

# PINEWOOD NEWS

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

VOL. 33 NO. 4 APRIL 3, 2026

COMPLIMENTARY



 PINEWOOD  
NEWS  
KIDS!

PAGE 14B

COVER by Sandee Caviness with Midjourney

## CELESTIAL EVENTS

# THE GIFT OF A REAL NIGHT SKY

In the city, night never really shows up. The sky stays lit, and the day simply fades into something dimmer.

In Munds Park, when the sun goes down, it gets dark. The kind of dark that lets the stars come through clearly. You step outside, and before long, you find yourself looking up longer than you meant to.

It is not something people talk about much when they live here. It is simply part of the rhythm. But it is getting harder to find.

Dark skies and bright stars are a gift we still have. A real night. The heavens shine through, and we are lucky to live beneath them.

Keep the gift. Keep outside lights dim, shielded, or off when not in use. It is worth it.

## What to watch for in the night sky.

### APRIL

Pre-dawn planet gathering: Best April 18–23. Mercury, Mars, and Saturn cluster low in the eastern sky before sunrise, with Neptune nearby for telescope users only. This is visible from Munds Park, but the planets sit very low, so a clear eastern horizon is important. Best about 30–45 minutes before sunrise.

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

New Moon: April 17. This is one of the best nights of the month for dark-sky observing in Munds Park because there is no moonlight to wash out faint objects. Ideal for spotting dim star clusters, nebulae, and galaxies after full darkness sets in.

Crescent Moon with Venus and the Pleiades: Best April 18–19. A thin waxing crescent Moon appears near brilliant Venus in the western evening sky, with the Pleiades nearby. This is an easy and attractive naked-eye sight from Northern Arizona. Binoculars may also reveal soft earthshine on the Moon's dark side.

### MAY

Full Flower Moon: May 1. May opens with the Full Flower Moon, the traditional full moon of spring bloom. It rises around sunset and stays visible through the night, lighting the landscape and making for a beautiful evening under the night sky in Northern Arizona.

Eta Aquariid Meteor Shower: Peak: May 5–6

Fast meteors before dawn. It's stronger farther south, but Northern Arizona can still catch plenty of bright streaks under dark skies.

Crescent Moon near Venus and Jupiter: Best May 18–19. A thin waxing crescent Moon appears near Venus and Jupiter in the western sky after sunset. Venus will be much brighter, while Jupiter may sit lower and be a little harder to catch if your horizon is blocked.

Blue Moon: May 31. A Blue Moon is when there are two full moons in one calendar month. The second full moon is called the Blue Moon. It doesn't usually look blue. It's just a name for something that doesn't happen very often. That's why people say "once in a blue moon" when they mean something is rare.



*Sometimes, when you stand very still and look up at the night, you find it has been waiting for you all along.*

## 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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Camp Verde Community Library

The next issue of the *Pinewood News* will hit the stands, **Friday, April 17**



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**\$1,295,000**  
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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.

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**\$400,000**  
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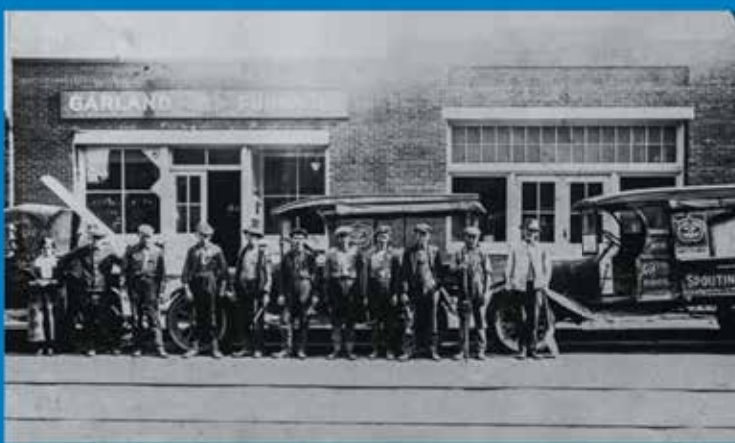
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# PINEWOOD

THE GOOD LIFE, COMMUNITY & DESERT MOUNTAIN LIVING

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### AA Meetings - Feel Better!

Munds Park Community Church

Every Monday, 6 pm

17670 S Munds Ranch Rd

### Munds Park Community Church Services

Services Sunday, 10:45 am

17670 S Munds Ranch Rd • Munds Park

### Munds Park Town Hall

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

Thursday, May 21, 2026

6:30 pm • Pinewood Country Club

### Pinewood Fire Department Auxiliary meeting

The Community is Welcome!

Tuesday, April 7

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

### Pinewood Fire District Board Meeting

Public Welcome

Tuesday, April 21

3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr • Munds Park

### Pinewood Sanitary District Board Meeting

Public Welcome

Thursday, April 9

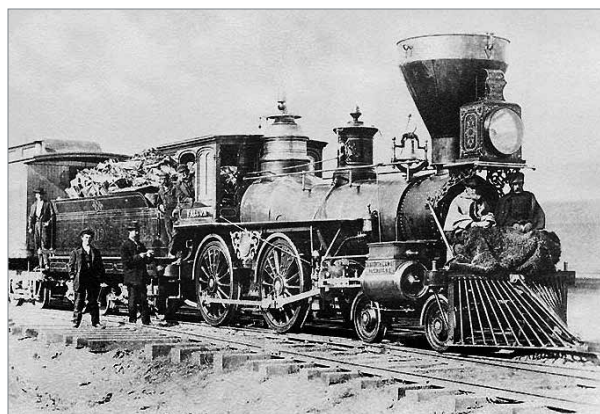
3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr • Munds Park



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## LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS 6A

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

## MADE FOR THE MOUNTAIN TABLE 11A

Steelhead trout come together in a dish that feels just right for mountain spring. It is simple enough for supper and lovely enough for company.

## THE MEANING OF EASTER 12A

In a powerful conversation, Pastor Steve Bowyer explains why Easter stands at the center of the Christian faith. His words offer comfort, clarity, and hope.

## FIRE SEASON JUST LEVELED UP 17A

Northern Arizona's weak snowpack has raised the stakes for wildfire season. For Munds Park, that means early preparation is not optional

## SECRETS OF CHACO 21A

From massive roads to celestial alignments and ritual cacao, Chaco Canyon still raises more questions than answers.

## SPRING IN A GLASS 23A

Fresh strawberries, citrus, and a silky finish give this cocktail its springtime charm. It is fresh, polished, and far from kid stuff in a fancy glass.

## NEW SERIES! BADGE & BALLOT 9B

Born early and not expected to live, Frances Willard Munds entered the world fighting. This first chapter traces the family, strength, and frontier blood that shaped her.

## GROWING MORE THAN GARDENS 13B

Warner's Nursery is launching a free Kids Club packed with hands-on Sunday sessions designed to get children outdoors, into the dirt, and excited about growing things.

## STAMPED, APPROVED... & WRONG 17B

Mountain Living Summer Series: Protecting Your Home Before, During & After the Job



PAGE 14B

# YOUR LINK TO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUNDS PARK

## PINE NEEDLES ARE FUEL

*Now Is the Time to Clean Up.*

After a weak winter and with dry conditions ahead, this is not the year to put it off. Pine needles, leaf litter, and slash turn your yard into wildfire fuel. Clean it up before it's too late.

### Bear Jaw Community Cleanup

- Crews start **Monday, April 27**
- All green waste **must be curbside by Sunday, April 26** (by 6 p.m.). Late material will NOT be picked up.
- Pickup runs weekdays 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. until the job is done.
- Crews make one pass per street only — **no returns for missed items.**

### Free Clear Bags (Limited Supply!)

Available early April at:

- Highlands Fire Station #23
- Pinewood Fire Station
- Kota's Coffee House
- Munds Park Post Office
- Limit: 15 bags per property
- Bags are for pine needles and leaf litter only

### What Else You Must Do

- Clean your gutters
- Remove pine needles right next to the house
- Cut back dry grass
- Trim ladder fuels (branches that can carry fire up into trees)
- If your lot feels overcrowded with trees around the cabin, call one of our local arborists for a consultation to see what should stay and what should come down

### Need to Haul More? Use Willard Springs Green Waste Site

- Opens Friday, April 3
- Free for green waste only
- Open Fridays & Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (through Oct 31)
- Last load accepted by 4:30 p.m.

Slash piles are accepted — but they must follow the posted size rules (check the flyer you received in the mail).

This is not the year to cut corners.

### Need help with spring chores?

Local Pinewood News advertisers are ready to help with yard cleanup, hauling, tree work, gutter cleaning, and more.

They support your free community paper — please support them in return by checking page 3B.

## Munds Park Town Hall

Join us for the first Community Watch Town Hall of 2026, an important evening of updates from the local and county leaders who serve Munds Park.

A featured discussion will be led by Fire Chief Josh Tope, who will explain the cancellation of Bear Jaw, why it happened, and what the future may hold for community cleanups and pine needle removal.

Hear updates, ask questions, and be part of the conversation as we work to keep Munds Park strong, safe, and prepared. Whether you are a full-time resident or a weekend neighbor, your voice matters. Bring a neighbor.

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



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# NEW FIRE STATION RISING AS FIRE SEASON LOOMS

## An Interview with Fire Chief Josh Tope



### MOVING IN

Pinewood Fire District is nearing one of its biggest milestones in decades—moving into a modern firehouse. Fire Chief Josh Tope expects his crew to move into the new station during the second or third week of May, assuming all final steps stay on track. The building is largely complete, and the crew is eager to settle in. Josh anticipates the full transition will take about one week. A community open house is planned for late June, once the station has been in service for a short while.

Josh expressed deep gratitude for the community's longstanding support, as well as the contributions from the Auxiliary, PPOA, and outside grant sources. That generous backing, combined with disciplined financial management and careful stewardship of district resources, has placed the new station on solid ground as it approaches completion.

The district is preparing to take ownership of a modern, state-of-the-art firehouse engineered to serve the community for at least the next 60 years. Josh added that he hopes future fundraising efforts can shift focus toward broader community needs beyond the fire district.

### UPCOMING EVENTS & BEAR JAW

The district is planning several public-facing events this season. Family Safety Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 27, and the next Community Watch meeting is set for Tuesday, May 21.

Josh said the May 21 Town Hall meeting will give residents an opportunity to ask questions about the discontinuation of Bear Jaw. He acknowledged the community's concerns and wants to address them directly during the meeting.

He added that the district understands how important that service was to the community and that exploring future alternatives will be part of the conversation moving forward.

See Town Hall meeting details just to the left, on page 6A

## LOOKS LIKE A BRUTAL FIRE SEASON

Josh made clear that fire season is already top of mind for everyone. Agencies have begun regular fire-restriction coordination calls, and current conditions are not looking promising. Unless the weather shifts meaningfully, he expects a busy fire season ahead.

The encouraging news, Josh emphasized, is that engines and wildland resources are well-positioned. Crews and support personnel are fully staffed at this stage, with no manpower shortages reported so far. Resources are expected to be fully in service by mid-April, giving responders strong capacity heading into what could be a challenging season.

### FEMA FUNDING FOR MUNDS PARK

Josh also shared promising news for wildfire mitigation efforts in Munds Park. A Hazard Mitigation Protection Grant, first pursued six years ago through county emergency management, has finally been awarded.

He noted that this is the first FEMA funding in the nation specifically designated for wildfire mitigation work on private property. In Munds Park, the \$400,000 grant will support targeted treatment work on private properties. Properties have already been identified, and the District will be working with the landowners. Josh said the work is expected to move forward later this year.

### CLOSING THE FOREST

The Pinewood News is already receiving calls from concerned locals who know this fire season could be brutal. Many are asking why the forest isn't simply closed to camping.

