

PINEWOOD

THE GOOD LIFE, COMMUNITY & MOUNTAIN DESERT LIVING

VOL. 32 NO. 10 JULY 4, 2025

FREE!



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OF
THE
FREE
1776



PINEWOOD
NEWS
KIDS!

COVER by Sandee Caviness & Midjourney



PINEWOOD NEWS

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PINEWOOD NEWS

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.

Send your letters to: PO Box 18977, Munds Park, AZ 86017, or email us at Hello@ThePinewoodNews.com.

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



\$649,500
17380 CRYSTAL BROOK PL
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Move-in ready Munds Park cabin with vaulted ceilings, new roof, floors, T&G pine, updated kitchen/baths, and XL loft. Enjoy a covered porch, paver patio, and prime location near golf, clubhouse, and trails.



\$495,000
17165 ELK PL
MUNDS PARK

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.



\$405,000
685 E OAK DR
MUNDS PARK

Beautifully maintained home with vaulted ceilings, split floor plan, and eat-in kitchen. Covered deck plus private patio, storage shed, and raised garden. Turnkey & ready to enjoy!



\$344,900
17145 S MESCALERO DR
MUNDS PARK

Upgraded, furnished home on large lot with RV parking, 10x14 shed, deck, fire pit, and fountain. New appliances, luxury vinyl flooring, updated baths. Split floor plan with office and great indoor-outdoor space.



\$269,000
1200 S Riordan Ranch St #125
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Perfect for an NAU student, or second home. Conveniently located across NAU and downtown Flagstaff. Newly painted interior. Stack unit Washer & Dryer. HOA covers water, trash, sewer and hot water.



\$295,000
230 E CEDARWOOD DR
MUNDS PARK

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At Liberty Plumbing, we handle everything from new construction to remodels and service for both residential and commercial projects. With over 30 years of experience, we guarantee your satisfaction—no matter the size of the job. Our licensed, insured, and bonded team is hand-picked for both skill and courtesy.

- ◆ Serving Munds Park & Surrounding Areas
- ◆ 30 Years of Experience
- ◆ Munds Park Resident

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We are finding an alarming amount of safety violations in Munds Park. Be sure your home is protected and schedule a free inspection with Liberty Plumbing today.

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- ◆ Valves and flex lines
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- ◆ RO Systems
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When you need a water heater replaced or upgraded, trust Liberty Plumbing.



Fixture Upgrades

Upgrading fixtures in bathrooms and kitchens offers a quick, impactful refresh. Modern faucets and handles not only enhance aesthetics but also improve functionality and efficiency. These updates boost property value, and with energy-saving features, they offer long-term cost savings.

We Winterize Cabins



This summer, we're giving back to our First Responders in a special way.

Book any job in the month of May and June and portion will go back to our local Pinewood Fire Department.

STAGE 2 FIRE RESTRICTIONS

NO CAMPFIRES • NO CHARCOAL OR WOOD FIRES • NO WELDING OR TOOLS THAT THROW SPARKS. • NO SMOKING OUTSIDE YOUR CAR OR A BUILDING.



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 Town Hall

All residents are encouraged to attend. Stay informed about what's happening in our community—your presence and participation is essential!

Thursday, July 17, 2025
6:30 pm • Pinewood Country Club

Pinewood Fire Department Auxiliary meeting

The Community is Welcome!
Tuesday, August 5
6:30 pm • 17670 S Munds Ranch Rd

Pinewood Fire District Board Meeting

Public Welcome
Tuesday, July 15
3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr.

PPOA Annual Public Meeting

Saturday, July 19
1 pm • Pinewood Country Club

Pinewood Sanitary District Board Meeting

Public Welcome
Thursday, July 10
3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr

LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

PINEWOOD SANITARY IMPORTANT UPDATES

As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe and efficient wastewater system, we want to inform residents of several important updates that affect property owners and community members alike.

Lateral Inspections Required for Property Sales

A lateral inspection is required prior to the sale or transfer of any property connected to the sanitary sewer system. This inspection ensures that private sewer laterals are in good condition and free of defects that could lead to costly repairs and environmental issues.

The inspection must be completed by a certified professional, and any necessary repairs must be addressed before the property can be sold. This requirement helps protect both buyers and sellers by ensuring the integrity of the property's sewer connection and reducing the risk of future problems.

Monthly Sewer Rate Increase to \$85

To support infrastructure improvements and ongoing maintenance, the monthly sewer service rate will increase to \$85 per month. This adjustment reflects the rising costs of operations, regulatory compliance, and system upgrades necessary to serve our growing community effectively. We understand that rate increases can be challenging, and we remain committed to transparency and fiscal responsibility in managing our essential service.

Join Us at Our Monthly Board Meetings

We value your input and encourage all residents to participate in our decision-making process. Board meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 3:00 PM, and the public is warmly invited to attend. These meetings provide an opportunity to stay informed about current projects and ask questions during the Call to the Public. Your voice matters, and we welcome your attendance.

Odell Lift Station

The Odell Lift Station, which has served the area for several decades, is being decommissioned to streamline operations and reduce long-term maintenance costs. Its removal will also help mitigate potential overflow risks and enhance the overall efficiency of the sewer network. Coconino County is currently processing the permits, and work will commence as soon as all approvals are secured. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

FIREWORKS ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED

THIS ISN'T ROCKET SCIENCE.

Fireworks + dry Arizona can lead to a catastrophic wildfire.

Without you even noticing, the wind can catch one hot ember and take it a mile away and set the forest ablaze.

Nobody wants to be *that* person who sets the community on fire. Seriously. That's not the legacy you're going for.

IF YOU HAVE GUESTS ON YOUR PROPERTY
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ONE FLIP CAN RUIN YOUR LIFE

Go Off-Roading Respectfully or Stay Home

An off-road trip in Coconino County turned deadly when an OHV (Off-Highway Vehicle) rolled near Oak Creek Canyon. A 19-month-old was ejected during the crash and was pronounced dead at the scene. A 7-year-old and a 17-year-old were also hurt, but their injuries were not serious. The 37-year-old driver was booked into jail on charges including manslaughter, three counts of aggravated assault, two counts of felony endangerment, two counts of aggravated DUI, reckless driving, driving on a suspended/revoked license and possession of narcotics. He's being held on a \$500,000 cash-only bond.

This isn't a rare headline anymore. According to the Coconino County Sheriff's Office, serious OHV crashes are on the rise across northern Arizona. The problem? Faster machines, reckless driving, and a basic lack of regard for safety.

OHVs may look like toys. They're not. They're machines capable of high speeds and rollovers. When a rollover happens, even the safest setup has limits. A girl lost her arm last year during a crash while wearing a seatbelt and helmet. It wasn't enough.

What are the basics that many riders still ignore?

Seatbelts & Car Seats

If it has a seat, buckle it. Children need proper car seats, just like in any other vehicle.

Helmets

Required for riders under 18. For adults, helmets are optional but strongly advised.

Speed

Most serious accidents involve going too fast. Slow down.



Alcohol

Operating an OHV while impaired is illegal and dangerous.

Licensing & equipment

Street use requires a license, title, registration, and insurance. Off-road OHVs must have a decal, mirrors, lights, spark arrestor, and other gear.

New Safety Course

Starting January 1, 2025, Arizona will require a safety education course for all OHV operators before registering or renewing. Riders have until June 1, 2027, to comply.

Holiday weekends bring a spike in accidents. That's why sheriff's deputies will be posted near popular trails this Fourth of July, handing out safety materials and talking with drivers.

"We're not trying to stop anyone from having fun," said Jon Paxton of the Coconino County Sheriff's Office. "But this equipment is getting faster and stronger. The mistakes are costing lives."

Tourism drives the economy here. Locals want visitors to enjoy the trails but return home safely.

For full OHV laws and safety rules, visit: azstateparks.com/ohv-laws-regulations.

If you own an OHV, operate one, or let your kids ride in one, take the responsibility seriously. One bad decision can change your life forever.

See someone driving dangerously?

Don't stay quiet.

Note the vehicle's location, description, and direction of travel. Call 911 if there's immediate danger or contact the Coconino County Sheriff's Office non-emergency line at (928) 774-4523. Your report could save a life.

Off-road smart. Buckle up. Slow down. Live to ride again.

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"My scrappy can be skittish with new comers but midtown did amazing with him. Everyone was so friendly, helpful and answered all my questions. I feel comfortable having my baby here."

-Alyssa M.

★★★★★

"Dr. Mac and Dr. Holly are amazing. Locally owned and operated, cat-certified, reasonably priced. They make you and your fur babies feel like family. Voted Best of Flag several times. There's a reason. My Sophie, Romeo, and Piper are so lucky to have them as their doctors ♥"

-Andrea Z.

★★★★★

"The entire staff at Midtown is absolutely wonderful! I have been taking Zeus (Belgian Malinois) to Midtown for over a year since he was ten weeks old and it quickly became obvious to me how caring, patient and knowledgeable the staff is with my pup."

-Charles C.

Dr. Mac

Dr. Holly

Dr. Croft

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Burritos, sandwiches & (soon!) full NiMarco's Pizza menu

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Thurs-Sat: 11 AM-2 AM | Sun-Wed: 11 AM-Midnight

Seasonally Open May-October

17570 S Munds Ranch Rd, Munds Park

PERFECT PAIRINGS WITH YOUR PINT



NiMarco's Pizza, a Flagstaff favorite for over 40 years, will soon be available right at the bar. You can order it to your table or take it to go. The full menu is coming soon!

BEFORE THE PARTY, EXPLORE THE PAST



Empty Nest Antiques & Gifts is just a few doors down from Sportsmunds, filled with vintage finds, quirky treasures, and the perfect "oh wow" find. It's owned and thoughtfully curated by Heather Hindman.

**BUY ONE DRINK
AT REGULAR PRICE
GET THE 2ND DRINK
FOR \$1.00!**

Limit one offer per customer per visit.
Dine-in only. Must be 21 or older. Valid with coupon only.
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Must present coupon at time of purchase. Expires 08/01/2025.

FROM FLAGSTAFF FAME TO THE PINES

Sportsman's Now In The Park!

BY SANDEE CAVINESS

There are bars, and then there are legends. Sportsman's Bar & Grill in Flagstaff is the latter. For more than 40 years, it's been the kind of place where locals go not just for wings and a beer but for tradition. The TVs are always tuned to the game. The bartenders remember your drink. And the wings? Let's just say half-price Wednesdays are practically a city-wide ritual.

But it's not just the food or the atmosphere that earned Sportsman's its stripes. It's the people behind the bar—the same family that's been running it for three generations. That's right: Sportsman's is family-owned, family-operated, and fiercely loyal to the locals who made it what it is today. Voted Best Sports Bar in Flagstaff fourteen years in a row and often topping the list for best bar food, Sportsman's didn't build its name on flash. It built it on consistency, care, and community.

And now, Munds Park gets a piece of it.

The same family that turned a no-frills Flagstaff bar into a legend has opened a new location right here in the pines. It's called Sportmunds, this isn't a chain, a franchise, or a rebrand. It's a continuation. A second home for everything the original stands for: casual, comfortable, and community-driven. Whether you're here for the game, the food, or just a place where everybody's welcome, the new Sportmunds brings 40+ years of proven tradition with it.

