

# PINEWOOD NEWS

THE GOOD LIFE, COMMUNITY & MOUNTAIN LIVING SINCE '93

VOL. 32 NO. 1 JANUARY 10, 2025

FREE!

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 **PINEWOOD  
NEWS  
KIDS!**  
PAGE 17



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# PINEWOOD NEWS

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR & STORY TIPS!

The Pinewood News is always interested in feedback and/or story tips from our readers and welcome comments on any subject or article published.

The Pinewood News will attempt to publish letters received, except for those that are an invasion of privacy or libelous. Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Letters: PO Box 18977, Munds Park, AZ 86017  
email: Hello@ThePinewoodNews.com

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## THE PINEWOOD NEWS

Genna & Sandee Caviness, Editors & Publishers  
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PO Box 18977, Munds Park, AZ 86017  
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# COLDWELL BANKER NORTHLAND



**\$1,495,000 • 17612 E FAIRWAY DR**

Closed Restaurant with HUGE potential. Was an Italian restaurant opened during COVID and closed 11/9/2021. Sale price includes the land, building, all contents. The community really wants a good restaurant and this could be the one! Owner is a licensed real estate broker in the state of Arizona. Call Bill Spain, owner, 602-622-1196 for details. Owner may carry with a significant down-payment/scenario.



**SOLD**

**\$400,000  
95 E FOXBORO ROAD, 11**

In serene Coconino National Forest, this 1.73-acre lot in Foxboro Ranch Estates offers a blend of tranquility and luxury with exclusive clubhouse access and all utilities ready.



**SOLD**

**\$350,000  
259 E FOXBORO ROAD, 7**

Nestled in Coconino National Forest, this 2.24-acre lot in Foxboro Ranch Estates offers luxury with no build time, exclusive clubhouse access, and proximity to Sedona.



**SOLD**

**\$445,500  
17305 BIG SKY DR**

Turn-key 3-bed, 2-bath manufactured home in Munds Park. Fenced yard, carport, pellet stove, A/C, shed, apple trees, perennial flowers, and flagstone patio. All appliances included.



**SOLD**

**\$299,500  
125 E OAK DR**

Updated home with new flooring, granite countertops, wood-burning stove, vaulted ceiling, split bedrooms, covered deck, storage shed, carport, and more..



**SOLD**

**\$391,900  
17220 MESCALERO DR**

Updated 2-bedroom, 2-bath home, fully furnished with modern appliances, jacuzzi, RV parking, UTV storage, deck, and automatic drip system.



**REDUCED!**

**\$549,000  
260 SANDIA CIR**

Enchanting cabin nestled among pines, fully furnished with new TV, light fixtures, Trex deck, Ring cameras, and WiFi locks. Enjoy al fresco dining under the stars. A cozy, modern retreat.



**SOLD**

**\$575,000  
635 E OAK DR**

2017 Cavco home with 2,234 sq ft, 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, and 4-car garage. Situated on 2 lots, a redwood deck, and a natural stream, this move-in ready home offers privacy and outdoor space.



**\$288,000**

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



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Becky@flagstaffrealestate.com



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# A QUIET RESOLUTION

## *Munds Park's Gentle Guardian Inspires a Kind 2025*

Every community has its quiet heroes—people whose kindness creates ripples that spread further than they'll ever know. Here in Munds Park, we are fortunate to have one such person. Over the years, whispers of his good works have traveled from neighbor to neighbor, stories of quiet compassion and thoughtful gestures painting a picture of a man with a heart as big as the pines that surround us.

We spoke to many in the community who have been touched by his care—neighbors and friends alike, each sharing their own story of gratitude. When we reached out to nominate him as Person of the Year, he politely declined. He explained that he didn't help for recognition; his work was not about seeking attention. He simply wanted to assist whenever and wherever needed.

But a story like this deserves to be told. So we're honoring his request for anonymity while celebrating the goodness he brings to this community. And we've given him a name that suits him well: The Gentle Guardian.

You might not know him, but chances are you've seen or heard of his kindness.

Perhaps you've heard of a driveway that was buried under a thick blanket of snow, mysteriously cleared as if by magic. Maybe that driveway belonged to someone recovering from surgery, an older neighbor who has difficulty navigating the slippery paths and a heavy shovel, or someone too overwhelmed to ask for help. His silent act of kindness leaves behind no calling card, only the thoughtful gift of a clear path.

If you've ever lost a beloved pet, you may have found a small, unexpected memento—perhaps a unique piece of art honoring your dog or cat—that arrived just when you needed it most. He understands that grief often defies words, so he offers something more: a quiet reminder that love endures.

When cars get stuck in the snow, The Gentle Guardian appears with shovels and patience. When children need watching, he's there with a steady hand and a kind heart. When fire alarms chirp for new batteries, when mice need to be tossed out of cabins, when boxes are too heavy to lift—he shows up, quietly, in the right place at the right time.

Those who know him try to repay him, slipping cookies, pies, or warm meals into his hands. It's the only way they can say thank you, because he refuses to take payment. A hot meal is his idea of "fair trade," though even that feels like more than he expects.

What makes The Gentle Guardian so remarkable is not just the work he does but how he does it—with humility, with no strings attached, and always without fanfare. He has a way of seeing the needs others might miss and stepping in without being asked.

The people he's helped will tell you: his heart is large, and his goodness is genuine. He's the kind of neighbor we all hope to have, the kind of person who makes a community feel like home.

Though he would prefer to remain in the background, we couldn't let his story go untold. We share it not to spotlight him, but to celebrate the example he sets for us all. He reminds us of the power of quiet acts of kindness—a reminder of the impact we can all have.

With the new year upon us, I hope we take inspiration from his example, finding ways to extend small gestures of kindness each day. Whether it's a thoughtful nod, a hand when needed, or a listening ear, these moments build the foundation of our community.

Our wish for Munds Park this New Year is simple: that we continue to support and uplift each other, finding joy in the shared connections of our small but strong community. May we step into the new year ready to offer kindness, not just in response to grand challenges, but in the quiet moments that truly define us.

Here's to a 2025 that is peaceful and kind, enriched by the good we do together. May the New Year bring you all the very best in health, happiness, and prosperity. Thank you for being a part of our community's story.

*Genna & Sandee Caviness*





# RE/MAX®

## Fine Properties



**\$224,500**

### 17375 CRYSTAL BROOK PL

This lot is a hidden gem secluded from the road. A long driveway that opens to an extra large lot with beautiful oak trees surrounding the perimeter. Lot is fairly flat.

**CALL DEBI BRIGHT**



**\$525,000**

### 660 TROUT CREEK RD

Escape to this cozy two-bedroom, two-bathroom cabin in Munds Park. With a rustic brick fireplace in the open living area, it's perfect for relaxing nights in. Outside, a spacious deck surrounded by pine trees offers a peaceful retreat. A large shed provides storage, and the lot has room to add a garage. Recent upgrades include a new roof and updated windows, ensuring durability and energy efficiency. Fully furnished and move-in ready, it's an ideal retreat.

**CALL ELIZABETH HAUSMAN**



**\$769,000**

### 1325 E JAGUAR LANE

Large concrete drive leads to an oversized single-car garage. Sit on the covered deck and enjoy the grass. Open the front door to a huge living room, dining room, and kitchen. Woodburning stove. Kitchen is all electric with an extra-large island. Back door leads to the shed. Down the hall to the primary bedroom with its own bath. Another primary bedroom with its own bath and a bedroom with walk-in closet. Upstairs addition with its own balcony. Family room is large enough for a pool table and seating. Up two steps to the sleeping area and a half bath. Plenty of parking. Oversized lot with trees.

**CALL DEBI BRIGHT**



**\$409,000**

### 265 E FAIRLANE ROAD

Charming 3-bed, 2-bath 1991 Cavco home on two lots. Upgrades include a renovated kitchen with new cabinets, countertops, and appliances, along with upgraded baths, new windows, and fresh paint. Exterior features a pergola, fenced yard, sheds, and covered porches on both sides. The yard is beautifully landscaped with artificial grass, trees, and pavers. Additional improvements include a new hot water heater, updated plumbing, and an A/C unit in one shed. Ready to move in!