Josh explained that decisions to close public lands involve far more than fire conditions alone. Public access to national forest land is a sensitive issue — residents often view it as "their" land, and agencies are reluctant to restrict taxpayers' access. Closures also bring significant logistical and economic impacts, including the cost of securing entry points and the effects on tourism and local recreation-based businesses.

In short, Josh said the delay in issuing closures is not because the danger is underestimated. It's also because pulling the trigger carries real political and practical challenges.

...Local Highlights continued on page 8A

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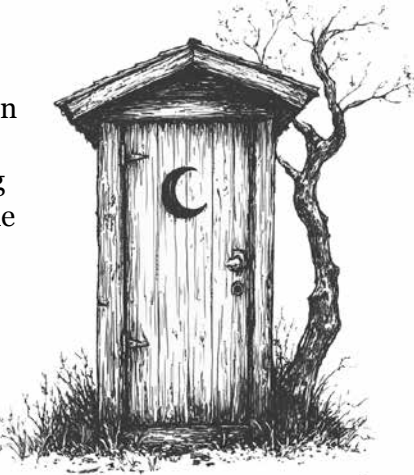
LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

... Continued from page 7A

# PINEWOOD SANITARY DISTRICT MEETS GOALS

## An Interview with Operations Manager David Richardson

The Pinewood Sanitary District says it is heading into the season in better shape than it has been in years. The district says it is in the black, ADEQ likes the progress being made, and the system is finally getting some needed upgrades. Now comes the tricky part: keeping residents informed, helping people understand billing changes, and staying ahead of rising costs that could hit everything from fuel to chemicals to everyday operations.



### A Different Tone This Year, and a Better One

Operations Manager David Richardson, known as DR, said the district is in pretty good shape financially and wants to keep it that way. He said some of the savings are coming from new equipment at the sewer plant that uses less power and helps reduce chemical costs. PSD is also taking care of several important plant repairs, including parts of the system that collect and pump wastewater, before those problems turn into bigger and more expensive ones.

DR said PSD is taking on projects in small pieces, replacing old equipment, planning for larger repairs, and addressing worn-out sewer lines a little at a time as money allows. The goal is to fix things steadily and help the district become a smoother, better-running operation.

And there is another piece of good news.

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality has been pleased with PSD's progress. After a recent meeting, PSD was told it had set a precedent in Arizona for other sanitary districts facing similar problems. What PSD has faced is not unique, and the district was asked to share with others the formula for digging out of the manhole, pun intended. For a small mountain district that has taken some hard hits, that is a real accomplishment.

### Street Repairs & Resident Questions

Some residents noticed that after repairs were made in the street, the same area was later dug up again. That raised concerns that the work had been done improperly. It also led to worries that redoing the job would cost the District more money. DR said rainwater got into an open trench and undermined the work. The good news is that PSD is not paying extra for those repairs. The contractor is responsible for fixing the problem.

### The Biggest Challenge — Getting Residents to Read

DR said the district has a hard time reaching everyone because many owners live out of state, some contact information is outdated, and many people simply are not tuned in to what is changing. The sandwich boards got attention, which helped, but notices only go so far. PSD is especially concerned that residents who are not closely following updates may not realize their bills will change as WIFA-related charges come due. If you are not paying attention, you may be caught off guard.

PSD's message is not fancy: read your bill, read our updates in the Pinewood News, make sure your contact information is up to date, and do not assume this quarter looks like the last one.

### New Voices, Old Wisdom

Board members are an asset to the district. DR values the different backgrounds, perspectives, and practical knowledge they bring. He said there are times when someone on the board throws out an idea no one else had considered, and it turns out to be the right one.

He also values the history some longtime board members carry with them. While some may wonder whether it is time for new blood, DR believes that institutional memory matters. For him, the best board is a mix of longtime members who know the district well and newer members who bring fresh ideas and energy.

PSD will have open seats, and the district is encouraging residents to come to meetings, learn more about how it operates, and consider serving on the board. DR said people do not need to be industry experts to help. They simply need to be willing to get involved, learn the issues, and care about helping the district make good decisions.

### Watching Costs in an Uncertain Time

DR said PSD is keeping an eye on war-related uncertainty, tariffs, and fuel costs because all of those can push operating costs higher. The district is already receiving notices from vendors about rising prices, with increases in trash service, chemicals, diesel, gasoline, and other petroleum-based products it depends on. PSD cannot control where prices go, but it is trying to be careful now by watching spending, handling smaller repairs in-house, and avoiding unnecessary purchases.

### The District is Being Financially Responsible

DR says PSD is in better shape, the state likes the improvements, and important work is moving ahead. But the district is also asking residents to meet it halfway by staying informed, reading the bill, and understand this system takes money and attention to keep running.

...Local Highlights continued on page 7B

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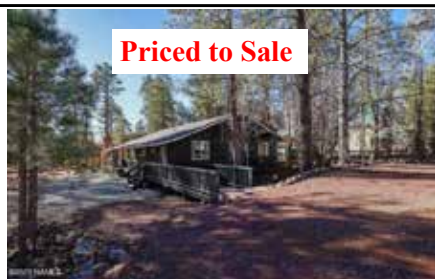
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## HOME MADE & WONDERFUL

# HONEY LEMON STEELHEAD TROUT

*Made for the Spring Mountain Table*

Spring in mountain country calls for food that is fresh and satisfying. Don't let the ingredient list deter you. Mountain folk are not afraid of a little fuss when the reward is worth it. The honey and lemon bring brightness and healthy goodness, the Dijon and soy add depth, and the fresh herbs make the whole dish taste like spring. What more could you ask for?

It's easy enough for a weeknight dinner, but pretty enough to set out for company without a second thought. Healthy, full of flavor and worth the effort. Your family will love it!

- Serves 4
- Prep time: 10 minutes
- Cook time: 15–20 minutes
- Marinate: 1–4 hours

### Ingredients

- 1 steelhead trout fillet, scaled, skin on or off, about 2 pounds
- For the sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 inch ginger root, peeled and grated or thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, pressed, minced, or thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, finely chopped, or use 1 more tablespoon parsley
- 2 tablespoons white wine, optional but recommended



### For Garnish

2 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped, or cilantro, or a combination of both

### Instructions

1. In a small bowl, whisk together all sauce ingredients until well combined.
2. Place the trout in a large baking dish, plastic container, or large zip-top bag. Cover the fish with the sauce and refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to 4 hours.
3. Preheat the oven to 450°F.
4. Transfer the trout and its sauce into a foil boat and place it on a baking sheet.
5. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the fish is tender and flakes easily. Do not overcook. If you see white proteins beginning to come out of the fish, it has gone far enough and should be removed promptly.
6. Garnish with fresh parsley or cilantro before serving.

### Serving suggestion

Serve with roasted vegetables, a crisp salad, or white or brown rice.

*Adapted from "Baked Honey Lemon Steelhead Trout" by Victor, Craving Tasty, published March 10, 2018.*



Dog-friendly patio

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# THE MEANING OF EASTER

## *A Final Gift of Faith & Hope From Pastor Steve Bowyer*

BY SANDEE CAVINESS

When I sat down with Steve, former pastor of Munds Park Community Church, to talk about the true meaning of Easter, I was not there just as an editor. I was there as someone he and his wife, Sara, helped lead to faith, and our conversation came at a time when Steve was navigating profound changes in his life. From the start, this interview carried unusual weight.

After strokes tied to kidney disease, Steve retired earlier than he wanted. He is still active and still very much himself, which is a blessing, but the strokes took his hearing and, at times, made conversation harder to process. For a man whose life centered on listening, preaching, and sharing the Word of God, that is a profound change.

Still, he sat with me, doing what he has always done — helping others understand.

To hold our conversation, Steve used an AI app on his phone that turned my spoken questions into words he could read. When he answered, his voice carried conviction and the familiar cadence of a man who had spent a lifetime preaching. Watching Steve light up with purpose as he shared God's truth was both a comfort and a testament to his unwavering faith.

Steve and Sara did not preach Genna and me into faith. They loved us there. They did it by living their faith honestly and with grace. For those of you who know us, you know how meaningful that was. They changed our lives in a profound way, and we will be forever grateful.

So when I asked Steve to explain Easter to me as a young Christian, I was listening not only for myself, but for the many people in this community who, like me, think they understand Easter, only to realize there is far more to it than they knew. One thing I have learned is that the more I learn, the less I know.

His answer came with the clarity and conviction so many here know well.

He turned to me and said, “Easter is that one moment in history when God made a way for us to be made right with Him through Jesus Christ.”

He returned to that idea more than once: one moment in history.

Steve spoke of the Bible as one unified story. It begins with creation, when God made all things good. Then came the fall, when sin entered the world and broke the relationship between God and man. What followed were centuries of longing, prophecy, sacrifice, and waiting for the day God would set right what had gone wrong.

Then came Jesus.

Steve described Christmas as the beginning of that long-promised arrival, but Easter as the moment everything came together. Not only in the crucifixion, but in the resurrection. That point mattered deeply. Sara joined our conversation, and together they explained that Jesus did not simply die. He rose. God gave His Son so that sin could be forgiven, the debt could be paid, and the way back to Him could be opened. That is why Easter matters so much.

Without the resurrection, there is no promise of eternal life.

This was one of the truths Steve made especially clear. Christ's death mattered, of course. It was the sacrifice. It was how our sins were paid for. But the resurrection is where death is defeated and the grave loses its power. It is the reason believers can trust that death is not the end.

That is why we celebrate Easter. Not just that Jesus suffered. Not just that He was crucified. But that He rose again and made eternal life possible.

Steve spoke about this not as a theory, but as a truth that sits at the center of history. The Old Testament points toward it. The New Testament flows from it. And the Christian life makes no sense without it.

Sara explained it with one of the most powerful images in Scripture. When Christ died, the great curtain in the temple tore in two. In biblical times, that curtain separated people from the most sacred place in the temple, the place set apart for God's holy presence. It was a sign that sin had separated people from God. But when Jesus died, that curtain tore open. Through Christ, that separation was removed, and we can now go directly to God.

Easter is not just about forgiveness in a broad, comforting sense. It is about access and restoration. Through Jesus Christ, the broken relationship between God and man can be restored.

Steve explained that love is sacrifice.

Real love costs something. It gives. It yields. It sacrifices. A good marriage knows that. Families know that. Anyone who has cared for another person in a hard season knows it too. And Easter, Steve said, is the greatest act of love because it is the greatest act of sacrifice. God gave His Son. Jesus gave Himself. What happened on the cross was not symbolic kindness. It was the highest price paid out of love.



*Illustration by Sandee Caviness with Midjourney*

I asked Steve why Jesus had to suffer. It is one of those questions that keeps coming back because it is difficult to understand. Why that kind of pain? Why that kind of sacrifice?

Steve and Sara answered with the humility that faith sometimes requires. Part of it comes down to sacrifice. Part of it comes down to what was necessary to make right what had been so deeply broken. And part of it comes down to trusting that God's ways are bigger than our own understanding.

That is where faith enters in.

Not blind faith. Not shallow faith. But the kind of faith that believes the cross and the empty tomb were not random, not symbolic, but the moment the broken relationship between God and man could be restored through Jesus Christ.

They also spoke about how easy it is for Easter to get buried under baskets, chocolate bunnies, and springtime traditions. And of course that is true. The world is very good at sanding the edges off holy things until they become decoration and translate into dollars. But sitting there with Steve, listening to him talk it through, Easter did not feel decorative. It felt freeing and hopeful.

It felt like the answer to the deepest problem people face, especially today.

Sin. Separation. Feeling lost. The ache of knowing something is wrong in the world and in ourselves, and the longing for it to be made right.

Steve's point was that Easter is the moment God answered that longing.

This particular conversation with Steve meant a great deal to me. He was explaining the hope of the resurrection while carrying deep loss of his own. He was speaking about victory over death while learning to live with profound changes in his health and the loss of the work he loved most. Even so, he spoke with the same steady faith so many here had relied on.