You're not just getting a new bar. You're getting a hometown classic, backed by decades of experience and a name that means something in Northern Arizona.

Sportmunds Is Open—And It's Everything Munds Park Has Been Waiting For

Craig and his wife Heather Hindman didn't open Sportmunds on a whim. It took two and a half years of thought, planning, and a leap of faith. But now that the doors are open, they'll be the first to tell you—it was worth it. They've fallen in love with Munds Park. With the people, the pace, the energy. And they're here for the long haul. A five-year lease with plans to renew means their goal is to serve this community for at least the next fifteen years.

This isn't just another bar. It's a full-family endeavor. Their four kids, Jaden, Gavin, Carson, and Chloe, help run the business. Their customer service is top-notch, and their smiles are genuine. They're building something real here. Something consistent. And that's exactly what they think Munds Park has been missing.

Sportmunds is open seven days a week.

Thursday to Saturday: 11 AM to 2 AM

Sunday to Wednesday: 11 AM to Midnight

They'll be open May through October, then take a break during the slower winter months. It's a smart strategy to keep the business healthy and the service steady.

And yes, Sportmunds is a family bar in every sense. Kids are welcome, and there are games like pool and bag toss to keep them entertained while the adults relax. It's a place to hang out with friends and family.

Here's what else makes Sportmunds different:

- It doubles as your local liquor store. Beer, wine, and spirits to go. And if they don't carry your favorite, just ask. They'll get it.
- Live music, but not the loud kind. Think one- or two-person sets that lift your mood without killing conversation
- Sports fans, rejoice. They've got the full cable sports package, so you never miss your team.

- Events are on the way. Once the team grows, expect karaoke, bingo, and trivia nights.

And yes, we're getting to the food.

Sportmunds serves burritos and sandwiches now, but soon, maybe by Fourth of July weekend or very soon after, you'll be able to order straight off NiMarco's Pizza full menu. Flagstaff folks know how good that pizza is. Munds Park residents will now get to enjoy her in the Park with a beer in hand. You can sit and enjoy it or take it to go. Whichever your little heart desires.

The owners of Sportmunds and NiMarco's go way back. Old college buddies. Now they're neighbors in this venture, teaming up to offer great food and drinks in one spot. NiMarco's doesn't have seating. Sportmunds does. Together, they've created the kind of setup that just makes sense.

And while you're in the neighborhood, wander a few doors down to Empty Nest Antiques and Gifts, Heather's other labor of love. It's the kind of store where you walk in for a quick peek and walk out with a lamp, a birthday card, and a conversation piece. She's already planning to expand, so prepare to get delightfully lost in her world of vintage treasures and quirky finds.

Sportmunds isn't just a place to grab a beer. It's the start of something. Something local. Something lasting.

Welcome to the neighborhood Craig, Heather and family!





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—Sandee, Editor, The Pinewood News

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Munds Park Farmers Market
at Agee's BBQ Patio
Saturday 9-1 PM
FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK - MUNDS PARK FARM TO TABLE MARKET

GET FRESH PRODUCE!
Starting Saturday, May 10, your weekends just got fresher—join us for farm-fresh produce every Saturday through October!

EVERY MONDAY

BINGO AT PINEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB

Bingo at the Pinewood Country Club! This event is open to everyone—no membership required. Come enjoy a fun night with neighbors and prizes!

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Pinewood Country Club, 395 Pinewood Blvd, Munds Park

ALMOST EVERY TUESDAY

PINEWOOD PLAYHOUSE MUSIC JAM NIGHT

Bring your instrument (or just your voice) and join fellow music lovers for a casual, come-as-you-are jam session. All levels welcome—from pros to kazoo dabblers. PA provided for singers. Free to attend, no RSVP needed.

Date: Most Tuesdays, check website at pinewoodplayers.com

Time: 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Location: Pinewood Playhouse, Pinewood Country Club, open to the community

YOGA IN THE PARK WITH CHRISTY SHAFT

Breathe deep and flow into summer with yoga sessions for all levels.

Mondays: July 7, 14, 21 & 28

Chair yoga 9-9:45

Mat flow 10-11

Fridays: July 11, 18 & 25

Chair yoga 9-9:45

Mat flow 10-11

Saturdays: July 5, 12, 19 & 26.

Mat flow 9:30-10:39

Note: Bring your own mat (I have extra)

Location: Munds Park RV Park Rec Hall

Fee: \$15 per class

SATURDAY, JULY 5

FAIRLANE PALOOZA!

Celebrate the 4th of July weekend with your neighbors in Munds Park! It's a traditional jam session! Enjoy live music, good company, and a relaxing evening under the pines. Bring chairs and your favorite beverages!

Time: 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Location: 245 E. Fairlane, Munds Park

Admission: Free

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9

COCONINO COUNTY BOOKMOBILE

Stop by the Pinewood Clubhouse for the Coconino County Bookmobile on the second Wednesday of each month! Services include free notary, 10¢ black-and-white printing, and access to library materials.

Date: Second Wednesday of every month

Time: 10:45 AM – 2:00 PM

Location: Pinewood Clubhouse

SATURDAY, JULY 19

CAMP VERDE CORN FEST

Corn Fest pays homage to the Verde Valley's famous sweet corn, grown at Hauser and Hauser Farms. This is a "corny" old-fashioned family event with plenty of food, fun, games, music, vendors and, of course, sweet corn. Street fair vibes. Roasted Hauser & Hauser corn. Fresh-picked sweetness to take home. What more do you need?

Time: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Hollamon Street & Community Center Gym, Camp Verde, AZ

Admission: Free (NO PETS, Service Animals only)

SATURDAY, JULY 19

STEP UP FOR OUR FOREST!

Join us at 8:15 a.m. for trail work on the Crystal Point Trail, including some TLC for the picnic table.

Meet at: Pinewood (240) Trailhead

Bring: Long pants, sturdy shoes, weather-appropriate gear, and a good sense of humor.

Provided: Water and trail tools

RSVP by July 12 to: mutts@mundstrails.com

More info: www.mundstrails.com

SATURDAY, JULY 26, 2025

BEAT THE HEAT 20 TRACTOR & ENGINE SHOW

Antique tractor display and pull, engine display, hayrides, plowing, and barrel train rides for kids. Hands-on fun for the whole family.

Time: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: 5285 E. Pumpkin Patch Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86004

Admission: Free

For information, call Jim at (928) 699-7434 or Shawn at (928) 300-7629

SATURDAY, AUGUST 30

COUNTRY CUB CRAFT FAIR

Join the Pinewood Country Club on Labor Day for their annual Craft Fair! All are welcome to support your local artist!

Time: 10AM - 2PM

Location: Pinewood Country Club

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

FLAGSTAFF MUSIC FESTIVAL

Celebrate Flagstaff's music scene at the free Flagstaff Music Festival, featuring local bands across genres like rock, funk, soul, and reggae. Held in downtown's Heritage Square, this community event supports the Haven Walker Music Scholarship Fund.

Time: 2 PM – 9 PM

Location: Heritage Square, Flagstaff

Admission: Free



TWO COYOTES
Market In The Pines

OPEN EVERY SATURDAY!
Starting Saturday, May 17 from 9 am - 1 pm

Enjoy a wide selection of fresh baked breads, pastries, pies, various food trucks and vendors selling wonderful crafts!

Operated by Munds Park Residents
Susan & Bill Havermale
bhavermale3@gmail.com

Located at 17620 N Munds Ranch Rd.
Parking behind the Munds Park Community Church



Farmer's MARKETS

SEDONA COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKET

Join us every Sunday for a sunny marketplace experience! Discover a wide array of local fresh seasonal produce to unique artisan creations.

Date: Every Sunday

Time: 11 AM - 3 PM

Location: 2201 W SR 89A, West Sedona

PRESCOTT FARMERS MARKET

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

Dates: Every Saturday, 7:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: 900 Iron Springs Road, Prescott,

OLD TOWN MUSIC & THE MARKET

Friday nights in the Verde Valley features locally grown fruits and vegetables, artisan foods, and handcrafted goods like pottery, jewelry, and soaps—all set to live local music. Bring a chair, grab a bite, and enjoy a relaxed evening under the trees with your community.

Dates: May 16, 23, 30

Time: 5 p.m. and continue until dark

Location: 187 E. Pima St., Cottonwood

VERDE VALLEY FARMERS MARKET

Discover real food from real farmers at the Verde Valley Farmers Market. Enjoy fresh, locally grown produce while supporting our community's farmers. Operated by local growers.

Date: Every Saturday & Friday from May 10 to October 4, 2025

Time: 8 AM - 11 AM

Location: 75 Hollamon St, Camp Verde

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, AZ



Community MARKETS

OLD TOWN MUSIC & THE MARKET

Shop locally grown fruits & vegetables, homemade items and more while listening to fabulous regional musicians.

Dates: Every Friday, starting May 9

Time: 5 PM Until Dark

Location: 187 E. Pima St., Cottonwood

FLAGSTAFF URBAN FLEA MARKET

Explore the eclectic and vibrant Flagstaff Urban Flea Market, a gathering of artisans and peddlers offering a unique variety of goods. Find everything from records, antiques, and books to handmade woodwork, ceramics, and vintage clothing. Plus, discover gems and minerals, soaps, used tools, comics, toys, jewelry, up-cycled goods, flowers, and other funky treasures.

Date: 2nd & 4th Saturdays, June 14th through October 25th

Time: 9 AM - 2 PM

Location: City Hall parking lot, 211 W. Aspen, Downtown Flagstaff on Historic Route 66

Admission: Free

PEDDLER'S PASS OLD-TIME FARMERS & FLEA MARKET

Visit Peddler's Pass Old-Time Farmers & Flea Market in Prescott Valley, a bustling open-air swap meet offering a diverse array of items. From seasonal farm produce and yard-sale secondhand goods to antiques, tools, collectibles, and rocks & gems, there's something for everyone. Known as "the best swap meet in Arizona," this family-friendly market features affordable finds and a wide variety of vendors.

Date: Every Saturday & Sunday, Year-Round

Time: 6 AM - 3 PM (Early morning is prime time for the best picks)

Location: 6201 E. State Route 69, Prescott Valley

Admission: Free

TWO COYOTES MARKET IN THE PINES

Enjoy a wide selection of fresh baked breads, pastries, pies, various food trucks and vendors selling wonderful crafts!

Operated by Munds Park Residents Susan & Bill Havermale

Date: Saturday, May 17, 9 AM - 1 PM

Location: 17620 N Munds Ranch Rd.



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Blackberry Cobbler

BY SUENET

Cobbler has a long and humble history. It came from cooks who knew how to make the most of what they had. The settlers who came here long ago brought their love of pies and puddings from England and Ireland, but on the frontier, there were no ovens, no pie plates. So they layered fresh or preserved fruit into heavy pots, spooned batter or dough over the top, and baked it slowly over the fire.

What they created was honest food. The kind that didn't need to be fancy to feel special. The kind that was always meant to be shared.

Blackberry cobbler, really any in-season fruit cobbler, is a wonderful dessert. It's simple, yes, but there's such beauty in that simplicity. The smell alone, as it bakes, fills your home and brings everyone to the kitchen before you even get it out of the oven. That's what good homemade food does. It makes people feel welcome, part of something, glad to be there.

