He looked out at the wide desert. The sky was very blue. The sand was very gold. And somewhere far away, a bird sang.

"I like being a Stink Beetle," he said softly. "I make smells. I stand on my head. I help the desert stay clean. And sometimes I make lizards sneeze."

He chuckled. It was a small chuckle, because beetles do not chuckle loudly.

And that is how Stinky spent his days. Walking. Eating. Thinking. And doing headstands when necessary.

Because even in the big desert, a small beetle with a big smell can be Very Useful Indeed.

FIND FOREST DWELLERS



FIND 10 HIDDEN PICTURES

Answers on page 14B.



V Z F Z N R O E Y S F X D J D B C
M I L K V T L F W S M R U E T N N
S C H O S T E H E Z A E V B P H F
N M G Z E L T C E Z U C L V B R X
R D M E G S R A I L E A F L A X I
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W R H R O A X E L B B I N W I O T
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WORD SEARCH

Search up, down, forward, backward, diagonal to find the hidden words. Answers page 14B.

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Ant | Milk | Sneeze |
| Beetle | Nibble | Socks |
| Button | Pinacate | Tail |
| Desert | Polite | Toast |
| Green | Puff | |
| Headstand | Secret | |
| Leaf | Shiny | |
| Lizard | Smell | |

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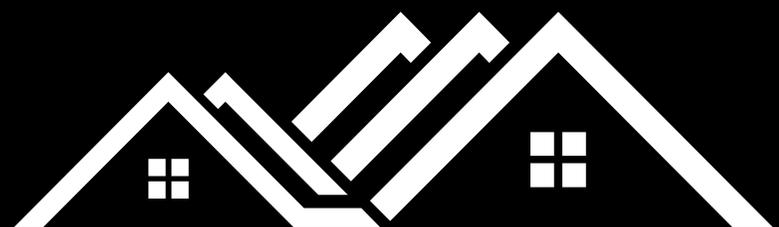
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THE GREAT OUTDOORS SNOW AT A COST

For many Northern Arizona residents, Arizona Snowbowl is part of the winter rhythm. It is close enough for a day trip, familiar enough to feel local, and in a dry year, one of the first places people look to see whether winter has really arrived. But as natural snowfall becomes harder to count on, the future of skiing across the West is leaning more heavily on a backup plan: machine-made snow.



Arizona Snowbowl | Image Courtesy of Arizona Snowbowl

A recent High Country News report found that ski resorts in the West are relying more on snowmaking as winters grow shorter, warmer, and less predictable. While resorts in the Northeast and Midwest have long depended on it, Western resorts historically have used it far less. That is changing.

Snowmaking helps keep runs open, extend seasons, and protect a business that depends on people showing up ready to ski. But it is not a simple fix. Making snow takes cold air, large amounts of water, and a great deal of energy. The report notes that snowmaking accounts for about 18% of a resort's energy use on average, and some resorts use tens of millions of gallons of water in a season.

Much of that water eventually returns to the watershed after the snow melts, but experts quoted in the story say machine-made snow is best viewed as temporary storage, not a substitute for the natural snowpack that the West depends on.

Here in Northern Arizona, the issue has an added layer. Arizona Snowbowl began using treated wastewater for snowmaking in 2013, according to High Country News. The practice has remained controversial because the San Francisco Peaks are considered sacred by local Indigenous people and members of 13 Native American tribes. Protests over that use continue, making Snowbowl one of the clearest local examples of how snowmaking

can reach beyond ski operations and into questions of land, water, and cultural respect.

The larger story is not whether snowmaking works. It does, up to a point. The real question is what it asks in return. For ski areas, it may help buy time during lean winters. For communities like ours, it also raises a harder question: how much should it cost to keep winter going when nature is giving us less of it for free?

Source: High Country News article "Snowmaking could be the future of skiing. But at what cost?" by Susan Shain, published February 24, 2026.



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—Sandee, Editor, The Pinewood News

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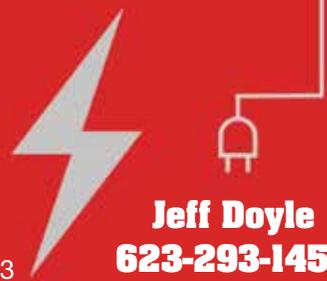