**CALL DEBI BRIGHT**



**\$699,900**

### 1385 BIG BEAR TRAIL

Fully furnished and tastefully decorated, this turn-key chalet in the desirable "Animal Hill" area offers 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and a large bonus room. The cozy living space features a stone fireplace, rustic wood banisters, and knotty pine doors, adding mountain charm. The kitchen boasts wood cabinets, stainless appliances, and ample space for cooking. The large upstairs bonus room is perfect for a bunk room, office, or game room. Just bring your essentials and enjoy your mountain retreat!

**CALL ELIZABETH HAUSMAN**



**\$229,000**

### 405 E OAK DRIVE

This is a two bedroom, 1.5 bath with brand new carpet, newer dishwasher and garbage disposal. Also a newer roof. All electric split floor plan, open kitchen. Property is ready for your occupancy. Covered and exposed front deck for those cool summer days. Carport with an entrance right into the utility room. A couple of sheds off the backside..

**CALL DEBI BRIGHT**



**\$419,000**

### 17060 S PENGUIN

Meticulously cared for 3-bedroom, 2-bath home with a large front porch, extended by 3 feet, and a walkway porch leading to a covered back porch. Features include a large shed, fenced backyard, new flooring in the kitchen, hall, dining, and living rooms, and an extra-large lot. The airy primary bedroom has two closets, and the spacious bath offers dual sinks, a soaking tub, and a separate shower. Plenty of space for additional sheds or a garage.

**CALL DEBI BRIGHT**

## RE/MAX Pinewood

15 W Pinewood Blvd  
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Munds Park, AZ 86017



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# LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

Pinewood News reshapes selected stories to bring our audience the most relevant news.  
All original reporting sources are credited.



**AA Meetings - Feel Better!**  
Munds Park Community Church  
Every Monday, 6 pm  
17670 S Munds Ranch Rd

**Munds Park Community Church Services**  
Services Sunday, 10:45 am  
17670 S Munds Ranch Rd

**Pinewood Fire Department Auxiliary meeting**  
The Community is Welcome!  
Tuesday, February 4  
6:30 pm • 475 E Pinewood Blvd

**Pinewood Fire District Board Meeting**  
Public Welcome  
Tuesday, January 21  
3 pm • 475 E Pinewood Blvd

**Pinewood Sanitary District Board Meeting**  
Public Welcome  
Thursday, February 13  
3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr

**Munds Park Town Hall**

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

Next Meeting May 15, 2025  
Pinewood Country Club

## COCONINO COUNTY SECURES FUTURE OF OPEN SPACES WITH STRATEGIC REZONING



Parcels Rezoned at Rogers Lake, Highlighted in Turquoise



10 Parcels in Kachina Village Rezoned, Marked in Turquoise

In a major win for nature lovers and conservationists, the Coconino County Board of Supervisors green-lit the rezoning of twelve parcels of land during their special session on Tuesday, December 10. This decision transforms over 2,400 acres into protected open space, securing a future for outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation. The rezoned areas, predominantly around Rogers Lake, are now safeguarded under the management of the Parks and Recreation Department.

These parcels, including some in Kachina Village, link to existing trails and natural spaces or are located in flood-prone areas, making them poor fits for development but perfect for preservation. This strategic move aligns seamlessly with the County's Comprehensive Plan, which champions the conservation of open spaces for the well-being and enjoyment of the community and its visitors.

With this unanimous vote, the Board has reaffirmed its dedication to maintaining and expanding the county's green spaces, ensuring that local wildlife and natural landscapes thrive for generations to come. The rezoning is effective immediately, following a robust year of planning and public input.

Source: Stephen Pelligrini, Coconino County Senior Communications Manager

Local Highlights Continued on page 9

## SNOW REMOVAL SERVICES

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

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9AM -4 PM t · 3201 N. Main St., Prescott Valley, AZ

Admission: \$5.00 (cash only)



## SOUP'ER BOWL 2025

Join us at the heart of Munds Park for a delightful soup competition that's **open to everyone!** Bring your favorite homemade soup along with the recipe, or simply come ready to taste and help judge the best soups in town. There will be prizes, but the real treat will be the fun and fellowship around the table.

This event is **FREE** for the community! Come hungry!

**Saturday February 8, 2pm**  
Munds Park Community Church

Please RSVP  
928-286-2022

### GOT AN EXCITING EVENT?

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# LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from page 7

## NEW IN 2025: I-17 FLEX LANES: A NEW ERA IN TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Arizona is gearing up for a significant enhancement on I-17 with the introduction of ‘flex lanes,’ a dynamic solution tailored to optimize traffic flow on one of the state’s busiest highways. Slated for activation in 2025, these lanes are not just a development project; they’re a shift towards smarter, safer, and more adaptable road travel.

### Smart Lanes for Smarter Travel

The stretch between Black Canyon City and Sunset Point, often a bottleneck, will see the introduction of these flexible lanes that can change direction based on the traffic’s needs. From Monday through Saturday, the lanes will primarily cater to northbound traffic, shifting to southbound on Sundays. This flexibility ensures a smoother drive during various travel peaks throughout the week, responding in real-time to the natural ebbs and flows of road use.

### Prioritizing Safety with Innovation

Safety takes the front seat in this innovative project. The flex lanes are equipped with state-of-the-art safety features including automated swinging arm gates and a robust Vehicle Arresting Barrier system. These are designed to prevent wrong-way driving mishaps and to control traffic flow effectively.

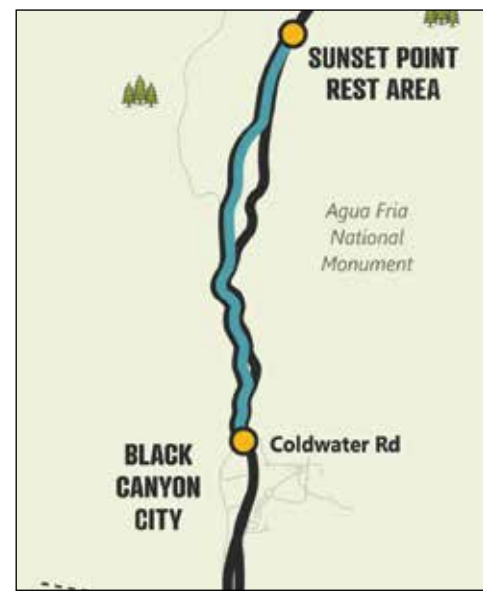
Additionally, a solid concrete barrier will separate the flex lanes from traditional southbound lanes, enhancing the structural integrity and safety of the roadway. Emergency access is also a key component, with steel gates integrated into the design, providing crucial entry points for first responders.

### High-Tech Traffic Control

To manage this new system efficiently, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) will employ cutting-edge technology. Dynamic Messaging Signs (DMS) will inform drivers of lane directions, ensuring clarity and preventing confusion. Moreover, a network of cameras will allow traffic controllers to monitor the situation from afar, adjusting barriers and gates as needed to respond to live traffic conditions.

This forward-thinking approach promises not only to alleviate congestion but also to pioneer a new standard in traffic management, making Arizona’s roads safer and more navigable for everyone. With the flex lanes project, ADOT isn’t just changing lanes; it’s paving the way for future innovations in highway travel.

*This article draws on reporting from ADOT.*





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# LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from page 9

## PERSISTENT DRY SPELL HITS ARIZONA

Arizona is experiencing an unusually warm and dry start to the year, with temperatures soaring and scarce precipitation. Phoenix is in the midst of one of its longest dry spells, now over 132 days without rain. Flagstaff, typically blanketed in snow by now, has received a mere 2.7 inches compared to an average of 28.9 inches.

Meteorologists link this dry pattern to a stubborn high-pressure ridge combined with La Niña effects, leading to warmer, drier conditions across the Southwest. With little relief in sight, the dry conditions are expected to continue, raising concerns about water scarcity and wildfire risks.

## Heightened Fire Danger in Coconino National Forest

Responding to the dry conditions, the Coconino National Forest and the City of Flagstaff have declared a “high” fire danger level. Despite the serious warning, no specific restrictions have been enforced yet, but authorities are urging the public to exercise caution.

## Important Notice for Munds Park Short-Term Rentals

Given the elevated fire risk, it’s imperative for those managing short-term rentals in Munds Park to educate their guests about the current conditions. Ensuring that visitors are aware of the risks and necessary precautions is crucial in preventing potential wildfires in this vulnerable region.

Source: Hayleigh Evans for azcentral.com.

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## NEW QUIET ON THE HORIZON: COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS TO CEASE OVER CANYON DE CHELLY

Canyon de Chelly will become latest national park unit to ban commercial air tours. In a move hailed by conservationists and the local Navajo community, the skies above this historic site will soon be free from commercial aircraft, ensuring the silence that complements its sacred atmosphere.

