

Explore Cloudcroft: Shop, eat, stay, and play with our expanded Local Guide, pg. 11

# MountainMonthly

Your Guide to Cloudcroft and the Sacramento Mountains

FREE



Mason and Lauren Locke get festive for the upcoming Ugly Christmas Sweater 5K in Cloudcroft

## Run Wild: Meet the Man Continuing Cloudcroft's Trail Running Series

HANNAH DEAN talks with *Wanderlust* owner and race director **Shane Asbury** about outdoor recreation, upcoming events

Shane Asbury has been quietly building a trail running empire, one mountain race at a time.

Now his work is paying off in a big way: Ruidoso will host the Xterra World Championship off-road triathlon for three consecutive years starting in 2026, bringing elite athletes from around the globe to the Lincoln National Forest.

"I see this really putting our area on the map," said Asbury, who directs races through his company *Wanderlust Running* while juggling every detail himself—from course marking to social media posts. "We have something special here."

The Xterra coup came in October, when Mayor Lynn Crawford announced the championships at Downshift Brewing Company. Asbury will

direct the event, which combines swimming, mountain biking, and trail running through some of the Southwest's most challenging terrain. Crawford called the championships a "boon" for Ruidoso, particularly as the village recovers from last summer's devastating Salt and South Fork Fires.

But the World Championships didn't appear out of nowhere. Asbury has spent years cultivating relationships with villages, parks departments, and local businesses while establishing Ruidoso as his home base and expanding throughout the region.

"I'm a one-man band," he said. "Everything you see, I'm putting on, I'm producing. I do all the social media. I do everything."

*continued on pg. 2*



## Little Bears Are Back On the CHS Court

The Little Bears Basketball program is back in action, giving elementary-aged hoopers a chance to show off their skills during halftime of JV and Varsity games. The free, co-ed program has kids dribbling, passing, and learning fundamentals under volunteer coaches.

While some are still figuring out which basket is theirs, families pack the stands to cheer them on—thanks to organizer Samantha Odom.

The halftime shows deliver: determined six-year-olds draining layups, three kids simultaneously diving for loose balls. These pint-sized players provide entertainment while developing skills for their future varsity careers.

The Little Bears scrimmage at upcoming home games, so arrive early and stay through halftime.

The Mountain Top Basketball Tournament hits CHS December 11th-13th—three days of hoops and mountain hospitality. Bring cash for the concession stand.

See you courtside, Cloudcroft.

## THIS ISSUE



Dusty Wiley wins the mayor's race. Meet your next council in MOUNTAIN NEWS, pg. 6



Shenanigans with Chris Shaw and Elyse Shadwell at Mad Jack's. See more MOUNTAIN LIFE in pictures, pg. 21



Cloudcroft student Parker Muncy cooks in the culinary program. Check out his posole recipe in our FLAVOR LAB, pg. 23



Check out winter events with our LOCAL GUIDE, pg. 11

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## From Virginia to World Marathon Majors

Asbury started running distance in high school in rural Virginia, where no distance program existed until he created one. The passion stuck.

He's since completed all seven Abbott World Marathon Majors—Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago, New York, Tokyo, and Sydney—a feat accomplished by fewer than 80,000 runners worldwide."I just ran my seventh star in Sydney in September," he said.

After years working in fundraising and event management, Asbury turned his love of running into a business. Wanderlust Running now operates a growing calendar of races across southern New Mexico, with a particular focus on Cloudcroft's high-altitude trails.

## Building the Cloudcroft Series

Matt and Cindy Preslar previously organized Cloudcroft races through Cloudcroft Runners. The duo worked with Asbury this year and will transition all events to Wanderlust Running in 2026, creating a cohesive series that encourages runners to take on fresh challenges from June through October.

Wanderlust Running's Cloudcroft events include:

- Trails & Rails 8-mile, 3-mile, 1-mile Kid's Dash
- Cloudcroft Ultra 53k, 9.5-mile, 4.75-mile, and 1-mile Kid's Dash
- Cactus to Clouds Sky Race (C2C) 50k and 30k

These races are now organized as a series to encourage runners to take on fresh challenges from June through October.

Each course highlights rugged trails and mountain scenery. The Cactus to Clouds 50k—a point-to-point race from the Chihuahuan Desert floor to the Sacramento Mountains—features nearly 9,000 feet of climbing.

"I see that event really putting Cloudcroft on the map, especially the ultra running map," Asbury said. "There are so many directions I plan to go with the Cactus-to-Clouds event."

His grassroots marketing is already working. At October's C2C race, runners came from 32 states. "Ninety percent of runners are from out of town," he said.

## Expanding to Christmas Runs

Asbury is also taking over Cloudcroft's Ugly Sweater Christmas Run, expanding the informal community event that Lauren Locke,



Shane Asbury at the October Cactus-to-Clouds Sky Race finish line. Photo: Lobo Photo NM

Amy Coor, and Bri Jonnes started last year at Zenith Park. The Dec. 6th race—now a 5K and one-mile walk—will start at 4 p.m., timed to lead runners straight into the village's Christmas parade and tree lighting on Burro after awards at Zenith Park.

"We'll have hot chocolate, coffee, and cookies at the finish line," Asbury said. "Then they can walk right up and see the parade."

Shane wants the event to become "an annual thing," designed to boost winter tourism and benefit local businesses: "Hopefully it drives some economy during Christmas time." Proceeds benefit Cloudcroft's Parks and Recreation program.

## Economic Engine

For Asbury, the races aren't just athletic events—they're economic development tools.

"I'm all about not only driving my business, but driving people to other people's businesses," he said. He works closely with local restaurants, lodges, and shops to create race bib discounts and partnerships that benefit the entire community.

The model extends beyond race weekends. By establishing Cloudcroft and Ruidoso as destinations for serious trail runners, Asbury hopes to build year-round tourism around outdoor recreation.

In 2022, the New Mexico tourism department reported that the average overnight visitor spent an average of \$315 per person, per trip. Those kinds of heads-in-beds numbers make a difference for Cloudcroft—especially in the village's typically slower winter season.

Giving back is central to Shane's approach. He donates race proceeds and supports cross-country teams, parks and recreation departments, and local programs in both villages.

"I love running in Ruidoso and Cloudcroft," he said. "Just being able to see the wildlife—elk, deer, wild horses. It's unique. And the trails are well-used and have really been taken care of."

The region's growing outdoor culture excites him most.

"It's infectious," he said. "I'm happy to see more people now out running and walking and just out and about on trails."

With World Championship triathlons coming to Ruidoso and runners from across the country discovering Cloudcroft's trails, he might be right.

The Cloudcroft Ugly Sweater Christmas Run 5K and 1-mile walk takes place Friday, Dec. 6, at 4 p.m. Registration and course information available at [wanderlustrunning.com](http://wanderlustrunning.com).

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- Mixed Green Salad.
- Gorgonzola & Toasted Almond Salad. Raspberry Vinaigrette.
- Smoked Salmon Caper Berries & Whipped Cream Cheese.
- Boursin Baked Cremini Mushrooms.
- Caprese Salad Local Pistachios & Balsamic.
- Crispy pork belly with Orange Spiced Local Honey.
- Domestic & Imported Cheeses.
- Sonoran Pimento Cheese with Crudites.
- Hummus Bar with warm Pita Bread.

**Carvery**

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- 1899 Slow Cooked Prime Rib.
- Baked Southern Arctic Salmon.
- Chef's Egg station.

**Sauces**

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- Orange Tamarind Glaze.
- Mushroom Horseradish.
- Lemon Dijon Cream.

**Sides**

- Cauliflower.
- Broccoli Au Gratin.
- Bacon Roasted Brussels Sprouts.
- Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes.
- Green Beans.
- Shallots & Garlic.
- Butternut Squash With Local Honey.

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# Home Front

The mountain view from the editor's desk — and beyond



(Painting by Hannah Dean)

Dear Readers,

December's here—and we're hitting our stride.

This is more than a running issue. It's a blueprint for what we're becoming: a visitors guide with heart and spine. Essential stories for locals and newcomers alike.

We're profiling the trail race guy. Tracking year-round runners. Curating the Local Guide—where to shop, sleep, eat. No fluff.

We're honoring Kira Davis with a legacy project her family shares in these pages.

Santa hits Santa Land before Christmas. The self-proclaimed Christmas Capital of New Mexico could use some actual snow—I'm willing to toss a few skis into the bonfire if you are.

Old traditions, new energy, zero filler.



Lace up. Let's go.

Happy holidays, from all of us.

## Extra: Off the Press

Last month, we featured stories on the incoming Ice Rink lessee, El Paso Rhinos hockey team owner and Cloudcroft part-timer, Corey Herman and longtime Ice Rink runner Donald Wiklund. Find these stories digitally at CloudcroftReader.com .

The James Sewell Ice Rink—named after a former Cloudcroft mayor—at Zenith Park will open for its last season as a natural ice rink, currently the southernmost natural rink in the United States and the only natural ice rink in New Mexico.

The concrete pad and steel covering were added to the natural low spot and watershed in the late 1990s to extend the rink's season.

2026 lessee Herman hopes to extend the ice season with refrigerated pads and a special water plant for ice making.

Wiklund is hosting Ullr Fest at Zenith Park December 13th with live music by the Broken Owls. Mark your calendars with this and more winter happenings with our EVENTS listings, pg 19.

## Would You Like to Help Spread the News?

**Would you like to carry the Monthly in your establishment? Do you have stories, tips, and photos you want to share?**

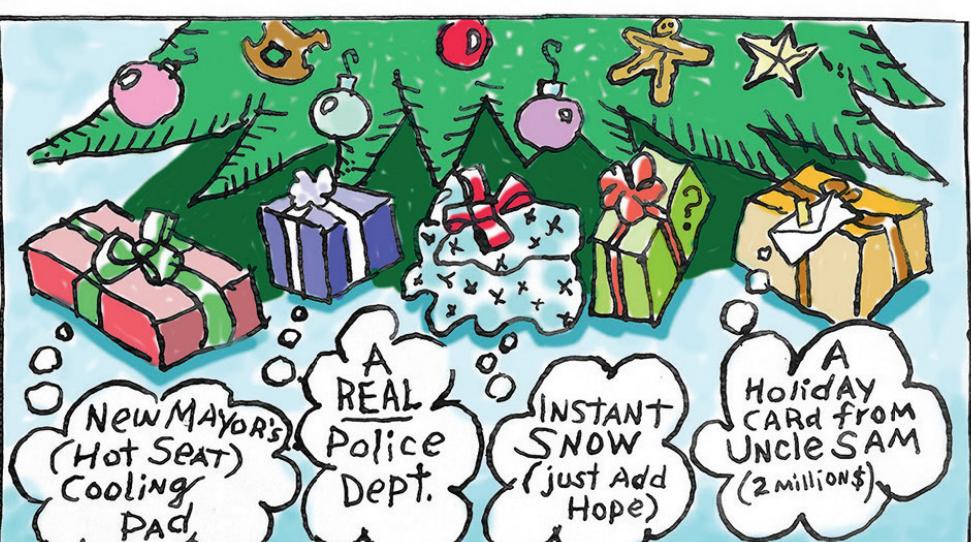
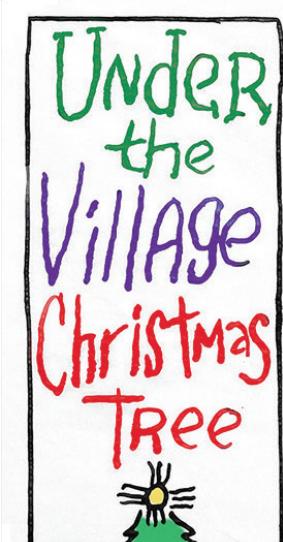
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## Switchbacks

"Switchbacks" twists through the steep terrain of local politics much like a mountain trail, offering sharp turns of satire and perspective along the way.

By Rand Carlson

Rand first came to Cloudcroft in the early 80s when he was Graphics Editor for the El Paso Herald-Post. After graduation he became an art director for newspapers and magazines. In 1986 he started Random Arts, an illustration and graphic design studio. Rand was also a cartoonist for the Tucson Weekly for 35 years. You can find Rand most mornings walking his dog Abbey around the Lodge.





# Strong Communities Need Good Information

A healthy town needs good roads, clean water, and reliable information. All three are infrastructure. All three require investment. All three make everything else possible.

The **Cloudcroft Reader** ‘s mission is to provide that third piece: factual, fair, timely reporting that everyone can rely on.

When the Village’s forensic audit revealed financial chaos, we reported it clearly. When three mayors came and went in three years, we covered the transitions thoroughly. When fire safety became urgent, we brought the community together for solutions.

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Quality journalism reduces rumors. It stops misinformation before it spreads. It gives neighbors common ground to stand on, even when they disagree about what to do next.

Cloudcroft works better when we all operate from the same set of facts. That’s not propaganda—it’s just how communities get things done.