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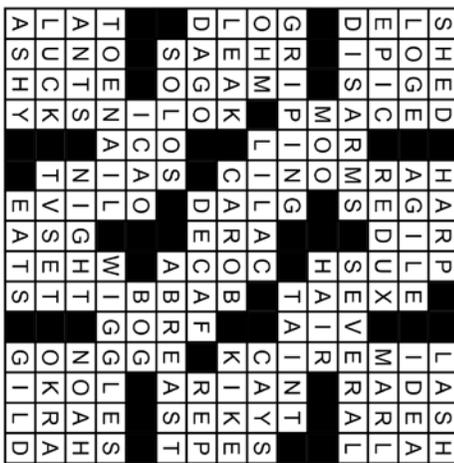
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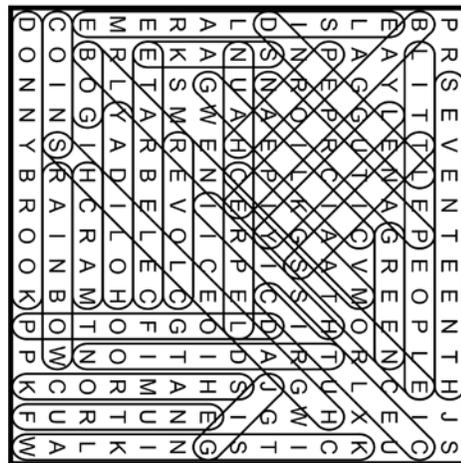
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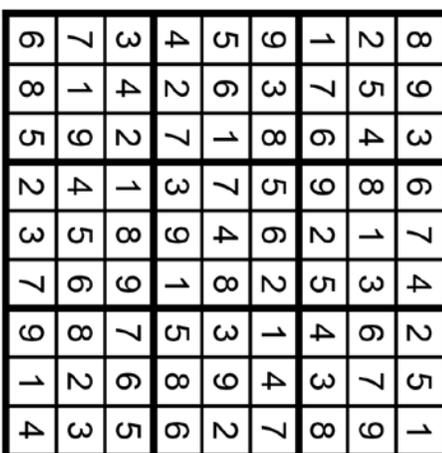
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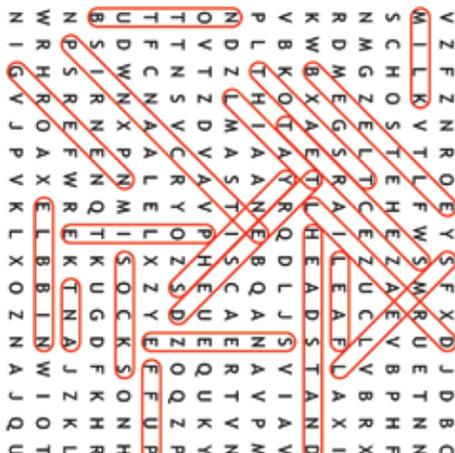
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BECAUSE GOOGLE DOESN'T ALWAYS KNOW THE MOUNTAIN WAY.

Spot an error or missing contact? Let us know: Hello@ThePinewoodNews.com.

Dark Sky Compliance

Coconino County offers Support for Keeping Our Sky's Dark

Lighting Inspection

Request an inspection of your exterior lighting. It includes a written report. Fees are \$55/hour plus mileage, two-hour minimum. Email Mark for details at mstento@coconino.az.gov.

Code Violation Report

Notice illegal lighting? File a report here at www.coconino.az.gov and search for Code Violations and Enforcement.

Fixture Review

Not sure if a light is compliant? Send it in for review at mstento@coconino.az.gov.

Still Have Questions?

Email or call Mark Stento, Code Enforcement Compliance Manager, at (928) 679-8856 or mstento@coconino.az.gov

Domestic Animal & Wildlife Services

Loose Dogs, Nuisance Complaints, or Dog Bites

Coconino County Animal Management (928) 679-8756
For serious attacks or issues, call the Sheriff's Office (928) 774-4523

Rabies Concerns (Pets or Wildlife)

Report sick or aggressive animals immediately—especially if foaming, staggering, or behaving unusually.

Coconino County Animal Management (928) 679-8756

Found a Stray?

Do not approach if the animal appears aggressive. If safe, confine the animal and call Animal Management for pickup or next steps.

The Pinewood Fire Department has microchip scanners. You can bring the animal to the firehouse or call(928) 286-9885

High Country Humane(928) 526-0742

Note: Coconino County has leash laws. Dogs must be under control at all times—even in rural areas.

Injured or Dangerous Wildlife

Arizona Game & Fish (Flagstaff Region)(928) 774-5045

Weekends & after hours call 911

Don't feed wildlife. Keep trash secure. Report encounters with bears, mountain lions, or sick animals.

Loose Livestock

Department of Agriculture (press 1) (800) 294-0305

Environmental & Emergency Services

Illegal Dumping in Forests or Waterways

Environmental Quality Reporting Line (928) 679-8886
(press 1 to leave a message) Reports can be made anonymously.

Flooding Concerns

Coconino County Call Center: (928) 679-8525

Emergency Planning and Real-Time Updates

Coconino County Emergency Management (928) 679-8311

Email: emergencymanagement@coconino.az.gov

Fire-Related Concerns

Illegal Campfires on National Forest Land

Coconino National Forest Dispatch Center (928) 527-3552

Coconino County Sheriff's Non-Emergency Dispatch (928) 774-4523

(press option 1) Provide detailed location information, such as forest road numbers or GPS coordinates, when reporting.

Illegal Campfires (private property) during Fire Restrictions

Coconino County Sheriff's Non-Emergency Dispatch (928) 774-4523

(press option 1) Applicable to unincorporated areas of the county.

Fire Restrictions Information

www.coconino.az.gov/2595/Fire-Restriction-Information

Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

Reckless Driving, Trespassing, or Noise Complaints

Coconino County Sheriff's Non-Emergency Dispatch (928) 774-4523

(press option 1) to report OHVs off designated routes, speeding near homes, or damaging property.

Short-Term Rental Questions & Complaints

Loud Parties, Parking Issues, Trash or Other Nuisances

Coconino County Sheriff's Non-Emergency Dispatch (928) 774-4523

(press option 1) For immediate issues with noise, trespassing, blocked roads, or safety concerns.

Ongoing STR Violations or Registration Questions

Coconino County Short-Term Rentals Compliance Officer,

Tristan Dowse (928) 853-5340

Know Your Rights: Short-Term Rental owners must give their contact details to Coconino County and provide them in writing to adjacent neighbors. If you live next door and never received this information, call the County STR Compliance Officer to confirm the property's registration. For unresponsive owners, recurring disturbances, or suspected unregistered rentals, report the issue to the County or the Sheriff's Office.

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