

# PINEWOOD

THE GOOD LIFE, COMMUNITY & MOUNTAIN LIVING SINCE 1993

VOL. 32 NO. 18 DECEMBER 12, 2025

FREE!

*Merry Christmas!*

MAY THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON FILL YOUR HOME.



COVER by Sandee Caviness & Hiccuprney

# WINE TASTING & MORE

## Munds Park's Hidden Pour

There's a little doorway that leads to your new favorite spot.

You won't notice it unless you're looking. That's part of the charm.

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### WINE TASTING & MORE

The best secret in Munds Park.

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17730 S Munds Ranch Rd  
Munds Park, AZ

(At the back door of the old BBQ)

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(928) 951-6532

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▪ Osteoarthritis	▪ Allergies
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▪ Rheumatoid Arthritis	▪ And More

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## 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.

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## ADVERTISE WITH US!

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Pinewood Bar & Grill  
Pinewood County Club  
Pinewood Powered by Re/Max  
Shell Gas Station  
The Outpost (Post Office)  
Wine Tasting & More

The next issue of the *Pinewood News* will hit the stands, **Friday, January 9, 2026**



YouTube



# COLDWELL BANKER NORTHLAND



**\$429,000**

**17810 S WALAPAI RD • UNIT #: 55**

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



**REDUCED**

**\$400,000**

**1170 E COUGAR ST**

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



**\$437,000**

**245 BARNWOOD TRL**

Darling little getaway on a beautiful large treed lot (9750 sq ft). Cozy wood interior with vaulted ceiling and a pellet stove in living room. Plenty of room on the lot for a garage or to add on. Home comes furnished too?



**REDUCED**

**\$475,000**

**17165 ELK PL**

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



**SALE PENDING!**

**\$475,000**

**17380 CRYSTAL BROOK PL**

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



**SALE PENDING!**

**\$1,295,000**

**17612 E FAIRWAY DR  
MUNDS PARK**

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



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- ✓ 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.

## NO SERVICE CHARGE PLUMBER

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- Valves and flex lines
- Wash machine hoses
- Water heater exhaust
- Gas lines
- Incorrect work

### Our Services:

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- Gas Lines for New Fixtures & Propane Tank Relocations
- RO Systems
- Tank-less Water Heaters
- Toilet Repair
- Water Heaters
- Water Softeners

# PINEWOOD

THE GOOD LIFE, COMMUNITY & DESERT MOUNTAIN LIVING

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### AA Meetings - Feel Better!

Munds Park Community Church

Every Monday, 6 pm

17670 S Munds Ranch Rd

### Munds Park Community Church Services

Services Sunday, 10:45 am

17670 S Munds Ranch Rd • Munds Park

### Munds Park Town Hall

All residents are encouraged to attend.

Stay informed. Your presence and participation is essential!

Thursday, May 21, 2026

6:30 pm • Pinewood Country Club

### Pinewood Fire Department Auxiliary meeting

The Community is Welcome!

Tuesday, January 6

6:30 pm • 17670 S Munds Ranch Rd  
Munds Park

### Pinewood Fire District Board Meeting

Public Welcome

Tuesday, December 16

3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr • Munds Park

### Pinewood Sanitary District Board Meeting

Public Welcome

Thursday, January 8

3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr • Munds Park



C'mon. C'mon Open it ...  
The suspense is killing me!



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Stay in the loop with everything local: public notices, community updates, and helpful info that keeps our community connected.

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Board games are back on the table. Why families are rediscovering the joy of unplugging and laughing together.

# CALLING ALL REAL ESTATE AGENTS!



## MONDAY, MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>

**WHEN: 9AM**

**WHERE: PCC CLUBHOUSE**

**CAN'T MAKE IT IN PERSON?**

**WE WILL SEND OUT A  
RECORDED VERSION OF THE  
SEMINAR!**

## NEW MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION & INQUIRIES SEMINAR

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

### SEMINAR TOPICS

**BREAKDOWN  
OF NEW  
MEMBERSHIP  
PRICING & POLICIES**

**UNDERSTAND THE  
MEMBERSHIP  
PROCESS FOR THE  
COMING SEASON**

**Q & A TO MAKE  
SURE WE COVER  
ALL THE BASES!**

## REGISTER TODAY!

[dzamora@pinewoodcountryclubaz.com](mailto:dzamora@pinewoodcountryclubaz.com) (928) 233 - 8271

# YOUR LINK TO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUNDS PARK

## UPDATES FROM THE PINEWOOD SANITARY DISTRICT

### 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.

### RV Hookups

Pinewood Sanitary District would like to remind everyone, especially visiting families and RV owners, hooking up RVs to residential clean-outs is prohibited. We appreciate your assistance and compliance.

### Public Utility Easements

Contractors and non-contractors are prohibited from obstructing Public Utility Easements (PUE) with permanent structures. Before any work begins, they must call 811 and establish BlueStake notifications to ensure all underground utilities are properly identified. Additionally, permission must be obtained from all utility providers before utilizing or accessing PUE. Failure to comply with these requirements can result in safety hazards, service disruptions, and legal liability.

### Utility Easement Access Required

All utility easements must always remain accessible, as PSD will be conducting essential repairs prioritized from the most severe issues to the least. Before work begins, we will make every effort to notify affected customers in advance; however, schedules may change as existing problems worsen and require immediate attention. While PSD will strive to provide notice whenever possible, advance notification is not guaranteed because these easements exist to ensure public safety and maintain continuity throughout PSD's collection system.

Important: If PSD is required to remove any obstructions to access easements for PSD lines and equipment, the homeowner(s) will be responsible for any associated costs. In some cases, costs may be shared between neighbors on both sides of the utility easement, depending on the specific situation.

## WOODY'S PROGRESS REPORT



Welcome to Woody's Progress Report (Or Lack Thereof), where we track the thrilling saga of absolutely nothing happening. This prime slice of pavement—complete with a post-apocalyptic gas station—has been sitting empty since 2013. Yes, 2013. So until this rundown gas station gets a purpose, we'll be reporting in every issue on the thrilling "developments" of absolutely nothing.



### In this issue's report:

A neighbor reported hearing sleigh bells. Turned out to be a loose piece of chain-link clanging in the wind.



## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE MUNDS PARK TRAIL STEWARDS

Our 2025 season is a wrap, and what a season it was. Every trail crew volunteer, every trash clean-up helper, every lunch crew member, Gail and Rick VanDeurzen for keeping the marquee sharp, and Cyndi Striegler for powering the website. Everyone who contributed financially. Our officers and board. You showed up, you worked hard, and it showed on every mile of trail.

You helped keep our forest clean, safe, and beautiful. We could not have done it without you.

And now we are already looking ahead. The 2026 season is on the horizon, and we would love to have you with us. If you are ready to lend a hand, meet great people, and make a real impact on the place we all enjoy, join the volunteer team for 2026. For more information visit [www.mundsparktrailstewards.com](http://www.mundsparktrailstewards.com).

Enjoy the trails in the meantime, treat them kindly, and pick up any trash you see. Thank you for being part of the MUTS community.

... Continued on page 8

## Christmas Eve Services

Munds Park Community Church  
Wednesday evening, December 24, 6 pm



## COUNTY SHARES MUNDS PARK EARLY FLOOD-MITIGATION PLANS

Coconino County Flood Control District officials met with Munds Park residents on November 12, 2025, to explain the initial steps of a long-term plan that could alter how future storms impact the community. The meeting focused on two possible projects: a flood-retarding structure near Frog Tank and a smaller drainage improvement project near the Pinewood Blvd. bridge. Both ideas are at the very beginning of the planning process. Before anything can move forward, the Flood Control District must determine technical feasibility and then conduct comprehensive engineering studies, obtain federal approval, and meet stringent legal and financial requirements.

### Why Munds Park Needs Major Flood Solutions

Flood Control District Administrator Lucinda Andreani and hydrologic engineer Scott Ogden from JE Fuller Hydrology explained that Munds Park has one of the highest flood risks in the county. The watershed that drains into the community covers about 45 square miles.

Updated modeling and real-world data from recent storms show that Munds Park is especially vulnerable during winter rain-on-snow events. When rain falls on snow or frozen ground, the water cannot soak in. Everything runs off at once. In 2019, this combination resulted in a sharp increase in flows through the wash, which closely matched the District's flood model. That match confirmed that the current model is accurate and reliable.

### Why Earlier Solutions Did Not Work

A popular idea in earlier planning was to enlarge the natural channel that passes under the bridge over Interstate 17 near the golf course. The goal was to move water more efficiently out of Munds Park. However, updated modeling showed that opening up this natural channel would push higher flows into Munds Canyon and raise water levels for downstream property owners along Oak Creek. That type of result is considered an adverse impact, which is not allowed under floodplain rules or case law. Because of that, the District did not pursue that alternative at that time.