Canyon de Chelly isn’t just another national park—it’s wholly owned by the Navajo Tribal Trust and has been continuously inhabited for thousands of years. The canyon is alive with history, from ancient architecture and artifacts to rock imagery that tells stories of the past. It’s a place where the Navajo people maintain a deep spiritual and historical connection, managed in partnership with the National Park Service.

The upcoming flight ban is part of a larger initiative to reduce noise pollution across America’s national parks, preserving the natural acoustic environment. This ensures that future visitors can enjoy the sounds of rustling leaves and distant bird calls, uninterrupted by the modern world.

For those living in or near Munds Park, a trip to Canyon de Chelly is a manageable four-hour drive, making it a perfect weekend getaway. Visitors can immerse themselves in the tranquility of the landscape and delve into the rich cultural heritage preserved so meticulously within the canyon walls.

This is more than just a policy change—it’s a commitment to preserving the quiet majesty of Canyon de Chelly for generations to come.

Source: The National Parks Travelor

# ARIZONA TACKLES WILDFIRE INSURANCE CRUNCH

The Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions (DIFI) has launched an innovative initiative to tackle the growing challenge of homeowners insurance. The Resiliency and Mitigation Council, led by DIFI Director Barbara D. Richardson, is set to explore the pressing issues of insurance availability and affordability, particularly in wildfire-prone areas like forested regions and the wildland-urban interface.

The need for this council stems from the hardships many Arizona residents face in securing home insurance due to the heightened risks of wildfires. The council aims to devise strategies that will enhance the state’s resilience against these natural disasters, potentially stabilizing insurance prices for all. By year’s end, they plan to draft a report detailing solutions to bolster insurance accessibility and make housing safer against fire threats.

The council’s membership includes key figures from various sectors:

- **Government Leaders:** Including DIFI’s own Director Barbara Richardson and Thomas Torres from the Department of Forestry and Fire Management.
- **Local Authorities:** Such as Tom Savage from the League of Arizona Cities and Towns and county representatives like Carmine DeBonis.
- **Insurance and Safety Experts:** Terri Edwards represents independent insurance agents, while Laura Curtis and Michael Newman bring perspectives from the property insurance and home safety industries, respectively.
- **Emergency Services:** With input from fire chiefs like Jake Rhoades and Randy Chevalier.

Director Richardson is optimistic about the council’s potential impact on reducing the financial burdens from high premiums and increasing community resilience.

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# TRAVEL

## SAVORING TRADITION: MY UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE AT THE WORLD'S LARGEST MATANZA



Sun rises over Eagle Field as Matanzos prepare for the day



Hatch green chiles roast at Matanza in Belen, NM



The first of three bands, Twist & Shout, a Beatles tribute

*By Unstoppable Stacey Wittig*

I'm always ready to jump at unusual experiences in the most unlikely settings, especially when they involve food. So when Mary Ann, a New Mexico winemaker's wife, suggested I return to Belen for The World's Largest Matanza during an interview for a wine article, I said, "Sure thing!"

My immediate follow-up question was, "What is Matanza?"

### What is Matanza?

Mary Ann explained that Matanza is a tradition rooted in community pig slaughter. In the past, New Mexican pigs were so large that a single family couldn't consume the entire animal. The whole community would gather to celebrate the slaughter, which is what "matanza" means, and participate in the lengthy process, turning a cumbersome task into a festive event.

The tradition of Matanza originated in early Spain, where communities held festivals to slaughter animals and cook them for all to enjoy. Spanish explorers brought this custom to the New World in the 1500s. Today, you can experience this little-known tradition every year near the end of January in Belen—literally "Bethlehem" in Spanish—New Mexico.

Cynthia Martin, a New Mexico cultural researcher, elaborates: "A traditional matanza is a family and community-gathering event, with friends and neighbors helping in the labor-intensive job of processing a large pig, goat or sheep. Taking at least an entire day, the process goes from slaughtering the animal and butchering the meat to cooking the various meat products and preparing what is left for distribution and storage. Of course, all those helpers also need to be fed, so the women in the family plan and prepare large amounts of food for the event."

### The New Mexico Food Scene

Nowhere are green chilies and pork more closely related than in this dusty part of the Southwest. We're only 150 miles north of Hatch, New Mexico, home of the infamous Hatch green chiles and 33 miles south of Albuquerque, where Gruet sparkling has won San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition awards for the past decade.

The enchanting food culture of green chiles, blue corn tortillas, and dried chiles hanging from porches pairs beautifully with New Mexican wines. These wines are crafted from grapes grown along the Rio Grande since 1649, making this region the oldest wine area in the United States.

*Continued on page 22*



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# SHAKEN & STIRRED IN PINewood

## The Cocktail Connoisseur's Corner

### ARIZONA'S FIRST VINTNER THE RISE & FALL OF HENRY SCHUERMAN'S WINERY

In the rugged heart of northern Arizona, where Oak Creek cuts through red rock canyons and cool winds sweep down from the high desert, a German immigrant named Henry Schuerman saw opportunity where others saw only wilderness. It was the 1880s, and settlers in the Verde Valley were scratching a life out of the arid soil. But Henry—sharp-eyed, hardworking, and perhaps a touch stubborn—noticed something curious: wild grapes grew along the banks of Oak Creek.

Henry had fled Germany, dodging service in the Kaiser's army. He passed through Canada and eventually settled in Prescott around 1884, where fate handed him a peculiar deal—160 acres of land along Oak Creek, payment for a \$400 debt. Initially, he hoped to turn a quick profit, but when the land wouldn't sell, he and his wife, Dorette, got to work. They planted apple orchards, built a homestead, and then—76 acres of Zinfandel grapes.

Wine flowed into Jerome's booming saloons, where miners, weary from shifts in the "Billion Dollar Mining Camp," drank to forget the dust and danger. Cowboys fresh off the range and loggers from Flagstaff found comfort in Schuerman's Red Rock Grape Wine. His modest vineyard became a thriving business, the first-known commercial winery in Arizona. Henry's knack for farming and his European understanding of viticulture transformed Oak Creek into an oasis of both sustenance and spirits.

But Henry wasn't just a farmer. He was a builder of community. The Schuermans built the first schoolhouse in 1891, ensuring children in the valley could learn. They established the region's first cemetery, served



on road crews, and even turned their home into a postal drop for neighbors. Henry, the quiet justice of the peace, embodied the pioneering spirit of northern Arizona. His grapes were not only part of a business—they were a gift to a growing community.

#### The Law That Killed the Wine

By 1914, Arizona—just two years into statehood—voted to outlaw alcohol. Prohibition crept in with little fanfare for men like Schuerman. "You can't grow food?" Henry allegedly asked, stunned, when the sheriff rode up to his vineyard outside Red Rock Crossing. But the law didn't care about nuance or Henry's well-earned livelihood.

In 1917, Schuerman's luck ran dry. Somewhere between Oak Creek and Clarkdale, two barrels of his wine were found in a car belonging to his buyers. Henry pleaded guilty, was sentenced to six months in jail, and fined \$300—a steep punishment for a man whose wine had been flowing freely just years before.

Henry served only part of his sentence. Governor Thomas Campbell pardoned him after learning two of Henry's sons were off fighting in World War I, and the third had married, leaving the family homestead without a caretaker. Henry, 66 and in poor health, promised, "I'm through. Never more will I transgress the law." But the damage was done. Henry's vines shriveled in the Arizona sun. Prohibition claimed not just his livelihood but his legacy.

*Continued on page 16*

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# ARIZONA'S FIRST VINTNER

Continued from page 15

Henry Schuerman died in 1920, a year before national Prohibition began. By the time America rediscovered its love for wine, Henry's vineyard was little more than scraggly vines forgotten beneath the shadows of Sedona's cliffs.

## A Vine Reborn

The Schuerman story might have faded entirely into dust if not for the curiosity of men like Stephen Schwartz and Eric Glomski, pioneers of Arizona's modern wine scene. In the early 2000s, Schwartz discovered two living vines on land once owned by the Schuermans. Tended by Sherman Loy, Henry's grandson, the vines had survived generations—silent witnesses to Arizona's forgotten past. Schwartz clipped the vines, planted them in his yard, and sought out Glomski, a winemaker at Page Springs Cellars, to press wine from the revived Zinfandel.