Since our interview, Steve and Sara have moved to the Valley because mountain winters have become harder now, and they wanted to make that change while it was still their choice. That, too, carries its own kind of wisdom. There comes a time when people who love mountain life have to tell the truth about what a season requires, and when it is time to let go.

Many of our readers love Steve. They know him not only as a pastor, but as a neighbor, a friend, a comfort in hard times, and a steady presence in this community. They know Sara the same way. What they have given to Munds Park goes well beyond Sunday mornings.

*“There is something in us  
that knows the world is broken,  
and that we are too. Easter is where  
God answered that ache.”*

For Genna and me, their kindness went even further. Steve helped lead us to Christ. Sara has been a true friend. Together, they have shown up for us in ways we will never forget. So yes, this conversation was about Easter, but it was also about hearing one more time from a man whose faith has shaped many lives, including ours.

And what he wanted people to understand is this:

Easter is the moment in history when God made a way.

A way back to Him.

A way through sin.

A way through death.

A way toward hope.

Not a shallow hope or wishful thinking. A real hope rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That is why Easter matters.

It matters because the tomb was empty.

It matters because Christ rose.

It matters because if He had only died, the story would have ended in grief.

It matters because He did not stay in the grave.

This Easter, Steve Bowyer may no longer stand behind the pulpit at Munds Park Community Church. But in that conversation, reading questions from a phone screen, gathering his thoughts, and answering with conviction, he was still doing what he has always done. He was pointing people to Jesus.

And that feels like a fitting Easter message.

# THINGS TO DO & SEE!

## MUNDS PARK

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11**



### MUTS VOLUNTEER TRAIL DAY

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

**Time:** 8:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Location:** Pinewood Trailhead turnaround area

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



### BEGINNING JUNE 1ST BINGO AT THE COUNTRY CLUB

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

required. Come enjoy a fun night with neighbors!

**Time:** 6:00 PM

**Location:** Pinewood Country Club,

## HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

**EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5**



### EASTER SERVICE AT MUNDS PARK COMMUNITY CHURCH

If Easter morning feels better with familiar faces and a welcoming room, this is a lovely way to spend it. Join your neighbors for fellowship at Munds Park Community Church.

**Time:** 10:45 a.m.

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

**SATURDAY, APRIL 4**



### EGGCELLENT-EGGVENTURE & PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Roll into Pioneer Park for pancakes, an egg hunt, games, prizes, and a cameo by the Easter Bunny. Hunts begin at 10 a.m., so arrive early if you want first crack at the good eggs.

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

**Location:** Pioneer Park, 1200 Commerce Dr, Prescott

**Details:** [prescott-az.gov/rec-services/special-events/](http://prescott-az.gov/rec-services/special-events/)

**Admission:** FREE

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY, MAY 9-10**



### MOTHER'S DAY FINE ART & WINE FESTIVAL

A lovely excuse to head to Prescott for a spring weekend of fine art, browsing, and downtown charm. This outdoor festival on the Courthouse Plaza features juried artists, vendors, and a festive Mother's Day weekend setting.

**Time:** Saturday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Location:** Historic Courthouse Plaza, Downtown Prescott

**Details:** [mountainartistsguild.org](http://mountainartistsguild.org)

**Admission:** See website for details

## WINE & OUTDOORS

**SATURDAY, MAY 9**



### VERDE VALLEY WINE FESTIVAL

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

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

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

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

**Details:** [verdevalleywinefestival.com](http://verdevalleywinefestival.com)

**Admission:** \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. Non-drink tickets are \$10.



### FRIDAY, MAY 15-17 OVERLAND EXPO WEST

Three days of overlanding gear, classes, and hands-on training, plus plenty of rigs to admire and ideas to steal for your next trip. If you like dirt roads, camp setups, and learning from people who have actually done the miles, this is your weekend.

**Time:** Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Sunday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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

**Details:** [overlandexpo.com/west](http://overlandexpo.com/west)

**Admission:** See website for details

Catch peak spring migration at the **VERDE VALLEY BIRDING & NATURE FESTIVAL** (April 23–26 at Dead Horse Ranch State Park) and read more on page 10B.

**CELEBRATE AMERICA'S  
★ 250TH ★  
BIRTHDAY**

*In The*

**MUNDS PARK**

★ 4TH OF JULY PARADE ★

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

## FAMILY FUN

### THURSDAY, APRIL 9 - 12



#### NORTHERN ARIZONA BOOK FESTIVAL

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

packed with publishers, makers, and live sets.

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

**Location:** Heritage Square, Flagstaff, AZ

**Details:** noazbookfest.org

**Admission:** See website for details.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 11



#### SPRING FAIR IN PRESCOTT VALLEY

If the kids need to burn off some energy and you would not mind a food truck or two, this one checks plenty of boxes. Prescott Valley's free Spring Fair brings live

performances, carnival rides, inflatables, crafts, market vendors, and family-friendly fun to Civic Center on the Green.

**Time:** 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Location:** Civic Center on the Green, 7501 E. Skoog Blvd., Prescott Valley

**Details:** prescottvalley-az.gov

**Admission:** FREE

### SUNDAY, APRIL 12



#### WARNER'S NURSERY KIDS CLUB

Kids ages 6 to 10 are invited to dig in, get a little dirty, and learn all about gardening at this free spring series. The first session begins April 12, with more weekly classes

to follow. See page 9B for full details and registration information.

**Time:** Sunday afternoons at 2pm

**Location:** Warner's Nursery, 1101 E. Butler Ave., Flagstaff

**Details:** See page 13B of the Pinewood News

**Admission:** FREE with advance registration required

### MONDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 29-JULY 5



#### WORLD'S OLDEST RODEO

Prescott's signature summer traditions returns for a full week of rodeo action, western spirit, and holiday-week crowds. Gates open

two hours before each performance, so there is time to grab food, shop, and settle in before the fun starts.

**Time:** Check website for times.

**Location:** Prescott Rodeo Grounds, 840 Rodeo Dr., Prescott

**Details:** worldsoldestoredeo.com

**Admission:** See website for details.

## LIVE MUSIC

### EVERY FRIDAY!



#### BARN DANCE

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

**Time:** 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

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

**Details:** mortimerfarmsaz.com

**Admission:** See website for dinner and ticket details



### FRIDAY, MAY 1



#### RED DIRT CONCERT SERIES OPENER

Kick off Sedona's free Red Dirt Concert Series with live music at the Posse Grounds Pavilion. Bring a chair or blanket and settle in for an easy Friday night outdoors.

**Time:** 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** Posse Grounds Pavilion, 525 Posse Grounds Road, Sedona

**Admission:** FREE

### FRIDAY-SUNDAY, MAY 22-24



#### GRATEFUL FESTIVAL

This three-day Flagstaff music festival brings live bands, camping, yoga, vendors, and a full weekend of mountain air and good energy. If your crowd likes jam bands and a festival feel under the pines, this one is worth a look.

**Time:** Friday welcome concert 6 - 10 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

**Location:** Fort Tuthill Fairgrounds, 2446 Fort Tuthill Loop, Flagstaff

**Details:** gratefulfestival.com

**Admission:** Tickets from \$15; kids 12 and under free



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# NEED-TO-KNOW WILDFIRE INFORMATION

## WHEN WINTER GOES ON VACATION

Northern Arizona did not get much of a winter this year, and that matters. By mid-March, the state's snowpack was just 25% of normal, a new record low. The Salt River Basin? A brutal 2% of normal. Spring runoff is expected to be well below normal across the state.

That is not just a water issue. It is wildfire season that just leveled up.

## The Locals Know What's Coming

On March 23, Coconino National Forest said prescribed fire plans were being modified because of "unseasonably warm and dry weather." At the same time, Coconino County said on March 20 that county lands were under no fire restrictions.

Both things can be true at once: restrictions may not be in place, and conditions can still be drying out earlier than normal. The locals know the difference.

They also know campfires get left too warm. Fire pits get treated like they put themselves out. Cigarettes get tossed. People make lazy decisions in dry country every single year, and the land pays for it.

The stakes are always high here. This fire season just leveled up.

## Two Fires. Too Close. Too Early.

On March 12, crews responded to a wildland fire near Janis Trail in Munds Park, just off I-17 at milepost 324.



Then, on March 24, firefighters knocked down the Landon Fire between Flagstaff and Kachina Village, only 1.5 miles west of the highway. That fire was officially listed as human-caused.

The cause of the Janis Trail fire hasn't been released yet, but it doesn't matter.

The point is clear: this isn't some far-off "what if." Fire is already showing up at our back door.

## New to the Mountains? This Ain't Your Old Backyard.

A lot of people come up from the city thinking they will have time. Time to watch. Time to pack. Time to decide. Wildfire does not work that way. It moves fast, changes fast, and punishes people who wait too long because they assumed someone would tell them exactly when to panic.

Fire in mountain country can move fast, shift fast, and turn an ordinary afternoon into a very short deadline. If you live in Munds Park, you need to

think less like a spectator and more like your own first line of defense. Government alerts matter. Fire crews matter. But your timing matters too, and that part belongs to you.

## If You Are Not Signed Up, You Are Behind

Coconino County's emergency notification system is one of the official ways residents receive alerts by phone, text, or email. Sign up now, not when smoke is already in the air and everyone is suddenly trying to remember passwords. Official alerts are basic equipment now, same as a flashlight or a fire extinguisher.

Sign up here: [www.smart911.com](http://www.smart911.com)

.. Continued on page 19A

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## 17010 TEAL PLACE

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... Continued from page 17A

## Get Watch Duty, Then Support It

The Watch Duty App is not the agency that issues evacuation orders, but it has become a widely used early-warning tool for nearby fires and firefighting activity. The organization says it is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, that its personal safety access is free, and that donor and member support helps keep the service running. Good. Support it. This is not the place to pinch pennies over a tool that may give you valuable time.

## Your Go Bag Does Not Need to Be Fancy

Do not turn this into a shopping hobby. This is not about buying the internet's favorite tactical backpack and seventeen matching pouches. Look up a basic wildfire go-bag checklist online and build a practical one. Medications. Important papers. Chargers. Glasses. Pet supplies. Clothes. The few things you would not want to replace in a rush. The point is not to bring all your fancy amenities. The point is to be able to leave FAST.

## Learn Three Words Before You Need Them

Arizona's Ready, Set, Go program exists for a reason. "Ready" means be prepared. You should always be prepared. "Set" means there is danger nearby and you should prepare to leave at a moment's notice. "Go" means leave now. It is simple by design because an emergency is no time to learn the system.

## Now, Here is the Munds Park Version

Because there is one practical way out for many residents, we strongly suggest this: if a fire is nearby and the system says "Set," do not wait for "Go". Leave early. Leave like it's "Go" time.

That is not panic. That is not drama. That is geography.

A lot of people think the brave move is to wait for one more update, one more official word, one more sign that this time it is really serious. In a place like Munds Park, that kind of waiting can become its own danger. Arizona's Ready, Set, Go program is built around preparing early and moving when conditions tell you the window is closing.

And one more thing: when it's time to roll, do not clog the road with trailers, side-by-sides, or extra toys. Leave them. They are replaceable. Your neighbors are not.

## The Best Time to Get Smart Is Before Smoke

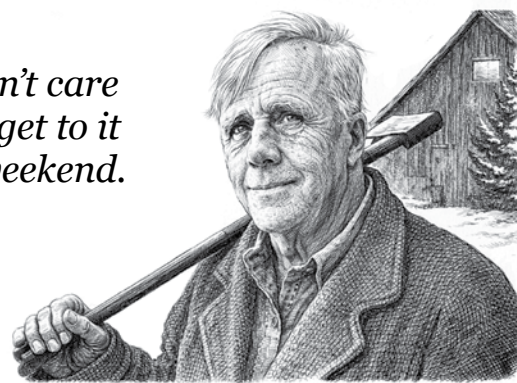
Look up Arizona's Ready, Set, Go plan at [www.coconino.az.gov/3129/Ready-Set-Go](http://www.coconino.az.gov/3129/Ready-Set-Go) and commit it to memory. Sign up for Smart911 emergency alerts at [www.smart911.com](http://www.smart911.com). Download Watch Duty. Build a simple Go Bag—have it ready *always*. Do it now, while your house is calm and your driveway is clear.