**Cloudcroft Reader**

Tracking life in Cludcroft and the Sacramento Mountains

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Dusty Wiley won the November election by 40 votes. He's already met with Mayor Tim King, and is gearing up to take the wheel in January

## Wiley Wins

*Second time running for mayor puts local business man in the mayor chair*

Gerald "Dusty" Wiley won the November 4th Cloudcroft mayor race, winning 164 votes to Mayor King's 124.

Cloudcroft saw an impressive turnout of 288 Cloudcroft village voters. In the 2024 mayoral contest, which coincided with the presidential election, the mayoral race received 307 votes, a mere 19 votes more than the previous year.

In a late night of refreshing phone screens and browsers, both Wiley and King awaited election results well past 10:00 p.m.

Wiley and a group of supporters livestreamed the action at Dusty Boots on Facebook. King hosted a virtual Microsoft Teams digital watch party.

Hannah Dean spoke with both Wiley and King after the unofficial results were made public.

## Meet Your Mayor

"It will be a lot of work," Wiley says.

"I think (voters) want transparency. And they want somebody who will listen to them."

"I gotta get with Tim King and see how much he will work with me. I want to work with the staff that's there so I can get to know what they do know, or not."

"I'm hoping that, per the Auditor who was there the other night, King follows through and does what he should be doing. The deadline is December 19th, I believe. [Garcia] said that they allow them up to January 31, I think. To give them a grace period. He's got a month and a half to work on it. There's nothing else he needs, really, to work on. He could focus on that and get it ready for the auditors to come in and start their process so that we could set the '24-'25 audit out of the way."

"Well, to the voters—thank you very much. I appreciate the support. I appreciate everything you've done and for believing in me. And, King supporters, I will work with them as well. I'm working for Cloudcroft as a whole."

"It doesn't matter whether they voted for me or not, I'm gonna listen to all of them. I hope the trustees will listen, and we can move forward from now on. I'm hoping to get the village meetings changed a little bit, where I can get more input with the trustees before beforeotes on different agenda items."

**"The number one priority is gonna be the budget," says Wiley**

"Thank you to Cloudcroft for believing in me. We got a lot of work ahead and there's a lot of people that I'm going to be working with, hopefully, on different issues I've talked to in the past," says Wiley.

## Passing theTorch

Dean also spoke with current **Mayor Tim King**.

"I'll keep working until 12/31/2025," King says.

"I just called Dusty to congratulate him. I want to have a really good transition, because I don't think there have been good transitions between the past two mayors. So, I'm going to get with (Village attorney) Zach (Cook) and we're going to get a list together of the most critical priorities. Number one's going to be the budget. I just mentioned to Dusty that he doesn't have a clerk. To hit the ground running, he is probably going to start looking for a clerk."

"Dusty loves the village as much as I do. So why am I not going to try and do the most of that I can, trying to make it a smooth transition?" says King.

After the intense November 17th special council meeting where the council appointed Matt Willett to the open fourth trustee seat, Wiley and King got down to business.

"I think it's gonna be OK. After the meeting, Tim and I spoke for about 2 hours in that building after everybody was gone. We had some conversations, some things we agreed on, and disagreed on other things. That's gonna happen," Wiley says.

"I did get a text from Matt Willett. And he said he wants it to be a smooth process, and he'll help

with that transition as well. So, we'll see how that goes. I think that'll work out well."

"The number one priority is gonna be the budget. Maybe other people don't realize that, but you have to have the budget fixed because you have to have a budget to move forward, so you get the staff that you need to be in office to do the things that need to be done."

"And then after that, it's gonna be the wastewater plant and water for the village to grow. And I know developers want to see the village grow, you can't grow until we have water. So you gotta fix those problems."

Wiley is already trying to get a handle on the numbers.

"I've already requested, in writing, for the current approved certified budget that the state has for the village, or what the village has for the state. If not, what budget they're working off of."

"And then I also spoke with Tim King about that last night and asked for a copy of it. I have not received it yet, so he's aware that I want it. So I can start looking at what (the budget) is at."

"I know there's a lot of things that need to be done, because the budget hadn't been done for X-amount of years."

"Some of the grants are 10% matches or whatever they may be. You have to have that money to continue with those grants. So until I see the budget and see what adjustments need to be made once I'm in office, if there have to be any made...I can't do a whole lot until I see it."

As for Monday night's heated arguments, Wiley says, "The mayor should have handled the meeting a little bit better. He should not have lost his composure. Hopefully, I never do that."

Go deeper in the election stories (with video and audio) on [CloudcroftReader.com](#)

## Election Results: Trustees, Judge, and School

*Meet your new Village Council and School Board. Plus, voters overwhelmingly approve the GO Bond*

**Keith Hamilton** was the top vote-getter for Village Trustee with 174 votes.

**Danny Hardwick** came in second, with 150 votes. **Gail McCoy** was close behind with 144 votes. This means Hamilton and Hardwick earned four-year terms on the council; McCoy will serve a two-year term.

**Mark Tatum** ran unopposed and received 219 votes.

The School Board race was won by Lance Wright and Michele Anthony, who received 403 and 359 votes, respectively.

The GO Bond passed with 72% of votes in favor of the funding.

At a heated special meeting on November 17th, **Matt Willett** was voted into the open fourth Trustee seat, 2-0 by Hamilton and McCoy.

For more election coverage and interviews, head to [CloudcroftReader.com](#)

## Village Fills Seats on Advisory Boards

The Village of Cloudcroft recently welcomed new members to several advisory boards and commissions.

**Amy Coor, Rick Donnelly, and Dave Bradshaw** have joined the Planning and Zoning Commission. Another seat on the commission will open in January when **Susan Difani's** term expires. Coor, a volunteer track and cross-country coach with Cloudcroft Schools, also serves on the Parks and

Recreation and Lodger's Tax Advisory Boards. Donnelly is a recent graduate of the Leadership Cloudcroft program.

**Harry Crinklaw** was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, filling a vacancy left when board chair Matt Willett was appointed to the village council as trustee. Crinklaw—who appeared as Spud Farmer in the CLOC's summer melodrama "Heaven Help the Po' Taters"—is a volunteer firefighter and works at the James Sewell Ice Rink.

**Gina Sweeny** and **Charlette Foster** were recently appointed to the Library Advisory Board. For information on the library's winter events, check in with Library Director Dr. Sandra Barr in the

Residents interested in serving on village boards can fill out the application online through the

GIS dashboard or email a letter of interest to [ccvillagemayor@cloudcroftvillage.com](mailto:ccvillagemayor@cloudcroftvillage.com).

## Cloudcroft Schools Reach New Heights With New STEM Center

*Funded by ExxonMobil in partnership with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, the Bears receive a new learning center and curriculum*

Cloudcroft Elementary and Middle School students are soaring to new heights with new state-of-the-art STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) equipment funded by ExxonMobil.

ExxonMobil and the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation teamed up to provide students with the new STEM center, featuring a 3D printer, coding robots, circuit kits, and drones.

"We know our STEM Centers and resources have a meaningful impact on kids from underserved communities, helping guide them toward healthy, successful futures," said Steve Salem, President and CEO of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation. "With the support of generous partners like ExxonMobil, we're able to instill critical problem-solving skills and provide these kids with the tools they need to succeed—and become the next generation of STEM leaders."

Scott Buechler, ExxonMobil's New Mexico Production Manager, said he was looking forward to seeing what Cloudcroft Elementary and Middle School students would create.

"Even more powerful than the tools and equipment are the imaginative minds of these young STEM leaders. We are excited to see the complex problems they solve, the creative solutions they work together to find, and the change they will create in New Mexico," Buechler said. "ExxonMobil is proud to work alongside the Ripken Foundation and Cloudcroft Schools to foster innovation in our next generation of STEM professionals."

During the ribbon-cutting celebration of the new STEM lab at Zenith Park on October 28th, students gathered around the Exxon Mobil hot air balloon and hollered as flames burst upward. DJ Nate Saffle, decked out in a white



lab coat, filled the park with beats for an early morning celebration.

"The hands-on interaction with our hot air balloon was a great example for students of what STEM in action looks like," Buechler said.

Joseph Cueto, one of Cloudcroft's own, now works for ExxonMobil in Carlsbad as the community relations manager and was integral to bringing the lab to Cloudcroft.

ExxonMobil began partnering with the Ripken Foundation in 2022 to expand STEM opportunities. Together, they have provided STEM equipment to eight New Mexico schools, four North Dakota elementary schools, and one Texas middle/high school. They recently opened a STEM center in Espanola, NM.

The Ripken Foundation has installed 770 state-of-the-art centers across the country through its STEM initiative, which aims to increase the number of minority and at-risk youth pursuing higher education and careers in STEM-related fields.

## Phone-free classrooms show early gains

*Cloudcroft Middle School saw a sharp rise in academic proficiency after locking away phones. As the state now requires all districts to limit device use, educators and researchers are watching to see if the results can be replicated statewide.*

By **Jonny Coker**, Southern New Mexico Journalism Collaborative

CLOUDCROFT — Earlier this year, New Mexico lawmakers passed a bill requiring school districts to develop rules restricting the use of cell phones in schools.

There's a growing sentiment across the country that this type of legislation is needed. Going into the 2025 fall semester 31 states now have implemented some type of anti-distraction policy. So what's leading to this legislative action?

According to nationwide data from the Department of Education, in 2013, 77% of 8th graders scored at or above basic reading proficiency. In 2024, that number dipped to 66%. On top of this, the nation's youth are experiencing declining mental health seemingly across the board. According to a 2024 report from the CDC, "Nearly all indicators of poor mental health and suicidal thoughts and behaviors worsened from 2013 to 2023."

This time frame corresponds to the widespread rise of smartphone use – and social media – by Gen Z kids.

So what does this new policy mean for New Mexico school districts? Well, we have our own data sets to dig into. Even though New Mexico's anti-distraction policy was instituted a few months ago, Cloudcroft Municipal Schools was ahead of the curve, requiring the use of Yondr Pouches in the Fall of 2024.

The **Yondr** pouch is, essentially, a magnetic case that locks a child's phone away for the day, allowing them to keep possession of their property, but restricting access until they leave the building. Cloudcroft Middle School Principal Nolene Adams said it's changed the behavior and habits of kids during school hours.

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*Even though New Mexico's anti-distraction policy was instituted a few months ago, Cloudcroft Municipal Schools was ahead of the curve, requiring the use of Yondr Pouches in the Fall of 2024.*

"I taught middle school for 10 years before I became the principal. It was a daily struggle with kids in my classroom. Not because of anything other than that they

were addicted to cell phones," Adams said. "Being able to put the Yondr pouches to use has helped a lot. I see them socially interacting more, they're more professional in their communication with teachers, they're nicer to each other, we've seen cyber-bullying decrease greatly in the last two years. I was dealing a lot with cyber-bullying, and then the very next year we implemented Yondr pouches, and I rarely have to do that anymore, so it's really helped a lot."

So now that this has been a policy in Cloudcroft for over a year, what can we learn? According to the latest data from the New Mexico Public Education Department, Cloudcroft Middle School saw a significant jump in academic proficiency rates, with math proficiency jumping around 18 percentage points, while reading and science

also saw demonstrable upticks. So, for this small middle school nestled in the Sacramento Mountains of south-central New Mexico, the data show that there is correlation between the cellphone bans and rising proficiency scores.

But does correlation equal causation, and is this a true solution to the negative outcomes that young people are experiencing? According to Kris Perry, executive director of Children and Screens at the Institute of Digital Media and Child Development, the answer is a bit more complicated.

"We can't go so far as to say there's a correlation or that there's causation, but [because] we're establishing this baseline right now as these policies are being put in place right now, that this is a critical time to invest in researching their impact," Perry said. "So, if we

ever wanted a federal policy, it'd be nice to know which states' policies have the greatest impact on academic performance and mental health. But I also want to caution us. Smartphone policies are great, but they are not the only solution to what's been hard for kids over these last many years, really since the pandemic. Just the struggle with mental health and the struggle with digital safety, the struggle with academic performance, those all preexisted."

While Perry said that more research is critical right now as these policies are in their infancy, the preliminary data is encouraging.

"Even within one semester, we're seeing some of these improvements around mental health and academic performance, one can assume that over many semesters you would see those improvements grow," Perry said. "That is the business model, of course, to keep us online. These products weren't designed as child centered or child positive products. They're designed essentially to support the companies who made them. So I think there is a moment here where parents are reaching kind of the breaking point, and teachers, too. I think that we all can see what's going on and how painful it is for individual children and families to cope with these devices and products that really are intended to keep their attention."

But Cloudcroft Middle School has a small student body, under 100 students last semester. And this anti-distraction policy is now a statewide mandate. Enforcing a policy like this in larger school districts could be difficult. Stepanie Behning, head administrator at Turquoise Trail Charter School in Santa Fe, said her classrooms had exactly that problem when implementing Yondr pouches a few years ago, to the point that they dropped the policy.

"We're an arts integration school, so we encourage creativity and creative problem solving and critical thinking. Well, those Yondr pouches brought on a lot of that with our students [getting] into the pouch after it was locked," Behning said. "I think as schools are bigger, it's harder to manage all of those phones and [what] you're actually putting into the pouch."