The wine was imperfect—picked too early, Schwartz admitted, and “insipid” by modern standards—but that first harvest was about something bigger: a revival of Arizona's wine roots. “The mystery is the story,” Schwartz said. Who knew what hybridizations had occurred over the years? Who could say what secrets lay hidden in those vines?

## Arizona's Wine Renaissance

Today, the Verde Valley hums with a new energy as winemakers once again flock to its hilly terrain, volcanic soil, and cool desert nights—just as Schuerman did. Vineyards like Page Springs Cellars, Alcantara Vineyards, and Caduceus Cellars bottle wines that are drawing national attention, their roots quite literally planted in history.

The Pinewood News will take our readers on a journey through select wineries in the Verde Valley throughout 2025, exploring the stories

behind the bottles, the landscapes that make the wine, and the people who carry on Arizona's winemaking tradition. Be sure to follow along as we raise a glass to the pioneers, the survivors, and the storytellers who turned this land into wine country.

Henry Schuerman's legacy reminds us that the land holds stories worth rediscovering, and sometimes, the seeds of the past grow into the promise of the future.



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## THE MYSTERIOUS MR. FROST & THE CASE OF THE VANISHING SNOW

By George Dee

In the cozy town of Winterberry, winter wasn't just cold—it was magical. The snow that fell here sparkled under the streetlights like a thousand tiny diamonds, and by day, it blanketed the town with the most perfect, sledding-ready hills. This year, something peculiar was happening. The very best sledding hill, the one right by the old oak tree, was losing its snow. Every morning, children would wake up to find less snow than the night before. It was a real winter mystery!

Lucy and Milo, two best friends with a love for adventure and a penchant for puzzles, decided it was up to them to solve the mystery. Lucy, with her bright red hat always a bit askew, was the brains, always ready with a plan. Milo, who could spot a clue a mile away, was the eyes of the operation. Together, with Sherlock, Lucy's fluffy, keen-nosed dog, they made a perfect team.

One chilly evening, armed with a bright flashlight, warm cocoa, and Sherlock's keen nose, they camped out beside the sledding hill. The moon was a sliver in the sky, casting silvery light over the snow. Hours ticked by, and just when they thought they might fall asleep, Sherlock's ears perked up.

A figure emerged from the shadows, draped in a shimmering silvery cloak that seemed to glow under the moonlight. It was Mr. Frost, the guardian of winter. He glided over the snow without leaving a trace, touching his staff to the ground, where frost patterns sprang up like magic.

Lucy and Milo approached him, their curiosity burning like the warmest fire. Mr. Frost, surprised but not unfriendly, explained his plight. "Ah, young detectives, I'm in quite the frosty pickle. My magical snow compass, which helps me balance the snow levels in Winterberry, has been spirited away by the Ice Sprites. Without it, I cannot control the snow properly!"

Determined to help, Lucy, Milo, and a somewhat reluctant Sherlock agreed to aid Mr. Frost in his quest to retrieve the compass. They ventured deeper



into the winter woods, guided by the flickering light of Mr. Frost's staff and Sherlock's sniffing.

Their journey led them to the river that whispered with the voice of an old lady. "Beware the Sprites' tricks," the river murmured as they crossed over stepping stones that jutted out like giant's teeth.

Finally, they reached the Ice Sprites' lair—a cavern draped with icicles that tinkled like wind chimes. Inside, the Sprites were having a snowball party, tossing handfuls of snow that glittered with stolen magic. Milo, with a clever glint in his eye, challenged the Sprites to a snowball duel. "If we win, we take the compass back. If you win, you can take my hat," he declared, waving his favorite blue beanie.

The Sprites, who loved games more than mischief, agreed. What followed was the most epic snowball battle in the history of Winterberry. Snow flew in arcs of sparkling light, and laughter echoed off the icy walls.

Thanks to Milo's sharp aim and Lucy's quick thinking, they won. True to their word, the Sprites sulkily returned the snow compass to Mr. Frost, who thanked the children with a smile as bright as the North Star.

With the compass back in his hands, Mr. Frost restored the snow to Winterberry's hills just in time for the annual Winter Festival. The town celebrated like never before, with sledding races, hot chocolate stands, and a special honor for Lucy and Milo, the heroes of Winterberry.

That winter, Lucy and Milo learned that bravery comes in many forms—sometimes as daring as facing mischievous Sprites, and sometimes as simple as offering a hand (or paw) to help a friend in need. And as for the town of Winterberry, they never forgot the winter when magic became more than just a word; it became a part of their lives, thanks to two kids, a dog, and a very grateful Mr. Frost.

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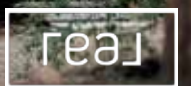
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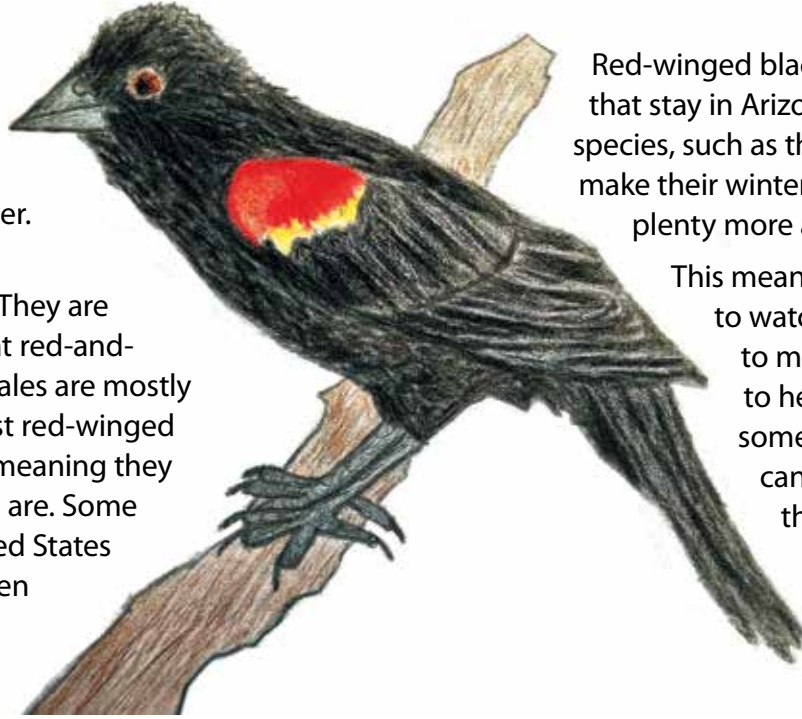


# WINGED WONDERS: DISCOVER THE WINTER BIRD MIGRATION MAGIC IN ARIZONA!

By Violet Bendinelli, Junior Writer, Age 14

Have you ever wondered what happens when birds seem to suddenly appear during the winter in Arizona? These birds are ones that go on migration every year. A migration is a movement of animals from one region to another. Not all birds migrate, but a lot of them do.

The red-winged blackbird is a perfect example. They are easy to identify—the males are black with bright red-and-orange patches on their shoulders, and the females are mostly brown with white and cream streaks. While most red-winged blackbirds are year-round residents of Arizona, meaning they can be found during any season, not all of them are. Some red-winged blackbirds live in the northern United States and Canada during the spring and summer. When the temperature begins to decrease, they want to find a warmer home, and will migrate far away in groups of thousands of birds. Large flocks may decide to stay in Arizona, while others will fly to Mexico. Either way, there are always going to be migrating birds that settle in Arizona during December, and Munds Park is a perfect place for them.