Wildfire does not care whether you are new to mountain living, optimistic by nature, or still convinced someone will knock on your door and save you.

Maybe they will. Maybe they wont.

And in Munds Park, waiting to find out is just stupid.

*The woods don't care if you meant to get to it next weekend.*



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# JOURNEY INTO CHACO CANYON'S ANCIENT WORLD OF ROADS, STARS & RITUAL

BY "UNSTOPPABLE STACEY" WITTIG

In a remote desert canyon in New Mexico, ancient people built monumental cities, aligned them with the stars—and, it turns out, drank chocolate.

Even before I moved from the mountains of Colorado to Munds Park 32 years ago, I was captivated by Chaco Canyon archaeology. A book by archaeologists Robert and Florence Lister sat on my shelf for years, its cover drawing me with towering masonry walls and great kivas stretching up to seventy feet across. I promised myself that once I settled in Arizona, my first road trip would be to Chaco Canyon, New Mexico.

That promise turned into a lifelong fascination.

Located deep in the high desert, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, New Mexico, feels as remote as it is mysterious. The canyon lies northeast of Gallup, surrounded by the vast Navajo Nation. Getting there requires intention—a true road trip across miles of open land. But what waits at the end is something far greater than a destination.

It's a question.

Why here?

Why would ancient people choose this dry, unforgiving landscape to build massive stone structures over a thousand years ago—structures so ambitious that nothing larger would be constructed in North America until the 1800s?

There was no steady water source. Game stayed away. Timber had to be carried from forty or more miles away. And yet, the ancestral Puebloan people—forebears of today's Hopi, Zuni, and other Pueblo cultures—built a complex that continues to challenge everything we think we know about early civilization in the Southwest.



Equinox alignment at Casa Riconada  
National Park Service photo by D. Davis

That's the magic of Chaco Canyon archaeology. The answers are never final.

On my first 300-mile journey from Munds Park, I arrived eager to explore what many believed at the time: that the Great Houses served as redistribution centers. The theory suggested that farmers carried corn along carefully engineered, 30-foot-wide roads radiating from the canyon like spokes on a wheel.

At the visitor center, I picked up backcountry permits and set out on those ancient roads myself.

Under the wide desert sky, with no shade and no sound but my own footsteps, I tried to imagine hauling goods across this landscape. The effort felt immense—almost impractical. And somewhere along that walk, I began to question the theory.

That's the thing about Chaco Canyon archaeology—it invites you into the mystery, then quietly asks you to rethink everything.

On my second trip, I approached Chaco differently—this time by train to Gallup, then by rental car into the canyon.

New theories were emerging. Instead of a trade hub, Chaco may have been a ceremonial and spiritual center. The roads, perfectly aligned north to south, may not have been built for commerce at all. They may have been symbolic.

Or sacred.

Chaco's structures appear to track the sky. Solstices and equinoxes reveal themselves through light and shadow—etched into spiral

... Continued on page 22A



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# TRAVEL

Continued from page 21A

carvings, framed by kiva doorways, and reflected in the orientation of entire buildings. This connection between architecture and astronomy remains one of the most compelling aspects of Chaco Canyon archaeology.

Stand there long enough, and you begin to feel it—the sense that this place was designed not just for living, but for understanding the cosmos.

There is no lodging in Chaco Canyon National Park, New Mexico—only a simple campground beneath some of the darkest skies in the country. And at night, without distractions, the conversations begin.

Around campfires, I've spoken with park rangers, archaeologists, and fellow travelers—some scientists, others seekers drawn by the canyon's quiet pull. I've been fortunate to meet names like Florence Lister, Gwinn Vivian, Tom Windes, and Steve Lekson—voices that continue to shape how we understand this place.

One question always surfaces:

Was Chaco a hierarchical society—or an egalitarian one?

Evidence suggests both.

At Pueblo Bonito, the canyon's largest Great House, burials reveal individuals who were taller, healthier, and buried with extraordinary goods—turquoise, copper bells, even macaws brought from Mexico.

But other findings complicate the story. Even evidence of cannibalism has been uncovered, hinting at periods of social fracture.

The deeper you go into Chaco Canyon archaeology, the less simple the story becomes.

And then—just when you think you've heard it all—Chaco surprises you.

On last year's visit, I learned about one of the most fascinating discoveries in the canyon: chocolate.

Among the artifacts found at Pueblo Bonito are 166 tall ceramic jars—sleek, cylindrical vessels decorated with bold black designs on white clay. For years, archaeologists debated their purpose.

Then anthropologist Patricia L. Crown had an idea. What if they held cacao?

Testing confirmed it: cocoa residue. Yes—chocolate in Chaco Canyon.

The discovery suggests that cacao, native to Mesoamerica, had been transported hundreds of miles north—likely reserved for ritual consumption. It adds a new layer to our understanding of trade and ceremony across ancient cultures.

Even now, Chaco continues to pull me back. On my visit last month, I searched for the Supernova pictograph, which may depict the celestial explosion first observed on July 4, 1054 A.D.—the event that created the Crab Nebula.

You see, there is always something new to learn. Something new to question.

If you're considering visiting Chaco Canyon, know this: it's not easy to reach. Roads can be rough. Services are limited. And yet, that's part of the experience.

Plan your Chaco Canyon road trip for spring or fall, or arrive for the Summer Solstice on June 21, when light and shadow bring the canyon's ancient alignments to life. Bring warm layers—the desert cools quickly before dawn.

And maybe, just maybe...

bring a little cocoa.

Because in Chaco Canyon, where ancient roads stretch toward the horizon and the night sky still speaks in light and shadow, the past doesn't feel distant.

It feels like something you can almost taste.

*"UNSTOPPABLE Stacey" Wittig is a travel writer based in Munds Park. For more travel inspiration and destination guides, visit [unstoppablestaceytravel.com](http://unstoppablestaceytravel.com).*

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# STRAWBERRY SEASON HAS A NEW FAVORITE

## *Fresh Berry Delicious*



April in Munds Park is that awkward handshake between cold nights and warmer afternoons. The sun shows up with confidence, then the shade reminds you you're in the mountains. It's prime time for a drink that tastes bright and clean but still feels like a real cocktail, not something poured straight out of a juice box.

Make it when friends drop by and the porch conversation starts running long. It's a good reminder that "fresh" can still have structure, and that a proper cocktail can taste like a farm stand without wearing overalls.

### Ingredients

- 3 large strawberries
- 1/2 ounce honey syrup
- 1 ounce Stoli Razberi vodka
- 1/2 oz Licor 43
- 1/2 oz Solerno blood orange liqueur
- 1 1/2 oz fresh lemon juice
- Garnish: 1 strawberry half

### The Method

1. In a shaker, muddle the strawberries with the honey syrup.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and ice, and shake until well-chilled.
3. Fine-strain into a cocktail glass.
4. Garnish with a strawberry half.

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Fresh Berry Delicious is exactly that. It starts with real strawberries and honey syrup, muddled together in the shaker until the fruit gives up its perfume and just a little color. From there, it gets built with raspberry vodka for a berry backbone, then takes a sharp turn into grown-up territory with Licor 43 and blood orange liqueur. The recipe is credited to bartender and brand ambassador Charlotte Voisey, and it reads like someone who knows the difference between bright and sugary.

Licor 43 is the wildcard. It's a Spanish liqueur made with a proprietary blend of 43 ingredients, and what matters to you is the result: vanilla, citrus, and warm spice notes that can round out the fruit instead of turning it into candy. Solerno blood orange liqueur brings a fragrant orange peel snap, and then the lemon juice shows up like a good editor, cutting what needs cutting and keeping the whole thing honest.

The trick at home is restraint. Muddle firmly but not violently. You want the strawberry's flavor, not a fistfight of seeds and pulp. Fine-strain it, too. This drink is supposed to land silky in the glass.



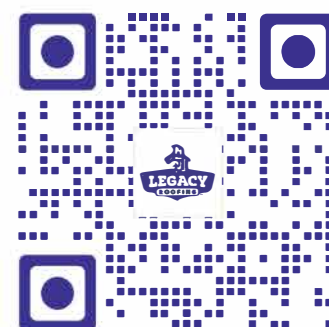
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... Continued from page 8A

Satchmo's Roadhouse is rollin' into Munds Park!

SPORTSMUNDS GETS READY FOR ANOTHER BIG SEASON

Sportsmunds will open for the season on May 1, and if last year was any sign, the tables are going to fill up quickly.

The popular neighborhood hangout is preparing for another lively summer with several upgrades: an expanded patio, extended late-night hours, live music, karaoke, and the same friendly service that keeps locals coming back.

The restaurant will serve seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m., ready to welcome the crowds in full force.

To handle increased traffic, the patio is being expanded to accommodate more guests who can relax and enjoy the mountain air. Additional parking is also in the works — welcome news for anyone who's circled the lot on a busy night.

Live music and karaoke nights are returning to the schedule, giving visitors even more reasons to stay and enjoy the evening. Sportsmunds will once again offer senior and military discounts.

Be sure to grab The Pinewood News starting in May for drink coupons, and check the "Things To Do & See" section for the monthly music lineup.

NIMARCO'S PIZZA

NiMarco's Pizza is coming back to the Park and is expected to open in early May. Follow them on Facebook for updates.

A new barbecue spot is coming to Munds Park with smoked meats, scratch-made favorites, good music, and an easygoing atmosphere built around family, friends, and good food.

For weeks, people in Munds Park have been asking the same question: is it true?

Yes. It is.

Owner Jamie Thousand hopes to open Satchmo's Roadhouse in May, provided final approvals and paperwork stay on track.

For Jamie, the idea behind Satchmo's has never just been about barbecue. It has always been about bringing people together. He and his wife built the original Flagstaff restaurant around the same things they were raised with in the Midwest: family, friends, fresh food, and finger-lickin' barbecue done right. Cajun and Creole food is never far from the table. That mix of comfort, flavor, and gathering together is the foundation of Satchmo's.

That spirit is what Jamie is bringing to Munds Park.

The new location will serve a full barbecue menu built around what can be cooked outdoors, with brisket, ribs, pulled pork, and chicken, along with favorites like red beans and rice, gumbo, and other house-made staples. Much of what Satchmo's is known for is made from scratch. Jamie takes pride in that. Stocks, soups, gumbo, jambalaya, spice blends, and many other items are prepared in-house, while the barbecue is slow-smoked for hours over carefully selected woods.

Satchmo's BBQ is the kind of downright good eating that makes you feel like your momma made it herself.

Jamie has owned and operated Satchmo's in Flagstaff for 16 years. He said Munds Park feels closer to the kind of small town he grew up in. That's why this new location excites him. He cannot wait to open a spot where people genuinely enjoy being—a laid-back place with good food, good people, and a reason to stay awhile.

In addition to the barbecue and Cajun staples, Jamie said he is exploring future possibilities such as seafood boils, special events, wood-fired creations, live music, and expanded seasonal offerings once the first summer is underway. For now, the focus is on opening, learning the community's rhythm, and listening to what people respond to.

Just as important to Jamie is becoming part of the community itself. He said he wants to be a good neighbor, get involved in Munds Park, and build something that adds to the life of the town.

The Munds Park location will begin with a menu that fits the current space and then grow from there. A larger remodel is planned after the season ends once the team has a better sense of what works best. They are not trying to force it. They are taking their time, paying attention, and building carefully.

For now, the focus is simple. Fire up the barbecue, open the doors, and build a place people are happy to have in the community.