## Possible Flood-Control Dam at Frog Tank

Ogden explained a new idea that could make a big difference for Munds Park. The District is considering building a flood mitigation structure near Frog Tank that functions similarly to a dam, but without a lake. Under normal weather, it would sit there empty. During a big storm, it would briefly hold back part of the floodwater, and then meter out the floodwater over a period of time reducing the impacts downstream.

Think of it as a safety valve. Instead of every drop rushing into Munds Park at once, the structure would take the punch out of the flood. During a big storm, the structure would hold some of the water in the open forest behind it for a short time, then let it drain out naturally after the storm passes.

Very early modeling indicates that this single structure could reduce peak flood flows by approximately half. Such a reduction could prevent Interstate 17 from overtopping, reduce the size of the floodplain in several areas, and make future improvements possible without increasing flooding for people who live downstream near Oak Creek.

The District would need to secure approval from the U.S. Forest Service and fortunately the District has developed a positive strong relationship with the Coconino National Forest given all the post-wildfire flood mitigation that has occurred west and north of Flagstaff. However, if the project is not approved, then it would not move forward to construction. At this time, the project is at a conceptual level and the next step is securing the funding to conduct a Phase 1 Engineering Study to determine minimally the technical feasibility of the proposed flood mitigation structure. Ultimately to be constructed, engineering would need to be completed and funding secured. All projects must be technically, financially, legally and environmentally feasible.

The price will depend on engineering, soil testing, environmental review, and approval from the Forest Service. Very early cost estimates range from \$ 30 to \$ 50 million, but the District will not know the actual number until the engineering is at a 60% level.

### A Smaller Project With Immediate Potential

Ogden also described a much smaller project at the Pinewood Blvd. bridge. During storms larger than about a 10-year event, water leaves the main wash through a low spot and floods streets before entering Odell Lake. A short containment berm could keep flows in the wash and remove several properties from the floodplain. This improvement appears feasible within the existing right-of-way and does not depend on the larger Frog Tank project. It is one of the few near-term options with a clear benefit, but solely for a limited number of properties.



**Nancy Shelton**

*Associate Broker*

**928-856-0152**

NancySheltonRealtor@gmail.com



**1159 Coyote**

Affordable and Adorable. This stick-built 2/2 cabin checks all the boxes. Great curb appeal, lots of outdoor living space, open great room with vaulted ceilings, wood burning stove, central heat and air conditioning. Upgraded, cared for and priced to sell!



Scan to see  
property details  
and photos.



Concerns About I-17 & Sanitation Risks

One resident asked what happens when a major flood pushes water toward Interstate 17. Ogden explained that Interstate 17 is a major transportation route for the region. When the highway closes, it disrupts travel, commerce, emergency response, and the movement of hazardous materials. Because of this, the District must consider Interstate 17 a top priority when studying long-term flood solutions. The District also plans to work with the Arizona Department of Transportation through the entire engineering process and when it reaches the stage of pursuing funding.

Ogden also addressed concerns about the Pinewood Sanitary District. He explained that the Sanitary District’s wastewater lagoons can be threatened during very large storms. A storm similar to the major 2004 event, which is considered about a 50-year flood, can push floodwater toward the lagoon system. Stormwater also enters the system through leaking manholes during heavy rain, which increases the amount of wastewater the Sanitary District must manage during a flood. The next phase of engineering would include evaluating the positive impacts of the potential projects identified relative to the wastewater treatment plant. Benefits to the plant may also align for potential federal and state funding sources.

What Happens Next

Before anything can be built, the District must complete a full feasibility study. This study will confirm whether the concepts are technically sound, legally acceptable, and cost-effective under federal rules. It will also determine whether the Forest Service would allow a project on its land.

The study and early engineering design are expected to cost between 1 million and 1.5 million dollars, depending on how many projects move forward.

Why This Matters

Munds Park sits at the bottom of a large watershed. Winter storms are not going away. The District now has better data, clearer models, and a few early ideas that may offer real mitigation, but the process is complex and long. Residents can contact the Coconino County Flood Control District for more information. Public involvement will matter as the planning moves forward.

To watch the November 12, 2025 meeting in Munds Park, or review the presentation slides, please visit: [www.coconino.az.gov/3518/FEMA-Special-Flood-Hazard-Area---Munds-P](http://www.coconino.az.gov/3518/FEMA-Special-Flood-Hazard-Area---Munds-P)

More Meetings to Come

The County plans to hold additional public meetings as the study moves forward. Pinewood News will share the dates as soon as they are announced so residents can stay informed and take part in the discussion. The next meeting is expected this spring, based on the County’s projected timeline.

### INSURANCE QUESTIONS?

### Meet your Munds Park expert.



## Lucky Penny Insurance

Goosehead Insurance





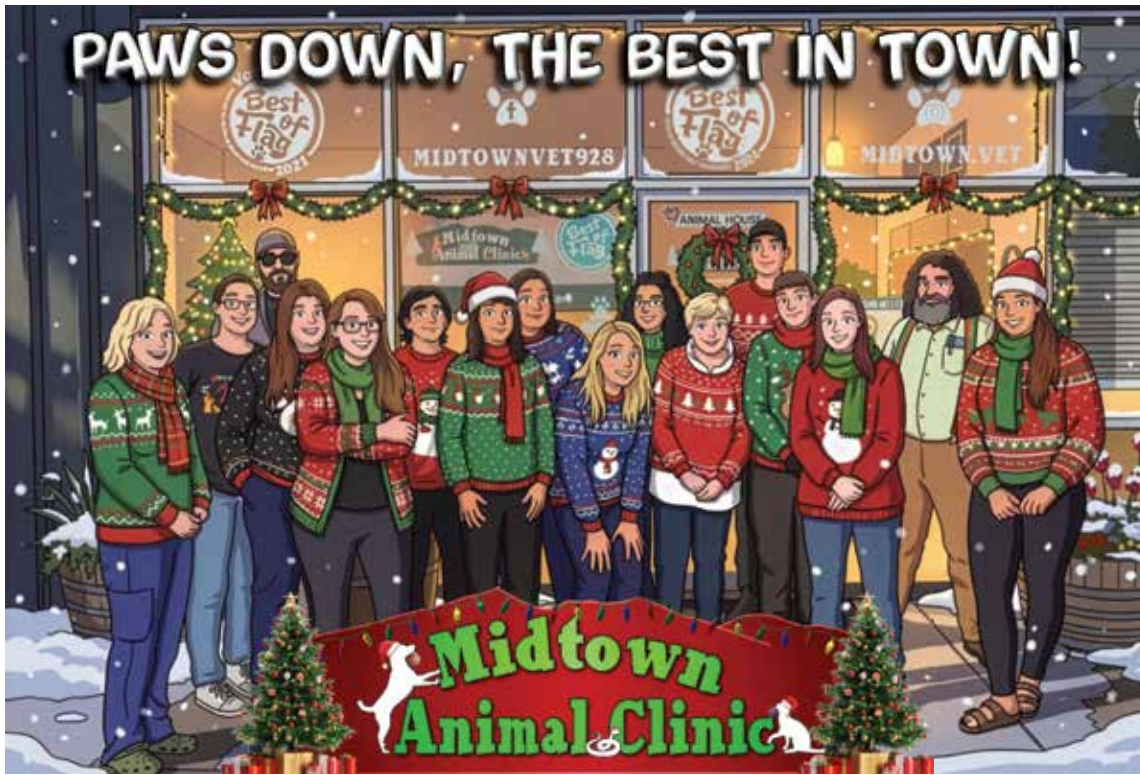
### PROTECTING YOUR HOME JUST GOT EASIER!

**Trust us with challenging insurance needs for wildfire areas, flood zones, aging roofs, and manufactured homes!**

Insuring homes in Northern Arizona is no easy task, but we’ve got you covered with an extensive network of over 70 insurance carriers. Together, we’ll explore a wide range of tailored options that fit your budget and needs. Secure your peace of mind today and call Lucky Penny Insurance!



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### JOIN THE FAMILY TODAY!



# MERRY Christmas

**928-440-4020**  
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1359 E Butler Ave, Flagstaff, AZ 86001



## NOW THROUGH DECEMBER 24 MAGICAL CHRISTMAS JOURNEY



A holiday train adventure filled with cheerful elves, the glowing Bird's Eye Village, Flurry the bald eagle, and a visit to the North Pole to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus. A lively seasonal outing for families and anyone who enjoys a good dose of Christmas spirit.

**Time:** See website for departure schedule

**Location:** Verde Canyon Railroad Depot, 300 N Broadway, Clarkdale

**For information:** [verdecanyonrr.com](http://verdecanyonrr.com)

**Admission:** Adults \$60, children \$40, Christmas Eve pricing varies

## NOW THROUGH DECEMBER 24 NORTH POLE EXPERIENCE



Climb aboard a festive trolley ride to Santa's workshop for a holiday adventure filled with elves, toy building, and Christmas magic. Multiple daily departures are available throughout the season.