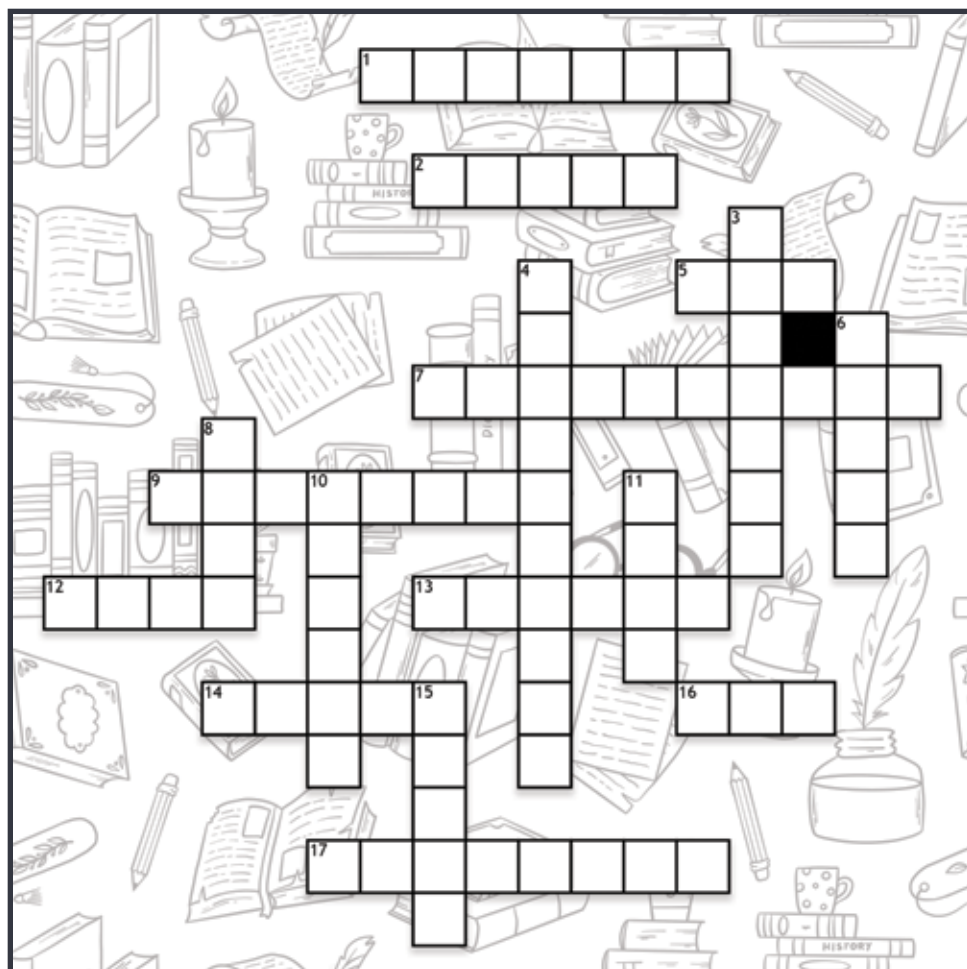
Red-winged blackbirds are not the only ones that stay in Arizona for the winter. There are other species, such as the belted kingfisher, that also make their wintertime home there, and there are plenty more as well.

This means that winter can be a perfect time to watch birds as they come in large flocks to make their home, and put out feeders to help them. So if you are looking for something to do during the winter, you can go outside and walk through the forest, keeping track of all the different birds you can find on your adventure!

Illustration by Violet Bendinelli

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## BOOKWORM ADVENTURES CROSSWORD Solutions Page 28



### Across

- You need a membership card to borrow books here
- Opposite of 'end' in a story
- \_\_\_ and Peace," a famous book by Tolstoy
- Books about real events and real people
- This book is about the planet, also a sci-fi subgenre
- You might solve this in a mystery book
- The person who writes a book
- The main story or argument of a book
- Harry Potter's best friend
- Illustrations help tell the story

### Down

- Portable light source used at night to read
- What do people traditionally put on top of a Christmas tree?
- What do children hang by the fireplace for Santa to fill?
- A type of story that could be true
- This type of book tells stories through pictures
- What you turn to continue the story
- E-books can be read on this device
- A series of events in a story
- Stories of grand adventures





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

**JACK FROST WORD SEARCH**

Search up, down, forward, backward, diagonal to find the hidden words.  
 Answers page 34.

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Adventure</b>  | <b>Milo</b>        |
| <b>Cavern</b>     | <b>Moonlight</b>   |
| <b>Chocolate</b>  | <b>Mr. Frost</b>   |
| <b>Compass</b>    | <b>Mystery</b>     |
| <b>Detectives</b> | <b>River</b>       |
| <b>Frost</b>      | <b>Sherlock</b>    |
| <b>Guardian</b>   | <b>Snowball</b>    |
| <b>Ice</b>        | <b>Sprites</b>     |
| <b>Lair</b>       | <b>Winterberry</b> |
| <b>Lucy</b>       |                    |
| <b>Magic</b>      |                    |





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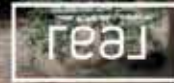
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Vendor relationships go beyond mere transactions; they are strategic partnerships that can provide your business with a competitive edge. Here's why fostering strong vendor relationships is crucial:

1. **Reliability and Consistency** - A solid relationship with your vendors ensures they deliver quality products and services consistently. This reliability helps your business operations run smoothly, reducing the risk of disruptions and delays that can affect your bottom line.
2. **Better Pricing and Terms** - Strong vendor relationships often lead to better pricing and more favorable terms. Vendors are more likely to offer discounts, flexible payment options, and other incentives to businesses they trust. This can result in significant cost savings and improved cash flow for your business.
3. **Access to Innovation** - Vendors who see you as a valued partner are more likely to share new products, services, and technologies with you before they become widely available. This early access can give your business a competitive advantage and help you stay ahead of industry trends.
4. **Enhanced Support and Service** - A strong vendor relationship means you can expect exceptional customer service and support. Vendors who value your partnership will go the extra mile to address your needs and provide personalized solutions.

5. **Collaborative Problem Solving** - When challenges arise, having a trusted vendor partner makes a difference. Strong relationships foster open communication and collaboration, allowing you to work together to find effective solutions.

At Valentine Group & BLR, we prioritize building and maintaining strong relationships with our vendors. We believe these partnerships are essential to delivering the best possible service to our clients and achieving long-term success. Here are a few tips for cultivating strong vendor relationships:

- **Communicate Regularly:** Keep the lines of communication open with your vendors. Regular check-ins help build trust and ensure both parties are aligned on expectations and goals.
- **Be Transparent:** Honesty and transparency are key to any successful partnership. Share your business needs, challenges, and feedback openly with your vendors.
- **Show Appreciation:** Recognize and appreciate your vendors' efforts. A simple thank you or acknowledgment can go a long way in strengthening your relationship.
- **Pay on Time:** Timely payments demonstrate your reliability and respect for your vendors' business, setting the foundation for negotiating better terms in the future.

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# A LITTLE HISTORY BEHIND UFOS

By Brit Elders

Unidentified Flying Objects—UFOS. It's a term that just a few years ago was taboo. If one had a sighting, they rarely shared the experience and if they did tell someone, it was in hushed tones in a cloistered setting.

The secretive nature of this enigmatic topic is no longer true. Today people can be heard discussing the subject in restaurants and at cocktail parties. Curious individuals wonder what these mysterious objects are and why they are here. Are they here to save us or to harm us? Or are they just observers as we take baby steps into space?

In December of 2022, the moniker UFO was revised by the Pentagon to UAP—Unidentified Anomalous Phenomenon. However, no matter what one calls them, the meaning is the same: objects that defy easy explanations that occupy our skies, oceans, or space. The unknowns are not limited to the airspace over the United States. They have been witnessed in all countries around the globe, several of which have released information and images to the public. UFOS are not a new theme; their presence in our skies has been noted throughout history but our intense interest in anomalous aircraft began intensively in the 1940s.

In 1947 national headlines were made, and eventually retracted, with the infamous flying object crash in Roswell, N.M. In that same year, Captain Edward J. Ruppelt of the USAF coined the term “unidentified flying object.” In 1948, the U.S. Air Force began investigating UFO reports under the code name Project Sign. At that time, we were in midst of the Cold War with Russia and UFOS were thought to be Soviet aircraft, despite the fact that some Air Force researchers suggested they were extraterrestrial. Project Sign eventually evolved into Project Blue Book, which was designed to determine if UFOS were a national security threat.

From July 12-29, 1952, a series of UFO sightings were reported over Washington, D.C. The most publicized sightings took place on the consecutive weekends of July 19–20 and July 26–27. Just before midnight on July 19, 1952, at the Washington National Airport (now the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport) an air traffic controller spotted seven unidentified flying objects in the sky southwest of the nation's capital.

The air traffic controller, Edward Nugent, asked coworkers to double-check and verify his sighting. They confirmed the equipment was working properly, and what they could see was not within the parameters of typical flight patterns. Not long after, the controllers could see other bright objects hovering over President Harry S. Truman's White House and the Capital Building.

Fighter jets were scrambled from nearby New Castle Air Force Base in Delaware in the pre-dawn hours of July 20, 1952, but the UFOS disappeared from the radar scope and from visual sight when fighter jets arrived over the nation's capital. When a lack of fuel forced the jets to return to Delaware, the radar detected the unidentified objects again.