Munds Park is about to get a whole lot tastier. Can't wait!

WINE TASTING & MORE

Wine Tasting & More is open! Yes, it was worrisome after Agee's closed, but owner Deann Martin hung on tight and fought for her dream! Be sure to follow her on Facebook and look for events in the Pinewood News "Things To Do & See" section of the paper!

Serving Hours

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Advertisement for Wine Tasting & More featuring an image of wine, grapes, and cheese. Text includes: 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. Inside, you'll find Arizona wines chosen with care, small plates made for sharing, and a room that feels like it was built for neighbors, laughter, and one more round. Quiet. Warm. Worth the discovery. WINE TASTING & MORE, The best secret in Munds Park. HOURS: Wed-Fri 4-8 | Sat 12-8, Sun 12-6 | Closed Mon-Tue. 623-363-8980, 17730 S Munds Ranch Rd, Munds Park, AZ (At the back door of the old BBQ). FOLLOW US ON Facebook & Instagram.

## KOTA'S ADDS REFRESHING SUMMER SIPS & CASUAL BITES

Kota's is kicking off the season with some cool new offerings that feel perfectly suited for summertime.

The popular local spot is now serving fresh fruit smoothies, along with a new "Monster" smoothie for anyone needing a bigger boost to start the day. They're also exploring the addition of a New York-style hot dog stand, which would give locals and visitors another easy, casual option for a quick summer bite.

## SAIGON NORTH GETS CLOSER TO SUMMER DEBUT

Excitement is building around Saigon North, with owner Dennis saying the remodel is coming along beautifully and plans still pointing toward a soft opening just after the Fourth of July holiday.

According to Dennis, the project includes new flooring, layout changes, all-new furniture, and fresh paint, all helping shape the restaurant's new look. He expects the remodel to be finished in June.

Dennis said Saigon North will feature an open kitchen, live music, and community offerings, adding even more anticipation for what is already one of Munds Park's most talked-about new spots.

Look for more updates in upcoming issues of The Pinewood News.

## PINEWOOD BAR & GRILL GEARS UP FOR THE SEASON

The Pinewood Bar & Grill, a longtime local favorite in Munds Park, will expand to seven days a week starting the first week of April. Taco Tuesday, Mexican Food Thursday, and karaoke are all making a comeback. Follow them on Facebook for hours, specials, and updates.

## UPCOMING CHANGES

*for Pinewood Sanitary District Customers*

Beginning April 1, 2026, Pinewood Sanitary District customers will see a new line item on their monthly bills: the WIFA fee. This charge relates to funding and compliance requirements through the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona. Additional details will be included in the quarterly statement, along with a full explanation of how the fee is used and how it supports long-term system improvements.

To make payments easier, PSD continues to offer its free SurePay Program. This automatic payment service helps customers avoid missed payments and monthly reminders. To enroll, contact the PSD office at 928-286-9166 or visit [PinewoodSanitary.com](http://PinewoodSanitary.com) for the enrollment form.

PSD also reminds residents and visitors that connecting RVs to residential sewer cleanouts is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized hookups can damage the wastewater system, cause blockages, and lead to legal issues. Proper RV dump stations should be used when needed.

In infrastructure news, Phase 2 of PSD's construction project is scheduled to begin this season. Preparations are underway, and the bidding process will begin as soon as possible. This phase marks another step toward improving the district's reliability, capacity, and long-term sustainability. Updates on construction activity and scheduling will be shared as the project moves forward.

To strengthen community communication, PSD is also adding new sandwich boards along Pinewood Boulevard. These boards will post announcements, including upcoming Board meeting dates, to help keep stakeholders informed and engaged.

PSD appreciates the continued support and cooperation of its customers as these updates and improvements move forward. Questions are always welcome, and the office is happy to help.

*Read our interview with Operations Manager, David Richardson, on page 8A. The outlook for PSD is good!*



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... Continued from page 8A

## LADY NINERS KICK OFF SUMMER SEASON

The Lady Niners are gearing up for a fantastic 2026 season with the first competitive round of golf starting May 6.

One of the high points of the Lady Niners' summer season is the annual Lady Niners invitational event which draws players from all over Arizona for a nine-hole tournament. Allison Mitzel will chair the event along with co-chair, Joyce Robertson. This year's "Nine in the Pines" is slated for Wednesday, July 15.

The Pinewood Lady Niners are a group within Pinewood Country Club that plays nine holes of golf every Wednesday morning. The group has fun games each week and hosts four luncheons every season. Tournaments, practice rounds and social gatherings are a part of the Lady Niners annual schedule.

## 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. 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:**  
Exciting news from Woody's ownership this week: they have officially entered the "thinking about it" phase of development! After years in the "completely ignoring it" phase, this marks a major step forward. Next up: the "maybe we'll get around to it" phase, followed by the traditional "let's put it off until 2030" milestone.



## PINEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY PREPARES FOR BUSY SEASON

The Pinewood Fire Department Auxiliary is heading into the season with a full slate of plans, including returning events, new outreach efforts, and opportunities for new members to get involved.

Among the events expected to return this year is the Auxiliary's golf tournament, scheduled for Sunday, September 27, with an early start. Registration details are expected to be announced in May or June.

The Auxiliary is also preparing its 2027 calendar, with sales set to begin Memorial Day weekend. Supplies will be limited.

The group is also developing an online store that will offer Pinewood Fire Department swag and other items. More details are expected soon.

In addition, the Auxiliary is considering a chili cook-off later this summer, once the fire department is settled into its new home. A date has not yet been announced.

The organization also plans to schedule a new member class for those interested in getting involved. Residents can sign up at the Auxiliary's monthly meeting, held on the first Tuesday of each month.

To strengthen communication efforts, the Auxiliary has added Cindy Anderson as its media contact. She will help manage Facebook, the website, and community announcements.

More details on upcoming events and activities are expected as plans move forward.

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# QUIXOTIC

Quixotic (kwik-SOT-ik) – adjective

Definition: Excessively idealistic, often in a way that is noble, romantic, or admirable, even if not entirely practical.

Some words are useful. Some are beautiful. And some carry an entire human type inside them. Quixotic is one of those words.

It comes from Don Quixote, the hero of Miguel de Cervantes' 1605 novel, a man so steeped in tales of knighthood and valor that he decides the plain, ordinary world around him will not do. He reinvents himself as a knight-errant, puts on battered armor, climbs onto an unimpressive horse, and rides out to defend honor, correct injustice, and pursue greatness as if the age of chivalry had never ended.

His judgment is not always sound. In fact, it is often gloriously off. He mistakes windmills for giants. Inns become castles. Everyday people are recast as noble ladies, enemies, or worthy companions in some grand campaign of virtue and danger. To everyone around him, he looks foolish. To Don Quixote, he is answering a higher call.

The word is often used as a mild criticism. A quixotic plan is overly hopeful. A quixotic person may be chasing an ideal that has little chance of surviving contact with reality. But the word is too rich to dismiss. It carries admiration, and deservedly so. A quixotic person may be impractical, but rarely small in spirit. They aim above cynicism. They are not content to accept the world as fixed. They are willing to be laughed at for the sake of something larger than comfort, convenience, or common sense.

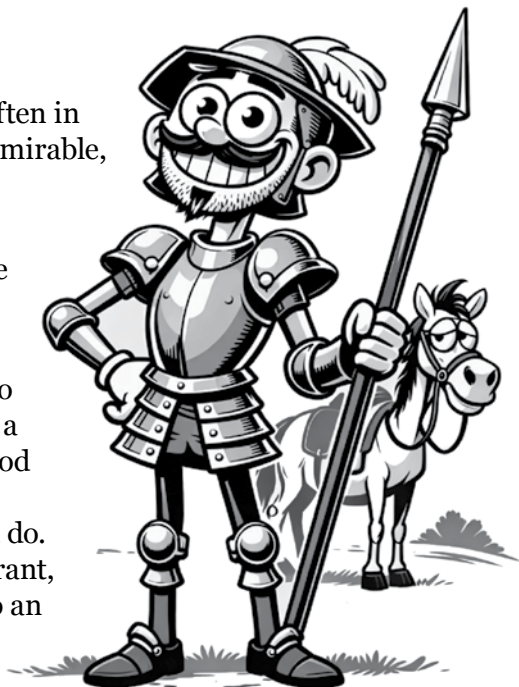
In a practical age, quixotic people can look faintly ridiculous. They are the ones who revive an old theater everyone else has written off. The teacher who keeps expecting more from struggling students when the paperwork says not to bother. The volunteer who believes a neglected park can become beautiful again. The writer who keeps going, convinced words still matter in a world that scrolls past.


Quixotic is not only about being unrealistic. It is also about having the nerve to want something better, even at the risk of looking foolish.

That may be why the word still feels alive more than 300 years after English borrowed it from Cervantes' wandering knight. We need practicality. We need sober judgment. We need people who can read a budget, fix the fence, and tell the difference between a giant and a windmill. But now and then, the world also needs people who can see beyond what is merely reasonable.


After all, many things that now seem obvious once looked unrealistic, sentimental, or impossible. The idea that women should vote. That diseases could be prevented before they struck. That a person might fly above the clouds, speak across oceans, or walk into a library and borrow knowledge for free. There is nearly always a stage when a bold idea looks foolish to the practical crowd. The difference between folly and vision is not always clear at the beginning.

That is part of the word's charm. It describes more than impracticality. It points to the old and difficult question of whether realism is always wisdom or whether it can sometimes become another name for surrender.






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# BADGE & BALLOT

## *A True Arizona Saga of Frances & John Munds*

### Part I: The Premature Pioneer

Some Arizona stories ought to be better known than they are. This is one of them.

Frances Willard Munds and John Munds built their lives in the rough early days of Arizona, where danger and hardship were part of everyday life. Their story is one of love, loss, endurance, and determination, shaped by ranching, outlaws, politics, and the unforgiving frontier. Through it all runs the story of a territory coming into its own, led by strong women and equally strong-willed men. Much of the heart in this series comes from family recollections preserved by their daughter, Sally Munds Williams, who drew from family memory and writings left by Frances herself. It is one hell of a story, and it belongs to Arizona.

In the summer of 1866, on a ranch built with sweat and the Lord's good blessing, in Franklin, California, a little girl was born before her time.

Born prematurely on June 10, Frances Lillian Willard was so tiny and fragile that survival seemed impossible. In that country, and in those days, the doctors offered what little they could. There was only a frightened family, a mother who refused to give up, and a child born too soon.

Mary Grace Willard fought for her baby girl with the fierce love of a mother who hadn't slept through the night in months, endless rocking and careful attention, with a flat refusal to give up.

The family held their breath for six long months, waiting for any sign that this little girl would hold on. After six long months, when she finally grew strong enough that hope turned to certainty, they made a feast in thanksgiving.

In true pioneer fashion, they roasted a small pig, harvested and set out the best vegetables and fruit the place could offer. The meal was served on a large family platter, and afterward Mary asked her mother-in-law to let her keep it. She held onto it for years, then passed it to her daughter Frances, who later passed it to her daughter Sally. The platter endured because it had come to stand for something profound—survival.

They called her Fannie.

She was the eighth child of Mary Grace and Joel Willard, a family marked by strength, loss, hard work, and high expectations. These were not soft people drifting through life scrolling on their phones. They were rugged pioneers, dreamers and builders, and people who understood how quickly life could turn on you.

Before Frances was old enough to remember one home from the next, Joel Willard sold the Franklin ranch and looked eastward to Nevada. He had secured land and water rights along Pine Creek in Nevada's Pine Valley. The land was a wide-open basin ringed by mountains, where the grass looked promising but the work would be unforgiving. With four of his sons and a handful of hired men, he gathered the cattle and horses, pointed them toward the trail, and drove them out of California.