And blackberries, well, they make a cobbler truly shine. That deep, rich color. That perfect mix of sweet and tart. I always tell people, if you're going to make cobbler, use the best in-season fruit you can find. That's why I love the Mortimer Farms Blackberry Festival. Their berries are fresh from the fields, full of sunshine and flavor. But wherever you are, look for what's in season. That's what makes the difference. You don't need to do much to a blackberry or any fruit when it's at its best.

When you make cobbler, take your time with it. Spread the fruit so every bite brings together just the right balance of sweetness and juice. Spoon the topping gently, so it bakes up golden and light. And when it's ready, serve it with care. A little ice cream or cream is always nice, but what matters most is that it's made with love and shared with people you're happy to have at your table.



Blackberry Cobbler Recipe

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar, divided, plus 1 teaspoon for sprinkling (optional)
- 1 cup self-rising flour
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups blackberries (fresh or frozen)

Directions

1. Melt the butter and set it aside. In a mixing bowl, whisk together 1 cup of the sugar and the flour. Slowly add the milk, whisking until smooth. Stir in the melted butter until combined.
2. Butter a baking dish. Rinse and gently pat dry the blackberries.
3. Pour the batter into the prepared dish. Scatter the blackberries evenly over the top. Sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 cup of sugar.
4. Bake at 350°F for about 1 hour, or until the top is golden and the fruit on edges is bubbly. If you like, sprinkle the cobbler with the remaining teaspoon of sugar about 10 minutes before it's done for a touch of extra sweetness.

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Josh Tope | *Photo by Barbara Sherman*

HEART, HUMOR & HONOR

Chief Josh Tope Named Grand Marshal of the 2025 4th of July Parade

BY SANDEE CAVINESS

There's something especially fitting about seeing a fire chief lead a parade, particularly one who has spent his life charging into flames, heartbreak, and the unknown—so the rest of us wouldn't have to.

In Munds Park, that someone is Chief Josh Tope. After more than twenty years of service and with just three to go before retirement, he'll be riding up front in the 2025 Fourth of July Parade as Grand Marshal.

If it were up to him, though, he'd be behind the scenes.

"I don't do well receiving gratitude," he says with a smile. "It's not why I do the job."

Josh joined the Pinewood Fire District back when the department was held together by sheer will. Two full-time firefighters per shift, a lot of heart, and a small army of volunteers. That was the beginning. Over two decades later, his team operates with a full five-person crew per shift, offering solid pay, a union contract, and something rare in rural departments: access to mental health care within 24 hours. No delay. No shame.

That didn't happen by accident. It took persistence, long hours, and a leader who never stopped fighting for his crew.

A Chief with a Different Mission

Ask Josh what people often miss about his role, and he'll be the first to explain. "The crews are here to care for the community," he says. "My job is to care for them."

Whether it's ensuring their gear is top-grade and ready at a moment's notice or making sure help is just a phone call away, Tope puts his crew's well-being first. He knows that when firefighters feel supported, they're better able to serve others.

"If they don't have to worry about their health, their paychecks, or their families, they can be fully present for someone else's emergency," he says.

He sees it not as management, but stewardship. "I'm not just here to run the department. I'm here to look after my people."

A Turning Point

Like many firefighters, Josh once believed that silence was strength. That the only way through the weight of heartbreaking calls was to push harder, dig deeper, and keep going. But pain doesn't disappear when ignored. It settles in the mind, haunting our firefighters.

That idea of just holding strong and pushing through began to shift after he started losing people. Friends. Colleagues. Good men who couldn't outrun the weight of the job once the sirens stopped. And then came a moment that changed everything.

A friend, a firefighter, was in crisis. Josh knew this wasn't something he could power through or fix alone. He picked up the phone and called a local counseling group. Not as a fire chief, but as a man who needed help.

"They walked me through it," he says. "What to say. What to look for. I learned more in that one conversation than I had in years."

Today, every member of the Pinewood crew gets regular check-ins. And if they need help after a call, they don't wait weeks to be seen. They wait hours. That's the culture now. Not because of a rulebook, but because Josh cared enough to just do what was right.

"Not every department has that," Tope says. "But ours does. And it's saving lives."

Josh knows what trauma feels like and how effective therapy can be. He had been carrying the weight of a call he couldn't forget. Eventually, he sought help through a technique called EMDR. "I went in with heart palpitations and goosebumps just thinking about the call. It haunted me. After EMDR therapy, I sat in my truck in the parking lot and tried to bring those paralyzing feelings back. And they were gone."

He tells this story openly now. Not to dramatize but to normalize.

"Firefighters aren't superheroes," he says. "We're people who show up on the worst day of someone's life. That takes a toll, and we've got to take care of each other."

The Lighter Side of the Station

Life at the firehouse isn't all emergencies and paperwork. In between the serious calls and serious coffee, there's a whole lot of joking, ribbing, and what can only be described as firefighter-style mischief.

Let's just say the walls of that station have seen things.

There was a firefighter who liked to sleep in. Tope quietly removed the chain from the station's chainsaw, crept into the room, and fired it up. "He jumped out of bed like a spider monkey crawling backward on the wall," Josh says, laughing. "Never slept in again."

Then there's the midnight "rescue team." At the station, emergency calls come through as tones, the chimes that alert the crew when it's time to move. If someone didn't hear them right away, they might get a surprise wake-up when they least expect it. In the middle of the night, the firefighters would suit up in full gear, sneak into the room, and haul the tone-deaf firefighter out of bed like it was a live house fire.

"Sometimes they fought back. Sometimes they just screamed. You never really knew what you were gonna get," Tope says, grinning. "But let's just say the lesson was learned."

The point wasn't humiliation. It was unity. It was making a difficult job bearable, together.

Building a Legacy, One Person at a Time

Tope is nearing retirement, with three years left on the clock. A new firehouse is finally under construction—something he's worked years to bring to life. But it's not the legacy he talks about.

"The building's important," he says. "But the culture? That's everything."

He's training his captains now, making sure the next generation knows the ropes. Budgets. Policies. The behind-the-scenes parts that keep the whole thing running. He wants someone from inside to lead when he steps away. Someone who knows the community and cares for the team, not just the process.

Because for Tope, what matters isn't the title or the truck or the station. It's the people. The ones he's worked alongside, fought for, and protected in ways most of us will never see.

So when you see him at the front of the parade this Fourth of July, know that behind that wave is a man who's carried more than most—and who's made sure no one else has to carry it alone.

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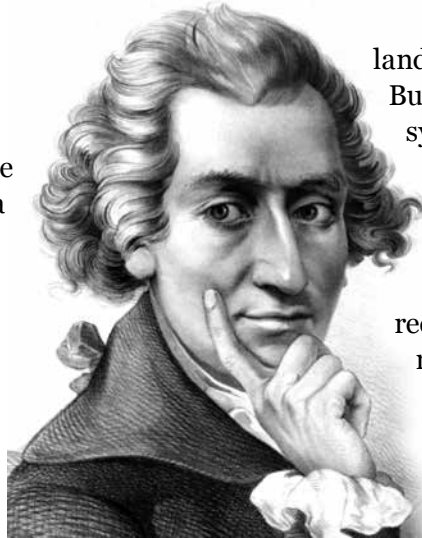
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Paine's Pen Took on the King & Crushed It

BY TEDDY JOHNSON



In January 1776, Philadelphia saw the quiet release of a 47-page pamphlet that would shake the foundations of the British Empire. *Common Sense*, written by Thomas Paine, didn't come from a general or a politician. It came from an unemployed immigrant with a printing press, a sharp pen, and no patience for kings.

The ideas Paine put forward weren't dressed up in legalese. They were bold, plain, and direct, and they landed with force. Within months, the colonies were hurtling toward independence.

Paine began with a clear premise: government's only purpose is to serve the people. It exists to create structure so people can solve problems and live together in peace. When it fails to do that, when it starts to serve itself, it becomes a problem. He called government a "necessary evil," useful only so long as it remains responsive.

The British government, he argued, had lost its way. The system was too complex, too unaccountable. Real power lived with the monarchy and Parliament's elite, not with the elected representatives of the people. "The constitution of England is so exceedingly complex," Paine wrote, "that the nation may suffer for years together without being able to discover in which part the fault lies."

He didn't stop there. Paine dismantled the idea of monarchy itself. Hereditary power, he argued, made no moral or practical sense. Why should someone be handed control of a nation just because of birth? "A pretty business indeed," he wrote, that a man should be paid handsomely to "make war and give away places." In his eyes, "one honest man" was worth more than all the "crowned ruffians that ever lived."

He rejected the emotional pull of loyalty to Britain. England wasn't a mother country. It was an abusive power. "Even brutes do not devour their young," Paine wrote. America, he insisted, was not an extension of Britain but something new entirely. "This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty," he said. Its future wasn't in looking backward. It was in breaking free.

And the time, he argued, was now. Independence wasn't just an option. It was a rare, once-in-a-generation chance to start fresh. America had the

land, the resources, the people, and the skills to survive on its own. But more importantly, it had the opportunity to build a better system. "That peculiar time, which never happens to a nation but once," Paine wrote, had arrived.

He imagined a country united under a strong but fair central government, with a constitution that protected individual rights and religious freedom. "A firm bargain and a right reckoning make long friends," he argued. In Paine's vision, this new government wouldn't serve a ruler. It would serve the people.

The impact was immediate and massive. *Common Sense* sold an estimated half a million copies across the colonies. It was read aloud in taverns, passed from hand to hand, and debated in town halls. It gave shape and voice to frustrations that had been simmering for years and it forced colonial leaders to take a stand.

This revolution didn't begin in palaces or parliaments. It began with words on paper, printed in Philadelphia and passed from hand to hand. It spread through neighborhood print shops, over kitchen tables, and inside crowded taverns. The American Revolution was not just a clash on battlefields or a moment marked by declarations. It was the result of ideas—clearly argued, fiercely believed, and shared by people ready to demand something better.

As we celebrate the Fourth of July, we often think of the Declaration of Independence. But it was *Common Sense* that helped make that declaration possible. Paine's words prepared people to demand it. His arguments made them believe they could win it.

This Fourth of July, celebrate the freedom we have, but remember where it began. Not only with speeches and battles, but with bold ideas printed on paper. A struggling writer. A neighborhood printer. And a people who had not yet formed a nation, choosing to believe they could. *Common Sense* was not just a pamphlet. It was a spark. It gave Americans the words to demand freedom and the courage to build something new.

We did not win independence through force alone. We won it with vision, conviction, and the will to imagine a better future. That spirit still defines us.



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Blackberry Vodka Lemonade

BY DICK TRUDEAU



Blackberry Vodka Lemonade is a grown-up twist on lemonade with roots in farm soil and a splash of summer mischief.

The great thing is, this isn't some over-complicated mixology moment. This is sunshine in a glass. It's what happens when blackberries ripen under the Arizona sun, lemon juice gets freshly squeezed, and someone has the good sense to pour vodka over the whole thing.

The Blackberry Vodka Lemonade might not have a century-old origin story, but it does have something better: Mortimer Farms' Blackberry Festival.

Each July, families, friends, and the berry-obsessed head to Dewey for one of the sweetest pick-your-own traditions around. Rows of sun-drenched blackberries, butterfly releases, tractor rides, live music—it's summer on a postcard. But here's the secret. While the kids are looking for butterflies, you're quietly scouting the plumpest blackberries to smuggle home for cocktails.