The following weekend, it happened again. Around 8 p.m. on the evening of July 26, a pilot and flight attendant on a commercial plane bound for the airport noticed strange lights above their aircraft. Air traffic controllers could see numerous unidentifiable objects across the radar. Again, fighter jets were scrambled from Delaware to D.C. One of the fighter pilots reported seeing the strange lights and attempted to pursue them, but our fastest fixed wing aircraft of that time was no match for the UFOS and the USAF pilot eventually gave up the chase and returned to base to file his report.



The 1952 sightings over Washington, D.C., statements from eyewitnesses and images of unknowns over the U.S. Capital are all part of the National Archives and were headlined in newspapers of the time.

On July 31, 1952, General John Samford released a statement to the press on the sightings in which he stated, “...there have been a certain percentage of this volume of reports that have been made by credible observers of relatively incredible things.” He went on to say, “Now, we do want to continue in the interests of intellectual curiosity or the contributions to be made to scientific measurements, but our main interest is going to have to continue in the problem of seeing whether the things have possibility of hurt to the United States, and our present dilemma of lack of measurement that can be turned to analysis and a complete lack of pattern in any of these things which gives any clue to possible purpose or possible use, leaves us in some dilemma as to what we can do about this remaining twenty per cent of unidentified phenomena.”

In 1968, the Air Force commissioned a new committee to review the most interesting material from Project Blue Book. The committee's report, known as the Condon Report, concluded that most sightings could be attributed to natural phenomena or earthly objects—but not all of them.

Fast forward to 2024. Even though UFOS have been a curiosity since the 1940's, UFOS/UAPs are the hot topic of the day. The U.S. Congress held two hearings on the still mysterious subject, the federal government has set up the All-Domain Anomalous Resolution Office (AARO) where one may report their sighting, and the Navy released previously classified images of UAPs. The public is more interested in and curious about this matter than ever before and they want more open disclosure from our government.

This is nothing new for many Munds Park residents as some members of our community witnessed the V-shaped object in March 1997, that became known as the Phoenix Lights. Whatever you think UFOS/UAPs might be, whether you've seen them or believe they exist or not, it is a topic worth discussion and investigation and one that we will continue to search the velvety dark heavens for with a profound sense of with curiosity.

*We are thrilled to have Brit Elders as part of our Pinewood News family. A Munds Park resident since 1984, Brit is a versatile talent with roles as an author, editor, ghost-writer, filmmaker, and digital content provider. Currently, she is the CEO of ShirleyMacLaine.com. Her extensive experience and unique perspective enrich our publication and engage our readers in new and exciting ways. We hope you enjoyed her first contribution in this edition.*



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# TRAVEL

Continued from page 13

## Preserving Fading Food Traditions

The World's Largest Matanza, hosted by the Hispano Chamber of Valencia County, is a vibrant celebration that preserves New Mexico's rich culinary traditions. This annual event features local families and friends competing to create the best carne adovada, red chile, chicharrones, and other traditional New Mexican dishes.

While the competition aspect adds excitement, the Matanza's true significance lies in its role as a cultural bridge. It provides a unique opportunity for elders to pass down time-honored techniques of butchering and preparing pork to younger generations.

Beyond its cultural importance, the event funds higher education scholarships awarded to Valencia County high school seniors.

How could I possibly pass up such an opportunity? I called my friend Diane, and she eagerly agreed to join me. As travelers, we are both fascinated by local food traditions that reveal the richness of unfamiliar cultures.

## The Most Unlikely Setting

We park our car at the one-story, white Catholic Church already filling with pickup trucks and sporty sedans. The church isn't fancy—Belen is a blue-collar town, once a major transportation hub on the Rio Grande, with trains running to and from all compass points. The railroad town is on flat, dry valley land that stretches to the Great Plains on the east. To the west, we admire elevated mesas and mountainous surroundings as we get out of the vehicle.

The young bus driver waves us onboard, and it's easy to find a seat on the semi-filled yellow school bus. "We have buses coming by every 10 minutes, so you'll be able to get back to your cars easily," the friendly driver assures us as he shuts the doors and accelerates. The bus lurches forward, reminiscent of the same jerking motion I felt 60 years ago when I rode the bus to school.

As the bus doors open, we spill into a scene buzzing with electric anticipation. Women with dark hair, looking like they could be the mothers of middle-school children, beckon us forward to pay and collect our wristbands. One wristband confirms our payment for the food extravaganza, while the other shows that our IDs have been checked and that these two middle-aged ladies are legally allowed beer purchases in the beer garden.

But with the sun still low in the eastern sky, it's too early for beer; we're not sure what to expect, but we're hoping for hot coffee and carnitas-covered tortillas.

Above the chatter of our greeters, the clatter of metal buffet pans and the shouts of older men directing others to stoke the fires reach our ears as we squeeze through the chainlink gate. The fires emitting the distinctive scent of piñon pine have probably been burning since before dawn to boil water.

In the past, adolescent boys tended those fires that heated water in 55-gallon drums while men skilled in such things handled the hog slaughter. Today, hogs are butchered in USDA-approved butcher shops, and it's mostly grown men who watch the fire. They dip burlap sacks into the boiling water and drape these hot, wet sacks over the hog's body to soften the bristles, much like a hot towel softens a beard before shaving. After the hot burlap softens the bristles, the next shift of Matanzos go to work shaving the pink hog's skin.

Eleven competing teams have tent stalls on two sides of the dirt field. On the third side, a bandstand is set up, and the DJ is preparing to introduce the day's first band, Twist & Shout, a hilarious Hispanic tribute to the Beatles.

I meet up with Diane at the red chile pancake cue. Women piled on eggs with carne adovada, beans and grilled potatoes alongside the spicy and sweet pancake.

Now, with both hands full of food, we quickly realize we should have brought camp chairs—there's hardly any seating available! A few friendly Matanzos notice our predicament and invite us to join their table, which looks suspiciously like it's reserved for their Matanza team.

We awkwardly squeeze past people whose chair backs are practically glued to the white tent walls. As we clumsily navigate this tight space, our close encounters help

Continued on page 23



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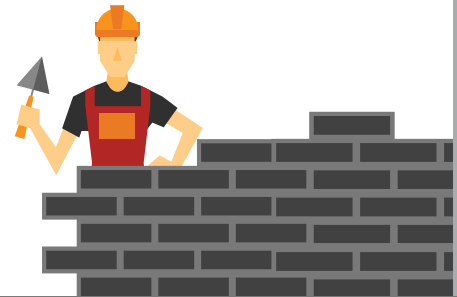
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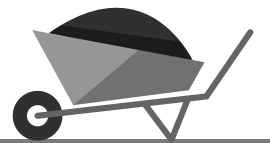
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break down the “outsider” barrier. Before long, we’re no longer strangers but part of the lively party, ready to indulge in all that delicious pork. And indulge, we did!

“Go and eat at all the teams. Eat as much as you want,” urges Hector Ortega, Hispano Chamber of Valencia County Board member, during a break between bands. “If you want to eat eleven times, eat eleven times.”

I’ve always avoided chicharrónes, which are very similar to cracklins of the South: deep-fried pig skin. I always considered them “junk food.” But the longest line of the festival convinces me otherwise. The cue for the chicharrónes is at least twice as long as the second longest line waiting for carne adovada.

FOMO kicks in hard, and with a little nudge from Hector, I tentatively step into the line. I turn to the guy in front of me, sporting a black cowboy hat, and ask, “What’s so great about these?”

“Chicharrones are the highlight of Matanza for me!” he replies enthusiastically. “You’ve got to be patient and wait for them, but trust me, it’s worth it. They come out nice and hot. Slather them with red chile sauce, chica!”

After finally snagging my plate of those porky delights, I find myself standing alone in the middle of a dirt field now packed with thousands of people. It’s like I’m the lone star in a meaty universe! I take a bite of the hot, crispy chicharrones drenched in red chile sauce, and suddenly I’m in hog heaven. Seriously, this must be the meat lust I’ve read about in the book, *Everything But the Squeal*.

With the New Mexican sun as overhead as it will get –this is January, and the sun is tracking south– I join Diane at the Beer Garden. We toast our successful first Matanza with, what else? Matanza Lager, brewed by 377 Brewery in Albuquerque.