It was not an easy push. It never was in those days. Long miles, dry stretches with water barrels sloshing low, and the cold that dropped sharp after sunset. By the time they reached Pine Valley, the real work was waiting. Hammers rang from dawn to dusk. Fence posts were driven into stubborn ground, corrals thrown up log by log, barns framed against the sky. The land fought back, but they wrestled it into shape one blistering day after another. Only when the place could stand on its own did Joel send word back.

Mary Grace gathered the younger children, their belongings, and what was left of California, and boarded the train to Palisade. The ride was long, the cars rattling over new-laid rails through empty country. At the station, Joel waited, hat in hand, dust on his clothes and calloused hands.

Happy to see his wife and kids, he loaded them into the wagon for the last leg, the team pulling steadily up the valley road. When they crested the final rise, the new ranch lay spread out and full of promise.

California was where Frances survived. Nevada was where she began.

For now, though, she was still little Fannie, heading into new territory with anything but ordinary blood in her veins.

On one side stood the Willards, men of wilderness, war, and westward hunger. On the other stood the Vineyards, political, fierce, and never afraid of a fight. The child Mary had saved was born into a family of explorers, fighters, ranchers, and people who had already tested themselves against a hard young country.

To be continued...

Next in Badge and Ballot: *The Blood Behind Her*. Look for it in the April 17th issue of the Pinewood News.

*Editor's Note: Badge and Ballot is a narrative retelling based on family recollections preserved by Sally Munds Williams, Frances Munds' own writings as referenced in those recollections, and supporting historical research. While grounded in documented historical events, some scenes have been lightly shaped with creative storytelling to bring the people and places to life for modern readers.*



A Central Pacific Railroad locomotive in Nevada in 1869, the kind of rail travel and rough country that shaped the early Western journeys of families like the Willards.

Photo credit: "Central Pacific Railroad Locomotive No. 113 'Falcon,' Argenta, Nevada, March 1, 1869," via Wikimedia Commons.



Palisade, Nevada, in the 1870s, a busy railroad town where freight, livestock, and supplies moved through hard country on their way to nearby camps and settlements.

Photo credit: "Palisade, Nevada, in the 1870s," John Zalac Collection, via Wikimedia Commons



An emigrant train in Strawberry Valley, California, in 1866. Images like this capture the wagon travel and hard overland movement that shaped pioneer family life in the American West

Photo credit: Library of Congress

**WEEKEND WORTHY**  
**FOR THE BIRDS**

*A Spring Day at the Verde Valley Birding and Nature Festival*

If spring has you itching to get out of town, the Verde Valley Birding and Nature Festival gives you a strong reason to head for Cottonwood. The festival runs April 23 through 26, 2026, centered at Dead Horse Ranch State Park, with guided birding tours across the Verde Watershed. It is presented each April by Friends of the Verde River, and by now it has been around for more than two decades.

What makes this one worth the drive is the timing. The festival takes place during peak spring migration in one of Arizona's richest birding and wildlife corridors, where the Verde River, Oak Creek, Sycamore Creek, and other perennial waters create prime habitat for birds and other wildlife. That gives visitors a real chance to see the Verde Valley showing off a bit.

This is not just for serious birders with expensive binoculars and strong opinions about warblers. Registration is already open, including one-day options, and the festival offers guided tours, hikes, workshops, experienced guides, featured artwork, speakers, and volunteer opportunities. For those who want to make more of it, camping and cabin stays may be available at Dead Horse Ranch State Park, depending on park availability.



For families, Saturday's Family Nature Day adds even more appeal. On April 25, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., organizers say the day will include nature walks, hands-on activities, live animal exhibits, and free entrance to the park for attendees.

Late April is also a sweet spot for a Verde Valley outing. Arizona State Parks says the nicest time of year at Dead Horse Ranch is from mid-March through early June, and nearby Verde River Greenway averages April temperatures around 77 for a high and 44 for a low.

**Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival**

April 23-26

Dead Horse Ranch State Park

675 Dead Horse Ranch Rd., Cottonwood, AZ 86326,

[www.verderiver.org/events/verde-valley-birding-and-nature-festival-2026/](http://www.verderiver.org/events/verde-valley-birding-and-nature-festival-2026/)



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# HOW TO WASTE A MORNING PROPERLY



We have all wasted mornings badly. We wake to the alarm's rude blare and reach for the small glowing screen, letting other people's chaos flood in before our own thoughts have had a chance to yawn and stretch. In seconds, cat reels elbow up against politics, scandal, and nonsense, stealing any chance of a peaceful morning. We call this starting the day. It sounds more like hell.

But there's a better way to start the day.

Begin by leaving the phone behind. Really behind. Lock it in a drawer if you must. Step outside with nothing but a warm cup in your hand and the crisp morning air stirring your senses awake. Find a comfortable place to sit, then sit still long enough to hear the forest speak in its quiet wisdom. Listen to the wind through the pines. A bird tending to its own small business. Just you, slowly remembering that you are allowed to exist before the world starts making demands.

Be grateful for this time.

Then walk. Not for steps, fitness, or to prove discipline. Just walk because the morning is there and so are you. Take easy loops like Mud or Frog Tank. Let your feet choose the pace. Let your mind wander off leash. Notice what wants to be noticed. An elk pretending it hasn't seen you. A jay with a strong opinion. Or nothing at all. That's fine too.

Afterward, find a log or a rock willing to hold you for a while. Sit. Do nothing that could be posted, measured, or turned into content. No photos. No need to prove you were peaceful. Just be peaceful. Let

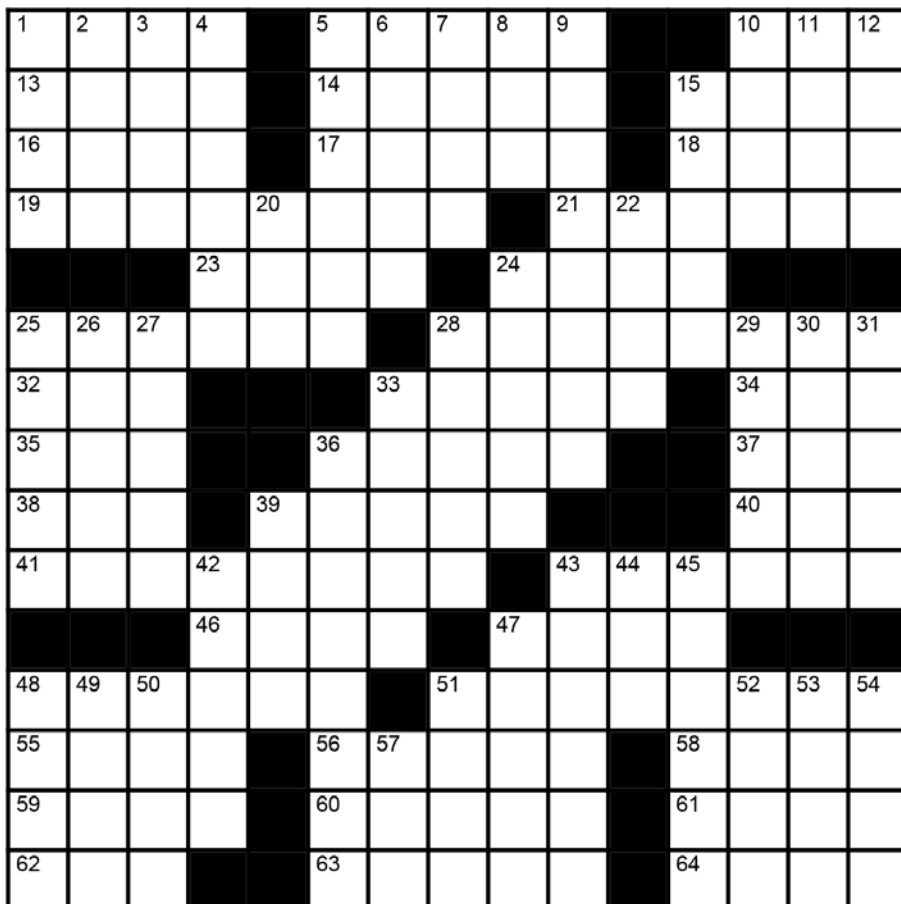
your shoulders drop. Let your thoughts loosen like old rope. The altitude will help. It gently reminds you that carrying the whole world is not your morning job.

That is a morning properly wasted. A true blessing.

So tomorrow, waste it well. Leave the distractions behind. Step into the quiet. Your spirit has been waiting for you there.

## CROSSWORD

CREATED BY PAUL MASON • SOLUTION PAGE 18B



### ACROSS

1. Thailand, once
5. Rand McNally product
10. Joke
13. Pro's opposite
14. Pageant wear
15. Alone
16. "American \_\_\_\_"
17. Put to the test
18. Poverty-stricken
19. Browbeat
21. Not keeping out the wind
23. Years and years
24. Blueprint
25. Laughable
28. Half-hitch kin
32. Order's partner
33. Daredevil's feat
34. Purpose
35. Sailor's affirmative
36. Kind of ray
37. Hullabaloo
38. Swab
39. Shenanigan
40. Receive
41. Hold one's liquor better than
43. Grasping tool

46. Uncontrolled
47. Tool building
48. Dermatologist's concern
51. Under the radar
55. Cashmere, e.g.
56. Sheer fabric
58. Toledo's lake
59. Organic compound
60. Eccentric
61. Monthly expense
62. Sleep stage
63. Heavenly host?
64. Son of Ramses I

### DOWN

1. Stated
2. Prefix with "China" or "European"
3. Nuclear energy source
4. Surroundings
5. Come to
6. Pit stop supply
7. Lion's den
8. Verb for you
9. Put a saddle on (a horse).
10. Foul-up
11. Zillions
12. Bloody
15. Paddle

20. Neither's partner
22. Spellbound
24. Drop heavily
25. San Antonio landmark
26. Louisiana marsh
27. Used a broom
28. Really need to bathe
29. Elbow
30. Willow twig
31. Campsite shelters
33. Get to one's feet
36. "The Pearl of the Indian Ocean"
39. Strait-laced
42. Reside
43. Derived from benzene
44. Shepherd's locale
45. Goof-offs
47. Feed, as a fire
48. Water pitcher
49. Scoop holder
50. Lens type
51. Smooch, in Britain
52. Squirrel's home
53. Help for the stumped
54. Abominable Snowman
57. Tiny particle

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## WORD SEARCH

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

- |           |              |            |           |
|-----------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| Absurdity | Gullible     | Mislead    | Spoof     |
| Amuse     | Hilarious    | Mockery    | Stunt     |
| Celebrate | Hoax         | Nonsense   | Surprise  |
| Chicanery | Hoodwink     | Outrageous | Trick     |
| Childish  | Infantile    | Play       | Unwitting |
| Chump     | Joker        | Prankster  | Victim    |
| Dupe      | Kooky        | Ridiculous | Wild      |
| Fun       | Lighthearted | Ruse       | Zany      |
| Gag       | Mischievous  | Scam       |           |

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## GARDENS IN THE PARK

# WARNER'S KIDS CLUB KICKS OFF

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



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With spring well on its way, it's time to make sure your kids have some fun in the sun, and gardening is a great way to make that happen.

As a busy parent, you know that coming up with activities that compete with ever-present screens (like televisions and tablets) can be a real challenge, even with younger kids.

Warner's Nursery is ready to help. Over the next two months, we'll have free weekly Kids Club sessions on Sunday afternoons that focus on gardening and are designed by our talented staff to be more than a little fun. The club is free to children between the ages of 6 and 10.

Learning to garden is a powerful tool that can impact your child's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It fosters a love for and respect of nature, teaches them about the environment, and illustrates the patience and sense of responsibility needed to be good stewards of the Earth. When you give children green thumbs, you are also encouraging green values.

Children will also discover how rewarding it is to grow a plant from seed and how much fun playing in the dirt (with a purpose) can be.