Blackberry Vodka Lemonade

Ingredients: Blackberry Simple Syrup

- 1 cup water
- 2 cups fresh blackberries a pint of blackberries is typically 1.5 to 2 cups
- 1 cup sugar, white sugar or sugar in the raw

Ingredients: Blackberry Cocktail

- Ice
- 1 cup Vodka
- 1 cup lemonade (homemade is the best, but store bought will work)
- club soda
- Blackberries for garnish
- Rosemary and or lemon wedge for garnish

The Method

1. Make the blackberry simple syrup by combining the berries, water and sugar in a medium sized pot.
2. Bring to a simmer, lower heat and continue to simmer for 4 minutes. Allow to sit and completely cool.
3. Strain the mixture to get all of these seeds out, place in a mason jar and keep in your fridge until ready to use.
4. When ready to make the cocktails. Fill tall glasses or large tumblers with $\frac{3}{4}$ the way with ice.
5. Add 2-3 oz of vodka per glass, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup or more of lemonade and 2-3 TBS blackberry simple syrup and stir.
6. Top with club soda or seltzer.
7. Garnish with blackberries and or a fresh sprig of Rosemary or lemon and enjoy!

Whether you're sipping it on the porch, bringing a cooler to a backyard party, or making a toast to the best berries in Arizona, this drink tastes like summer's best moment.

Fun Tip: Don't settle for store-bought berries. Head to the Mortimer Farms Blackberry Festival on July 12–13 and 19–20, pick your own, and turn your cocktail into something way more satisfying.

Until next time—sip responsibly and enjoy.

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Be “Bear Aware” Over Long Holiday Weekend

BY ARIZONA GAME & FISH



With a long holiday weekend right around the corner, the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) is reminding campers, hikers and other outdoor recreationists to be “bear aware.”

While bears are typically shy and tend to avoid humans, their excellent sense of smell can be problematic for both the animals and humans. AZGFD officials advise those living or visiting in bear country to remove or block access to trash, food or other attractants (such as pet food or bird seed). Unfortunately, a fed bear is a dead bear.

“If a bear becomes habituated to getting food from trash cans and other human sources, it’s only a matter of time before it loses its fear of humans and begins to actively search out human food sources,” said Larry Phoenix, AZGFD’s regional supervisor in Flagstaff. “At that point, the bear becomes a threat to public safety.”

Tips to Avoid Attracting Bears

When camping

- Keep food and attractants secured and inaccessible to bears. Do not keep food in a tent.
- Don’t burn left-over food or trash on the grill.
- Set up a campsite away from places where bears might forage for food, such as creeks, rivers and other bodies of water.

When hiking

- Don’t wear scented lotions or perfumes.
- Make noise or hike in groups.
- Hiking with a pet? Keep it on a leash at all times.

In Case of a Bear Encounter

- Do NOT run.
- Back away slowly while maintaining eye contact with the bear.
- Make yourself look bigger than you are by flaunting your arms or pulling your shirt/jacket up higher than your head.
- Throw items and yell at the bear.
- If attacked, fight back.

Bear sightings in areas where there is human activity should be reported to AZGFD by calling 623-236-7201. For questions, or to obtain a brochure on living with bears, visit www.azgfd.com/wildlife-conservation/living-with-wildlife/.

About 400 Tourist Deaths Occur in the U.S. Each Year

Most of these deaths happen in national parks, on hiking trails, in lakes and rivers, or near cliffs—places where one bad decision or a moment of overconfidence turns a vacation into tragedy. Falls, drownings, and a handful of wildlife encounters top the list. While millions visit safely each year, around 400 people don’t make it home—often because they underestimated the risks or ignored posted warnings. Nature doesn’t care how many Instagram likes your selfie gets. Pay attention people!



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A Bridge Too Wild? New Overpass Helps Elk & Drivers Travel Safer

BY "UNSTOPPABLE STACEY" WITTIG

For the past week, a fresh elk carcass has been lying on the shoulder of I-17, a couple of miles north of where I'm meeting the project superintendent for the Willard Springs Wildlife Overpass. When I climb out of my SUV after pulling off southbound I-17, I have to tiptoe around a scatter of sun-bleached bones to reach the work site.

Clods of broken ground and the recurring beep-beep of a backing cement mixer prove that construction of the Willard Springs Wildlife Overpass is in full swing. TK Boyer of SEMA Construction, Inc., fills me in: "Over 100 elk and deer are killed on this stretch of road every year."

No surprise to me. For the past 15 years or so, I've been telling people I meet while gallivanting around the globe that I live on the deadliest stretch of interstate for elk in the entire U.S. But for this story, I figured I'd better verify that bold claim. So I'd checked in earlier with Arizona Game and Fish biologist Jeff Gagnon to see if it's fact—or just one of those things we say around here. (Assuming anyone considers Munds Park "urban" legend territory... LOL.)

"I would say that I-17 is the worst elk-vehicle collision Interstate in Arizona, but I don't have the numbers to compare to Montana or Colorado, for



Elk crossing, Photo by George Andrejko, AZGFD

example, but it's quite possible," Gagnon had responded.

The \$15.8 million project includes not just a grassy overpass fit for elk royalty, but also eight miles of fencing on each side of I-17 to gently "suggest" that elk, deer, and even the occasional bear take the scenic route over the freeway. Yes—bears. The big, hairy locals who lumber through the woods between Munds Park and Kelly Canyon like they're late to a picnic. This new setup aims to give them a proper crosswalk.

When I'd told one of my church buddies I was headed out to interview the crew building the overpass, he shrugged and said, "Elk are gonna

cross where they wanna cross." I love a healthy dose of local skepticism. I relay that to TK Boyer, who just grins. "This is a proven system. It will work," he says with the calm confidence of a guy who's seen it succeed. And he has—TK helped build the wildlife crossings along State Route 260 near Payson. At Christopher Creek, the fences and overpass dropped elk collisions by 84% in the first year. That's not just a win—it's a mic drop for traffic safety.



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“Game and Fish chooses areas where there are lots of wildlife collisions, to put this infrastructure in,” TK explains, as a cement mixer lets out a mechanical groan behind us. It’s true: the stretch of I-17 that’s getting this wildlife overpass and fencing accounts for 58% of all wildlife-vehicle collisions between Stoneman Lake Road and Flagstaff. That’s not a backwoods backroad—that’s a high-speed elk gauntlet, and it’s high time we reroute the traffic with some strategic fencing and a little ecological wisdom.

Today, TK and the SEMA crew are pouring fittings for an elk escape ramp on the west side of I-17. Yesterday, they poured concrete for the ramps on the east side. These escape ramps are spaced about every three-quarters of a mile along both sides of the interstate and feature a 10-foot-wide flat area on top, designed so an elk trapped on the highway side of the fence can safely jump back to the forested side.

The ramps are part of a thoughtful system that accounts for the reality that wildlife doesn’t follow traffic rules. When animals end up on the wrong side of the fencing, these structures offer a much-needed path back—reducing the risk to both wildlife and drivers.

As Munds Park residents, we all know the challenges of living with a four-lane highway running straight through prime elk territory. These aren’t animals that sit still—they follow the seasons, migrating between water sources and feeding grounds like nature intended. I know you stay alert while driving at dusk or after dark, just like I do, scanning the roadside for movement and hoping those glowing eyes stay put.

This new stretch of infrastructure, spanning from MP 322.76 to MP 331.13, is designed to reduce those white-knuckle moments—and the devastating collisions that can come with them. But it’s about more than just protecting bumpers and windshields. These crossings help reconnect fragmented wildlife habitats that have been split by pavement and progress.

When roads interrupt migration paths and access to mates, entire populations can suffer. Some species—like pronghorn antelope—have even been known to stop crossing highways altogether. The Willard Springs Wildlife Overpass will help restore these critical crossings, giving animals access to areas they’ve struggled to reach for decades.

The bulk of funding for the project, which is scheduled to wrap up by fall 2026, comes from a grant through the Federal Highway Administration’s Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program. The program is competitive—so kudos to the Arizona team (AZDOT and AZGFD) for bringing those dollars home to Northern Arizona.

At its core, the Willard Springs Wildlife Overpass is about keeping both people and wildlife safer. It’s designed to cut down on crashes while reconnecting habitat for animals that don’t understand the concept of “lane closures.” Speaking of which, construction will keep at least one lane open in each direction, but ADOT advises planning for possible delays.

“UNSTOPPABLE Stacey” Wittig writes about her adventures from her home base in Munds Park. Next week, she’s off to the San Francisco Bay Area for Port Chicago Weekend, which honors 320 sailors—mostly young Black men—who lost their lives in the worst homefront disaster of WWII. She’ll also be exploring the Rosie the Riveter National Historic Park. The research for this trip brought her to tears—follow along at UnstoppableStaceyTravel.com to find out why.

5

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How to Sell Your Munds Park Cabin Without Slashing the Price

BY STEVE VALENTINE, REAL ESTATE INVESTOR & STRATEGIST



As the holiday weekend brings families together here in Munds Park—grilling, riding quads, and escaping the Valley heat—there’s another conversation quietly happening around campfires and cabin porches:

“We’ve been thinking about selling, but the market’s soft... should we just wait?”

It’s a fair question. Interest rates are still high. Buyer demand is down. And yet, many cabins are sitting while price reductions stack up.

But here’s the truth: price isn’t the only lever you can pull to move your property.

If you’re one of the many long-time Munds Park homeowners—likely retired or semi-retired—who either owns your cabin outright or has a manageable mortgage, then you have a unique opportunity to sell smarter, not cheaper.

Let me show you how.

The Door Most Sellers Don’t Know Exists

The traditional way to sell is simple: list with an agent, hope a buyer qualifies, negotiate, and close.

But what if I told you there are four other ways to sell your cabin—strategies that let you keep your price, put money in your pocket today, and help a new family get into the market despite rising rates?

Here are the four creative strategies that are working in markets just like Munds Park:

1. Seller Carry (Owner Financing)

This is ideal if you own your cabin free and clear.

You act as the bank. The buyer puts down a sizable deposit, you agree on a sale price and interest rate, and they make monthly payments directly to you.

Why it works:

- You avoid the hassle of financing roadblocks
- You earn steady monthly income
- You can often sell at or above market value
- You attract buyers who want in now, not later

This method is perfect for someone who wants passive income without being a landlord.

2. Wraparound Mortgage (Wrap)

If you’ve got a low-interest mortgage, you’re sitting on leverage. With a wraparound mortgage, you can sell the cabin while keeping your existing loan in place—the buyer makes payments to you, and you continue paying the original mortgage.

Why it works:

- You keep your great loan in place
- You earn interest on the spread
- You sell at your price, not a discount
- You cash out part of your equity now

A wrap allows flexibility for both sides—and you stay in control.

3. Subject-To (Sub-to the Existing Loan)

This strategy lets a buyer take over your existing loan payments without assuming the loan. Title transfers to them, the mortgage stays in your name, and they take care of the payments.

Why it works:

- The buyer gets your low interest rate
- You sell faster in a slow market
- You may receive some equity upfront
- You avoid price cuts just to compete

This is especially useful if you’re ready to walk away from the cabin and are okay with a structured exit over time.