Since the mandate came down from the state, Turquoise Trail doesn't use the Yondr Pouches, and instead has kids lock their devices away in their lockers. Behning said that she has seen positive improvement since the mandate, but that more emphasis should be put on teaching kids to build a healthier relationship with their devices.

"We can take away and put things away and lock things up as much as we want. But if we don't actually give them the tools, then they're not going to be able to know how to

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use it responsibly when they're out of school."

So we know what the data say, and we know that enforcement can get tricky, especially as the schools get bigger. But what about anecdotes on the ground about in-class participation, social events, and even mental health outcomes? According to Cloudcroft's eighth grade science teacher Bryan Casinger, the Yondr pouches have been a game changer.

**"It was a battle for teachers, because not only do we have to teach a lesson, but we were stuck trying to watch for those phones.**

Casinger said that beyond increased classroom participation, children are socializing more, the lunchroom is louder, and that cyberbullying incidents have gone down. Now that anti-distraction policies have been mandated across the state, he said other districts should expect similar outcomes.

*"It was a battle for teachers, because not only do we have to teach a lesson, but we were stuck trying to watch for those phones. And when we tried to take them, usually the kid would try to argue, so that was conflict in the class. To deal with that was an issue, to take the phones, to send them to the office, to worry about the liability of taking the kid's phone – all those things have gone away for us."*

So teachers and other school staff seem to support anti-distraction policies, but what about the kids? Manasseh Newton, a Cloudcroft eighth grader, said after initially being upset, he started to see quite a bit of changes in his peers.

*"When I was in sixth grade, this was like a year before they had Yondr Pouches, every period or so, especially boring ones, I would see kids on their phone or just hanging out in the bathroom trying to skip school," he said. "During lunch time [and] recess, a lot of people would just be staring at their phones and not really paying attention to anything else. And now we have conversations, and we communicate a bit more instead of staring at a phone for the entire lunch period."*

The district pays for a student's first Yondr pouch. But if it's damaged or tampered with, a student's parents must pay around \$30 to replace it, according to school officials.

Newton said that even though many people weren't on board with

Cloudcroft's policy initially, he feels that the impact on him and his peers has been mostly positive, and will do the same across the state's school districts.

*"I think a lot of people will be upset. I know I was, and a lot of my peers [were], but in the end, I ultimately think it can benefit us, especially because it'll keep us focusing on school a bit more," he said. "So not only are we paying more attention in school, but we're not staring at our phones and harming our eyes, and just doomscrolling, so to speak."*

And Principal Adams echoed Newton's sentiments that these policies are not popular at first, but that they become easier to enforce over time, and that it helps to get faculty buy-in.

*"They're very addicted to their cell phones and their devices in general. So at first there is going to be a struggle, it's going to be tough to start it. But I think as long as the administration and the teachers are both on the same page, and that everybody is aligned in the mentality of [the] zero tolerance policy, then that's the safest way to go. Otherwise, kids will take advantage of it."*

Adams said Cloudcroft Middle School caught students using their phones when they shouldn't have been only 12 times in the past year, and those instances weren't in the classroom – a significant improvement over past years.

As more states move to limit phone use in schools, New Mexico's classrooms are becoming a testing ground for how much policy can actually reshape student behavior and learning. Whether these restrictions mark a significant turning point is yet to be seen, but the next few years may reveal just how much difference a locked pouch can make.



*Fire training prepares for many scenarios. Photo courtesy of Andy Kitzman*

## Commitment in Action

*How Our Local Volunteer Firefighters Chased Training Across New Mexico this Fall*

By Hilary Kitzman

This fall, Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department members went the extra mile—literally—by attending leading fire service training events across New Mexico.

In September and October, volunteers loaded trucks for the 26th Annual NM Fire Service Conference in Ruidoso, the 12th Annual NM Fire and EMS Expo in Socorro, and the Emergency Management Symposium at Inn of the Mountain Gods, near recent wildfire sites.,

In a state as vast and unpredictable as New Mexico, where fires and disasters don't punch a clock, staying sharp isn't optional – it's paramount. And our volunteers show up, ready to soak in every lesson. We also help behind-the-scenes at

some of these events too!

The 26th Annual New Mexico Fire Service Conference, hosted by the New Mexico State Firefighters Association, convened fire service leaders and personnel for two days of intensive workshops and strategic discussions.

The event attracted hundreds of participants focused on advancing operational effectiveness with key sessions addressing wildland fire challenges, crew resource management, and fostering professionalism in a volunteer fire department.

The 12th Annual New Mexico Fire and EMS Expo was held in early October in Socorro. Sessions covered leadership improvements, as well as hands-on training of specific challenges to firefighting and EMS, such as flammable liquid fires and vehicle extrication as well as medical and trauma continuing education classes for EMTs. Dramatic live demonstrations were featured exhibiting advanced turnout gear and medical technologies.

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The month concluded with the New Mexico Emergency Management Symposium and Expo. Members from Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department spent the week assisting in setting up the event and helped to run it.

The symposium offered state-led pre-conference certifications followed by daily sessions on all-hazards planning, community resilience, and post-disaster recovery. The theme of this year's symposium focused on the future of emergency management, and invited in exciting conversations in incident communications, new technologies, and building resilient operations in turbulent times.

Set at the Inn of the Mountain Gods near the recent Salt and South Fork fires, the location was a stark reminder of shared vulnerabilities, and an inspiration for growth in emergency management throughout the state.

All three of these events represent more than accumulated continuing education credits. They reflect a deliberate, department-wide commitment to excellence despite logistical and financial constraints.

Volunteers sacrificed personal time, juggling day jobs and navigating long commutes. They returned with actionable knowledge



– new tactics, forged alliances, and renewed purpose.

In a volunteer fire service where retention hinges on tangible support and visible impact, such initiatives reinforce morale and operational readiness. The ripple effects are already evident with local trainings, reflecting some of the newly learned techniques on the road.

For the communities served by Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department, this fall's training marathon, translates to measurable safety. When the next emergency

call gets dispatched – whether for a structure fire at dawn or a wildland interface – residents can take confidence in a team that consistently goes above and beyond to be prepared.

For fire safety information, volunteer opportunities, or updates on CERT, contact the Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department at info@cloudcroftfd.com.

## Library Corner

*Checking in with Library Director Dr. Sandra Barr*

December hours at the Michael Nivison Public Library are to be determined. Dr. Barr announced at November's Village Council meeting that she will be recovering from surgery for the entire month. Follow the Village of Cloudcroft and Michael Nivison Public Library Facebook pages for timely updates.

November 17th, the village council approved Trustee Gail McCoy as the Library Aide, contingent upon Village Attorney Zach Cook's review for any conflict of interest.

Recently, the Old Red Brick Schoolhouse kitchen was newly remodeled. See for yourself at a library cookie-decorating event on December 19th, tentatively scheduled from 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Daily attendance is in the mid-to-high 20s, a steady stream for Cloudcroft's typically slower tourist season. As always, the library seeks volunteers to help with circulation, inventory, and events. Call (575) 682-1111 or e-mail ccvillagelibrary@cloudcroftvillage.com to get involved.

Dr. Barr is using the State GO Bond and has ordered more than \$1,200 in new books. Check them out soon.

Recently, the Old Red Brick Schoolhouse kitchen was newly remodeled. See for yourself at a library

cookie-decorating event on December 19th, tentatively scheduled from 2:00-5:00 p.m.

More upcoming events: Join the library on December 15th for an **Ugly Sweater Movie Night** from 4:00-6:00 p.m. for a projected movie with popcorn and hot cocoa provided. Storytime and Crafts with Paige will continue on Friday mornings at 10:30 a.m. throughout the month, until closer to the holidays.

## Cloudcroft Schools NM Vistas 24-25 Report Card

Cloudcroft Schools' latest report card shows students continue to perform at or above state averages, according to the recently released New Mexico Vistas data. For the 2024-25 academic year, Cloudcroft students reached 67% proficiency in reading, 42% in math, and 56% in science—results that mirror or slightly surpass New Mexico's statewide averages for these subjects.

When compared to larger Otero County districts, such as Alamogordo Public Schools, Cloudcroft maintains a lead in core academic areas. Area and demographic comparisons show similar or better results for Cloudcroft, despite the district's smaller and more rural student body. These numbers also remain steady in comparison to last year's results, aligning with statewide trends that saw a modest gain in reading, a slight decrease in math, and a small increase in science proficiency.

For families and community members interested in a deeper breakdown—such as school-specific achievement, graduation rates, and progress over time—full report cards and interactive data are available on the official NM Vistas website at nmvistas.org.

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## Local Guide

### What to Know

Discover the best of Cloudcroft with our monthly local guide — a handpicked selection of favorite places to shop, eat, and play in the mountains.

### Stocking Stuffers

Cloudcroft's shops have the best art, goodies, brands, and unique finds for your Christmas gift (or wish) list.

The Monthly's top pick for bespoke pantry goods and stocking stuffer shopping is **The Elk Shed** on Burro Avenue, owned and operated by Susan Difani.

Over a quarter of **The Elk Shed's** inventory consists of food goods, including gourmet offerings like tinned fish, salami, pasta kits, Thai kits, cake mixes, Santa Fe-sourced oils and vinegars, and more.

The Shed also carries clothing, jewelry, ornaments, locally au-

thored children's books, and beyond.

Susan says of the store's expansion, "We have nicknamed the two stores The Elk Shed "He Shed" and The Elk Shed "She Shed". You can still shop the original location for all your provisions such as gourmet foods, coffees, teas and cocktail mixers, goods such as books and finery with a greatly expanded Mens clothing and accessories area. Upstairs, the She Shed is all for the Ladies with clothing, jewelry, accessories and more! We're hard at work on renovations and aim to open on Black Friday, Nov. 28th - The Elk Shed's third anniversary."

### Local Lit

Louisiana native **Andrika Ruiz** now lives in the Land of Enchantment, where she and her family run Café Au Lait food truck, ride motorcycles with the Christian Motorcyclists Association, and An-

drika authors books about "real spiritual life, bringing spiritual concepts to the natural realm." Her newest creation is "The Sweetest Mess I've Ever Made," available on Amazon.com.

Local artist and teacher at Cloudcroft Schools, **Deborah O'Connor**, and her sweet woodland critters delight young readers. Pick up a story about Freddy Fox or Suzy Hen in stores around Cloudcroft, including the Elk Shed and Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy.

### Good Eats

**Cloudcroft Brewing Company and The Distillery:** A renovated former Forest Service tanker bay station for Wildland Fire Fighting engines offers indoor and outdoor seating in a family-friendly setting. Delicious wood-fired pizza, chips and salsa (and guacamole), soup-of-the-day, and salads complement CBC brews like the Railspike Red Ale or Trainwreck IPA and drafts

from New Mexican breweries. The Distillery side offers pizza by the slice, craft cocktails with in-house and NM spirits, and a grown-up atmosphere—21+. Chili or Frito Pie on Thursdays. Follow Cloudcroft Brewing Company on Facebook for live music schedules and updates. Closed Tuesdays. Open 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. the rest of the week—til 10:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

**Dusty Boots:** You might catch Cloudcroft's Mayor-Elect Dusty Wiley cooking breakfast at his namesake cafe. Homestyle breakfast, lunch, and dinner staples with southwestern flair—burgers, tacos, salads, and more. For breakfast, try the veggie-loaded Hiker's Boot omelette and western potatoes. Open 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, closes at 5:00 Sunday.

**Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop:** Traditional deli sandwiches, salads, soups, and soft-serve in the Burro Street Exchange. Photo op at the local-artist Cloudcroft mural in the outdoor patio. Indoor and outdoor seating. Get any sandwich as a salad, then a signature monster-sized cookie—#balance. Open 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. every day, closed Wednesdays.

**Old Barrel Tea Company:** Snag a fresh cuppa while stocking up on cooking spices and specialty blend loose-leaf teas. Rooibos, Green, Black, Pu-ehr, medicinal blends, and more. Tea supplies, bespoke tea sets, honey, and gifts. Open 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mon-Fri. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Sunday.

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## Stay Awhile

**Summit Inn:** Newly-renovated chic interiors, classic mountain exterior. Kitchenettes, family rooms, and continental breakfast are offered. A large outdoor area invites guests to relax by the fire pit or toss a burger on the provided grill. Book a room for one or reserve the three-room suite for the entire family at rates that won't break the bank.

**Cabins at Cloudcroft:** Step back in time and unwind at one of the few traditional cabin rental facilities left in Cloudcroft. The cabins are mostly original to the 1950s era when they were built. Full kitchens, proximity to the park, and a mom-and-pop feel set them apart. The cabins are dog-friendly.

**Dusty Boots Motel and Cafe:** Take a trip to Gilligan's Island, Hogwarts or Historic Route 66 in this quaintly-themed, family-run motel. Every detail is considered in the over-the-top rooms, from Lucille Ball's bedsheets to Harry Potter's Golden Snitch. Aside from the rooms, Dusty Boots provides everything to make your stay in the mountains memorable. Borrow a sled, rent an e-bike (seasonally) and enjoy homemade cooking at the on-site cafe. The kitchen is nut-free with gluten-free options available. Did we mention they serve beer now?