**Time:** See website for departure times

**Location:** Little America Hotel, Flagstaff

**For information:** [northpoleexperience.com](http://northpoleexperience.com)

**Admission:** \$58–68 per person

## NOW TO TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30 THE POLAR EXPRESS AT GRAND CANYON RAILWAY



A cocoa filled trip to the North Pole where elves roam the aisles, the classic story comes to life, and Santa appears with gifts and plenty of cheer. Riders get cookies, a keepsake bell, lively characters, and a front row seat to the holiday magic that has made this ride a family favorite for twenty five seasons.

**Time:** 5:30 PM and 7:30 PM

**Location:** 233 N Grand Canyon Blvd, Williams

**For information:** [thetrain.com](http://thetrain.com)

**Admission:** Rates from \$48 to \$98. Reservations required

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13 CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK AT SEDONA HERITAGE MUSEUM



Step into a nostalgic holiday celebration with hot cider, cookies, vintage décor, live music, storytelling, author signings, hands-on crafts, and the Museum's iconic tumbleweed snowman. A festive, family-friendly favorite.

**Time:** 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

**Location:** Sedona Heritage Museum, 735 Jordan Road, Sedona

**For information:** [sedonamuseum.org](http://sedonamuseum.org) or 928-282-7038

**Admission:** Free

## NOW THROUGH DECEMBER 30 VALLEY OF LIGHTS



A one mile drive through Fain Park where glowing scenes, animated displays, and plenty of holiday sparkle turn the route into a rolling light show. A simple, cozy outing perfect for families and anyone who enjoys a car full of "look at that" moments.

**Time:** Sunday to Thursday 6 PM to 9 PM, Friday, Saturday and holidays 6 PM to 10 PM

**Location:** 2200 N Fifth St, Prescott Valley, AZ

**For information:** [pvchamber.org](http://pvchamber.org)

**Admission:** Suggested donation \$5 per car

## WEEKENDS, NOW THROUGH JANUARY 4, 2026

### WINTER WONDERLAND HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDES



Free holiday carriage rides roll out from the Flagstaff Visitor Center and take guests through Historic Downtown for a cozy, classic seasonal outing. A simple way to add a little extra sparkle to a winter afternoon.

**Time:** 1 PM to 4 PM

**Location:** Flagstaff Visitor Center, Historic Downtown Flagstaff

**For information:** [downtownflagstaff.org](http://downtownflagstaff.org)

**Admission:** Free

## DECEMBER 18 – DECEMBER 21 PRESCOTT CHRISTMAS VILLAGE



A four day holiday celebration filled with shopping, treats, rides, and plenty of seasonal cheer. Families can visit Santa, hop on the Christmas carousel, take the holiday train ride, zip down the snow slides, and explore vendors surrounded by bright décor and lights. Expect a few fun surprises along the way.

**Time:** Check website for times: [aprescottchristmas.com](http://aprescottchristmas.com)

**Location:** W Goodwin St., Downtown Prescott

**For information:** [aprescottchristmas.com](http://aprescottchristmas.com)

**Admission:** Free

## NOW THROUGH CHRISTMAS EVE MORTIMER FARMS CHRISTMAS WALK THROUGH THE FARM



A cheerful holiday wonder filled with life size snowmen, a mischievous Grinch scene, a sweet nativity and plenty of lights to keep spirits bright. Kids can play and feed the animals while families enjoy the cozy small town magic that makes this farm feel like a Christmas card come to life.

**Time:** Daily, 7 AM to 7 PM

**Location:** Mortimer Farms, 12907 E State Route 169, Dewey, AZ 86327

**For information:** [mortimerfarmsaz.com](http://mortimerfarmsaz.com)

**Admission:** See website for details

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20 WINTER MOVIE SERIES – THE SANTA CLAUSE



Join a free morning show of the holiday classic at the historic venue in downtown Flagstaff—perfect for families and early-birds alike.

**Time:** Doors at 9:00 AM, Show begins at 9:30 AM

**Location:** Orpheum Theater, 15 W. Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

**For information:** [Orpheumflagstaff.com](http://Orpheumflagstaff.com)

**Admission:** Free (no RSVP needed)

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2025 WHISKEY ROW BOOT DROP



Prescott rings in the new year twice, with a 10 PM drop for families and early sleepers, then the midnight drop for everyone going the distance. Live music, tasty street food, rides, and a glowing boot sliding down the flagpole keep the party lively from start to finish.

**Time:** 7:30 PM to 12:30 AM

**Location:** Downtown Prescott, Whiskey Row, Prescott, AZ

**For information:** [bootdrop.com](http://bootdrop.com)

**Admission:** Free

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE IN DOWNTOWN FLAGSTAFF



Celebrate with the iconic Pinecone Drop at noon, 10:00 pm, and midnight—plus live music, parties, and family fun all day long. Don't miss the free Noon Year's Eve celebration at Heritage Square and take advantage of free Mountain

Line bus rides until 1:45 am.

**Location:** Heritage Square & surrounding downtown area, Flagstaff

**Admission:** Free access to main events

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2026 FIRST DAY HIKE AT DEAD HORSE RANCH STATE PARK



Kick off the new year with a guided walk along the west lagoon, Arroyo Trail and Verde River Trail. The hike is free in honor of America's 250th anniversary, making it a meaningful way to welcome 2026 outdoors.

**Time:** 10 AM

**Location:** Dead Horse Ranch State Park, 675 Dead Horse Ranch Rd, Cottonwood

**For information:** [azstateparks.com](http://azstateparks.com)

**Admission:** Free in honor of America's 250th anniversary



**NEW LOOK,  
SAME GREAT  
SERVICE  
YOU TRUST!**

**—FREE—  
SAFETY  
INSPECTIONS**

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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WATER HEATER**

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STOP WASTE VALVES**

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## Community MARKETS

### RUBY'S OPEN-AIR FALL AND WINTER MARKET

A monthly outdoor market filled with vintage finds, handmade goods, seasonal treats, and plenty of small town charm. Shoppers can browse, snack, and enjoy a relaxed day among pumpkins, sunflowers, and local vendors.

**Date:** Saturday, December 20

**Time:** 9 AM to 4 PM

**Location:** Ruby Road Vintage, 851 E Howards Rd, Camp Verde

**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 Friday, Saturday & Sunday

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

**Location:** 6201 E. State Route 69, Prescott Valley

**Admission:** Free

### 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, 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

**Location:** 900 Iron Springs Road, Prescott,

### WINDMILL PARK FARMERS MARKET

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**Time:** 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM

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**Time:** Daily

**Location:** Flagstaff-area resort

**For information:** [www.snowbowl.ski](http://www.snowbowl.ski)

**Admission:** Prices vary by date; online early purchase gets the best rate.

**Pro Tip:** Purchase your ticket in advance online, pick a weekday if your schedule allows, and you'll likely get the best value.

## DAILY, WINTER/SNOW SEASON FLAGSTAFF SNOW PARK



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winter day into a full-on "did we really just do that?" kind of outing.

**Time:** See website for daily session times

**Location:** Fort Tuthill County Park, 2446 Fort Tuthill Loop, Flagstaff

**For information:** [flagstaffsnowpark.com](http://flagstaffsnowpark.com)

**Admission:** See website for ticket pricing

## DAILY, WINTER/SNOW SEASON BENHAM SNOW PLAY AREA



A simple, wide open spot south of Williams where families can roll giant snowballs, build snowmen and enjoy relaxed winter fun without fees or frills. It's quiet, low key and great for anyone who wants a basic snow day without the crowds.

**Time:** Daylight hours

**Location:** Benham Snow Play Area, Perkinsville Road, south of Williams

**Admission:** Free

## SNOW PLAY TIPS FOR NORTHERN ARIZONA

- **Always check road conditions** before heading out. Road closures can happen without warning.
- **Follow parking rules.** Some areas, including Fort Tuthill, have winter parking restrictions
- **Bring your own gear** when visiting non commercial spots. Pack sleds, warm layers and any safety items your group needs.
- **Pack out everything you bring.** Trash and broken sleds have become a real issue at free snow play areas, so help keep the forest clean.
- **Natural snow varies.** Even in Flagstaff, officials note that some seasons start slow and certain public areas may not have enough snow for sledding.
- **NEVER park along any highway for snow play.**

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# HOME MADE & WONDERFUL

## GINGERBREAD TRIFLE

BY NINA KNEADS TO BAKE



The kitchen is where the Christmas season begins, the place where preparations for celebrating with family and friends take shape. The steady warmth from the oven warms the house and everyone in it, and the scent of ginger and cinnamon fills the air, announcing the season as clearly as the wreath on the door.