Here's the Kids Club sessions we'll be offering:

April 12th at 2pm - Seed Starting. Children will discover how seeds turn into real plants, start your own seeds, and learn how to care for them.

April 19th at 2pm - A Little Dirt Never Hurt. Kids will examine



different types of dirt and learn which is best for different plants, then build a "perfect" dirt layer.

April 26th at 2pm - Plants and Pollinators. Club members will learn about why we should be friends with bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects, and how to make their own perennial, pollinator garden.

May 3rd at 2pm - Planting Day! Time to take all that knowledge, dig in the dirt, and plant some of your favorite flowers with a Warner's associate!

May 10th at 2pm - Grow a Seed Necklace and Pot. Children will make their own natural jewelry using seeds and a pet chia pot, drawing on all they have learned

about germination, seeds, water, and light.

May 17th at 2pm - Beekeeping. Bees are essential to our environment, plus they make the best natural sweetener, honey! Children will learn how they can help bees in their own garden.

MAY 24th at 2pm - Flower Art Collage. Children will make art from plant material that they find around the nursery, and bring home their very own planting souvenir!

Kids Club sessions are free, but you need to reserve your child's spot and register in advance so we have enough materials for classes. To register, please visit us at the nursery (1101 East Butler Ave., Flagstaff), or you can call us at (928) 774-1983 or email us at [info@warnercompanies.com](mailto:info@warnercompanies.com).

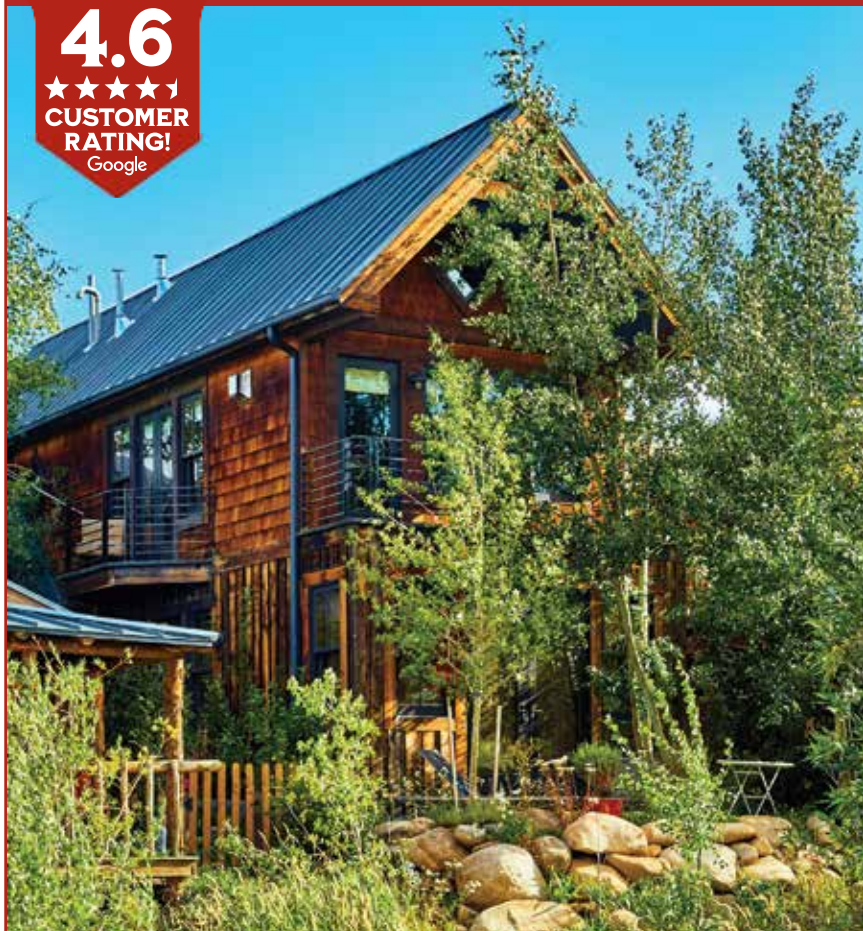
Space is limited, so don't wait to plant the seeds for a lifelong love of gardening!

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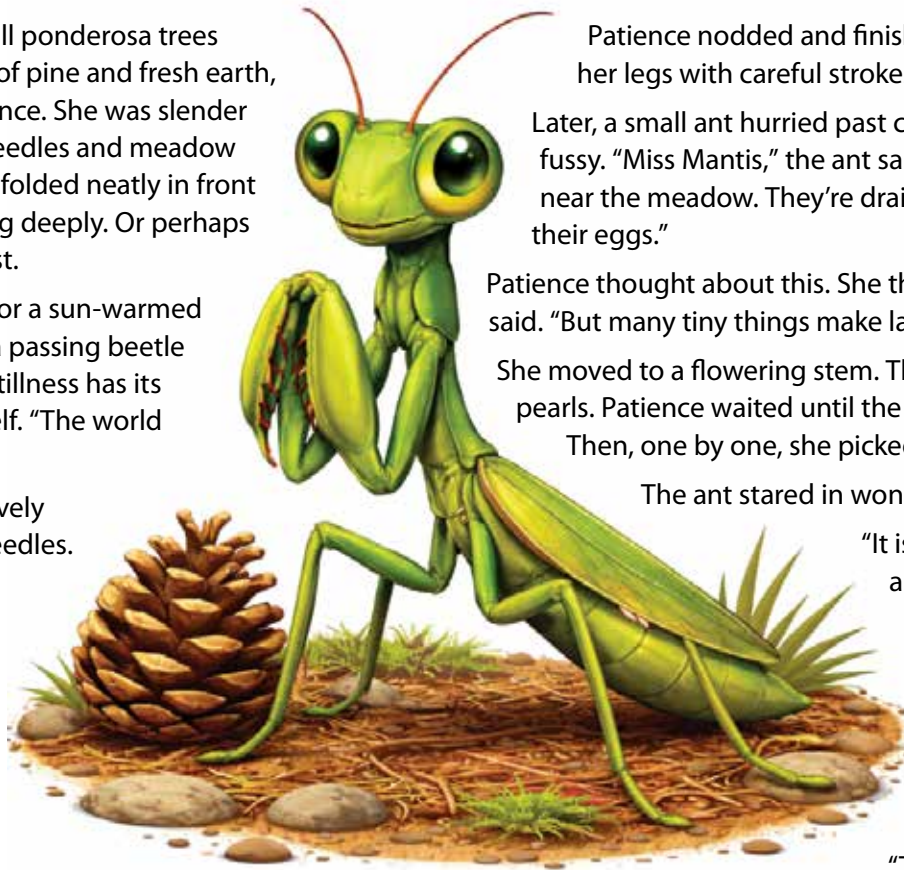
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## IT'S A BUGS LIFE

### PATIENCE THE PRAYING MANTIS



In the cool pines of Munds Park, where tall ponderosa trees stretch toward the sky and the air smells of pine and fresh earth, there lived a praying mantis named Patience. She was slender and green, the exact shade of the pine needles and meadow grasses around her. Her front legs stayed folded neatly in front of her chest, as if she were always thinking deeply. Or perhaps offering a small, silent prayer for the forest.

Patience spent her days on a low branch or a sun-warmed rock. She kept perfectly still. So still that a passing beetle might think she was just another twig. "Stillness has its advantages," Patience would say to herself. "The world brings its troubles right to your feet."

One crisp morning, Patience watched a lively grasshopper leaping through the pine needles. He nibbled on young shoots and tender grass. "Too many grasshoppers this year," Patience noted thoughtfully. "They nibble the plants the butterflies and bees rely on. Balance is important in the forest."

The grasshopper spotted her. He stopped hopping. "Hello, tall green one," he said brightly. "You look so calm with your arms folded like that. Are you praying for good weather?"

Patience turned her head slowly. She could turn it nearly all the way around, which was most useful. "I am waiting," she replied. "Waiting is a form of praying, perhaps."

The grasshopper chuckled. "Waiting for what? A rain shower? A new leaf? A friend?"

"For breakfast," Patience said plainly.

The grasshopper blinked. He hopped a step closer. "You don't seem hungry. You're so peaceful."

Patience said nothing more. She only watched. Her large eyes were calm and knowing.

The grasshopper, feeling bold, jumped high and spun in the air for show. He landed right in front of her. Much too close.

In an instant, Patience unfolded her front legs. They moved like swift shadows. Her spiky forearms closed around the grasshopper gently but surely. He wriggled once or twice.

"Oh," said the grasshopper quietly. "I understand now."

Patience held him steady. "You were eating too much," she explained. "The pines need their young shoots. The flowers need to bloom. No blooms, no nectar. No nectar, no happy bees. Everything is connected in the forest."

The grasshopper sighed. "It was a tasty shoot."

Patience nodded and finished her breakfast neatly, then groomed her legs with careful strokes. "There. Tidy again."

Later, a small ant hurried past carrying a pine seed husk. The ant looked fussy. "Miss Mantis," the ant said, "aphids are crowding the wildflowers near the meadow. They're draining the plants the monarchs need for their eggs."

Patience thought about this. She thought very carefully. "Aphids are tiny," she said. "But many tiny things make large trouble."

She moved to a flowering stem. There the aphids sat, clustered like green pearls. Patience waited until the breeze was soft and the aphids were busy.

Then, one by one, she picked them off and ate them.

The ant stared in wonder. "You make it seem simple."

"It is simple," Patience answered, "when you are patient. Fold your arms. Wait for the moment. Then act."

By afternoon, the flowers stood taller. A monarch butterfly drifted by and settled on a bloom. She laid a single egg. Patience watched from her branch, legs folded once more.

"Thank you," the butterfly whispered.

Patience dipped her head. "We each have our part. I watch and wait. I catch what needs catching. And the woods stay green and full of life."

As evening came and the pines turned golden in the sunset, Patience found her favorite perch. The forest quieted. Stars began to peek through the branches.

"I like being a praying mantis," she murmured. "I help keep order. I stay still while others rush. And sometimes, I look as if I am praying."

She gave a very small mantis smile.

Because even in the tall pines of Munds Park, a quiet watcher with folded arms can be very important indeed.

### KIDS WANT TO DIG IN THE DIRT & GROW COOL THINGS?



Warner's Nursery Kids Club has free Sunday classes just for kids ages 6 to 10. You can learn about seeds, flowers, bees, pollinators, and even make fun garden art. It's messy, sunny, and you might even make some cool garden art along the way.

Kids, tell your parents all the details are on page 13B.

# HIDDEN PICTURES!

Solutions on page 18B!



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

## WORD SEARCH

Search to find the hidden words. Answers page 18B.

- |                   |                  |                    |                 |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Advantages</b> | <b>Balance</b>   | <b>Butterfly</b>   | <b>Monarch</b>  |
| <b>Afternoon</b>  | <b>Bee</b>       | <b>Folded</b>      | <b>Patience</b> |
| <b>Ant</b>        | <b>Beetle</b>    | <b>Forest</b>      | <b>Pine</b>     |
| <b>Aphids</b>     | <b>Bloom</b>     | <b>Grasshopper</b> | <b>Praying</b>  |
| <b>Arms</b>       | <b>Breakfast</b> | <b>Mantis</b>      |                 |



# ON VACATION WITH THE PINEWOOD NEWS



Bob and Cheryl Rydzynski traded ordinary days for river views, cruising up the Rhine and doing what they do best: proving that travel is a fine habit and one worth keeping!

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Let's see where our little paper ends up next! Send your photos to  
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## SUDOKU

CREATED BY PAUL MASON • SOLUTION PAGE 18B

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



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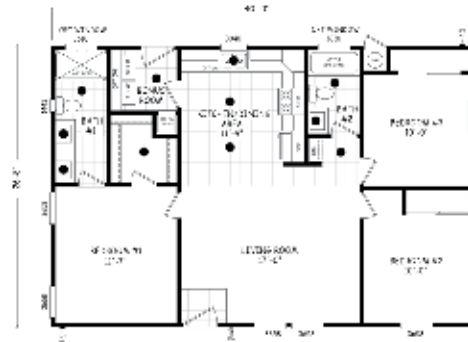


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# STAMPED, APPROVED... & WRONG

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

BY SANDEE CAVINESS



areas. And ask one more important question: Is the inspection checking how the work actually performs, or just whether certain visible items meet code? If the answers are vague, don't let it go.