For more lodging options and videos, check out the Cloudcroft Reader Lodging series online at: <https://www.cloudcroftreader.com/p/cloudcroft-readers-lodging-guide>

## Four-Season Playground

**Disc Golf:** Check out Elevation Park for an 18-hole challenge that winds through high-elevation trees. Views of White Sands National Park, Sierra Blanca peaks, and mountain scenery make this course worth playing.

**Scenic Drive:** Head north to Ruidoso on Highway 244 for a slow-paced jaunt where you'll likely see deer, elk, horses, and turkey.

**Hike:** The Rim Trail offers various treks with several trailheads between Cloudcroft and Timberson. Stunning views.

## Give

**Kira's Angel Tree** brings cheer to children and seniors in the Sacramento Mountains. Learn more about the legacy project on page 29.

**Sacramento Camp** is accepting donations to help Tonya, the second largest horse in the Equine Facility. Tonya has carcinoma in her left eye, which requires surgery. Donate directly to the Sacramento Camp online at [sacramentocamp.org/donatefinancials/donate](http://sacramentocamp.org/donatefinancials/donate)

The VFD Cladcroft Sparkies are

fundraising for the emergency helipad. Donate online at [paypal.com/ncp/payment/UF5BCS5KAH-JVY](http://paypal.com/ncp/payment/UF5BCS5KAH-JVY)

Volunteer or give with **Thrive in Southern New Mexico**, which funds local non-profits and community programs. [letstrivenm.org](http://letstrivenm.org)



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## The Listings

Find What You Are Looking For. We'll Get You Started

Welcome to Cloudcroft, New Mexico — a mountain village with timeless charm and plenty to do.

Whether you're looking for a cozy cabin, a good meal, or ideas for a scenic day trip, this list is here to help you make the most of your visit.

Here you'll find local restaurants, lodging, shops, and services — everything you need to explore, relax, and enjoy your time in our beautiful mountain community.

### Eat/Drink

**Big Daddy's Diner** (1705 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 682-1224, [bigdaddysdinernm.com](http://bigdaddysdinernm.com)) Comfort food and desserts. Try the fried chicken basket. Open daily 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

**Black Bear Coffee** (200 Burro Ave., (575) 682-1239, [mybbcoffee.com](http://mybbcoffee.com)) Locally-roasted beans on the west end of Burro. Head upstairs for con-

versation nooks, enjoy the down-stairs gallery wall with rotating exhibition. Wednesday-Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Sunday 8:00-3:00.

**Brother-N-Law BBQ** (209 James Canyon Hwy, (215) 858-0400) Delicious smoked meats, baked potatoes, sandwiches, and fried okra. Don't skip the sauce. Open 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. every day but Thursday.

**Burro Street Bakery** (505 Burro Ave., (575) 682-2777) Sit awhile at this centrally-located joint. Pies, danishes, breakfast burritos, coffee, and more. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

**Cloud 9000 Coffee** (96 James Canyon Hwy) Quick breakfast—smoothies and handhelds. Coffee, tea, and lemonade, too. Outdoor seating only. 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, closed Mondays.

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

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

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

**Dusty Boots Cafe & Taco Cantina** (1317 James Canyon Hwy, 575) 601-2009) Laid back home cooking—burgers, tacos, salads, and more. For breakfast, try the veggie-loaded Hiker's Boot omelette and western potatoes. Open 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, closes at 5:00 Sunday.

**Eight the Cake Bakery** (506 Burro Ave., (575) 682-3088, [eightthecakekellc.com](http://eightthecakekellc.com)) Lovely custom cakes. Cupcakes, cinnamon rolls, and local art. Open Thursday-Monday from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

**Family Dollar** (309 James Canyon Hwy, (505) 532-2697, [familydollar.com](http://familydollar.com)) Get the essentials. Discount chain with groceries, toiletries, and home goods. Open 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. daily.

**Fernando's Burritos** (96 James Canyon Hwy) Best burrito, barbacoa, and burger in the village. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Outdoor seating only. Open 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. daily, closed Mondays.

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

**Higher Grounds** (300 Burro Ave., 575) 682-2127) Ice cream and milkshake counter next to Dave's Cafe. Hours vary.

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

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**1094 Blanca Vista**

Stunning mountain retreat on over half an acre with open living, chef's kitchen, luxe primary suite, finished basement, and amazing year-round views.

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**\$2,300,000**

#### HIGH ROLLS

**163 Karr Canyon Road**

126-acre mountain property backing national forest with big views, water rights, reservoir, apple barn, and endless development potential.

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**13 Hollywood Boulevard**

As-is mountain home with 3 bedrooms, 1 bath, and kitchen area. Needs TLC but offers plenty of potential; bring your ideas and make it your own.

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**1084 Woodlands Way**

One-year-new luxury home with open living, soaring ceilings, designer finishes, chef's kitchen, spa-like primary suite, and an oversized deck.

Cori Abel - (816) 896-2674



**\$395,000**

#### MAYHILL

**9 Serenity Street**

4 Bed/2 Bath on 2 acres in the New Mexico Skies Astronomy Enclave, backing national forest; a true stargazer's paradise.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



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#### MAYHILL

**1846 Rio Penasco**

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**102 Mexican Avenue**

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

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



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#### CLOUDCROFT

**29 Mystery Path**

1Bed/1 Bath cabin with rustic charm, fenced yard, covered deck, wood stove, and a bonus bunkhouse plus a spa-like soaking tub room with loft bed.

Rebekah Graham - (575) 921-5517



**\$320,000**

#### CLOUDCROFT

**1012 Maple Drive**

Updated cabin with new roof, plumbing, flooring, paint, and tankless water heater. Expanded deck and fully furnished with an acceptable offer.

Blake Bingham - (830) 496-1836



**\$298,000**

#### HIGH ROLLS

**59 Mountain Estates Road**

Over 4 acres with a mix of trees and open meadow. Year-round access and a well in place make it ideal for building your mountain home.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



**\$675,000**

#### TIMBERON

**1855 Sacramento Drive**

3 Bed/2 Bath modern retreat on 20 unrestricted acres with a large metal building, RV parking, horse-friendly setup, and a serene pond.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



**\$759,000**

#### MAYHILL

**2979 US Highway 82**

Rustic log-sided home on 6 acres backing forest with vaulted living, loft, primary suite, basement space, horse corrals, and a large workshop.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



**\$262,000**

#### CLOUDCROFT

**502 Phelps Circle**

Updated cabin with open living, new oak floors, granite kitchen, clawfoot-tub suite, solar panels, heated garage, and RV hookups with extra storage.

Blake Bingham - (830) 496-1836

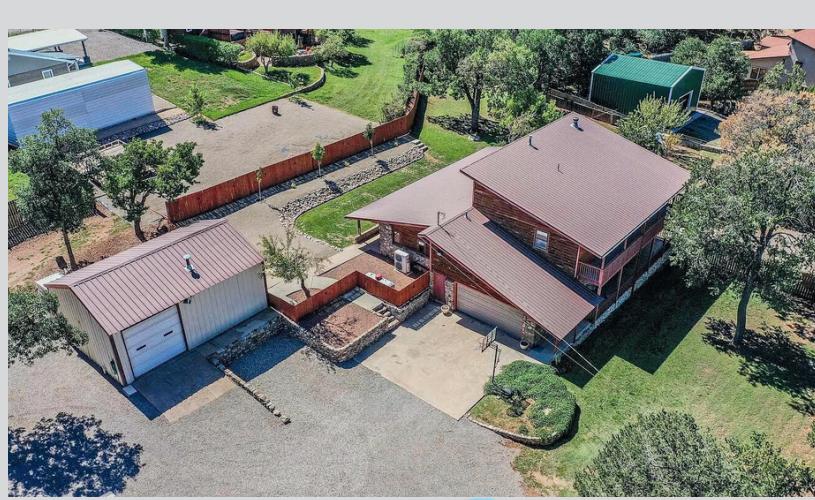


**\$675,000**

#### CLOUDCROFT

11 Maple Crest  
Spacious 3,000+ sq ft log-sided home with 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2 living areas, and drive-through garage on 1.3 acres by national forest.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



**\$549,900**

#### CLOUDCROFT

606 Fifth Street  
5BR/2BA village home with open kitchen/living/dining, large loft, ground-level entry, plus a workshop and detached 1-car garage.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



**\$343,000**

#### TIMBERON

4 Timber Drive  
Spacious 4BR/2.5BA home on 2+ acres with pellet stove, open kitchen, big deck, garden area, oversized heated garage, extra storage, and RV hookup.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444

**\$725,000**

## HIGH ROLLS

### 36 Old Railroad Drive

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

Cori Abel - (816) 896-2674

Emily Kellam - (575) 214-9479



**\$525,000**

#### HIGH ROLLS

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

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



**\$199,000**

#### TIMBERON

94 Pawhuska Drive  
Bright 2BR/1BA home on 0.5+ acres with open living, covered decks, RV carport with power, 2-car garage/workshop with stove, and Airbnb income potential.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



**\$299,000**

#### CLOUDCROFT

1313 Blanca Vista  
Charming cabin with wood-stove living, two bedrooms, walk-in shower, covered/open decks, hot tub, 2-car carport, and a heated 200 sq ft workshop.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



**\$600,000**

#### CLOUDCROFT

63 Sullivan Canyon Road  
Log home on 5 private acres bordering national forest with vaulted living, loft, wood stove, hardwood floors, generator, hot tub, and stunning canyon views.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



**\$789,000**

#### MAYHILL

67 Silver Fox Trail  
Stunning mountain retreat on 2 acres in a gated community, offering luxury, comfort, modern amenities, and beautiful mountain views.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



**\$295,000**

#### CLOUDCROFT

29 Trading Post Road  
Cozy cabin on three lots with main-level living, two upstairs bedrooms with private decks, and multiple outdoor spaces to enjoy year-round mountain views.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



**\$829,000**

#### MAYHILL

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

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



**\$204,000**

#### CLOUDCROFT

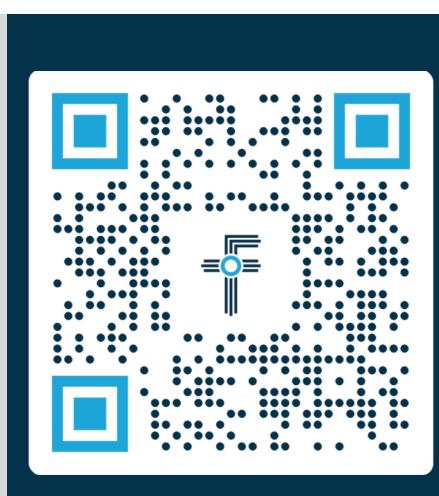
11 Center Road  
Charming single-wide on 0.31 acres featuring open living, a primary suite, two guest rooms, and a covered deck among the tall pines.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

Scan Here!



for more listings  
& property details



**\$230,000**

#### CLOUDCROFT

1207 Chautauqua Canyon Blvd.  
Inviting 3BR/2BA home with wood-stove living room, large kitchen, updated primary suite, covered deck, and a rare 2-car attached garage.

Debbie Tate - (575) 430-9511

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

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

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

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

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

**Cloudcroft Brewing Company** pizza by the slice. Open M, W, TH 4:00-9:00 p.m., Friday 4:00-10:00 p.m., Saturday 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m., and Sunday 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

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

## Lodging

**Burro St. Boarding House** (608 Burro Ave., (575) 682-3601) Rustic and artful digs near downtown. burrostreetboardinghouse.com

**Cabins at Cloudcroft** (1006 Coyote Ave., 575-682-2396) Retro casitas by the park. cabinsatcloudcroft.com

Crofting Inn (300 Swallow Pl.) Comfy B-and-B. Book on Expedia or Hotels.com

**Dusty Boots Motel** (1315 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 682-7736) Themed rooms with a restaurant next door. thedustyboots.com

**Grand Cloudcroft Hotel** (1207 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 601-2202) Relax in the indoor pool and spa. All king-sized beds. grandcloudcroft.com

**Osha Trail Lodging** (102 Mexican Ave., (575) 937-3767) Modern, conveniently-located suites. Book

on AirBnB or oshatraillodging@gmail.com

**SugarPines RV Park** (601 Columbine Blvd., (575) 682-3375) Easy access in the heart of the village. sugarpinesrvpark.com

**Summit Inn** (103 Chipmunk Ave., (575) 295-3235) Chic interiors, classic mountain exterior. summittinnnm.com

**The Lodge** (601 Corona Pl., (575) 682-2566) Historic beauty. Stay, eat, play. thelodgeresort.com

## Shopping

**Aspen and Ivy Boutique** (206 Burro Ave.) Bespoke goods, candles, plants, and local art. Open Thursday-Sunday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

**Base Camp 9K** (302 Burro Ave.) Teeny space with quality shirts, hats, and more. Open Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

**Burro Street Trading Post** (505 Burro Ave., (225) 253-2606) Rocks, gems, and original Southwest art and wear. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily. burrostreettradingpost.com

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

**Cloudcroft Souvenirs** (502 Burro Ave.) Southwestern tchotchkies and take-home memorabilia. Open Monday-Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.

**Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts** (94 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 682-6002) Requisite auto supplies. Open 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, Saturday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Closed Sunday.

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

6:00 p.m. on Saturday.

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

**The Fat Rabbit** (206 Burro Ave.) Silver and turquoise, plus. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.

**The Highland** (206 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 682-1041) Nambe, gifts, hunting supplies, licenses, and beyond. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. daily.

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

**Homee** (109 James Canyon Hwy) Everything for sale. Home rental services. Hours vary. inhomee.com

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

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

**Magnum's Guns II** (207 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-6677) Guns and ammo on James Canyon Highway. 1:00-4:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday to Friday from 12:00-5:00 p.m., Saturday 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. magnumsguns.com

**Mountain Magic** (506 Burro Ave. (575) 682-2348) Cludcroft shirts, woodland toys, baby gifts, natural goods, and more. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

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

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

**Red Wall Jewelry** (505 Burro Ave. 575-682-4414) Delicate and artisanal wares—great for gifts. Open

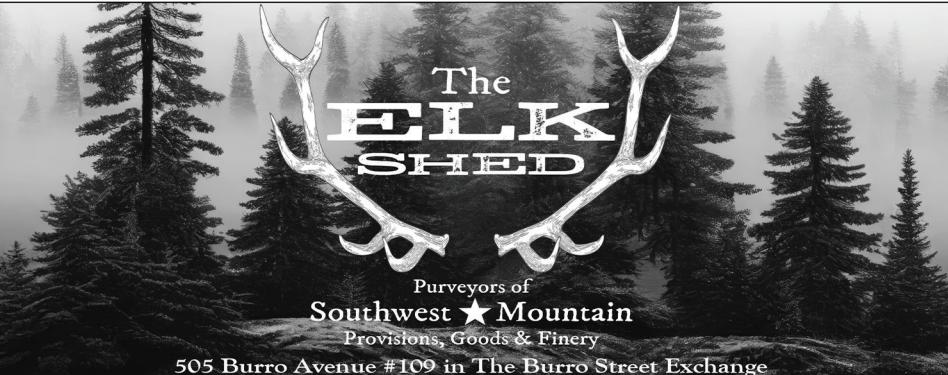
## THE CABINS AT CLOUDCROFT

*Close to everything but off of the main roads! Beautifully sited within the Village!*



**4, 2, and 1 Bedroom Cabins  
Fireplaces ~ Kitchens**

**575-682-2396  
www.cloudcroftnm.com**



## CLOUDCROFT BREWING COMPANY 1301 BURRO AVENUE • 575-682-BEER



10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

**Roots Flower Co.** (62 Curlew Pl. (575) 295-1644) High-end flowers and affordable prices. Bouquets of all sizes, event orders. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.

**Seasons Boutique Gift Shop** (601 Corona Pl. (575) 682-2566) Shop at the historic Lodge.

**Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy** (505 Burro Ave. (575) 682-2566) Goodies for all ages. Open M, Th, Fri, Sat 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., W 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sun 12:00-5:00 p.m.

**Tree Top Teez** (505 Burro Ave. (575) 430-5154) Custom silk-screen and embroidery shop. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

**Turquoise Shop** (507 Burro Ave. (575) 682-3327) Fine jewelry at every price point. Open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day, closed Sunday. [cloudcroftturquoise.com](http://cloudcroftturquoise.com)

## Art

**Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op Gallery** (90 Swallow Pl.) Artist-run rotating gallery. Open seasonal Saturdays 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and for holiday sales. [ccartsociety@gmail.com](mailto:ccartsociety@gmail.com)

**Off the Beaten Path** (100 Glorietta Ave. (575) 682-7284) Regional handmade art selection of all media. Open 10:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sunday. [offthebeatenpathstuff.com](http://offthebeatenpathstuff.com)

**Osha Trail Depot** (102 Mexican Ave. 575-551-2099) Local art, woodworking, and New-Mexican



## Art in the Wild

**Judy Siebenaler** brings the Christmas cheer to the village with her locally sourced, handcrafted garlands.

Judy "Garland," as she's called in November and December each year, Siebenaler is an active member of the Cloudcroft Art Society and continues to hone her earthy style of mixed-media printmaking, ceramics, and assemblage sculptures.

"In the 70s, I went to a vocational school in Minnesota. As part of learning all about landscaping, we

goods. Interested artists inquire: [oshatraildepot@gmail.com](mailto:oshatraildepot@gmail.com). Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. every day.

**Samantha Odom Art Gallery** (300 Burro Ave. (575) 649-9951) Original paintings and affordable prints by Samantha Odom. Open 11:00

a.m.-4:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

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

also did a robust Christmas greens business. That's where 'Judy Garland' was born."

Judy also worked for the National Forest Service in the Timber and Wildland Fire departments for the Sacramento Ranger District.

"The Forest Service is a great place to learn all the conifer species in this area. What makes my wreaths better is that there are at least four different varieties of conifer and deciduous in each wreath. They smell so yummy. Like Christmas," she says.

*Photo: Judy with a spray, photo by Crystal Tompkins Photography*

## Healing

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

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

**Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage** (404 Burro Ave.) Relax and recover upstairs at the OCEC building. Open by appointment at [cloudcrofttherapeuticmassage.com](http://cloudcrofttherapeuticmassage.com)

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

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

**Southwest Naturals CBD** (506 Burro Ave. (575) 682-6022) Range of CBD products, vitamins, and supplements in store. Open Monday 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Friday-Sunday 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

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



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NOW OPEN  
Monday, Wednesday,  
Friday 9-6  
Tuesday & Thursday  
9-3  
Saturdays by  
appointment



## Services

**Atelier Art of Hair by Anna** (505 Burro Ave. (415) 230-9506) Pamper your hair, style your photo-shoot. Available by appointment [vagaro.com/lacnb9/services](http://vagaro.com/lacnb9/services)

**Bhair Necessities** (202 Burro Ave. (575) 518-9011) Classic color, cuts, and products. Available by appointment.

**Cloudcroft Fitness** (90 Swallow Pl.) Get moving with a range of class offerings and instructors. [cloudcroftcycling.punchpass.com](http://cloudcroftcycling.punchpass.com)

**Cloudcroft Village Office** (201 Burro Ave.) Pay your water bill, attend village meetings, and more. [cloudcroftvillage.com](http://cloudcroftvillage.com)

**Cloudsoft Laundry To Go** (520-330-2613) Delivery service.

**Crystal Tompkins Photography** Family photos, headshots, business branding, soul sessions, and more. By appointment: [crystal-tompkinsphotography.com](http://crystal-tompkinsphotography.com)

**First National Bank** (301 Burro Ave. (575) 682-2531) Money on the mountain, outdoor ATM. Open 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday.

**Green Mountain Construction** (500 Burro Ave. (575) 551-2811) Local development. Open 8:00 a.m.-5:00

p.m. Monday-Friday. [greenmountainconstr.com](http://greenmountainconstr.com)

**High Valley Weaving School** (90 Swallow Pl. 575-921-1020) Modern courses in ancient fiber techniques. Class schedules: [highvalleyweavingschool.com](http://highvalleyweavingschool.com)

**Pre-School and Extended Care** (50 Chipmunk (575) 682-1264) Local childcare.

**Rick Roger's Auto & Equipment Repair** (72 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-3352) Gas and diesel mechanic services. Open Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00-5:00 p.m.

**Sacramento Mountain Senior Services** (212 Glorieta Ave. 575-682-3022) Cafeteria and social hub. [mtnseniors.org](http://mtnseniors.org)

**U.S. Post Office** (20 Curlew Pl. (800) 275-8777) Mail and passport services. Open 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, Saturday 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**1CAT Trap & Release Program** (100 Glorieta Ave. 575-682-7284) Non-profit feline care. Available by appointment.

## Play

**Cosmic Adventures** ([cosmicadventuresnm.com](http://cosmicadventuresnm.com)) Snow-mobile tours and more

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

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

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

**Pickleball Addicts of Cloudcroft** ([pickleballaddictsofcloudcroft.com](http://pickleballaddictsofcloudcroft.com)) Join them! Regular seasonal play at Zenith Park.

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

**The Lodge Golf Course** (703 Corona

Ave.) Scottish 9 in the clouds. Visit the pro shop for gear, snacks, and drinks.

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

## Visit Cloudcroft

**Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum and Pioneer Village** (1000 Hwy 82) Study the Sacramentos

**Sacramento Ranger District Forest Service Ranger Station** (4 Lost Lodge Rd.) Visit for maps and forest facts

**The Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce** (1001 James Canyon Hwy) Stop in to learn about local businesses and events

**Michael Nivison Public Library** (90 Swallow Pl.) Community hub for all ages

## Fill Up/EV Charge

**Allsups** (10 Curlew Pl) Gas, groceries, beer cave in the middle of Cloudcroft.

**High Rolls General Store** (845 U.S. 82) A little bit of everything.

**Mayhill Country Store** (3497 U.S. 82) Travel stop with souvenirs, food, and gas next door.

**Otero County Electric Co-op** (404 Burro Ave.) Shop Cloudcroft's downtown while your car charges.

## Day Trip

**Alameda Park Zoo** (35 minutes) Observe critters in the Southwest's oldest zoo. Educational programs, a playground, and summer camps available. [ci.alamogordo.nm.us/816/Alameda-Park-Zoo](http://ci.alamogordo.nm.us/816/Alameda-Park-Zoo)

**American Armed Forces Museum** (23 minutes) Archives, memorabilia, and memorial garden. Volunteers welcome. [americanarmedforcesmuseum.com](http://americanarmedforcesmuseum.com)

**Cadwallader Mountain Farms** (14 minutes) High-elevation orchards with scenic views and "u-pick" seasons. Find them on Facebook for updates.

**La Luz, NM** (24 minutes) Tularosa Basin settlement at the base of the Sacramento Mountains.

**Lincoln National Forest Scenic Byway** (Varies) Winding drives past basin views, mountain meadows, wildlife, and beyond. [fs.usda.gov/r03/lincoln/recreation/opportunities/scenic-drives](http://fs.usda.gov/r03/lincoln/recreation/opportunities/scenic-drives)

**Mayhill, NM** (23 minutes) Neighbors to the east.

**Museum of Space History** (30 minutes): Exhibits, education, memorials, playground, and theater. [nmspacemuseum.org](http://nmspacemuseum.org)

**Nichols Ranch and Orchards** (35 minutes) Seasonal harvests and events. [nicholsranchandorchards.com](http://nicholsranchandorchards.com)

**Oliver Lee Memorial State Park** (47 minutes) Desert camping, historic site, and hiking. [emnrd.nm.gov/spd/find-a-park/oliver-lee-memorial-state-park/](http://emnrd.nm.gov/spd/find-a-park/oliver-lee-memorial-state-park/)

**Sacramento, NM** (48 minutes) Mountain hamlet nestled in the Sacramentos.

**Silver Lake** (17 minutes) RV and tent camping, fishing, and more on the Mescalero Apache Reservation. [mescaleroapachetribe.com/parks-rec/silver-lake-official/](http://mescaleroapachetribe.com/parks-rec/silver-lake-official/)

**Sunspot Solar Observatory** (32 minutes) Unique solar observing facilities and telescopes, education, visitor's center, and breathtaking views. [sunspot.nmsu.edu](http://sunspot.nmsu.edu)

**Three Rivers Petroglyph Site** (59 minutes) One of the largest and most interesting rock art sites in the Southwest. [blm.gov/visit/three-rivers-petroglyph-site](http://blm.gov/visit/three-rivers-petroglyph-site)

**Timberon, NM** (55 minutes) Mountain community surrounded by gorgeous forest—gas up on your way, no station for miles. [timberon.org](http://timberon.org)

**Tularosa Basin Museum of History** (31 minutes) area history with a full research library, gift shop, and bookstore.

**Valley of Fires** (80 minutes) Lava park featuring trails, visitor center, picnic areas, and campsite hook-ups. [blm.gov/visit/valley-fires-recreation-area](http://blm.gov/visit/valley-fires-recreation-area)

**Weed, NM** (41 minutes) Mountain community, home of the Weed Bluegrass Festival. [weednm.org](http://weednm.org)

**White Sands National Park** (45 minutes) Otherworldly chalky dunes—pack sunscreen and water. [nps.gov/whsa/index.htm](http://nps.gov/whsa/index.htm)

## Church Directory

**Anglican Church of the Epiphany** (400 Chipmunk Ave.)

**Cloudcroft Church of Christ** (40 Swallow Pl.)

**Cloudcroft United Methodist Church** (50 Chipmunk Ave.)

**Community of Christ** (3081 U.S. 82, Mayhill)

**Mountain Bible Fellowship** (33 Haynes Canyon, High Rolls/Mountain Park)

**High Rolls Trinity Baptist Church** (#1 Railroad Dr.)

**Mayhill Baptist Church** (MM 35, U.S. 82)

**Mountain of the Lord Faith Fellowship** (6 Sawmill Trail)

**Sacred Heart Catholic Church** (205 James Canyon Hwy)

**Summit Christian Fellowship** (106 Burro Ave.)

**Weed Baptist Church** (25 Weed Rd.)

Have a business in Cloudcroft? Contact us at [hello@mountain-monthly.com](mailto:hello@mountain-monthly.com)

## Otero County Electric Co-op

After Hours Outage Assistance

1-800-548-4660

[www.ocec-inc.com](http://www.ocec-inc.com)



PO Box 227

Cloudcroft, NM 88317

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# Events: December 2025

Get Out Your Calendar and Mark Dates. Cludcroft is Happening

## Art

**Samantha Odom Art Gallery** on Burro hosts a special CHRISTmas Art Show with the opening Dec. 5th. Work will be on view through Jan. 19th.