What makes these moments settle into fond memories isn't the food. It's the people nearby, whether friends, family, or both. Children climb onto stools for a better view and sneak a taste. Friends find their way to the counter with the quiet ease

that comes from shared holidays, and the room fills with the gentle cheer that only Christmas brings.

Cooking together has a way of slowing the world down. You pass a spoon across the counter. You steady a measuring cup for a younger hand. You talk about nothing in particular while the scent of warm spice builds. It isn't about getting things perfect. It's about being side by side long enough for the spirit of the season to quiet us, slow us down if we let it, and enjoy those around us.

These simple hours tend to become the ones people remember. Not the gifts. The moments in the kitchen where everyone found something to do and felt welcome doing it.

So this year, let the kitchen earn its place. Turn on the music. Let the air fill with the good smells of the season. Invite your people into the work, even if it gets a little messy. The food will be finished soon enough. The memories will stretch a lot farther.

This gingerbread trifle is layered with moist gingerbread cake, homemade caramel sauce, and whipped gingerbread cream cheese filling. Perfect for a crowd during the holiday season!

### Ingredients

#### Gingerbread Cake

- 3 cups all purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ tablespoons ground ginger
- 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ¾ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 cup unsalted butter room temperature
- 1½ cups light brown sugar packed
- 3 large eggs room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¾ cup molasses
- 1 cup whole milk room temperature

#### Whipped Gingerbread Cream Cheese Filling

- 16 ounces cream cheese room temperature
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream



...Continued on page 14

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# WORD SEARCH

CREATED BY PAUL MASON • SOLUTION PAGE 33

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

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## HOME MADE & WONDERFUL

... Continued from page 13

### Caramel Sauce

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter cold
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream cold
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

## Instructions

### Gingerbread Cake

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Grease two 9 inch round cake pans, and line the bottoms with parchment paper.
2. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves together in a medium sized bowl.
3. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar together until fluffy and lightened in color, about 3 minutes. Add eggs, vanilla, and molasses. Mix until well combined.
4. Add in milk and dry ingredients alternatively starting and ending with flour (3 additions of dry ingredients, 2 of milk).
5. Pour batter evenly into the prepared pans. Bake for 23-28 minutes, or until toothpicks inserted in the center of the cakes come out clean. Let cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes, and then turn cakes out of pans and let them cool completely on a wire rack.

### Whipped Gingerbread Cream Cheese Filling

1. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar until well combined. Add ginger, cinnamon, cloves, molasses, and milk. Mix until well combined.
2. Whip heavy whipping cream in a medium bowl, until stiff peaks form. Fold half the whipping cream into cream cheese mixture. Gently fold in remaining whipping cream. Chill in the refrigerator until ready to use.

### Caramel Sauce

1. In a heavy bottomed saucepan, heat sugar over medium heat until melted, stirring constantly.
2. Once melted, immediately remove from heat and stir in butter and heavy whipping cream. The mixture will violently bubble.
3. The caramel will stop bubbling when the ingredients are well combined. Stir in salt and pour caramel into a small bowl to cool completely before using.

### Assemble

Cut gingerbread cake into 1 inch square cubes. Place a layer of cubes in the bottom of trifle dish. Drizzle 1/4 of the caramel over cake, and then place a layer of whipped cream cheese over the cake and caramel.

Repeat 2 more times and finish with a layer of whipped cream cheese and a drizzle of caramel over the top.

Cover trifle and place in refrigerator for at least 4 hours or overnight. The trifle needs time to settle and for the flavors to marry. Decorate with gingerbread men before serving, if desired.



*The best meals are  
cooked at home!*

# AT THE EDGE OF TOWN

## *Tim Smith & His Daughter Zoe's Vision for Munds Park's Front Door*

BY SANDEE CAVINESS

When you pull off I-17 into Munds Park, you pass a stretch of land that looks, at first glance, like any other commercial edge along a highway. Gravel, trees, a wash cutting through it, and construction and movement of earth that will soon reveal itself.

For Tim Smith and his daughter Zoe, that 26-acre parcel west of Munds Park, south of Agee's, is not just another stretch of interstate frontage property. It is the land they have been quietly shaping, and the spot where they believe Munds Park could gain both practical storage and something it has never quite had: a shared, thoughtfully planned front porch.

Tim bought the land around 1999. He has made a living as a builder and developer, and he likes to joke that floodplains have followed him from job to job. This one is no different. The maps have shifted twice since he closed on the ground, so every shovel of dirt is tested against charts and elevations.

"It looks simple when you drive by," he said, "but there is a lot going on under the surface."



Tim Smith & His Daughter Zoe

Tim believes that shift could quietly improve the look of Munds Park neighborhoods.

"If we can move some of the bigger units out of side yards and shared driveways and into a lot that functions well, it cleans up the streets," he said. "That feels like a win for everybody."

### Respecting the Floodplain

When construction equipment rolled in and trees started coming down, many in the community wondered what was happening along the wash. Tim says the changes were part of a calculated plan to follow floodplain regulations and improve water flow, not disrupt it.

According to county flood rules, a landowner can raise ground in one area only if they remove the same amount of soil from another. This ensures the wash still has the capacity to carry stormwater during heavy rains. On this property, that meant digging out one section of the floodplain so another section, where the RV storage pad will go, could be built up without increasing flood risk.

"It's basically a trade," Tim explained. "We remove material from one spot to deepen the channel, and that allows us to raise another area while keeping the water flow the same."

The elevated pad, he said, remains about a foot below the mapped flood level and should safely accommodate RVs without affecting nearby properties. As for the trees that were removed, Tim clarified that they were located outside the official flood zone and were cleared only as part of the necessary grading work.

"I get why people are concerned when they see trees come out," he said. "But in this case, it was done carefully and by the book. The goal is to manage water properly, not push it into someone else's yard."

### Exploring Options for a Shared Community Space

Ask Tim what comes after the storage yard, and he doesn't pull out a glossy master plan. He talks instead in sketches and "what ifs."

Standing on the open ground near the highway, Tim gestures toward a natural bowl formed by the wash and grading work, with a tree-lined slope rising behind it. "This could be an amphitheater one day," he said. "Stage at the bottom, trees as the backdrop. Movies, music, community events. It's already shaped for it."

Then the conversation turns to food.

This year he planted his first real garden on the hill above, just to see what would happen. Pumpkins sprawled. Vegetables came in faster than his family could eat them. Friends went home with armloads.

"I have never gardened in my life," he admitted. "We still ended up with more than we needed. It felt like something we should offer the community."

The Smiths imagine a community garden where locals can reserve plots, share water, and grow food together. Nearby, the flat open space could host a farmers' market with real parking, rather than vendors

... Continued on page 17

### The First Phase: RV & Toy Storage

The only part of the long-term vision currently underway is an RV and toy storage facility at the back of the property. The plan is to start with open-air spaces, then add enclosed storage buildings as demand grows. Around 200 spaces are included in the initial layout, though that number may shift based on what the community needs. The Smiths hope to open the facility in early 2026 and will share updates through the Pinewood News. Reservations are already being accepted. See the ad on page 14 for contact information.

The storage facility is not designed to be a field of exposed rigs. A seven-foot perimeter fence of corrugated metal and expanded wire surrounds the space, offering a clean, modern appearance. The entire facility will be gated, with keypad access, security cameras, and operating hours generally set from morning into early evening.

Lighting is a frequent concern in a dark-sky community, and Tim has made it a priority from the start. The planned fixtures follow Flagstaff's dark-sky standards, using low-mounted, amber-colored lights that reduce glare and limit skyglow. Only a small number of poles will be installed, just enough to ensure safety and visibility without flooding the area with light. The goal is to protect the night sky, not light up the forest.

"We do not need to light this up like a shopping center," he said. "We just need to see who is there and keep it safe at night."

When the Smiths first drew up the concept, they pictured Phoenix area residents storing their rigs here instead of dragging them up and down the hill every weekend. Early phone calls and inquiries have surprised them.

"So far the interest seems to be right across the street," Zoe said. "A lot of Munds Park residents are tired of losing their carport or garage to a fifth wheel all summer."

Some of the calls have come from owners of high-end diesel coaches who want a secure, screened home for their investment. Others are simply looking for a place to park an extra vehicle so the driveway is usable again.



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AT THE EDGE OF TOWN

... Continued from page 15

setting up in improvised lots. They are clear about one thing: they do not want to run the market themselves.

“We know enough to know what we do not know,” Zoe said. “There are already people in the region who run true farmers’ markets with real produce and quality vendors. We would rather work with someone like that and focus on being good land stewards.”

Over time, Tim can see the strip becoming a small-town center of sorts. A café that serves local food. A place for yoga classes. Shared paths that connect to the forest instead of random cuts through fences.

“What Munds Park does not really have right now is a common meeting place that feels like the heart of town,” he said. “We have the room here to try to build something like that if people want it.”