And if you can, be there. Watch what gets looked at, and just as importantly, notice what doesn't. It may feel uncomfortable, but this is your home, your investment, and ultimately your problem if something goes wrong.

The hard truth is this: "Approved" does not mean examined closely enough to catch serious issues. To

Genna and me, the permitting process felt more like a tax than real protection. When the work is wrong, the homeowner is far more on their own than most people realize.

In our next installment, we'll walk through what happens when you turn to the Arizona Registrar of Contractors, and why many homeowners are surprised by what that process actually requires.

This year in our seasonal home series, we're pulling back the curtain on the hard lessons we learned after a major home project went sideways, despite doing everything we thought was right.

Last issue, we shared how trusting glowing online review stars left us burned. This time, we're talking about something homeowners trust even more: the permit.

The contractor pulls the permit. The city stamps it approved. And the homeowner breathes easier, thinking the work was truly checked.

We believed that too.

Our HVAC system was permitted and signed off. On paper, everything looked right. It wasn't.

What we didn't understand is that a permit and final sign-off are not proof the work was thoroughly inspected. They don't guarantee every part of the job was examined, or that anyone verified the design and installation were sound.

A permit inspection means the inspector signed off only on what was checked that day, and that depends on access. If the work is already covered up, hard to reach, or not left ready for inspection, those areas may never be looked at. Roof work is a perfect example. Inspectors don't bring ladders; it's up to the contractor or homeowner to provide safe access and keep the work exposed. Some jurisdictions even require it.

In our case, no one ever went onto the roof to examine the ductwork installation. No one verified the insulation on the exposed rooftop ducts. No one evaluated whether the design itself made sense for our home. Yet the job received the county's seal of approval. To this day, we're not sure what was actually inspected, clearly not the parts that mattered most.

Inspections are not full investigations. They're often brief and focused only on specific items tied to the permit, not on how the finished work actually performs. Most homeowners assume "passed inspection" means the job was fully vetted. In reality, it may mean only that nothing obvious was flagged during a limited review. Those are not the same thing.

That distinction became painfully clear when rain started leaking through our interior vents. What began as annoying drips turned into condensation dripping onto our kitchen table, and sometimes our heads that eventually required an independent environmental inspection. That inspection came back positive for mold.

From our point of view, the question was simple: How did this pass inspection?

The answer? The process doesn't go deep enough to catch major design flaws or poor workmanship, especially when critical elements are hidden or hard to access.

So what should homeowners do?

Ask exactly what will be inspected, and what won't. Ask whether the inspector will need access to the roof, attic, or other hard-to-reach



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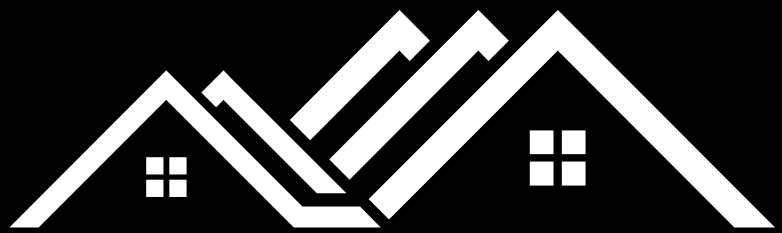
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WORD SEARCH

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# IN LOVING MEMORY

## *Dwight Lyman Moffitt*



Dwight Lyman Moffitt, 79, of Clarkdale, and previously Munds Park, Arizona, passed away peacefully at home on December 27, 2025, following complications from COPD and diabetes.

Dwight was born on January 2, 1946 in Los Angeles, California, to Claude and Hazel Moffitt, who preceded him in death. He grew up with strong values defined by service, benefiting from a strong work ethic, and a love for family and friends.

Dwight attended Phoenix Union High School and continued his education at John Brown University and Northern Arizona University. He proudly served his country in the US Coast Guard as a jet engine mechanic, and then braving the waters he joined the helicopter Search and Rescue teams, reflecting his courage and dedication to helping others.

In 1975, Dwight married the love of his life, Maral Vischer, sharing a devoted, faithful partnership, together raising their daughter, Tracy, who was the pride of their lives.

After Dwight retired from the military, he had many work opportunities that revealed his numerous talents, from architectural draftsman and building coordinator, to a UPS driver, to a business owner starting a trash company in Munds Park and surrounding communities. On selling that, he then purchased the Pinewood Chevron Gas Station, mechanic garage and towing business, which he owned and operated for over 30 years. His talents spilled over to chimney sweeping, snow plowing, winterizing cabins, cutting and selling firewood for resale in C-stores all over the Flagstaff area. His other love was volunteering for over 20 years with the Flagstaff Sheriff's posse, helping them to raise money for community needs and scholarships, as well as being a devoted member of the American Legion.

Dwight most definitely loved the great outdoors, and he relished to explore each quiet road to see where it led. He spent countless hours boating, fishing for bass at Lake Powell and exploring it regularly with family and friends. Other joys were snow skiing, large game hunting, fishing in the mountains of Mexico, snowmobiling to Mormon Lake, and again on the North Rim and Yellowstone. Once he even snowmobiled from Munds Park to the top of the San Francisco Peaks on just back roads. He was a member of Grand Canyon HOG, the Harley Davidson motorcycle

group traveling several times to the Wall in DC. He often traveled with his little dog Reagan who usually stole the show. One spring, traveling on his own, he took the "4 corner challenge" to see the entire perimeter of the USA, from Flagstaff to the Florida Keys, to Maine, Washington, then San Diego. Then again, he ventured on his Harley from Arizona to Alaska, and eventually to the Arctic Circle (on gravel roads). Altogether, he traveled over 100,000 miles to see the most beautiful country there is from coast to coast. Whether on the open road or in nature, he found peace, freedom, and joy. Above all, Dwight was a loving husband and father – a steady presence, provider, protector, a true patriot, a man who lived his life to the fullest, a man to be admired.

Dwight is survived by his wife, Maral Moffitt, his daughter Tracy Moffitt, Robert (Bob) Moffitt, sisters Gayle Zamora, Gwen Buscher, and numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial service with Military Honors and Color Guard will be held to honor Dwight's life and service on May 2 at the Verde Valley Community Church in Cottonwood next to the hospital.

Dwight Lyman Moffitt will be deeply missed and forever remembered for his devotion to family, love for God and Country, and the strong quiet legacy he leaves behind.

**Some things should never  
come with a price tag.**

At The Pinewood News, we are honored to share the moments that matter most to our community, from lives remembered to babies welcomed, weddings celebrated, and anniversaries cherished. These notices are more than announcements. They are keepsakes. Small pieces of family history that deserve a place in their local community paper and in our hearts.

That is why we publish them free of charge. Always.

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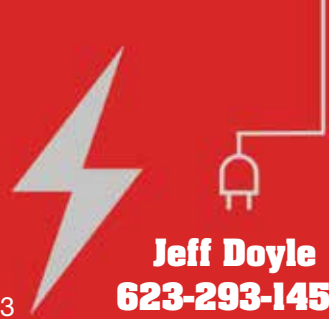
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### Dark Sky Compliance

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#### 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 Sheriff's Office ..... (928) 774-4523

#### Rabies Concerns (Pets or Wildlife)

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

Coconino County Animal Management ..... (928) 679-8756

#### Found a Stray?

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

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

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

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

#### Injured or Dangerous Wildlife

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

Weekends & after hours call ..... 911

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

#### Loose Livestock

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### 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

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### 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

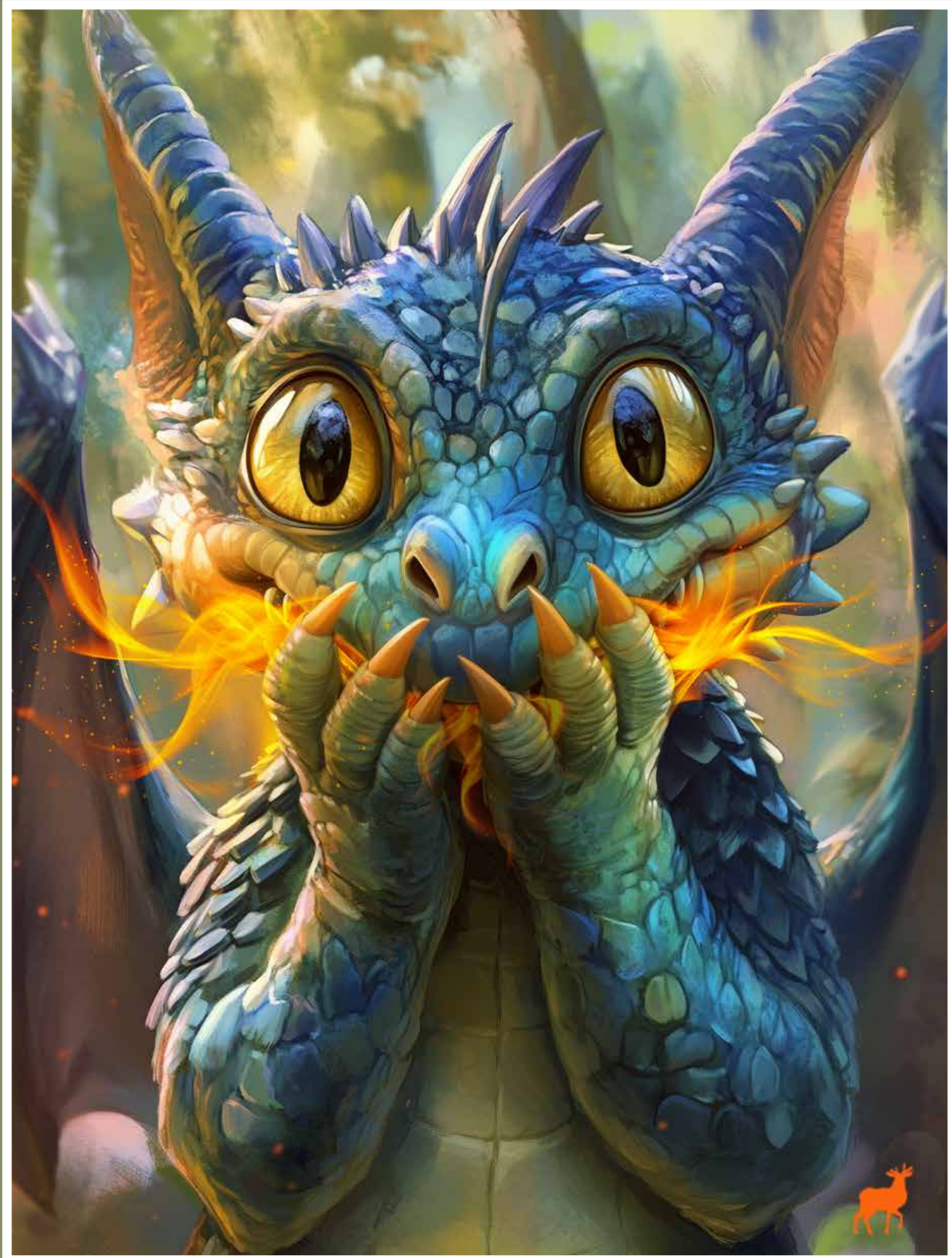
**Know Your Rights:** Short-Term Rental owners must give their contact details to Coconino County and provide them in writing to adjacent neighbors. If you live next door and never received this information, call the County STR Compliance Officer to confirm the property's registration. For unresponsive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

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