**Black Bear Coffee Shop** hosts a Kids' Art Competition with winter themes—Winning entries in four age categories will be on the gallery wall by the downstairs coffee bar through the month of December.

## Community

**Ullr Fest** returns to the James Sewell Ice Rink on Saturday, December 13th at 7:00 p.m. Live music from the Broken Owls and a bonfire at Zenith Park.

The Cludcroft Village tree lighting is November 28th at 5:30 p.m. at the Otero County Electric Cooperative courtyard on Burro Avenue. The tree will remain up throughout the month of December.

Join the village Christmas parade and tree lighting on December 6th at 5:30 p.m. on Burro Avenue.

The inaugural **Cludcroft Ugly Sweater 5K and 1-mile walk** and Parks and Rec fundraiser starts December 6th at 4:00 p.m. at the Zenith Park Pavilion. Awards and cocoa at the finish, also at the Pavilion. (Race limited to 100 participants.)

**Kira's Angel Tree:** Sign up to help deliver gifts to children and seniors in Cludcroft, High Rolls, and surrounding communi ties. In memory of Kira Davis. Contact: [kangeltree@icloud.com](mailto:kangeltree@icloud.com) or call (575) 285-4205. Learn about the

legacy project on page 22.

Take a breather and gather at the **Mountain Moms** program at Summit Christian Fellowship on Wednesdays from 9:00-11:00 a.m. Wednesday, December 3rd: Kids Club Christmas Program at 5:30 p.m.

## Chamber of Commerce

**A Mountain Christmas Village: Immersive Christmas walk** at Zenith Park December 12th, 13th, 19th, and 20th starting at 5:00 p.m.—no matter the weather.

Chamber of Commerce **Toys for Tots Drive** now through December 18th.

Membership Drive: become a Chamber member at [coolcludcroft.com](http://coolcludcroft.com)

## Michael Nivison Public Library

Join the library on December 15th for an Ugly Sweater Movie Night from 4:00-6:00 p.m. for a projected movie with popcorn and hot cocoa provided.

Decorate and bake cookies in the newly-remodeled library kitchen in a festive atmosphere on December 19th from 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Special storytime with Santa: December 22nd 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Storytime and Crafts with Paige will continue Friday mornings at 10:30 a.m. throughout the month, until closer to the holidays.

## Cludcroft Schools

School Band Holiday Concert, Wednesday, December 3rd from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

**Mountain Top Basketball Tournament:** December 11th, 12th, and 13th at the CHS gym.

Winter break: December 22nd through January 6th—school resumes Wednesday, January 7th.

Board of Education Meeting: Tuesday, December 16th at 6:00 p.m. in the District Boardroom, 10 Swallow Place.

## Dark Skies

**Sunspot Solar Observatory:** December 22, 2025, through January 5, 2026, the Visitor Center and observatory grounds will be closed for the NMSU holiday break.

**Geminid Meteor Shower** will have up to 120 meteors per hour; slow, bright, often colorful. December 13-14th. Radiates from Gemini. View from a dark location after 8:00 p.m.

**December 4th Cold Supermoon Full Moon:** fully illuminated and slightly larger and bright due to proximity to Earth.

## Alamogordo

**City of Alamogordo Christmas Tree Lighting at Washington Park,** Friday, December 5th from 5:00-9:00 p.m. Free admission. Food and craft vendors, a “snow slide,” skating rink, cookies and cocoa, kid-friendly crafts, and a visit from Santa Claus.

**Kanopy Movie Matinees** at the Alamogordo Public Library: Located in the Southwest Room for a matinee showing of Kanopy films. Selections vary each week. Call the Reference Desk 575-439-4148, or check the library Facebook page, for the current schedule. December 4th, 11th, and 18th from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

## Flickinger Theatre

**Mariachi Chritmas** at the Flickinger—celebrate the holiday season with “cheery music and charming dance.” December 16th at 7:00 p.m.

## Otero Artspace

December 5th First Friday Art exhibit and reception of favorites from Member Collections.

Sunday, December 7th, 2:00 p.m.: Otero Arts reading series featuring Josh Wheeler.

December 13th art workshops: Children's acrylic pour workshop with Pennie Espiritu from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and ages 14-and-up workshop in drawing and watercolor from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

## Road Runner Food Bank

[rrfb.org](http://rrfb.org) for dates and locations. Mobile food bank: Sacramento Mountain Senior Center, High Rolls.



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## The Lodge

Christmas at the Lodge featuring starters and small bites, carvery, sides, sauces, and desserts. \$65 per adult, \$30 per child. Reservations required. (575) 682-2566

New Year's Eve "Disco Fever" featuring DJ Big Daddy at the Lodge. Dance, food, and music. Info: (575) 682-2566

## Cloudcroft Brewing Co. and The Distillery

Karaoke night every Monday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at the brewery side.

December 5th: Those Two Guys play live music from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

December 19th: Doso Dirtbags return from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

December 20th: Dynamic Duo plays on The Distillery side from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

## The Western Bar

Enjoy \$1.50 tacos—only served on Tuesdays.

## Noisy Water

## Winery

December 6th: Watch the village tree come to light from the Noisy Water patio on Burro while enjoying an adult hot cocoa or mulled wine. Kid's cocoa with whipped cream and marshmallows available. Bundle up! Tickets can be purchased at [noisewaterwinery.com](http://noisewaterwinery.com).

On December 13th, Noisy Water releases a new wine, the 2021 Re-fosco.

## Cloudcroft Light Opera Company (CLOC)

CLOC's annual Santa Land is back this year on November 29th and December 20th. Santa arrives at the Zenith Park Pavilion at 5:00 p.m.

## Sacramento Senior Center

Got talent? Show it off on from 10:30-11:15 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month.

Christmas Dinner December 19th. Centers closed for the holiday December 24-25th.

## Timberon

Senior Social night at the High Country Lounge and Grill every Tuesday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. with food, drinks, and "those classic songs that you love." Also on Tuesdays—\$2.00 tacos all day.

## Ruidoso

Oso Productions presents A 1940s Radio Christmas Carol, a nostalgic holiday show set during a live 1943 radio broadcast of Dickens' classic tale. Performances run December 12-14 and December 19-21, 2025, at ENMU-Ruidoso. Tickets are available at [osoproductionsruidoso.com](http://osoproductionsruidoso.com). One dollar from each ticket benefits the Scott Fitzgibbon Fine Arts Grant, supporting local students and artists.

## Michael Nivison Public Library

**575-682-1111**

Old Red Brick Schoolhouse at the corner of Swallow Place & Burro Avenue in Cloudcroft

**Monday through Friday 9:30 am – 4 pm**

**Saturday & Sunday - Closed**

Currently, we have only one librarian who will post a note on the door if she can't be in. Please call first if you are driving from afar!

*Is there anyone who would be willing to volunteer? It would be wonderful to be able to open the library for a few hours on Saturday. Call the Library!*

**STORY TIME: Fridays, 10:30-11:30 am**

*Call or stop by for more info & to learn about all your library has to offer!*

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# Mountain Life

Folks Caught on Camera Living Their Best Mountain Life



Contributing Editor **Drew Gaines** goes behind the scenes in 1899 at the Lodge with Chef **Richard Lepree** and his crew. Look for an exclusive video interview with Cladcroft Reader.



**Joseph Cueto**, one of Cladcroft's own, now works as the community relations manager for Exxon Mobil, which recently brought a new STEM lab to Cladcroft Schools.



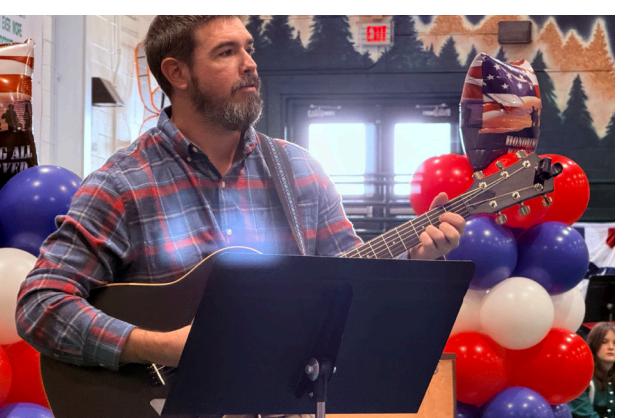
**Ellie Smith** hands out candy at the Halloween school parade on Burro Avenue.



**Lucas and Cassandra Saffle** volunteer at the Basketball season kick-off scrimmage, raffle, and auction fundraiser.



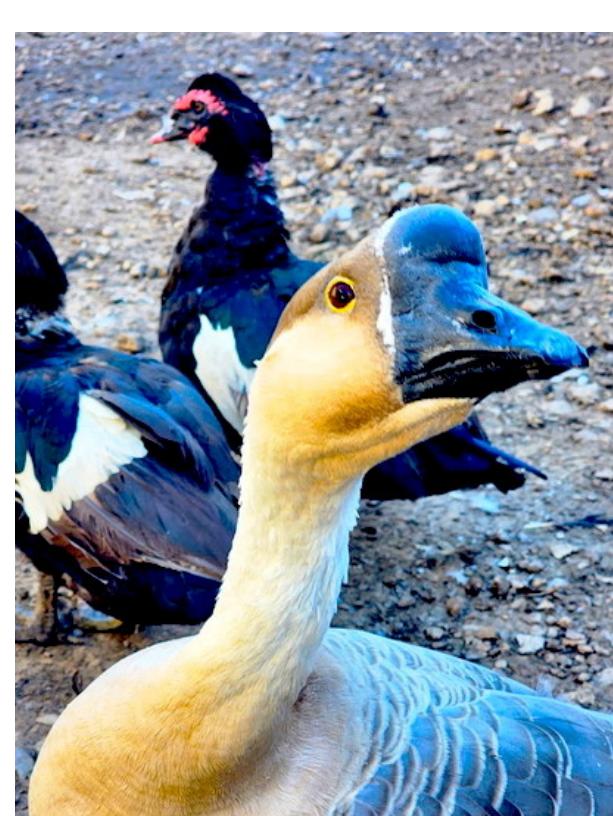
**Matt Willett** gets to work behind the dais minutes after he is appointed trustee



**Chase Shelton** strums the tune of Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" at the Veterans Day Assembly in the CHS gym.



**Julie and Paxton Bragg** (L) join Julie's dad, **Jim Maynard** (R), at the polls on Election Day.



**The Little J Ranch Round-Up:** Meet Duchess the goose and her duck friends, Kevin and Zoe Jane! Duchess came to Little J after another sanctuary had to close, and Kevin and Zoe Jane were rescued from a poultry hoarding situation. They now spend their days splashing, waddling, and soaking up the love they've always deserved.

# Spotlight

on people who make Cloudcroft special



Kira with her husband Daniel Hewitt and children Jackson, Jayden, and Korin.

## Enduring Spirit: The Legacy of Kira's Angel Tree

The Kira Angel Tree project is a growing tribute to the generosity of Kira Davis, who passed away unexpectedly in March 2022 at the age of 30. Founded by her family, the project ensures her tradition of community giving continues to uplift children and seniors across the Sacramento Mountains.

Kira was born and raised in the mountains, graduating from Cloudcroft High School. She was the only sister to her three brothers: Janscen, Chris, and Rylan. Kira loved being a stay-at-home mother to her three children: Jackson, Jayden, and Korin.

Her family remembers a woman with a strong personality, "awesome sense of humor," and love of music, the mountains, and community. She was six feet tall, enjoyed hunting, and had a passion for history, even working part-time at the Sacramento Mountain Historic Museum.

Kira's sister-in-law, Tabitha Davis, says she tells her nephew Jackson that his mother was so loved that at Kira's baby shower, over 100 folks came to Dave's cafe—and they ran out of food. Tabitha, Chris, sister-in-law Jenee, and the Davis Family now organize the Kira's Angel Tree non-profit in her memory.

### The Angel Tree Today

The Kira Angel Tree was established in 2022, inspired by Kira's volunteering with the First National Bank's angel tree program, which she participated in annually with her family.