They are big fans of models that already exist nearby: a Rimrock shop that roasts its own coffee and stocks local eggs, produce, and prepared foods; Camp Verde farms that sell directly to families; and the growing number of restaurants in the region that focus on fresh, lighter meals.

“Munds Park is full of people who hike, bike, and want to feel good,” Zoe said. “The land here could support that kind of lifestyle in a practical way.”

Respecting the Land & Setting Boundaries

Owning a wide-open parcel next to the woods comes with its own troubles. Over the years, drivers of off-road vehicles have cut locks, sliced fences, and even driven over gates to reach the forest illegally. They tear up the ground and let cattle out. They break things because they want a shortcut.

That history shapes how the Smiths think about their space. If they add gardens or markets, they will likely create pedestrian entrances or turnstiles to keep vehicles out.

“We want people to enjoy this place,” Zoe said, “but we have to protect it too. There is a balance between open and overrun.”

Shared Easement, Shared Frustrations

There is an old easement running in front of the Chevron, Agee’s (now no longer in business), and neighboring parcels. You cannot talk about this land without touching it.

According to documents Tim has reviewed with his attorney, a 50 to 60-foot-wide ingress and egress easement was created decades ago to guarantee access across the frontage to several parcels and to public utilities. It runs parallel to the highway and includes the strip where Agee’s and Chevron customers often park.

For many years, that easement functioned quietly in the background. As businesses grew busier and Munds Park saw more visitors, the same strip began filling with cars and trucks. When Tim leased part of his land to a construction company during the interstate project, their heavy rigs sometimes could not get through. Utility vehicles faced the same squeeze.

From Tim’s point of view, that turned a legal access question into a safety concern. He says he asked that parking be pulled back, that “no parking” signs be posted along the easement, and that he even offered to lease a portion of his own property as a fenced seasonal parking area for Agee’s and their customers. The offer, he says, was declined by the property’s owner, representative.

Meanwhile, petitions have circulated in the community in support of continued parking near the restaurant, and many residents understandably worry about what changes to that strip could mean for a local business they enjoy.

As of this writing, the legal questions about how the easement can be used and by whom are being handled by attorneys. The Smiths say their goal is to secure clear access for their land, their tenants, and utility providers, while leaving room for nearby businesses to find workable parking solutions on land outside the access corridor.

Looking Ahead

For now, what is actually happening on the ground is straightforward. RV and toy storage will come first. Munds Park residents will have one more option to store their rig currently occupying the carport.

The rest is still a conversation.

Community gardens. A farmers’ market with real parking. Maybe an amphitheater. Maybe a handful of small local businesses. None of it moves forward without partners and neighbors. None of it works without people who want open space, good food, and a place to gather.

“This place has a lot of potential,” Zoe said. “If we do it right, it can become something that serves the whole community. A place for people to come together, enjoy good food, connect with neighbors, and enjoy themselves. That is our hope.”



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## THE CHRISTMAS LANTERN



Snow had arrived overnight and did what snow always does in Munds Park: it made everything quiet enough that you could hear yourself think, which Donovan found both pleasant and mildly unfamiliar in our noisy world.

Donovan was on his way to visit Peanut, the woodland mouse who lived near the old pine, when he noticed something odd. A soft glow flickered near the old oak tree, warm and golden, and definitely not coming from anything he'd misplaced. Donovan had once lost a library book for three whole days, so he knew the signs.

When he reached the tree, he found a bright lantern hanging from a limb. A note dangled from its handle.

For whomever needs a bit of light this Christmas Eve.

"Well," Donovan said, "that sounds like everybody."

He took the lantern and hurried to Peanut's house, which took longer than expected because he walked carefully—the sort of careful reserved for breakable things, especially when you're headed toward a mouse who worries easily.

Peanut opened the door. "Donovan! You're glowing."

"Not me," Donovan said. "This." He held out the lantern. "It's for whoever needs light tonight, which is an excellent plan, because it is dark every night."

Peanut admired it but frowned his usual tiny frown. "But who left it?"

"That," Donovan said, "is a mystery. And mysteries are best solved with friends. Also snacks."

Peanut happily agreed to both.

They gathered everyone: Smokey the raccoon ran in with enough enthusiasm to jolt the lantern sideways twice; Sir Hopsalot, the woodland bunny, demanded to know whether lanterns had proper permits; Walter the old badger said he appreciated the light but wouldn't depend on it; Pumpkin the fox and Ollie the young deer arrived with cocoa; and Dr. Hoo, the owl, declared himself the official historian of the lantern even though nobody asked.

They placed the lantern on a tree stump and discussed the mystery. The glow pulsed softly, brighter whenever someone stepped near it, almost as if it was listening.

"Maybe it's from Santa," Peanut whispered.

"Or maybe it's a trap," Sir Hopsalot countered.

"Raccoons love traps," Smokey said cheerfully, which was not reassuring.

Donovan studied the lantern carefully. "I think," he said slowly, "that this lantern is meant to remind us of something."

"What's that?" Pumpkin asked.

"That we're better together. A lantern on its own can only shine on one spot. But if we take it with us, we can share it wherever we go."

Everyone paused. Not just because this was a remarkably deep thought, but because Donovan rarely said things that

sounded so sensible—especially for a boy who was only ten years old.

They decided to carry the lantern through Munds Park, stopping at every home to share its glow. As they walked, the lantern grew brighter. By the time they circled back, even Walter admitted it was "not a bad bit of cheer."

Peanut leaned close to Donovan. "Do you think the lantern carries a light meant for us?"

Donovan looked at his friends, all bundled together, laughing, trying not to slip on the snow, passing the lantern gently from hand to hand.

"I think it's meant for everyone," Donovan said. "Just the kind of light that doesn't need explaining."

They hung the lantern on a branch of the old oak tree where everyone could see it. By morning it had vanished, but the glow remained, resting in their hearts as though it had always belonged there.

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

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

Search up, down, forward, backward, diagonal to find the hidden words.  
Answers page 33.

- Bells

Blessings

Celebrate

Cheer

Christmas

Family

Gratitude

Holiday

Joy

Kindness
- Lights

Love

Peace

Snow

Thankful

Tidings

Warmth

Wonder

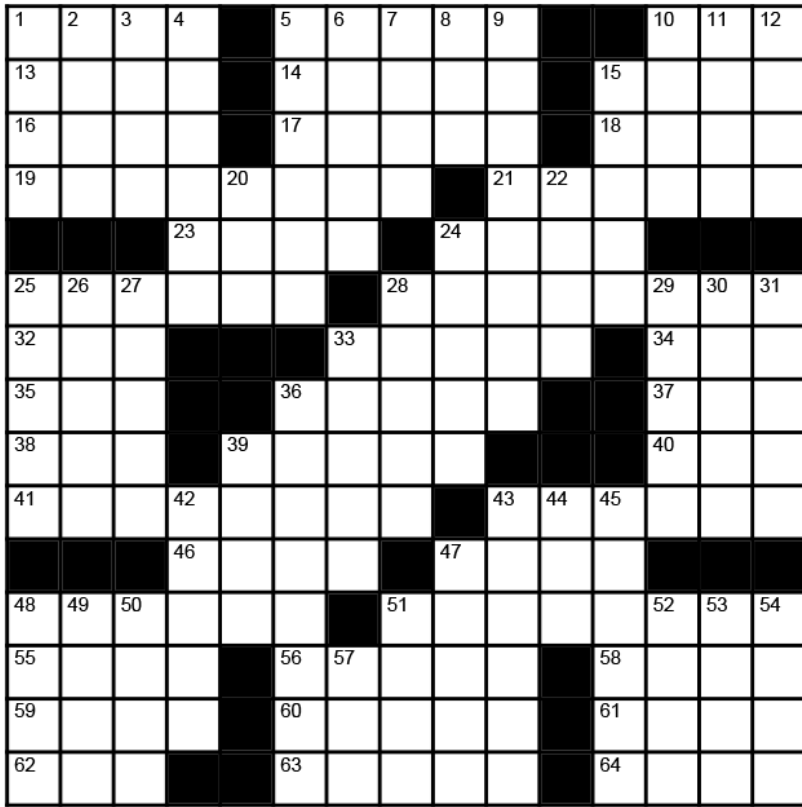
Wreath

Yule



# CROSSWORD

CREATED BY PAUL MASON • SOLUTION PAGE 33



## ACROSS

1. Cat's scratcher
5. Sleeping disorder
10. Video maker, for short
13. Centers of activity
14. Plunders
15. "Give that \_\_\_ cigar!"
16. Not odd
17. Vote into office
18. Table scraps
19. Celebration
21. Chopin pieces
23. "... happily \_\_\_ after"
24. Smile
25. Compound used as a detonator
28. Rudolph and teammates
32. Tavern offering
33. Buddy-buddy
34. Old name for Tokyo
35. "\_\_\_ Got a Secret"
36. Jeans material
37. \_\_\_ de Janeiro
38. "\_\_\_ lost!"
39. Boy with a bow
40. Part of T.G.I.F.
41. Cigarette butt receptacles
43. Most spirited.
46. Lubricates