How do I feel being part of this incredible tradition? Let me tell you, when Mary Ann invited me to experience the Matanza, I felt like I’d hit the cultural jackpot. Witnessing a slice of New Mexico that I had never encountered before was nothing short of humbling.

As two middle-aged gringas, Diane and I were welcomed into the Matanza family with open arms, and it felt like we had just been handed a VIP pass to the best party in town. The warmth and inclusivity of this festival made me feel like I truly belonged. Here I was, an outsider transformed into a cherished guest, diving headfirst into the delicious food, lively music and vibrant culture of Hispanic New Mexico.

This experience was special—one that most people may never get to enjoy. If you’re looking for an adventure that will leave you with a full belly and a heart bursting with joy, mark your calendars for the World’s Largest Matanza on Saturday, January 25th, 2025. Trust me, you won’t want to miss this unforgettable celebration where every bite tells a story!

*“UNSTOPPABLE Stacey” Wittig is a travel writer based in Munds Park. Read the whole story at [UNSTOPPABLEStaceyTravel.com](http://UNSTOPPABLEStaceyTravel.com).*



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# MUNDS PARK REAL ESTATE MARKET SEES PROMISING GROWTH IN 2024

By Jay Otlewski

The Munds Park real estate market continued to show strong momentum in 2024, with rising transaction volumes and increasing property values.

Whether you're a potential buyer or seller or simply keeping an eye on local trends, the data reveals key patterns that highlight the unique dynamics of this mountain community.

## Sales Activity Increases

In 2024, Munds Park recorded 133 total closed transactions, up from 125 in 2023. This growth is largely driven by a notable increase in single-family home sales, which rose by 20% from 75 sales in 2023 to 90 in 2024.

Meanwhile, the condo market held steady with four sales in both years, suggesting limited inventory or stable demand for these smaller, low-maintenance units.

However, manufactured home sales declined, from 46 transactions in 2023 to 36 in 2024. This trend may reflect shifts in buyer preferences or the availability of these homes.

## Property Prices on the Rise

Buyers and sellers alike will note the upward trend in property values across Munds Park.

- Single-family homes saw significant appreciation, with the average sale price rising from \$628,289 in 2023 to \$690,256 in 2024. This jump is partially fueled by an increase in average home size, which grew from 1,650 sq ft to 1,776 sq ft, and an uptick in the price per square foot, which climbed from \$391 to \$404.

- Condos, though fewer in number, also experienced price growth. The average price rose to \$387,750 in 2024, up from \$372,875 the year before. This market saw modest increases in the price per square foot, which now stands at \$304.
- Manufactured homes showed a mixed trend. While the average sale price increased to \$358,652 in 2024, the price per square foot fell slightly from \$287 to \$271. However, buyers bought larger homes, with average sizes rising from 1,179 sq ft to 1,319 sq ft, offsetting the decline in price per square foot.

## Animal Hill: A Prime Location

The Animal Hill area continues to shine in Munds Park. In 2024, homes in this area commanded higher average sale prices and valuations compared to properties outside the area.

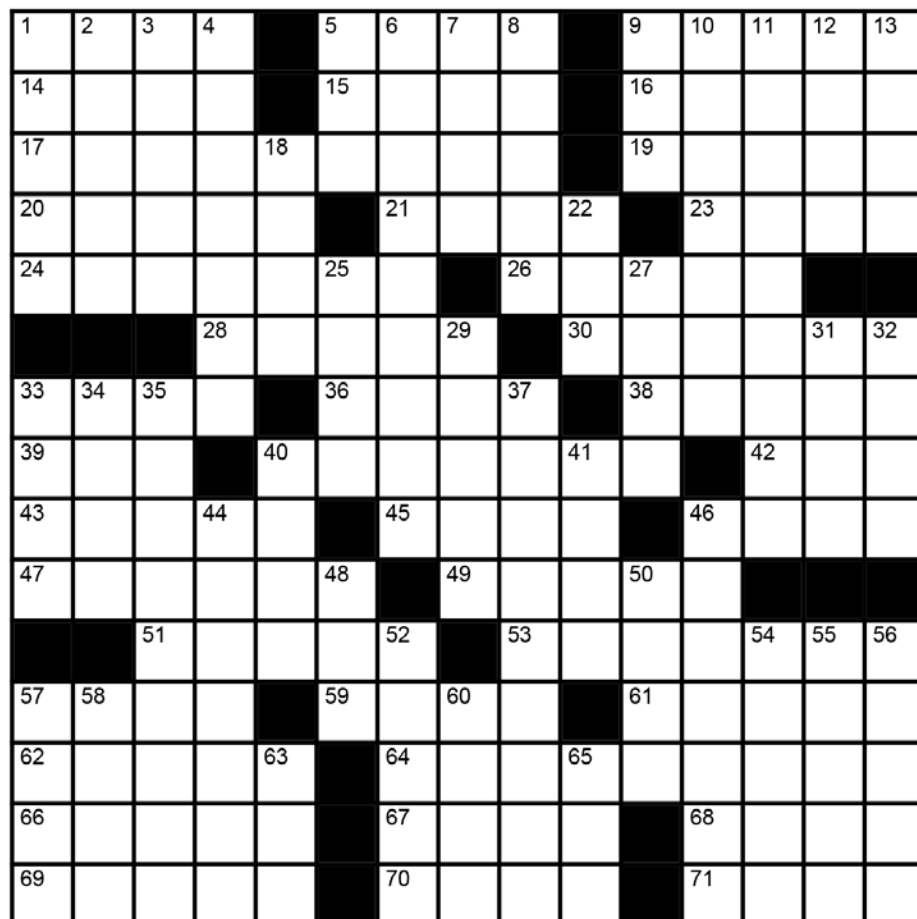
- Animal Hill properties averaged 1,963 sq ft, with an impressive price per square foot of \$408 and an average sale price of \$762,379.
- In contrast, homes outside Animal Hill averaged 1,620 sq ft, with a price per square foot of \$400 and an average sale price of \$620,782.

These figures underscore the premium associated with Animal Hill, driven by its unique location, larger homes, and potentially desirable amenities or scenic views.

Continued on page 26

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Created by Paul Mason • Solution Page 34



## ACROSS

- Lug
- Muslim holy man
- Settle
- Unlock
- Danish toy company
- Unaccompanied
- Made Moonshine
- Drawing
- Chipped in chips
- Praiseful poems
- Unexpected difficulty
- December 31
- Melody
- Lifeless, old-style
- Colored like the sky
- Event attended by Cinderella
- Drug buster
- Violinmaker Nicolò
- Roth \_\_\_\_
- By hook or by crook
- Actor Beatty
- Heraldic band
- Voyaging
- Scotch \_\_\_\_
- Islamic decree (Var.)
- Mythical creature
- Rice dish
- Believers in one god

## DOWN

- NBC morning show
- Speculate
- Seed covering
- Involving or passing through the intestine
- Under the weather
- Tear-jerker
- Ripened
- Wi-Fi device
- Spill the beans
- 2013 science fiction movie starring Jodie Foster
- Tree with showy flowers
- Visitor to Siam
- Safecracker

- Footnote word
- Long sandwich
- Thou-shalt-not
- Cole \_\_\_\_
- Rapunzel feature
- Stride
- Sweep under the rug
- "Back to the Future" villain
- Region
- The cellar, in sports
- Was unfaithful to
- Marine mammal
- Word of honor
- Person moving through water
- Three-baggers
- Stetson, e.g.
- Calendar span
- Blue-ribbon position
- Tackle box item
- Inventor Nikola
- Smart-mouthed
- Taverns
- Touched down
- Short skirt
- Vein stuff
- Ram's mate



# GARDENS IN THE PARK

## ORCHIDS: THE FLOWER THAT INSPIRED EXPLORERS

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Few flowers evoke an emotional response quite like orchids. Their beauty sparked an obsession, called "Orchidelirium" in the Victorian era, when explorers would risk danger and financial ruin to travel the globe just to discover new varieties of the plant. Much like the famous Tulip Fever that gripped the Dutch Republic of the 17th century, orchids became symbols of wealth and status.

Today, orchids still captivate, but the allure has shifted from a symbol of luxury to a celebration of their remarkable diversity, resilience, and beauty.

So, what is it about orchids that inspires such devotion?

Much of the attraction is that there is no flowering plant quite like them. Their intricate, symmetrical blooms often look as if they were sculpted by an artist. They come in all colors except for black and they can be found in almost any environment except for glaciers.