"She instilled in her children the importance of giving back to the community," Tabitha says.

Today, the project has achieved significant milestones and expanded its reach. The organization is officially a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Growing Reach: It currently serves locals in Cloudcroft, High Rolls, Mayhill, and Timberon. The organization sponsored 53 children and 11 seniors last year, with a goal of sponsoring about 100 people annually.

Comprehensive Aid: While the main focus is ensuring children and seniors have a good Christmas, the organization also helps during emergencies, such as providing items after a house fire and donating approximately \$1,500 worth of baby clothes during flooding.

Gifts and Experiences: Organizers prioritize providing quality winter wear (jackets, shoes, pants, shirts) and toys. Each child typically receives around \$150 worth of items. They also aim to give families shared experiences, like movie tickets or passes to local attractions.

Operations & Privacy: The family maintains a private, careful process, interviewing each family to understand their needs (due to job loss, illness, etc.). To protect privacy, the Davis family members handle the deliveries.

Community Involvement: The gift-wrapping tradition continues as a major event, often bringing together 20 to 30 volunteers and sponsors. Many sponsors include locals, second-home owners in the mountains, and folks who want to support the mountain community from afar.

Looking Ahead: The nonprofit plans to expand its outreach to area nursing homes.

The Kira Angel Tree operates by allowing sponsors to either donate funds or receive an anonymous wish list to shop for participants.

Wish lists for this year are concluding, and financial donations are accepted year-round. Sponsorship announcements typically begin on October 1st. To register to receive aid this year, reach out by the first week of December.

Contact Tabitha Davis at (575) 285-4205 or

kangeltree@icloud.com for more information. Find Kira's Angel Tree on Facebook at [facebook.com/share/g/1BdJLHD1S8/](https://facebook.com/share/g/1BdJLHD1S8/) to get involved.

## Villager Conquers Local Trail Running Series

Martin Menzel, a Cloudcroft resident, husband, father, and Store Manager at High Altitude, just conquered a demanding local trail running series—topping it off with the grueling Cactus-to-Clouds (C2C) 50k Sky Race.

Martin didn't start out as a runner. "Not running, really," he admits.

But from June to October, he pushed himself through a series of high-altitude, technical mountain trails, beginning with an 8-miler and culminating in the C2C 50k—a race notorious for its nearly 9,000 feet of climbing and breathtaking southwestern mountain scenery.

Completing the 50k, Martin said the experience was "all positive" and he "had a blast." For him, it was about proving he could do "something really hard" and push his body. He wanted to show his wife, Ashley—who was "terrified the entire time"—that it could be done. Now, he's hooked on running.

The Menzels moved to Cloudcroft three years ago from Colorado, seeking a slower pace and closer ties to family. "Living here makes it super easy to take advantage of the trails," Martin says. "They're right out your back door." The move was also about being near his mother and sister after the birth of his daughter, Sawyer.

Martin's journey—from non-runner to 50k finisher—shows just how possible that is, right in his own backyard.



Martin Menzel finishes at 50k strong at Zenith Park. Photo: Lobo Photo NM



## Life in the Sacramento Mountains

with Lyn Canham

Greetings Mountain Monthly readers – we love December in the southern Sacramento Mountains, don't we? No promises, but we do have high hopes for snow – it looks so beautiful in the fir and pine forest, and we and our doggos love to romp in it. Many of us are skiers, sledders, or snowshoers and we love to play in it.

So, this brings me to the subject of water in the southern Sacramento Mountains. There isn't

much surface water "down here" to picnic next to, boat on, fish in, and this isn't news to any of us.

Yes, there are some sizeable ponds, even lakes, such as Silver Lake on the Mescalero Apache reservation and the stocked fish pond just south of it on private land in the Lincoln NF, that area residents and visitors love to use. It might be news to some readers that many ponds in the southern Sacramento and on private lands in the Lincoln have dried up; the springs that fed them have dried up. There are many less than "sixteen springs" now, or the 8 or so springs in our own canyon, Bell Canyon – we no longer have a spring and associated ponds, and several neighbors have lost their springs.

This is a fact right now, and could be related to climate predictions for the Southwest. It could be related to the increasing rarity of snow and rain "down here" too. So – we wait for January. Maybe our 'new' pattern is to get snows in January through March.

Please, just sometime.

Recently, I was in an area on the globe with ample moisture through much of October 2025 – Switzerland and northern (alpine) Italy. I was on a painting trip, a group of 15 of us painting on location ("plein air painting") through the

Swiss Alps and the famous, large Northern Italy lakes, specifically Lake Maggiore, Lake Lugano, and Lake Como. Yes, lots of (snow, ice) and water.

Last month, two of us local artists and an art historian (the latter, our Librarian, Sandra Barr), collaborated on talks for 'Cloudcroftians' with highlights of the history of watercolor painting, how to watercolor paint, and values of plein air painting, specifically using water media while traveling. The painting shown with this article was one of 8 or 9 I did while on this painting trip in Europe, and shows beautiful Lake Lugano early one Sunday morning; I used the water medium called Gouache. More on plein air painting (or simply "painting outside") and maybe more about this plein air trip and the gouache medium another time in these pages.

## Flavor Lab

Cloudcroft High School Culinary Program students take recipes from the classroom to your table.

Sophomore Parker Muncy spotlights this Green Pork Posole Recipe from a family friend.



Homemade tortillas made by the Cloudcroft culinary class, and a Green Chile Pork Posole

You'll need:

Can of Hominy  
1 1/2 lbs of Pork Chops  
1 Large Bueno Green Chili  
1 Bunch of Cilantro  
2 Tomatillos  
4-5 Bay Leaf  
Oregano  
Chicken Bullion  
Garlic  
Salt & Pepper  
Onion

Sear your pork a little at a time in a skillet with oil. Rinse the hominy well, place it in a pot with water, and add some chicken bullion to taste, a little at a time.

In a pot, add tomatillo, onion, garlic, oregano, and bay leaves till cooked, then add green chile and cilantro, and then blend until pure liquid. Pour into your pot of meat and hominy. Then let it simmer.

Served with cilantro, limes, onions, cabbage, radishes, and avocados.

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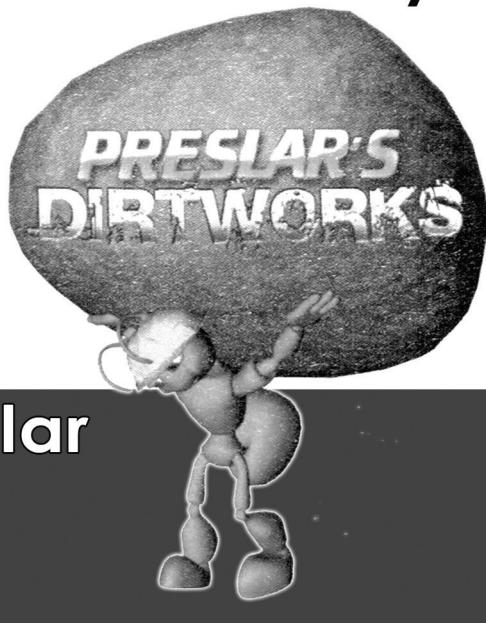
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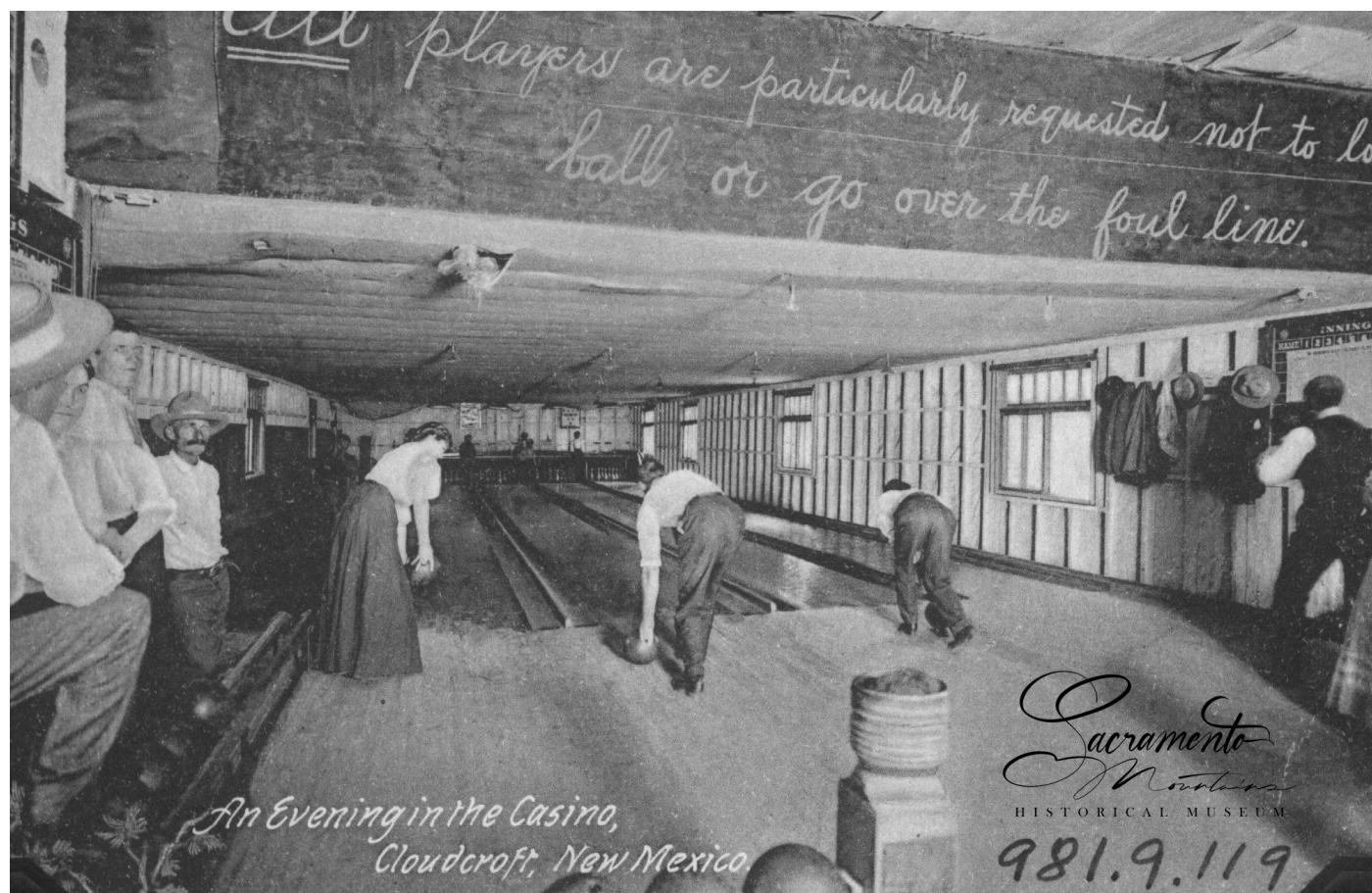
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## Travel down Memory Lanes: Cloudcroft's Bowling History

The first casino and bowling alley was built in 1902(ish) as entertainment for those staying at the Lodge (which was originally built between Mad Jacks and the Summit Inn.) The casino burned down in 1910, in the site that now belongs to New Village Hardware.

The current Pavilion is the 3rd version, the first one was built around the 1902 era when the Lodge and casino were built. It has burned twice and been rebuilt. The current version was built in 1923, and the Bowling alley was added to the south end at that time.

I worked there in the early 70s when I was 10 years old. Many of the towns' kids worked there as pin setters. We started out at \$0.15/game and eventually moved up to \$0.25/game with credit at the bowling alley of a \$1.00 a day for Cokes, candy, and chips.

*—Damon Marez, on behalf of the Sacramento Mountain Historical Society*

(Photos and stories from the Sacramento Mountain Historical Society)

## Scouting Around

This month, the focus for Cloudcroft's Scouts has been on serving and honoring the veterans of our community.

Troop 958 and Pack 958 are chartered by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 11999, and our Scouts regularly support their efforts through shared service projects and community events. On October 18th, Scouts joined forces with members of the VFW, as well as Scout parents and leaders, to take part in the semi-annual roadside cleanup along Highway 82. Working between mile markers 17 and 18 on the east side of the Village of Cloudcroft, the team filled and removed 17 bags of trash. This effort is part of an ongoing commitment to keeping our mountain community clean and scenic.

Both the Pack and Troop also took part in the Veterans Day Assembly at Cloudcroft Schools, performing the opening flag ceremony and posting the colors. The assembly gave students and community members the chance to recognize and thank local veterans for their service.

Later, Scouts continued the tradition of supporting the Annual VFW Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser, hosted by Post 11999. Scouts helped set

up for the event, waited tables, and served drinks.

Whether it's a roadside cleanup or a flag ceremony, service is one of the pillars of Scouting. We're proud to stand with the veterans of Cloudcroft and thankful for their continued support.