## DOWN

47. Newborn
48. Sushi condiment
51. Soar behind a motorboat
55. Obligation
56. Rush
58. Pitchfork part
59. Harbor
60. Gift of the Magi
61. Ticks off
62. Woeful
63. Store events
64. Dermatologist's concern

## DOWN

1. Musical sign
2. Cherish
3. Top guns
4. Snowy season
5. Top-shelf
6. \_\_\_ Bear
7. Wassailer's song
8. Often-repeated abbr.
9. Cluster of stars
10. Blackjack request
11. Add to the pot
12. Come together
15. Pitcher's place
20. Wrigley Field flora
22. Wee

24. Very cold
25. Coniferous evergreen forest
26. North Pole workers
27. Choppers, so to speak
28. Indian royalty
29. Unnatural
30. Rewrites
31. Fowl pole?
33. Diarist Samuel
36. The quality or state of being dual or of having a dual nature
39. Baby holder
42. Breakfast bread
43. A small yards or enclosures
44. Lawyers' org.
45. "\_\_\_ Pizza"
47. Wilkes-\_\_\_, Pa.
48. Doo-\_\_\_ (Vocal groups harmony music that originated in the 1940s)
49. Old world buffalo
50. Irrational number
51. "Knit one, \_\_\_ two"
52. Well-ventilated
53. Signs, as a contract
54. "\_\_\_ we forget"
57. Myanmar monetary unit



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### Help From Across the Channel

The English were unintentionally pushing Champagne toward greatness. In 1662, scientist Christopher Merrett recorded how sugar could be added to encourage a second fermentation. It was the first known written explanation of deliberate sparkling winemaking. English glassmakers were also producing bottles with coal-fired furnaces, which made the glass far stronger than anything produced in France. Those sturdier bottles kept the wine from exploding during secondary fermentation. Without these advances, Champagne might have remained a regional curiosity.

By the 1700s, sparkling Champagne moved from accident to obsession. French aristocrats prized the drink, and Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of King Louis XV, was one of its most famous fans. She supposedly said, "Champagne is the only drink that leaves a woman beautiful after

drinking it." The wine soon spread throughout royal courts in Europe and became a symbol of celebration, sophistication, and status.

### Protecting the Name

With popularity came imitators. By the 19th century, sparkling wines from all over the world tried to pass themselves off as Champagne. Producers in the actual Champagne region refused to let that slide. The French government stepped in to protect the name. If the wine did not come from the Champagne region, it could not use the name. That rule still stands under strict international agreements.

### A Story in Every Sip

Today, Champagne is not reserved for royalty. It appears at weddings, birthdays, quiet achievements, and celebrations. People reach for it when life feels big and quiet moments worth celebrating. Each bottle carries centuries of discovery, effort, and craftsmanship.

A Champagne cork pops and suddenly the room feels brighter. Its backstory is just as lively, with a monk, an Englishman, a scattering of royals, and winters so cold politicians kept their hands in their own pockets. Pour a flute and let's see how the bubbles began.

### A Cold Problem Creates Bubbles

The Champagne region of France became the unlikely birthplace of the world's most famous bubbles. Back in the 1600s, winemakers were making still wine, and the region's icy winters kept sabotaging their efforts. The cold temperatures would halt fermentation and push the yeast into dormancy. Once spring arrived and the bottles warmed up, the yeast restarted its work, creating a second fermentation, and trapped carbon dioxide inside. Suddenly, there were bubbles.

### Not Everyone Was Thrilled

At first, winemakers saw it as a problem, and they had a point. Bottles were exploding because the pressure kept building, and cellars became dangerous. Still, this "flawed" wine had fans, especially across the English Channel.

### Dom Pérignon's Real Role

The famous story says Dom Pérignon invented sparkling wine and shouted, "Come quickly, I am tasting the stars." It is a great line, but history gives the credit elsewhere. Dom Pérignon did not invent sparkling wine. What he contributed was technique. He perfected grape blending, improved clarity, and worked tirelessly to stop bottles from bursting. His influence shaped the quality of Champagne, even if he was not the father of the fizz.



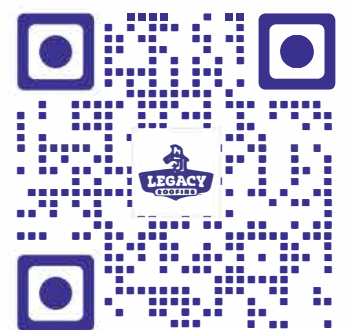
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# COASTAL CALM & IRISH CHARM AT SHANDON HOTEL & SPA

BY "UNSTOPPABLE STACEY" WITTIG



Horn Head on Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way  
Photo by Unstoppable Stacy

*A rejuvenating retreat on Donegal's Wild Atlantic Way offers soulful spa rituals, breathtaking scenery and warm local hospitality.*

If you ever dream of escaping to a place where nature calms your spirit and spa days unfold like poetry, then follow me to the quiet edges of County Donegal, Ireland. Tucked along a rugged sweep of coastline on the Wild Atlantic Way, the Shandon Hotel & Spa is a coastal hideaway where green hills roll into the sea, rainbows arrive on schedule and the pace of life slows to a kindhearted Irish rhythm.

I discovered this restorative refuge during a recent trip to Ireland's far northwest—one of the country's most remote and least-visited regions. Although Donegal has earned accolades as one of the world's most beautiful coastal destinations, it remains delightfully uncrowded. Even better, Shandon Hotel & Spa is still something of a local secret. Northern Irish women have quietly claimed this 4-star retreat as their sisterhood sanctuary for years, slipping away for spa weekends and celebratory getaways. Visiting Americans? Rare. Which makes the cultural experience not just authentic—but heartwarming.

My stay began before dawn on a calm Irish morning. I woke in my spacious Executive Suite to a blush of light rising over Sheephaven Bay. As the sun climbed, the water shifted from pewter to gold, reflecting

soft ripples against the grassy hills. Wrapped in a cotton robe, I brewed a French press coffee and settled by the picture window to watch the day arrive.

A hearty Irish breakfast set the tone for the day ahead—fluffy eggs, rashers of bacon, brown bread thick with Irish butter and servers who chatted like old friends. Then it was time for what Shandon does best: soul-soothing spa rituals.

Shandon Spa is housed in a separate stone building above the sea. Its floor-to-ceiling windows frame scenes of sheep grazing on nearby pastures, giving guests the sense of sinking into the rhythms of rural Irish life. Before my treatment, I sipped tea in the relaxation lounge, letting the view do its quiet work.

Warm lamplight and the scent of essential oils welcomed me into the treatment room, where my therapist's steady pace and gentle method seemed designed to unravel every tight muscle from shoulders to toes. Afterward, I drifted back to the lounge, loose and luminous. A spa attendant appeared to escort me to a private outdoor soaking tub

... Continued on page 24

ONE



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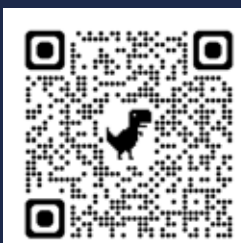


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Communal wooden hot tub overlooking Irish countryside | Photo by Unstoppable Stacy



Tea at Shandon Hotel & Spa in Donegal, Ireland  
Photo by Unstoppable Stacy

overlooking the countryside. “Prosecco or orange juice?” she asked. I chose bubbles. The Irish way, I’ve learned, often leads to celebration.

Shandon’s thermal suite invites lingering. Indoors are a hydrotherapy pool, sauna, salt room and heated tile loungers reminiscent of a Hammam. Outside, a communal wooden hot tub sits on a terrace high above the coastline. Just steps away, an icy plunge pool dares you to be bold. I took the plunge. My shriek echoed, but my spirit felt wildly alive.

The beauty of basing yourself at Shandon is how easily it connects you to Donegal’s natural wonders. A scenic coastal drive took our group to Horn Head Cliffs, where massive sea stacks and dramatic drop-offs form one of Ireland’s most cinematic panoramas. Another day, we toured the Crolla Distillery, home to handcrafted whiskey and a fascinating tale of Donegal resilience. Glenveagh National Park, with its castle, formal gardens and mountainous trails, made for a perfect final-day pilgrimage.

But the moment that stitched Donegal into my heart happened not on a cliff or in a spa, but inside the hotel ballroom.

Shandon hosts monthly dinner-theater nights—lively events where locals arrive in busloads, dressed to sparkle and ready for fun. The performance during my stay was “ABBA Sensation,” and by the time “Dancing Queen” filled the room, we were all on our feet. I found myself swept into a circle of Donegal women who sang, laughed and welcomed me as if I were one of their own. Later came “Rock the Boat,” a beloved Irish wedding tradition involving synchronized seated dancing that defies adequate explanation. You have to see it. Better yet, you have to join in.