4. Lease Purchase (Rent-to-Own)

This one gives the buyer a chance to rent the cabin with the option to buy within a set time (usually 1–3 years). You agree on a future purchase price, and they make monthly lease payments—often with some of that rent applying to the future purchase.

Why it works:

- You maintain ownership (and control)
- You collect consistent rent now
- You lock in your price today
- You give the buyer time to qualify later

Lease purchase is perfect if you don’t need to sell immediately but want to create momentum now.

Why Creative Financing Matters Now

We all know the Munds Park market isn’t like metro Phoenix. It’s slower, seasonal, and emotion-driven. But that’s exactly why creative financing fits so well here. Buyers want to create a family legacy. They want in—but current rates and loan qualifications are pushing them out.

You can change that.

As a seller, you hold the key.

By offering alternative financing options, you open your property up to a whole new group of capable, serious buyers—without slashing your price just to compete.

And that’s how you win in this market.

Final Thought

This 4th of July, while you’re reflecting on freedom, maybe it’s time to give yourself a little more of it.

Freedom from waiting.

Freedom from price cuts.

Freedom to sell on your terms.

If you’re curious about how to structure any of these strategies safely and legally—or just want to explore your options—reach out to someone who’s been doing this for over two decades.

It might just be the smartest real estate conversation you have all summer.

*Steve Valentine sponsors the Pinewood News Kids.
You can see his ad on page 1B.*

I've Seen This Before—And It's Hurting Our Community

BY APRIL PLONSKI, MBA, SCLA

Over the past week, I've had two different people show up at my home—both claiming to be roofers, and both calling themselves public adjusters as well. They knocked on my door, offered a “free roof inspection,” and told me I could get a brand-new roof “free of charge” through my homeowners insurance. They were ready with paperwork in hand and pushed hard for me to sign on the spot.

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone. These kinds of unsolicited visits are happening more and more often in small towns like ours—even years after any significant storm activity. These salespeople target neighborhoods based on old storm paths, hoping homeowners won't ask too many questions. And while some might be legitimate, many are not.

Before opening my own insurance agency, I spent over a decade working in homeowners insurance claims.

I've personally seen the aftermath of this kind of aggressive roofing and public adjusting behavior in places like southeast Florida, Texas, and Colorado. In each case, the pattern was the same: out-of-town contractors and adjusters sweep into a community with promises of “free roofs” and “big checks,” and homeowners are told they have to act fast.

What starts as one or two claims can quickly snowball into dozens. Once insurance carriers start seeing a spike in claims from a particular ZIP code—especially claims that seem suspicious or are ultimately denied—they respond the only way they know how: by raising premiums, tightening underwriting requirements, or even pulling out of the market entirely.

One of my own clients recently experienced this firsthand. They were approached by a roofer who told them there was storm damage, encouraged them to file a claim, and offered to “handle everything.” The claim was denied. Now that denied claim will sit on their insurance record for an average of five years. That means they may pay higher premiums and could have trouble switching carriers or finding coverage in the future. And they still don't have a new roof.

Even worse, this isn't just about one person. When multiple questionable or unnecessary claims are filed in a community, it affects



everyone. Rates can rise for entire neighborhoods. Carriers may stop renewing policies or stop writing new ones altogether. We've already seen early signs of this in our area, and I fear it's only the beginning if we're not careful.

Adding to the concern is the fact that many of these roofers and public adjusters don't carry proper licenses, don't have the right insurance, and aren't pulling the necessary permits. Some public adjusters charge significant fees for their services—sometimes as much as 10–20% of your insurance payout. Others walk away mid-job, or worse, never show up again after the paperwork is signed and the claim is in.

Arizona doesn't yet have the regulatory protections other states have begun putting in place, which means it's up to us as homeowners to be extra cautious.

So here's my advice:

- If someone shows up at your door uninvited offering a “free” anything, take a step back.
- Ask to see their credentials, license, insurance, and verify them.
- Don't sign anything under pressure.
- Call your insurance agent before filing a claim, especially if it was suggested by a contractor or public adjuster.
- Seek recommendations for local roofers through the Pinewood News, (the editor personally vets each of her advertisers).

A legitimate professional will respect your desire to do your homework. A scammer won't.

We live in a wonderful, close-knit community, and I care deeply about protecting it. I've seen what happens when neighborhoods are flooded with roofers and adjusters making big promises. I've seen insurance markets shrink, homeowners left without options, and entire communities suffer from the actions of a few bad actors.

Let's not let that happen here. Let's look out for each other, stay informed, and make thoughtful decisions that protect both our homes and our community.



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Game Highlights from Pinewood Country Club—Bragging Rights Start Here



Lori Deemer and Becky Palumbo



Megan Reeves Kim Eaton

The Pinewood Country Club's Women's Golf Association held their very competitive member/guest tournament over June 18th, 19th, and 20th. Over 90 ladies competed. The winners for Overall Low Gross were Megan Reeves and her guest, Kim Eaton, and for Overall Low Net were Becky Palumbo and her guest, Lori Deemer.

Pickleball Action Heats Up

Pickleball season at PWCC charges ahead after an active summer kick-off. Clinics and friendly competition with Forest Highlands players served up plenty of fast-paced fun in June, with PWCC players prepping for club tournaments and inter-club competition in the coming months.

Tournaments within the club this season start with a July 5 blind draw tournament that will benefit local charities. August tournaments will include women's doubles, men's doubles, mixed doubles, 65+ players and a club stockholders tournament.

Starting July 13, Pinewood pickleballers will square off against Forest Highlands players competing for the coveted "PineForest Cup" which will be awarded to the club with the most points at the end of the four match series.

A full schedule of pickleball programming is available at the club front desk and is also posted at the courts. Pickleball is open to all PWCC sports members.



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Laura Davis & Sarah Fox | Photo by Sandee Caviness

THE REAL FARM TO TABLE

PART 4: WHY SUPPORTING LOCAL FOOD MATTERS

A Summer Series

BY SANDEE CAVINESS

Welcome back to our summer series, where we're spending time with the people who grow our food, care for the land, and keep Arizona's farming traditions alive through hard work and purpose.

In this issue, we visit Two Sisters' Tomatoes, a small farm built on conviction. Laura and Sarah aren't in it for appearances. They grow natural food, stand by their choices, and do the kind of hands-in-the-dirt work that speaks for itself.

Two Sisters, One Farm: A Conversation with Laura and Sarah

When Genna and I pulled up to their farm, the first thing we noticed were the tools. Left where they'd been dropped, still leaning against a wheelbarrow or poking out of rows mid-prep, they told the story of a long day and the kind of tired that only comes from real work under the Arizona sun. The beds were being shaped for the coming season, the ground tended with care and a bit of stubborn hope. Laura greeted us with a smile that said both "welcome" and "we've been busy." Inside, Sarah was finishing up and joined us with an adorable baby on her hip like a final, joyful punctuation mark. It was immediately clear that this was a farm built on sweat, family, and the quiet kind of purpose you don't find just anywhere.

Some ventures begin with a blueprint, a business plan, or a seat at a boardroom table. Two Sisters' Tomatoes started with a broken world, two stimulus checks, and a bit of dirt.

Broken because the pandemic had just upended everything: jobs vanished, supply chains collapsed, grocery shelves went bare, and people suddenly realized how fragile the food system really was. For Laura and Sarah, it was a wake-up call. The world they thought was steady, wasn't.

Laura and Sarah, two sisters from Ohio, didn't set out to become tomato farmers in Arizona's Verde Valley. Sarah had been busy navigating check-ins and concierge calls in Sedona's hospitality industry when COVID abruptly ended that chapter. Laura, whose Peace Corps assignment in Nepal was cut short, had spent her days teaching families how to grow kitchen gardens. Suddenly home, with unexpected free time and a global view of food, they looked at each other and asked, "Now what?" The universe replied with juicy, sun-warmed tomatoes and the wholesome satisfaction of working the land.

"We just decided to go for it," Laura said. "The broken supply chain made people realize they needed local food if they were to survive difficult times, and we saw a chance to be part of the solution, rooted in organic farming and the kind of food that does the body good."

They didn't start with much. Just a few acres, a greenhouse, and the kind of dream that keeps you up at night. Grow real food, the right way, for people who care what's on their plate. Today, their 2.5-acre farm is peaceful and purposeful. Nearly an acre is in active cultivation. The greenhouse is where they take chances. New crops, new methods, no guarantees. Just grit, sun, and a little faith.

Now their beautiful, vine-ripened heirlooms sell out fast at farmers markets in Flagstaff, Camp Verde, Prescott, and Payson. "We try to be the first tomatoes to market in the Verde Valley," Sarah added. "We plant early and take risks. Sometimes we lose crops to late frost, but being first matters. People are waiting."

Some customers want tomatoes for slicing and salads. Others buy by the case, choosing the ones that are extra ripe or slightly bruised because they're perfect for canning or sauces. "We have local cooks and canners stock up," Laura said. "That kind of loyalty is what keeps this little operation going."

They also have a growing circle of customers who bring them seeds from their family gardens. These are often heirloom, open-pollinated varieties that don't show up in commercial seed catalogs. "We're helping preserve not just the memories but the seeds themselves."

The sisters grow more than just tomatoes. Their seasonal lineup includes squash, lettuce, peppers, okra, and even artichokes, some of which have become wildly popular in floral arrangements. One of their helpers, a retired teacher from Ohio, now runs the small flower program, which has quietly become a surprise hit. "The artichokes, especially, have ended up in wedding bouquets," Laura said.

Farming with Integrity

The sisters don't sugarcoat their stance. They're deeply concerned about the direction of industrial agriculture and the reliance on synthetic chemicals like glyphosate. In their view, growing food comes with a responsibility that shouldn't be taken lightly.

"People are trusting us with their food," Laura said. "That should mean something."

At Two Sisters' Tomatoes, it does. That trust shapes every decision they make. They've chosen not to use pesticides of any kind, not even those approved under organic certification. The reason is personal and practical. They drink the same water that runs through their irrigation lines. Their children play in the same soil where the crops are grown.

Sarah knows it's not always easy. They've lost crops to bugs and heat and bad timing, and there's no safety net when you choose to farm this way. But she sees that as part of the trade.

"We lose crops sometimes. But that's part of the deal," she said. "You give up some control, but you keep your integrity. You keep your health. You keep the ground cleaner than you found it."

This isn't about perfection. It's about staying aligned with their values, even when the stakes are high. They're not trying to build an empire. They're trying to grow food that's good to feed your family.