Want to learn more or get involved? We meet most Sundays at 4 PM at the Cloudcroft United Methodist Church. Contact us at [info@CloudcroftScouts.org](mailto:info@CloudcroftScouts.org)

*—By Greg Crinklaw*

## Top of the Class: Cloudcroft School Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Bears,

As we approach the end of the fall season and welcome the winter months, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible achievements and experiences we have shared as a school community. It has been a time filled with growth, learning, and connection, and I am truly grateful for the dedication and support of our students, staff, and families.

This fall, there were many outstanding accomplishments in academics, athletics, and activities. Our students continue to make academic growth, showing gains in reading and math and connecting to real-life learning through CTE programs and projects. Our students showed dedication in fall sports including Cheerleading, Football, Cross Country, and Volleyball, and we were proud to send our Cross Country runners to State this year! Our

Bears showcased their leadership at events such as the CTSO Fall Leadership Rally in Albuquerque and the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis, and engaged in meaningful community service projects including a moving Veteran's Day assembly, a successful Thanksgiving food drive, and our beloved Thanksgiving Luncheon. These achievements demonstrate the hard work and commitment of our educators, the enthusiasm of our students, and the unwavering support from our families. We are incredibly proud of every Bear!

As we transition into winter, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for your involvement in our school community. Your participation in events, whether through volunteering, attending meetings, or simply encouraging your children, has made a significant impact on our school environment. Together, we have fostered a sense of belonging and pride that enriches the educational experience for all.

I would like to invite you to join us for several exciting events happening in December. These gatherings are wonderful opportunities to connect with other families, celebrate our students' achievements, and embrace the spirit of the season. Please mark your calendars for the following events:

- 12/2: Dual Credit Information Night @ 5:15 pm, CHS Commons
- 12/3: Holiday Band and Music Concert @ 6:30 pm, CHS gym
- 12/9: Blood Drive, CHS Boardroom
- 12/10: High School Parent Teacher Conferences
- 12/11-13: Mountain Top Basketball Tournament
- 12/16: Board of Education meeting @ 6:00 pm, CHS Boardroom
- 12/19: Last day of school before winter break
- 12/22 - 1/6: Winter Break
- January 7: School resumes

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our schools. As always, I am available and would love to speak with you. Please reach out via email [jocelyne.gillespie@cmsbears.org](mailto:jocelyne.gillespie@cmsbears.org), phone 575-601-4416, or if you would like to stop by, make an appointment with our administrative secretary Grace White. I wish you all a joyful and peaceful December!

Go Bears!

*—Jocelyne Driscoll-Gillespie  
Superintendent  
Cloudcroft Municipal Schools*



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# Little Joe II Rocket Restoration Launches at NM Museum of Space History

Alamogordo, NM - The New Mexico Museum of Space History is thrilled to share that we're refurbishing the shining star of our Rocket Park, Little Joe II! This restoration will bring it back to its original glory. During this time, the Rocket Park and the nearby playground will be temporarily closed to the public to ensure the safety of everyone. However, this also presents a unique opportunity for our visitors to witness the meticulous restoration process, a privilege not many get to experience.

Received by the museum in 1985, Little Joe II is one of only two known surviving rockets of its kind. Standing 86 feet tall and weighing about 41,000 pounds, the rocket's corrugated aluminum body has endured decades of exposure to the desert environment. To preserve this historic artifact, restoration specialists from Blast Off, Inc. will work on it for up to 90 days.

Tested between 1963 and 1966 at White Sands Missile Range, Little Joe II played a crucial role in preparing for the Apollo program by testing the spacecraft's Launch Escape System (LES) and verifying the Command Module's parachute recovery system during abort scenarios. The solid-fueled rocket, powered by nine motors, launched "boilerplate" test spacecraft on trajectories that simulated Apollo-Saturn in-flight emergencies. During these simulated aborts, the LES successfully separated the Apollo Command Module from the booster, proving the escape system's effectiveness and paving the way for safe human spaceflight.

For those interested in seeing Little Joe II in action, archival launch footage is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGxZ3Jvzkmo&t=182s>.

Fun Fact: The name "Little Joe" was provided by NASA engineer and Mercury capsule designer Max Faget. He said the rocket's four large fins reminded him of the "Little Joe" roll in the dice game "craps." In craps, "Little Joe" is a hard 4 or two twos.

The Little Joe II's restoration ensures that future generations can continue to appreciate its vital role in the testing that made the Apollo program—and human lunar exploration—possible. The museum looks forward to welcoming visitors back to Rocket Park once the work is complete.

The New Mexico Museum of Space

History in Alamogordo is a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. A Smithsonian Affiliate, the museum showcases the significant role New Mexico has played in the development of the U.S. Space Program and features the International Space Hall of Fame, and New Horizons Dome Theater.

For more information, please contact the museum at (575) 437-2840 or visit our website at [www.nmspacemuseum.org](http://www.nmspacemuseum.org).

-- Olga Valanos, New Mexico Museum of Space History

## 15,000 Cookies Needed for 2025 Airmen Cookie Drive

HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. — The Holloman Spouses Organization is organizing the annual Airmen Cookie Drive. Their goal this year is to collect 15,000 cookies for the Airmen who live in the dorms at Holloman Air Force Base.

The effort is a way for the community to come together and show support for our Airmen, especially during the holiday season when many Airmen are unable to return home.

We invite the public to bake or buy a variety of cookies that will be distributed to the Airmen in the dorms on December 9th. Please avoid adding nuts for those who might have nut allergies.

Cookies can be dropped off at the Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce on Sunday, December 7 from 2-4 p.m. In addition, for those with base access, cookies can be delivered to the Holloman



Community Activities Center, 722 Idaho Ave., building 325, on Saturday, December 7th from 12 p.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday, December 8th from 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Prior to drop-off, please pre-package cookies of three cookies per bag.

For questions about the Cookie Drive and to volunteer to help collect cookies at the collection sites, please send an email to [Holloman-Cookies@gmail.com](mailto:Holloman-Cookies@gmail.com).

—Gaspar A. Cortez, SSgt, USAF

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# Faces & Places



(L-R) Max, Miyah, Matt, Cindy, and Ricky

## Running in Their Footsteps

The Preslars are deeply woven into our mountain's fabric through Cladcroft Runners, the nonprofit that transformed the area's approach to distance running events.

By Hannah Dean

On a warm November morning, Cindy sits down with me in their family home to talk running, life, and Cladcroft.

While we chat, Cindy's son, Ricky, rests by a window, looking out into the yard full of four big dogs—one of Cindy's, three belong to Ricky's brother Max. One golden retriever, a fluffy solar panel, stretches out on the sunny lawn overlooking the Preslar's mountain property outside of the village.

The bright walls—some yellow, red, blue—are covered in family photos, colorful art, and other evidence of a full life.

Beneath a sparkling display of sun-

catchers—a line of trophies and awards sits in the windowsill, each earned by the Preslar family, who share a love of long-distance running and the outdoors.

### Cladcroft Runners: A Legacy of Endurance and Community

Cindy Preslar launched Cladcroft Runners in 2014 to revive racing in the high-desert mountains and to fundraise for students who needed assistance.

For years, Cladcroft had been a ghost town for runners. The Rails-to-Trails race was gone. So was the Governor's "Highest 10k." Cindy wanted them back—she just didn't know how.

"I had no idea how to put races on," she admits. Enter Amy Collins, a Las Cruces connection with race-organizing experience. Together, they launched Run through the Clouds and Trails and Rails in 2014.

Cladcroft Runners evolved its offerings, at one time switching from the point-to-point Cactus to Clouds ultra to the in-town Cladcroft Ultra when busing fell through.

Beyond promoting running, the organization served the community.

Cindy and Matt organized the races for nonprofit purposes, donating money raised through the events to the Cladcroft Schools. Students volunteered for events that supported various organizations, including the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), Technology Student Association (TSA), athletic teams, cheerleaders, and Scouts.

The races also brought a significant economic boost to the town, putting heads in beds.

At 8,600+ feet, Cladcroft offers something rare: high-altitude training in a small-town setting.

Runners from Las Cruces, El Paso, and beyond returned year after year, filling hotels and restaurants. "I think we pack Cladcroft," Cindy says—and local business owners confirm it.

The Preslars recently transferred the Cladcroft races (Trails and Rails, Cladcroft Ultra, and Cactus to Clouds) over to Shane Asbury with Wanderlust Running, ensuring the tradition continues.

### Partners in Life and Running

Matt Preslar is a lifelong resident of Cladcroft. Cindy settled in Cladcroft in the late 1990s shortly after meeting Matt—the couple celebrated their 25th anniversary this year in March.

Cindy has been running since middle school, but became serious about it in college after taking an "Adventure Running" class in Connecticut. The longest race she's run is the 34-mile Canyon de Chelly Ultra with Matt—an exclusive experience after winning a lottery to run the race on Navajo land.

Cindy had a long career in education, teaching science, PE, and the fourth grade. Later, she worked as Cladcroft Schools' Social Media and Website Coordinator. She retired last year and is currently involved in real estate with Miyah Beug at Aspen Trails Real Estate. (Miyah is Max's girlfriend, and their pups, Cindy's granddogs, are some of the pack that greeted me as I drove up.)

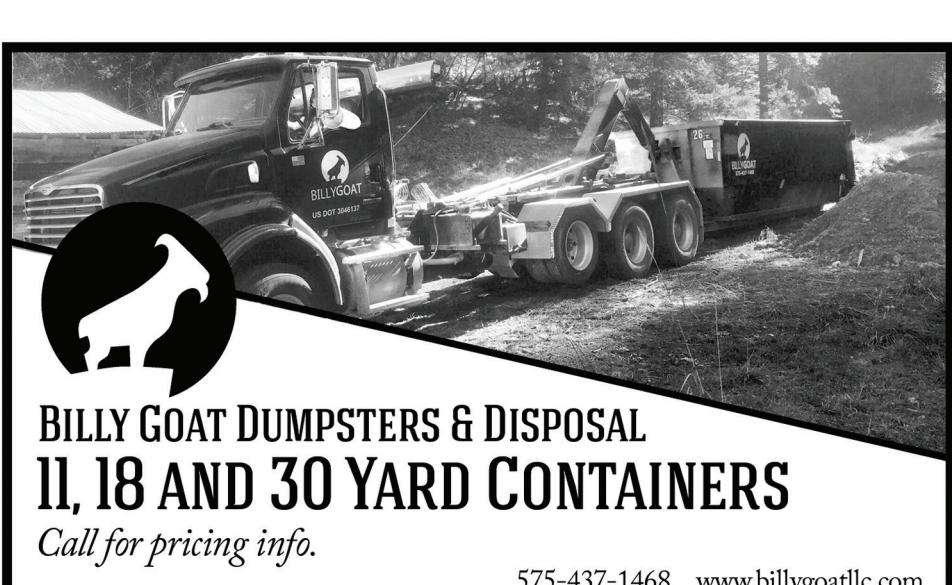
Her running and teaching career shaped her discipline and perspective. Cindy's routine is steady and practical: "almost daily, two to three miles, just to clear my head."

Matt's career path included selling firewood, being a hotshot, and working in real estate before he founded Preslars Dirt Works. He also coached cross-country at Cladcroft Schools.

Matt's most grueling race wasn't in New Mexico—it was the Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc, 100 miles through France, Switzerland, and Italy. Thirty-six hours of running. Cindy laughs: "He's much faster and



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more intense than I am."

Matt runs more miles in a year than Cindy does, often adopting a "weekend warrior" approach, where he will "crank out 10 [miles], no problem" sometimes after work.

#### The Next Generation: Max and Ricky

The Preslars raised their two sons in Cloudcroft, where "it's great. Everybody knows them."

Max, 22, started the 575 Tree Service business after deciding he wanted to make money selling firewood. He grew up familiar with chainsaws because his father sold firewood, and Max taught himself to climb trees on their property.

Max also has helped his family in the running community, even pushing his younger brother Ricky in his adaptive wheelchair during the Run through the Clouds road race one year.

Ricky, 19, attended the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Alamogordo. Cerebral palsy limits his mobility, but not his adventurousness. With the help of his family, he has completed two marathons and "at least five or six half marathons and then some shorter races."

He's skied at Ski Apache since age four, tried adaptive mountain biking, and now flies with his family in the plane Matt recently earned his pilot's license to operate.

The family has flown to Payson, the Grand Canyon, Taos for anniversaries. Sedona is next.

Cindy and Matt, together, have flown running culture in Cloudcroft to new heights.

Through their endurance running and deep connection to Cloudcroft's schools and community life, the Preslars have fostered an outdoor sports events culture in Cloudcroft.

The Preslars recently transferred their three races to Shane Asbury's Wanderlust Running. After a decade, it was time.

But Cindy still runs almost daily—two or three miles "just to clear my head." The routes wind past her house, through Cloudcroft's forest trails, sometimes in snow. Some are the same paths she mapped when she was pushing Ricky's stroller, dreaming of races that would bring runners back to the mountains.

That dream worked—now it's shared with Shane Asbury. And Cindy can keep running.



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