Travel, at its best, draws you closer to the soul of a place. At Shandon Hotel & Spa, that soul feels unmistakably Irish—warm, generous and full of joyful mischief.

As I packed to leave, I paused again at the window. Another rainbow—Donegal’s parting gift—arched over the coastline. I took a deep breath and let thankfulness sink in. For the spa treatments that restored me. For the landscapes that humbled me. For the people who folded me into their laughter. And for the reminder that sometimes the most meaningful journeys are the ones we didn’t know we needed.

If you’re considering a winter escape, let the wild beauty of Donegal be your balm. And if you go, give yourself over to the spa, the sea air, the slow mornings and the music that inevitably pulls you into the moment. Shandon Hotel & Spa is worth crossing an ocean for.

## If You Go

Shandon Hotel & Spa is in Dunfanaghy, County Donegal, on Ireland’s spectacular Wild Atlantic Way—about 3 hours northwest of Dublin and 2 hours from Belfast.

## Getting There

Fly into Dublin (DUB) or Belfast (BFS). Rent a car or join a small-group tour to explore Donegal’s coastal drives, cliff viewpoints and national parks at your own pace.

## Best Time to Go

Winter brings fewer crowds and calm, introspective beauty. Spring and fall offer mild weather, colorful landscapes and excellent value.

Shandon Hotel & Spa, [shandonhotelspa.com](http://shandonhotelspa.com)

“UNSTOPPABLE Stacey” Wittig helps you plan your own unstoppable adventures. Find more travel inspiration at [unstoppablestaceytravel.com](http://unstoppablestaceytravel.com).

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# MAKING THE MOST OF WINTER WITH OFF-SEASON PROJECTS

BY MISTI WARNER-ANDERSEN



Winter may look like the slow season of your garden, but I've always thought of it as one of the most inspiring times of the year. When the leaves have dropped, and everything is dormant, you can suddenly see your yard with brand-new clarity, giving you a real sense of what your garden could be.

Winter is when the fun planning begins.

A great place to start is with your soil. Strong, healthy plants begin with strong, healthy soil, and winter gives you plenty of time to make sure yours has what it needs. At Warner's, we have soil testing kits available right in the nursery, and our team is always ready to help you understand the results. Once you know whether you need to add compost, adjust pH, or boost specific nutrients, you can make a plan now - long before the spring rush.

This quieter season is also perfect for catching up on anything you didn't get to before the first snow. If you've got dead or diseased plants lingering, go ahead and clear them out so pests and diseases don't settle in for the winter.

Winter is also when I start making lists, and I encourage you to do the same. Think about the plants you've fallen in love with, the garden projects you've been daydreaming about, or the tools you wished you had last season. And if it's too late to get something for Christmas, let your loved ones know that gardeners appreciate Valentine's Day gifts, too.

Your tools deserve a little winter attention as well. Pruners, shovels, and trowels work hard all year long, and a good cleaning, sharpening,

or repair now will make a world of difference come spring. If anything is beyond repair, winter is a great time to upgrade. We're always happy to help you find the right replacement, and we can walk you through how to care for your tools to make them last.

With your garden bare, it's also much easier to imagine your spring layout. Take a little time to walk through your yard and picture where things might go: new shrubs, refreshed perennial beds, a veggie garden expansion, you name it. Many gardeners find it helpful to sketch a simple layout, but even a few notes in your phone work just fine. The important thing is that you're thinking ahead. Planning now means you get to hit the ground running once the weather warms.

And of course, even though your garden is in "rest mode," you still have one very important job: watering. Our winters in Northern Arizona can be dry, and your trees, shrubs, and perennials still need moisture. On warmer days - when temperatures rise above freezing - give your plants a slow, deep soak. A little winter watering can make a big difference in how well your landscape bounces back in spring.

At Warner's Nursery, we love helping gardeners in every season, but winter is when next year's beautiful garden truly begins. Whether you want help testing your soil, choosing tools, building your plant list, or planning your layout, we're here for you. Because, believe it or not, spring will be here before you know it, and everything you do now helps make sure it's your best gardening season yet.

Happy gardening, Misti Warner-Andersen



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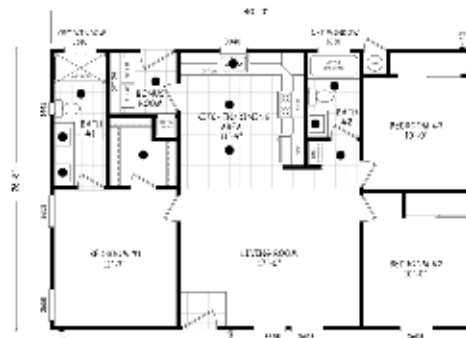


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# THE GREAT GAME COMEBACK

## *Why Board Games Are Rolling Back Into Our Hearts*



There was a time when fun came in a cardboard box. It didn't need charging. It didn't ask for your Wi-Fi password. It only required a little table space, friends or family, and perhaps some healthy competition that occasionally resulted in Monopoly pieces being launched across the room. And then screens came along and convinced us they were the only entertainment we'd ever need.

And yet, here we are, creeping back toward the very games we shoved into the hall closet years ago. Just like books and vinyl records, board games are proving that old favorites rarely go out of style. In fact, they might be exactly what we need now more than ever.

Board games give us something modern life is surprisingly short on: real connection. The kind you can feel. The kind where you look someone in the eye instead of staring at a tiny bubble with their initials in it. They remind us that laughter sounds better in person. They remind us that storytelling, problem-solving, bluffing, bonding, and even the occasional tantrum feel more meaningful when we're sitting around a table together.

Kids love them because play is natural. Adults love them because play has become rare.

In a busy world, these games let us slow down. Time stretches differently when everyone shuffles cards or debates whether a certain word in Scrabble is real. There's comfort in the familiar click of puzzle pieces coming together, the suspense of a Jenga tower swaying, the triumph of solving a mystery before your friends catch up.

It has a scent too. A new board game smells like fresh ink and brand new adventures. A well-loved one smells like history. Family history. Weekend memories. Holiday laughter. Snacks spilled in excitement. Rules argued over for years, but always with love.

And the best part? This magic doesn't require anything new. It has been waiting patiently on the shelf, ready whenever we are. We don't have to invent something to bring joy back into our homes. We only need to dust it off.

So this season, instead of letting the glow of our devices turn us into quiet spectators, we can open a box that brings everyone to life. We can deal a hand. Roll the dice. Crack a joke. Make a memory that doesn't disappear into a digital archive.

Screens will always be part of our lives. But there is still room for the shuffle of cards and the cheers that follow a well played move. It's not nostalgia pulling us back. It's wisdom. We remember what felt good. And we want it back.

Gather close. Clear the table. Someone pick the game. Fun in a box is calling.



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# A CHRISTMAS CHURCH BUILT IN FAITH BY FLAGSTAFF'S FIRST FAMILIES



Church of the Nativity

*Photo courtesy of Save Nativity BVM*

On December evenings in downtown Flagstaff, the small Gothic chapel on Cherry and Beaver looks as if it gathered sunlight in its stones just for this season. Its gargoyles keep steady watch. The bell tower guides anyone who needs a reminder of where peace can still be found. Locals call it the Pink Church, though its true name is the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Chapel. Built in 1930 from local volcanic stone, it stands quietly at 16 West Cherry Avenue.

The story reaches back to 1888, when Flagstaff was a tough railroad town and Catholic families had faith but no resident priest. They carried permission from the bishop and a determination that did not bend. With their own hands they built a brick church south of the tracks and worked hard to finish before Christmas. A visiting priest arrived in time, celebrated the first Mass on Christmas Day, and the church took its name from that moment. Nativity was not chosen for sentiment. It was the truth of the calendar, set in brick and later in stone.

As the town grew north, the parish moved with it. In 1930 they built the present chapel, a modest Gothic landmark with its slim tower, pointed arches, and stained-glass windows that spill color across the floor like bright beads scattered on wood. Those windows were designed and painted by Jesse Earl Fink with hand-blown German glass, showing how far beauty can travel to find a home.

Step inside on a winter night and the quiet feels alive. The air carries a hint of pinyon smoke from the neighborhood. When a car passes, the windows answer with a soft shimmer. Even the gargoyles seem less like warnings and more like guardians. People still marry here, mourn here, and gather here when the doors open for prayer or special events. Though it is not a full-time parish today, it remains under the care of the San Francisco de Asís community and continues its steady life as a working chapel.

The Christmas thread never loosened. That first Mass in 1888 set a pattern, and every December since has pulled on that original line of hope. If you pause long enough, the building tells the story for itself. The tower rises like a simple statement of trust. The nave holds its breath the way a singer does before a carol. The windows turn daylight into a book of color that shifts as the clouds move. A historic marker outside offers the short version, but the deeper one waits inside, where the light settles softly on coats and faces and makes you stand a little straighter.