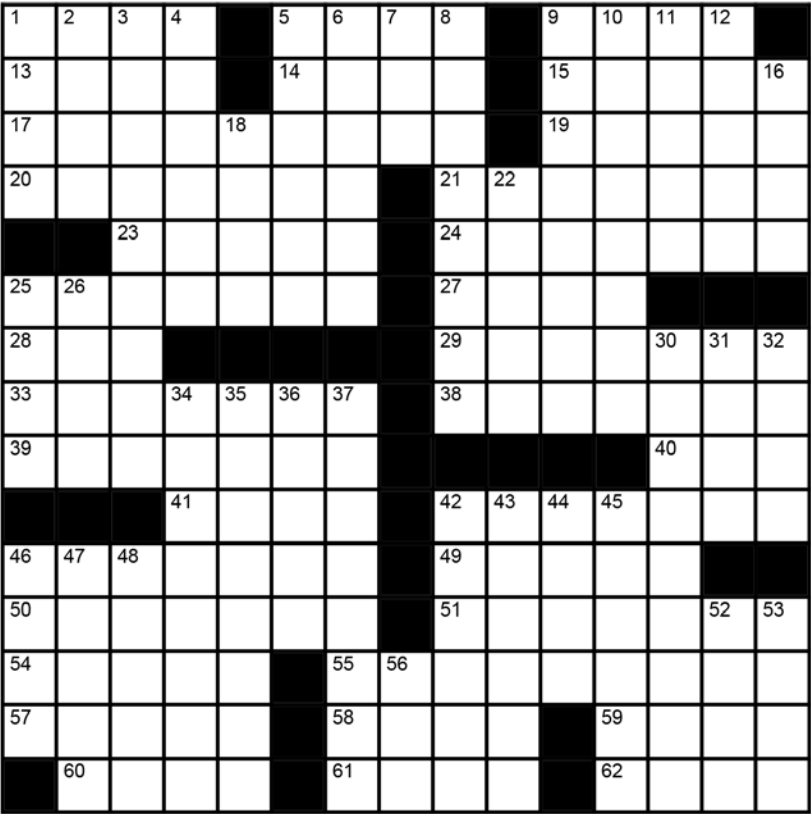
Their method isn't the easy route. It means pulling weeds by hand, staying ahead of pests the old-fashioned way, and accepting that some seasons are stingier than others. But it also means their soil stays healthy, their water stays clean, and their customers never have to second-guess what's in their food. It's not just farming—it's a promise. One rooted in safety, transparency, and respect for the land they work.

Last year, they brought on a few local FFA girls to help with fieldwork. "They were sharp, motivated, and completely changed the vibe of the farm," Laura said. "It felt good to bring young women into this space and show them what small-scale farming can be."

...Continued on page 5B

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Created by Paul Mason • Solution Page 22B



ACROSS

1. The Beatles' "Back in the ____"

5. Back talk

9. St. Louis landmark

13. Casanova

14. Hint

15. Other nations, to Israelites

17. Sign on to buy

19. Capital of Ghana

20. Election loser

21. To become clouded or gloomy

23. Malarkey

24. Shoes with copper disks, perhaps

25. Open-bodied truck

27. Descartes's "therefore"

28. Long, long time

29. Hollywood hopeful's hope

33. Opposite of failure
38. Fish in a can

39. Sneak attack requirement

40. Hair goo

41. Backside

42. Get by

49. Make into law

50. Passed, as laws

51. "____ Lineman," Glen Campbell song

54. Fragrant oil

55. A tendency to suffer from a particular medical condition.

57. India's first P.M.

58. Border

59. Allocate, with "out"

60. 500 sheets

61. Caviar sources

62. ____ Minor
- (constellation)

2. Essence

3. Matter

4. Vacation destination

5. Abrasion

6. Set straight

7. Hero

8. Like grapes that don't crunch

9. Thickening agent, from seaweed

10. 1970s James Garner TV title role

11. Ride a bike

12. Human resources person, at times

16. Come together

18. Baby's bed

22. Heart line

25. Come clean, with "up"

26. LummoX

30. Convert (pictures, text, or sound) into a digital form (var)

31. Individuals

32. Defrost

34. Vulture of southern U. S.

35. Alloy of gold and silver

36. No longer fresh

37. Document destroyer

42. Treatment plant input

43. Consolidates

44. Johann Sebastian ____

45. Outline

46. Campus bigwig

47. "Come in!"

48. Clean up

52. South American monkey

53. Away from port

56. Altar avowal

DOWN

1. ____ Major

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...Continued from page 3B

Local Produce vs. Store-Bought Produce

There’s something different about biting into a tomato from a local farm. It’s not just the flavor, though that’s a big part of it. It’s the fact that the tomato was picked at its peak, likely that same morning, and hasn’t spent days in a truck or weeks in cold storage. It still tastes like the sun. Most grocery store produce, especially out of season, is picked too early so it can survive the long haul. It ripens in boxes or under fluorescent lights, which dulls both taste and nutritional value. You can tell the difference.

Local farmers grow with the seasons. They stick to what thrives naturally in the soil and weather they know best. Grocery store shelves, on the other hand, are designed to look the same all year. Strawberries in January. Asparagus in October. That kind of consistency usually requires greenhouses, artificial light, chemical inputs, and a lot of water. It’s not just resource-heavy. It’s often flavor and nutritionally light.

The distance food travels also matters more than we think. Local produce might come from ten miles down the road, often arriving within a day or two of harvest. Grocery store produce can come from hundreds or even thousands of miles away. It sits in transit, in warehouses, in storage. That long journey chips away at freshness and adds to the environmental cost.

Then there’s shelf life. Commercial growers aim for produce that looks perfect and holds up under pressure. Uniform size, tough skin, long-lasting appeal. But that often comes at the expense of flavor and nutrition. Local growers don’t have to grow for shipping. They grow for taste, for variety, and for the people they feed in their own communities.

When you buy local, you’re not just getting better food. You’re keeping your money in your community. You’re supporting small farms, families, and neighbors who are doing the work with care. You’re choosing a system built on connection, not convenience.

So yes, local produce is fresher. It tastes better. It’s better for the land and the people on it. And once you’ve tried it, you won’t need a label to remind you. You’ll know.

Not for Profit, But for Purpose

Profit isn’t the end goal, at least not yet. “This is a hobby farm that pays for itself,” said Sarah. But the dream runs deeper. “We’re not trying to build an empire. We’re here to rebuild a broken connection between people and their food.”

Their tomatoes are picked within a day of hitting the market. That freshness stands in stark contrast to the hard, flavorless supermarket versions. “When someone asks why store tomatoes are so bland, I want to say, ‘Because they’re styrofoam,’” Laura said.

Both sisters still work other jobs to keep things going. But with loyal customers, including local canning legend Sara Bowyer from the Park, and growing demand for local food, the future looks promising.

“We’re not in this to scale up or sell out,” Laura said. “We’re here to serve the community, connect people to their food, and grow what matters.”

Get in Touch with Two Sisters’ Tomatoes

If you want to experience food grown with care and purpose, reach out:
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Gallimaufry

BY TESS LANGLEY



Gallimaufry

noun | gal-li-mau-fry: A hodgepodge, a jumble, a glorious mix of bits and pieces that somehow works.

Gallimaufry is an old word, but it speaks to today. It means a jumble or mix of all sorts of things. The word comes from 16th-century France, where galimafrée was a stew. People would throw together whatever ingredients they had. The result might have seemed random, but it came together into something hearty and good. Over time, the word came to describe any collection of mismatched parts that somehow form a whole.

That sounds a lot like America. From the start, this country has been a gallimaufry. People arrived from different places, bringing their languages, foods, customs, and dreams. The mix wasn't neat. It wasn't planned. But together, they built something stronger than any one piece alone.

Walk through a city, small town, or rural fair and you'll see it. A barbecue stand next to a taco truck. A festival where polka bands play between hip hop acts. Churches, temples, mosques, and community centers standing within blocks of each other. Schools where children learn from teachers with different accents and histories. The gallimaufry is everywhere.

Some might call it messy. But in that mix is where the strength lies. The variety of voices and ideas is what has kept this country growing and changing. It is what has helped America face challenges, push boundaries, and keep reaching for better.

This is a place built by people who didn't match on paper. But they worked side by side. They argued, struggled, helped one another, and kept going. The gallimaufry of America is not just what we are. It is what has made us who we are.

So next time you hear the word gallimaufry, think of this country. A mix of people, ideas, and hopes. Different, yes, but together making something worth believing in.



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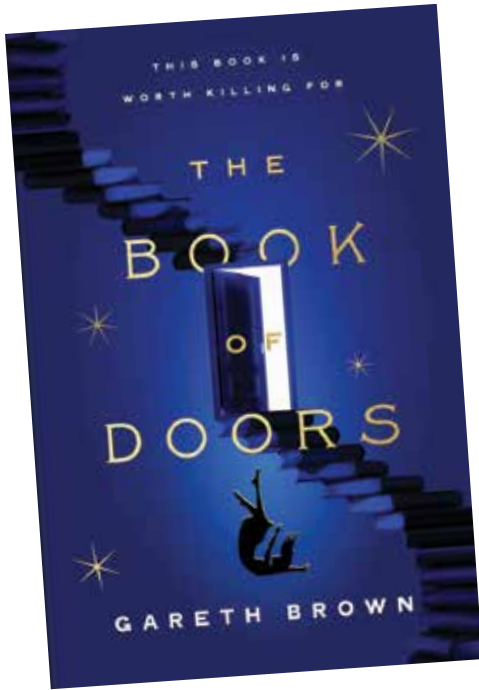


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The Book of Doors

BY SANDY WRIGHT



This debut novel reminded me of the contemporary fantasy books *The Midnight Library* and *The Night Circus*, because it mixes a modern story with the wonder of the unknown, with a tinge of darkness swirled in.

Cassie Andres works in a New York City bookstore, shelving books and making coffee for customers. She lives an unassuming ordinary life. Until the day one of her favorite customers—a solitary yet charming old man—dies right in front of her. Cassie is devastated. She had loved the

old man's stories, and now she has

nothing to remember him by. Only the last book he was reading.

The Book of Doors.

The book is inscribed with enigmatic words and mysterious drawings. It promises Cassie that any door is every door. You just have to know how to open them.

As she tentatively explores *The Book of Doors*, she is approached by a stranger in a rumpled black suit and with a Scottish brogue, who calls himself Drummond Fox. He's a librarian who keeps watch over a unique set of rare volumes. The book now in Cassie's possession should belong in Fox's library, and it is the book most coveted by those who want to steal the whole collection.

Cassie's life changes completely with the gift of the Book of Doors. She is hunted by those few who know of the special books. With only her roommate Izzy to confide in, she has to decide if she will help the mysterious Drummond protect his secret library from those who will do evil.

It turns out, only Drummond knows where the library is, and only

Cassie's book can get them there.

There are several villains, and I truly hated all of them. 'The woman' as she's called throughout, is the true embodiment of evil. Then there's Mr. Barbury—also terrible—who has been chasing Drummond for years trying to get his books. This is no children's book, it's aimed squarely at adults. In fact, it's very, very dark.

But I must admit the main plot twist was my least favorite part. You may agree, and, if so, I hope it doesn't spoil the story for you, because it made everything come together in a perfect puzzle.

Themes of exploration, self-discovery, and the consequences of our choices resonate throughout "*The Book of Doors*." Brown encourages readers to consider the paths they take in life and how those choices shape their identities and futures. The novel serves as a reminder of the power of possibility and the importance of embracing new experiences, even in the face of uncertainty.

- The Book of Doors
- By Gareth Brown
- William Morrow, 2024
- 418 pages

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'SCRUMDIDDLYUMPTIOUS' WILLY WONKA JR. LIGHTS UP PINEWOOD PLAYHOUSE

BY CINDY SMITH



The delicious adventures of Willy Wonka's chocolate factory light up the stage in this captivating adaptation of Roald Dahl's fantastical tale. Featuring the enchanting songs from the 1971 film, in addition to a host of fun new songs, Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka JR. is a scrumdiddlyumptious musical guaranteed to delight everyone's sweet tooth.

Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka JR. follows enigmatic candy manufacturer Willy Wonka as he stages a contest by hiding golden tickets in five of his scrumptious candy bars. You will be delighted to find Youth Camp is offering special candy bars with Golden Tickets at each performance. In the play, whomever comes up with these tickets will win a free tour of the Wonka factory, as well as a lifetime supply of candy. Four of the five winning children are insufferable brats, but the fifth is a likeable young lad named Charlie Bucket, who takes the tour in the company of his equally amiable grandfather. The children must learn to follow Mr. Wonka's rules in the factory — or suffer the consequences.

Jennifer Adams has returned for a fifth season as Co-Director and Musical Director. Elizabeth Peterson joins her as Co-director and Director of Choreography. While some of the actors and actresses are

new to Youth Camp this year, many return year after year to sing and dance their way into our hearts.

Words and Music for Willy Wonka Jr by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newly. Adapted for the stage by Leslie Bricusse and Timothy A. McDonald. Based on the book Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl

Purchase your tickets for one of the three performances at the theater Box office on

Saturdays from 10 to noon or at www.pinewoodplayers.com/tickets. The show runs Friday July 11 at 7 PM, Saturday July 12 at 2:30 and 5:30 PM and Sunday July 13 at 2:30 PM.

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ON VACATION WITH THE PINWOOD NEWS

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BY OUR READERS

Donna Langston brought the Pinewood News to Brunswick, Maine, and her husband Wayne to a donut shop. Only one of them is thrilled about it.

We love you Wayne, Honey Butt, Langston!



Got The Pinewood News packed in your suitcase? Send us a photo from your getaway. Let's see where our little paper ends up next! Send your photos to [Hello@ThePinewoodNews.com](mailto>Hello@ThePinewoodNews.com).



STARS, STRIPES & STAGE LIGHTS

Madagascar Jr. Brings Local Kids Together

As red, white, and blue decorate Pinewood Boulevard this Independence Day, another kind of celebration is beginning across the highway — the joy of watching young performers shine in Arizona Children's Theatre's summer hit, Madagascar Jr..

This vibrant, laugh-out-loud musical has not only entertained audiences with its colorful jungle antics and catchy songs but has also brought kids and families across Munds Park together in a meaningful way. Just as the Fourth of July celebrates freedom, creativity, and unity, this production has given local children the freedom to express themselves, discover new talents, and find their voices — both on and off the stage.

"This experience has been more than just learning lines and dancing," said one parent. "It's taught my child confidence, responsibility, and how powerful it is to be part of a team."

With a cast made up entirely of young performers, Madagascar Jr. has become a platform for kids to grow not just as actors, but as leaders and role models. From shy first-timers to enthusiastic returners, each child has found a place where they are supported, celebrated, and encouraged to try something new.

The impact stretches beyond the stage. Many of the performers have formed lasting friendships, learned time management, and developed a sense of pride in contributing to something bigger than themselves. Parents have praised the program for providing a positive, structured outlet during the summer months, one that celebrates individuality and teamwork.

And the best part? The doors remain open for more children to get involved.

Arizona Children's Theatre is actively enrolling for upcoming productions and classes. Families can register today at <https://www.arizonachildrenstheatre.com>.

As we celebrate America's birthday and the values that define our communities — creativity, opportunity, and unity — there's no better time to support programs that nurture the next generation of artists and leaders.

So this July 4th, while you're enjoying the parades and patriotic playlists, consider applauding the young stars right here at home who are learning to dream big, work hard, and "Move It, Move It" with heart.

Performances of Madagascar Jr. will take place at Munds Park Community Church from July 23 – July 25, and tickets will sell out quickly. Don't miss your chance to see this heartwarming, high-energy musical that's fun for all ages.

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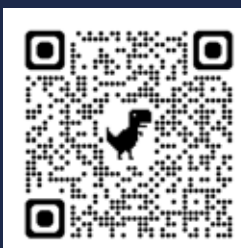


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THE DAY WE DECIDED TO BE US

THE STORY OF THE 4TH OF JULY FOR CURIOUS KIDS

BY GEORGE DEE

A long time ago, before there were 50 states and baseball and chocolate chip pancakes, the place we now call America was a bunch of colonies. Thirteen, to be exact. They were like teenage kids living in a house ruled by a very bossy parent who lived all the way across the ocean.

The bossy parent was King George III of England. He made rules from far away and expected everyone to follow them. The rules were strange. Some were unfair. Some cost money. And nobody here got to vote on any of it.

At first, the colonies tried to be polite. They sent letters. They argued. They grumbled. But the king didn't really listen. So the colonies stopped asking. They started thinking.

One day, a man named Thomas Paine wrote a little book with a big name: Common Sense. It basically said, "Why are we letting some fancy man with a crown boss us around from 3,000 miles away?" The book spread through the colonies like a secret you just had to tell someone.

Pretty soon, people who had once just wanted things to be fair started wanting something bigger.

Freedom.

Then, on a hot summer day in 1776, a group of colony leaders met in a stuffy room in Philadelphia. A man named Richard Henry Lee stood up and said what a lot of people had been thinking: "Let's not be colonies anymore. Let's be our own country."

Now, deciding to become a country is not like choosing a team for dodgeball. It is a big deal. So they talked. And argued. And maybe yelled a little.

While they worked it out, they picked five smart guys to write something that explained their decision. One of them, a young red-haired fellow named Thomas Jefferson, got stuck with the writing job.



He used a quill and ink and wrote by candlelight.

What Jefferson wrote didn't have glitter or swirly borders or a title in rainbow letters. But it felt fancy. The kind of fancy that makes people lean in and whisper, "This is important." It was written with a feather, but it landed like thunder. It said things that made people cheer. And probably made one king very, very grumpy.

It said people are born with rights. Big ones. Like the right to speak up. The right to be treated fairly. And the right to say, "No thanks," when the people in charge aren't doing a very good job.

It also said something that made King George spit out his tea.

We're not yours anymore.

The leaders voted to break away from the king on July 2.

But they still had to agree on all the words, fix a few sentences, and argue over whether it should say "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" or "life, liberty, and something cooler."

By July 4, they were ready. They signed the Declaration of Independence. That was the paper that said, "We're not just part of something. We are something."

Then somebody, no one wrote down who, lit a firecracker.

Someone else rang a bell.

Someone probably yelled, "Let's eat."

That is how the Fourth of July became a holiday.

Not because of a battle, or a crown, or a king.

But because a bunch of tired, sweaty people in wigs agreed that freedom was worth the noise.

And we've been making noise ever since.

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Answers page 22B.

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Independence

July
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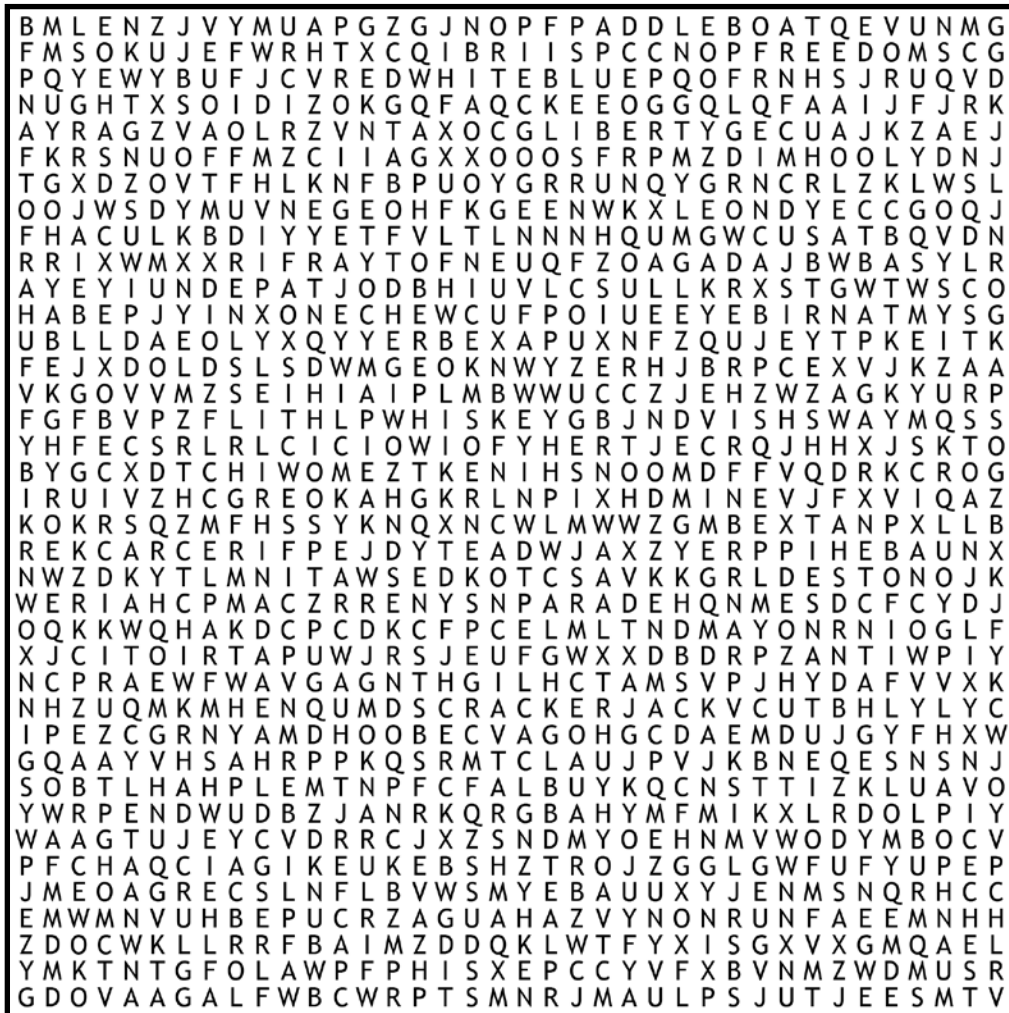
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USA



WORD SEARCH

Solution Page 22B



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What Does a Nestbox Monitor Do?

BY MARGARET DYEKMAN



Mountain Chickadee Babies courtesy of Doug LeVasseur



Mountain Chickadee courtesy of Eric Gofreed

Hundreds of citizen scientists across the country are monitoring bird boxes and other nests and reporting the data to NestWatch, a nonprofit organization. Each week these folks, including me, carefully monitor bird nests and submit their observations to a database, along with photos and comments. You may ask why this is done and what is the information used for? Per NestWatch's website, it is a "monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. Our database is intended to be used to study the current condition of breeding bird populations and how they may be changing over time as a result of climate change, habitat degradation and loss, expansion of urban areas, and the introduction of non-native plants and animals."

I've been a nestbox monitor for three years now and share the responsibility of the nestbox trail at Pinewood Country Club with another volunteer, a retired Arizona Game and Fish employee. We take turns checking the 14 boxes. We bring along screwdrivers to open the boxes, our phone to take photos when possible, gloves and sticks for cleaning out boxes or moving out unwanted insects like hornets, and extra nails and screws. We geo-mapped the boxes' locations and have them numbered to make it easier for us to report the right activity at the right box. We wear a yellow vest with the words "Nest Box Monitor" on the back so the maintenance staff at the golf course recognize we are there on business, and we very much appreciate the Club's support of this effort.