A recent chapter is quieter and just as faithful. Years of winter and sun wore at the stone and slate. Volunteers formed Save Nativity BVM and stepped forward to repair what time had strained. In June 2022 four small ventilator windows were taken out, shipped to a conservation studio in California, restored, and returned. Work like that rarely draws attention, but it keeps the story alive for the next generation. Open-house days welcome the community to see the progress and to

help, because a fragile treasure heals when neighbors show up, not when they hope someone else will.

So here is your Christmas walk. Park on Cherry as the sky cools into that deep desert blue. Let the tower lead you. Read the bronze plaque. Step inside if the doors are open. Stand in the colored light and remember the families who finished their church in time for Christmas 1888, the craftsmen who lifted the glass into place in 1930, and the volunteers who crated small windows in 2022 so the rest of us could keep standing here. Not every miracle comes with trumpets. Some arrive as a humble chapel that holds back the dark and turns winter into something gentle.

Visit [www.savenativitybvm.com](http://www.savenativitybvm.com) to learn more.

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★★★★★  
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Google

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Hazardous tree removal and  
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- Dead Wooding
- Tree Thinning
- Tree Pruning
- Wildfire Fuel Reduction

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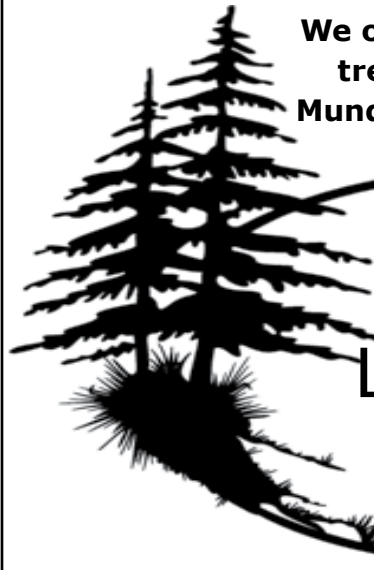
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**Minor Plumbing**

**Electrical**

**Sliding Windows**

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Remodels**

**Drywall & Drywall  
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*Brought to you by the merry volunteers of the  
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Kevin@TheFlagstaffHandyman.com  
www.TheFlagstaffHandyman.com  
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REFERENCES  
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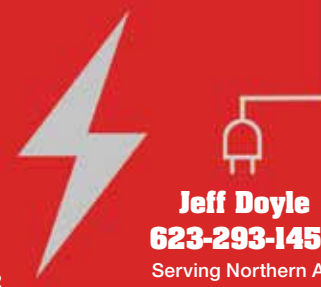
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WHERE YOUR  
KEYS ARE?**

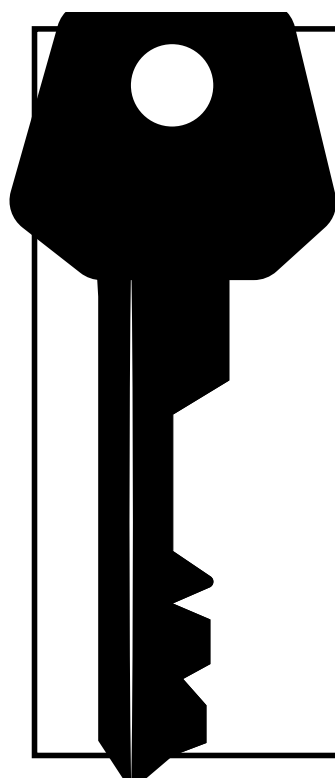
**CALL  
Bill's Lock Shop**  
**(928) 699-8868**

Serving Munds Park

**Just Moved?**

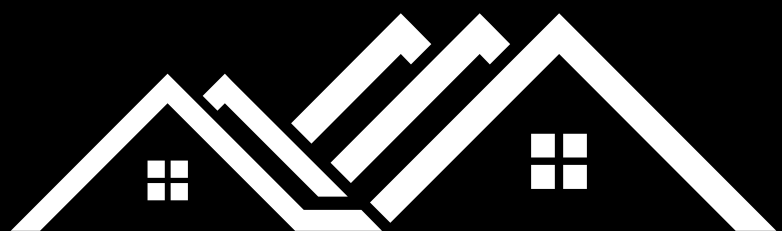
Re-keying is the safest  
thing to do!

Ask about a lock  
check-up!



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PICTURES  
SOLUTIONS**





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CUSTOMER  
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## CROSSWORD

Solutions

C	L	A	W	A	P	N	E	A	C	A	M
L	O	C	I	L	O	O	T	S	M	A	N
E	V	E	N	E	L	E	C	T	O	R	T
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I	V	E		D	E	N	I	M		R	I
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W	A	S	A	B	I	P	A	R	A	S	A
O	N	U	S		S	P	U	R	T		T
P	O	R	T		M	Y	R	R	H	I	R
S	A	D		S	A	L	E	S		C	Y

## SUDOKU

Solutions

7	4	3	2	1	6	5	8	9
1	5	2	4	9	8	3	6	7
6	9	8	5	7	3	2	1	4
2	7	5	6	4	1	9	3	8
4	1	9	3	8	7	6	2	5
8	3	6	9	2	5	4	7	1
5	8	4	1	6	2	7	9	3
9	2	1	7	3	4	8	5	6
3	6	7	8	5	9	1	4	2

## WORD SEARCH

Solutions

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

## KIDS WORD SEARCH

Solutions

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

# BECAUSE GOOGLE DOESN'T ALWAYS KNOW THE MOUNTAIN WAY.

Spot an error or missing contact? Let us know: [Hello@ThePinewoodNews.com](mailto>Hello@ThePinewoodNews.com).

## Dark Sky Ordinance & Lighting Inspections

Coconino County offers Support for Keeping Our Sky's Dark

### Lighting Inspection

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

### Code Violation Report

Notice illegal lighting? File a report here at [www.coconino.az.gov](http://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](mailto:mstento@coconino.az.gov).

### Still Have Questions?

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

## Domestic Animal & Wildlife Services

### Loose Dogs, Nuisance Complaints, or Dog Bites

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

### Rabies Concerns (Pets or Wildlife)

Coconino County Animal Management ..... (928) 679-8756  
Report sick or aggressive animals immediately—especially if foaming, staggering, or behaving unusually.

### Found a Stray?

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

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

High Country Humane ..... (928) 526-0742

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

### Injured or Dangerous Wildlife

Arizona Game & Fish (Flagstaff Region) ..... (928) 774-5045  
Weekends & after hours call ..... 911

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

### Loose Livestock

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

## Environmental & Emergency Services

### Illegal Dumping in Forests or Waterways

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

### Flooding Concerns

Coconino County Call Center: ..... (928) 679-8525  
Emergency Planning and Real-Time Updates  
Coconino County Emergency Management ..... (928) 679-8311  
Email: [emergencymanagement@coconino.az.gov](mailto:emergencymanagement@coconino.az.gov)

## Fire-Related Concerns

### Illegal Campfires on National Forest Land

Coconino National Forest Dispatch Center ..... (928) 527-3552  
Coconino County Sheriff's Non-Emergency Dispatch ..... (928) 774-4523  
(press option 1) Provide detailed location information, such as forest road numbers or GPS coordinates, when reporting.

### Illegal Campfires (private property) during Fire Restrictions

Coconino County Sheriff's Non-Emergency Dispatch ..... (928) 774-4523  
(press option 1) Applicable to unincorporated areas of the county.

### Fire Restrictions Information

[www.coconino.az.gov/2595/Fire-Restriction-Information](http://www.coconino.az.gov/2595/Fire-Restriction-Information)

## Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

### Reckless Driving, Trespassing, or Noise Complaints

Coconino County Sheriff's Non-Emergency Dispatch ..... (928) 774-4523  
(press option 1) to report OHVs off designated routes, speeding near homes, or damaging property.

## Short-Term Rental Questions & Complaints

### Loud Parties, Parking Issues, Trash or Other Nuisances

Coconino County Sheriff's Non-Emergency Dispatch ..... (928) 774-4523  
(press option 1) For immediate issues with noise, trespassing, blocked roads, or safety concerns.

### Ongoing STR Violations or Registration Questions

Coconino County Short-Term Rentals Compliance Officer,  
Tristan Dowse ..... (928) 853-5340

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

**JUST ONE MORE**



*Toni Rohlwing shared her artwork with us earlier this year. While we chose a different cover for December, we are excited to share her charming Christmas painting with our Pinewood community. Toni created this playful elk tangled in lights for her grandkids, a piece that shows the fun and creativity she brings to her work. Born and raised in Phoenix, she has always enjoyed painting, and even though she recently sold her Munds Park cabin, we believe once a Mundsie, always a Mundsie. We are happy to feature her art and celebrate her connection to our community.*



4.8/5 Stars  
100+ Reviews

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