This year half of the boxes have had nests, and it looks like all but one will successfully have its young fledge. The boxes have had Pygmy Nuthatches, Violet-green Swallows, Mountain Chickadees, and House Wrens. We love the species diversity.

You too can be a nest box monitor if you have a nest box on your property. It's much easier at home than having to monitor at a golf course, because we have to be on the property very early to ensure we don't interfere with the golfers. Nest box training is available online, and it's a commitment for about three months, with at least weekly reporting.

Another critical program tracking breeding birds is the Breeding Bird Survey, which began in the 1960's. It also enlists thousands of volunteers across the country to provide long-term data on what species are increasing or declining over time and the impact of habitat changes. This program is invaluable for conservation analysis, and it is managed by the U.S. Geological Survey. This entire program will be eliminated under the Trump administration's proposed 2026 budget, which is a shame, because most of the work is done by volunteers and has been critical for scientists as they try to protect habitat and biodiversity for all of us.

You can reach me at margaretdyekman@cox.net or by text at 602-620-3210. You can read all about Backyard Birding in Northern Arizona at www.backyardbirdingaz.com and order the book online or get one directly from me. I welcome your questions, reports of sightings, and your suggestions for future articles.

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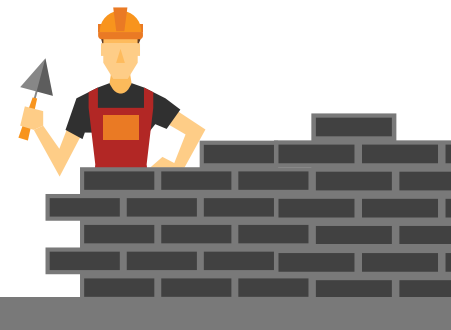
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Oh My Achin' Knees!

BY CHRISTY SHAFT, PT, CERTIFIED YOGA INSTRUCTOR



Knee pain is more common than you might think. According to the National Institute of Health, over 25% of adults experience knee pain that causes some level of impairment. Chances are, you've felt it yourself—or you know someone who's complained about a sore knee after a hike, a game of pickleball, or just tackling everyday activities. Here in Munds Park, it's not unusual to hear pain stories swapped over drinks at Happy Hour, shared with equal parts humor and sympathy.

Common Causes of Knee Pain

Common causes of knee pain include everything from sudden injuries to the slow wear-and-tear of daily life. For some, it's that awkward twist during a hike up Crystal Point. For others, it's the creeping ache after hours of pickleball or crouching in the garden. Here's a breakdown of some of the most frequent culprits:

Overuse & Repetitive Motion

Overuse happens when we push too hard without giving our bodies time to recover. For example, playing pickleball for 2 hours, three times a week is far easier on the knees than grinding through 3 hours, five days a week.

Arthritis

The most common type is osteoarthritis, where the cushioning cartilage between the joints wears down over time. This type of knee pain often shows up as stiffness in the morning or after long periods of sitting.

Injuries

Sprains, strains, torn ligaments (like the ACL), or meniscus tears are all common—especially after a misstep on a trail or a hard pivot on the course.

Bursitis & Tendinitis

These are inflammation of the small sacs of fluid (bursa) or tendons around the knee. They can flare up with too much kneeling or squatting, and they hurt—a lot.

Weight & Joint Stress

Extra weight puts more pressure on your knees than you might think. Just walking on flat ground puts 1.5 times your body weight on your knees—so every pound matters.

Alignment or Muscle Imbalance

This is usually the culprit and where you can do the most work. The hip and the ankle are the usual suspects. The knee is just the joint caught in the middle. Tight hips and stiff ankles cause more stress on the knee. Weak hips make it difficult to control knee stability and absorb shock. Muscle imbalances put extra strain on tendons, bursae, and joints, leading to premature wear.

What Can I Do to Help My Knee Pain?

- Cross-train with different activities to work a variety of muscle groups and spread the workload across joints.
- Improve hip mobility, especially the IT band and hip rotation. Tight hip flexors can also be a problem.
- Stretch your calves and maintain ankle mobility. If your feet are too mobile or you have flat arches, consider a pronator shoe or arch supports like “Superfeet.”
- Strengthen with functional exercises where your feet are on the ground. Avoid the leg extension machine, as it can place too much stress on the kneecap. Include movements like lunges, side steps, side planks, and rotational exercises—these lateral and twisting motions are often missing from regular workouts.
- Use a stationary bike or do aquatic exercises to maintain circulation and keep the joint lubricated.
- Wear a knee sleeve for gentle compression and warmth. A lightweight option like the “Tommy Copper sleeve” can offer comfort without bulk—note that it's for compression, not stability.
- Consult a Physical Therapist for a specially designed workout for your needs.

Additional Relief Strategies

- Use ice and elevation to manage acute pain.
- Dry needling may help relieve discomfort.
- Natural supplements like turmeric, magnesium, or NSAIDs can help, but consult a healthcare provider before starting any new treatment.
- For chronic stiffness, try heat or a hot tub followed by gentle range of motion exercises.

Final Thoughts

Knee pain can be frustrating, but it's not something you have to live with. By understanding the root causes and taking proactive steps, you can manage symptoms, improve mobility, and get back to the activities you love—whether it's hiking the trails, playing pickleball, or just moving through daily life with ease. Don't ignore your knees—they work hard for you every day!

As always, try our Yoga Classes where you will do lots of hip and ankle stretching and strengthen those hips! Monday, Friday and Saturdays at the RV Rec Hall. See our “Yoga In The Park” Facebook page for the schedule.



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What the Stars Have in Store for July

BY CAKE



ARIES, MARCH 21 - APRIL 20

Aries, July is all about taking charge of your independence—no surprise there! Channel your bold energy into something new, like a solo adventure or starting a passion project. You're a natural trailblazer, but don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it (even superheroes have sidekicks). The stars remind you that true independence means knowing when to go solo and when to share the load. Go light the fireworks—you've got this.



LEO, JULY 23 - AUGUST 22

Leo, July gives you the perfect excuse to take center stage—fireworks and all. This is your month to lead with confidence, whether it's inspiring a team, planning an event, or just being your fabulous self. The stars also suggest sprinkling in a little humility (don't roar too loudly). True leaders lift others as they rise, so share the spotlight. You'll still be the star; you're just sharing the galaxy a bit.



SAGITTARIUS, NOV 23 - DEC 21

Sagittarius, July dares you to dream big and take action. Your adventurous spirit thrives on exploring new horizons, so why not map out a bold goal? Whether it's planning a trip, starting a side hustle, or diving into a passion project, this is your month to think big. The stars are cheering you on, but don't forget to set the GPS—your enthusiasm is legendary, but a little direction goes a long way. Adventure awaits!



TAURUS, APRIL 21 - MAY 20

Taurus, July is your reminder that comfort zones are great for lounging, but growth happens outside of them. Whether it's trying a new recipe, learning a skill, or traveling somewhere unfamiliar, this month is about shaking things up. The stars promise that stepping out of routine will bring delightful surprises. And hey, even if it's uncomfortable, at least treat yourself to snacks along the way. Growth is better with cheese fries.



VIRGO, AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22

Virgo, July wants you to embrace freedom—not just from work, but from overthinking. Let go of the idea that everything has to be perfect before you enjoy it. This month, focus on spontaneity and fun. Try something unplanned, like a last-minute road trip or a carefree day at the park. The stars say laughter is your best medicine, so don't sweat the details. Even the universe has a little chaos in its design.



CAPRICORN, DEC 22 - JAN 20

Capricorn, July reminds you that independence isn't just about hard work—it's about knowing when to relax. Take time to enjoy the little things: a backyard barbecue, a summer stroll, or just a quiet moment with a good book. The stars suggest balance is key. You're building an empire, but even emperors need vacations. Let go of the grind for a bit and focus on living. Success feels sweeter when paired with joy.



GEMINI, MAY 21 - JUNE 21

Gemini, July asks you to focus on communication—your superpower! This month, dive into meaningful conversations, whether it's reconnecting with an old friend or finally expressing your true feelings. Your words carry weight, so use them to build bridges and spark laughter. The stars also suggest a fun writing project or a spontaneous speech. And remember: not every group chat needs your opinion, but when it does, make it a masterpiece.



LIBRA, SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22

Libra, July invites you to spread kindness like confetti. Whether it's a random act of generosity, lending a listening ear, or just complimenting a stranger, your efforts will ripple positivity. Your natural charm is a gift, so use it to bring people together. The stars suggest your kindness might even circle back to you when you least expect it. Just don't forget to save a little of that love for yourself—it's okay to be your own fan.



AQUARIUS, JAN 21 - FEB 18

Aquarius, July calls you to rally your community. Whether it's organizing an event, volunteering, or simply connecting with friends, your leadership can bring people together in amazing ways. Your vision is inspiring, so use it to ignite collaboration. The stars suggest your unique perspective will spark fresh ideas that benefit everyone involved. And if someone calls you the life of the party, just nod modestly—it's true, after all.



CANCER, JUNE 22 - JULY 22

Happy birthday season, Cancer! July is your time to shine, but instead of hiding in your shell, why not throw a party? Celebrate your wins, big and small, and let others celebrate you too. The stars remind you that independence doesn't mean doing everything alone—it's about creating a support system that feels like home. So, plan the gathering, light the sparklers, and remember: cake is non-negotiable. You've earned it.



SCORPIO, OCT 23 - NOV 22

Scorpio, July asks you to embrace vulnerability—it's where true strength lies. Open up to someone you trust, whether it's a friend, partner, or family member, and let them see the real you. The stars suggest that independence doesn't mean building walls; it's about building connections that support your freedom. And if the idea makes you squirm, remember: even scorpions need a little sunlight. Vulnerability isn't weakness; it's power in disguise.



PISCES, FEB 19 - MARCH 20

Pisces, July is all about creative expression. Whether you're painting, writing, cooking, or just rearranging your living space, let your imagination take the lead. The stars say this is your time to turn daydreams into something tangible. Share your creations—you'll inspire others more than you realize. And if it doesn't turn out perfect? Congratulations, you've just invented a new art style. Let your inner artist run wild—it's summer, after all.

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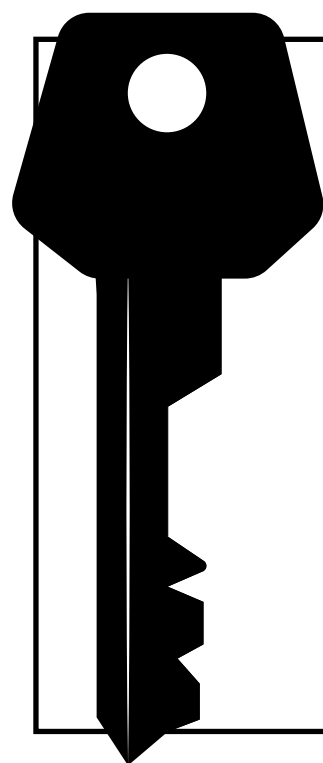
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Coconino County offers Support for Keeping the Dark Sky Dark

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Request an inspection of your exterior lighting. It includes a written report. \$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.

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The Pinewood Fire Department has microchip scanners. You can bring the animal to the firehouse or call (928) 286-9885
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High Country Humane (928) 526-0742

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

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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.

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

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Short-Term Rental Complaints & Questions

Loud Parties, Parking Issues, or Other Nuisances

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