Their blooms are as long-lasting as they are beautiful, with some thriving for weeks or even months.

Then there's just the sheer diversity of the species. There are about 28,000 accepted species within the family Orchidaceae, making it the second largest botanical family in existence. (The first is Asteraceae, which has about 32,000 species, including asters, daisies, and sunflowers).

No matter your level of experience, there's an orchid for you. Here are some of the more popular species:

**Phalaenopsis** ("Moth Orchids") – Graceful and easy to care for, perfect for beginners.

**Cattleya** ("Corsage Orchids") – Show-stopping blooms with a heavenly scent.

**Oncidium** ("Dancing Lady Orchids") – Lively sprays of flowers that resemble tiny dancers.

**Paphiopedilum** ("Slipper Orchids") – Unique, whimsical blooms.



**Vanda Orchids** – Vibrantly colored showpieces for the adventurous grower.

### Caring for Your Orchid

Every orchid has unique needs, so you'll need to make sure to understand the optimal conditions for the particular species you wish to cultivate.

For example, getting the light level right for your orchid is crucial. Cattleya and Oncidium love bright indirect light, but Phalaenopsis and Paphiopedilum prefer lower light.

In general, watch your orchid's leaves for signs of too much or too little light. If they are bright green, you are doing well. If they are dark green, they aren't getting enough light, and if they have a reddish tinge, it's probably too much light.

Overwatering is the most common mistake with orchids, which need a balance of hydration and airflow. In general, water every five to 12 days, adjusting for warmer summers and cooler winters. Always avoid letting water sit on leaves or in the pot. Using a well-draining orchid medium will help.

Fertilize with an orchid-specific formula once a month during active growth. Pay attention to the directions on the fertilizer; too much will burn your plant's roots, while too little can slow growth and flowering.

Finally, keep the humidity levels at about 50% to 70%. That's hard to do in our high desert climate in northern Arizona, so a pebble tray or humidifier is a good idea for your orchid.

Orchids may no longer spark wild expeditions across the globe, but their mystique remains. Whether you're drawn to their fascinating history or their stunning beauty, orchids offer a unique joy to those who care for them. If you need some help picking out an orchid, come visit us at Warner's Nursery, and we'll help you discover the orchid that speaks to you!



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# MUNDS PARK REAL ESTATE MARKET

Continued from page 24

## What This Means for Buyers and Sellers

For buyers, the rising prices indicate a need to act decisively, particularly in sought-after areas like Animal Hill. The increasing home sizes may appeal to those looking for spacious properties, but competition for single-family homes remains strong.

Sellers, on the other hand, can take advantage of the upward trend in prices, particularly if their property falls within the Animal Hill area. Pricing competitively and showcasing features that add value—such as modern updates, garages, or larger homesites—can help maximize sale potential.

## A Community in Demand

Munds Park’s real estate market reflects the allure of this mountain retreat. With its blend of single-family homes, condos, and manufactured homes, the community offers something for everyone.

The continued demand and appreciation in property values highlight its growing appeal as both a year-round and seasonal destination.

## Looking Ahead: Munds Park Real Estate in 2025

As we look toward 2025, the Munds Park real estate market is poised for continued growth and opportunity. With experts anticipating a slight drop in interest rates and sustained economic strength, particularly in the second-home market, demand for properties in this mountain retreat is likely to remain robust.

Buyers seeking a getaway or investment property will find Munds Park’s diverse offerings—ranging from cozy condos to expansive single-family homes—well-suited to meet their needs.

Areas like Animal Hill, with its premium home sizes and scenic allure, will likely continue to command attention and higher price points.

For sellers, 2025 could bring even more favorable conditions. Lower interest rates may draw new buyers into the market, increasing competition and potentially driving prices higher.

Preparing homes for sale by emphasizing space, modern features, and connection to the unique charm of Munds Park could be the key to success.

As the community evolves, Munds Park is expected to solidify its standing as a premier destination for both full-time residents and seasonal homeowners, making 2025 a year full of promise for buyers and sellers alike.

# SUDOKU

Created by Paul Mason • Solution Page 34

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	5				7			3
	4	7			1			2
	9	1	3					

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# WORD OF THE DAY

By RG

Alright, time to put your thinking cap on! Here's a little brain teaser. See if you can figure this one out:

What do all these words have in common? big, miniscule, misspelled, and pulchritude.

If you can't answer yet, odds are it's because of that last word. Keep reading and the answer may become clear. If, by the end, you still haven't figured it out, the answer is on page 28.

If you know the word and the answer, my feelings won't be hurt if you skip this article entirely. After all, there's a lovely little story on page 25 about The Flower that Inspired Explorers that's an absolute treasure of a read!

## pul·chri·tude

/ˈpʌkrə,tuːd/

noun

1. beauty.

"Her pulchritude was undeniable, capturing the attention of everyone in the room without her saying a word."

January's Word of the Day doesn't seem like it would mean beauty. In fact, it sounds rather unpleasant and would be more fitting to describe someone hideous, a disease, a bad attitude, or even Moira's wig from season 6 episode 1 of *Schitt's Creek* (and can be found exactly 1 minute into the episode). But, oddly enough, it describes breathtaking beauty. Think Angelina Jolie, Jason Mamoia, Charlie Hunman or Rihanna. Did I mention Jason Mamoia?

Pulchritude comes from the Latin adjective *pulcher*, meaning "beautiful." While *pulcher* hasn't contributed many words to English, it did give us *pulchritude* and *pulchritudinous*, an adjective meaning "attractive" or "beautiful." Other words derived from *pulcher* include *pulchrify* (a synonym for *beautify*), *pulchritudeness* (same meaning as *pulchritude*), and *pulchrous* (meaning *fair* or *beautiful*).

Pulchritude, in all its sesquipedalian splendor, is not the word you reach for in casual conversation. It's somewhat intimidating and makes a rather bold entrance. It demands attention but may leave people questioning whether they've been complimented or cursed. It's a word you use when you want to impress—or, quite frankly, confuse—everyone around you.

Although it's a great example of how the English language can take a simple concept and turn it into something overly complex, there's also an issue with how the word *pulchritude* comes across. It's not exactly a word people use regularly. If you throw it into a sentence, you might need to pause for a moment to let everyone fully grasp what you've said.

Take for example the classic, "True pulchritude comes from within, but if you resemble a LOTR cave-troll on the outside, it's going to be a lot harder to convince people." Now, picture the confusion on everyone's faces as they scramble to figure out whether you're inventing words on the fly or if they're the only one that doesn't understand what the heck you just said.

If you really must use *pulchritude* (we all know you will), here are a few tips on how and when to use it effectively (without making it awkward):

**Use It in Written Work:** *Pulchritude* is probably best suited for the literary world, where pretentiousness is cherished to some degree. Bonus points if you use it within a fan-fiction sequel of *Pride & Prejudice*. Plus, your

I knew your mother hated me!  
Can you believe she just called me  
pulchritudinous to my face!



reader can always just google the definition on the spot without any witnesses present.

**Use It to Annoy People at Social Gatherings:** Picture yourself at a party. As Jessica casually and predictably mentions the beautiful charcuterie board, you might respond, "Yes, it is a great display of pulchritude, isn't it?" You'll either win over the room with your brilliant vocabulary, or you'll make everyone question why you were even invited.

**Use It to Fluff Your Perceived IQ:** Nothing says "I'm confident in my knowledge of obscure vocabulary" more than dropping *pulchritude* into an everyday conversation. Whether you're discussing the beauty of the Belgian Shepherd dog breed (specifically the short-haired Malinois variety) or the divine aesthetic of an impeccably designed personalized closet, you

can always sound like you know something no one else does. Trust me, people love know-it-alls.

In the end, there's something quite beautiful about the word *pulchritude* itself. The irony is impossible to ignore. Here is a word that means beauty, but by all accounts, is anything but. It's cumbersome, pretentious, and not particularly easy on the ears. Yet, in some strange way, that very juxtaposition makes it a gem of the English language—a reminder that even in a world that celebrates simplicity and Gen Z slang, there's still a place for words that are unapologetically complex and, yes, sometimes a little over the top. No cap, fam.

So, if you feel like breaking the monotony of everyday language, and you're ready to impress (or agitate) your friends, go ahead—drop a *pulchritude* into a conversation. Just be prepared for the possible aftermath: raised eyebrows, nervous nods, or covert google searches to decode your claptrap.

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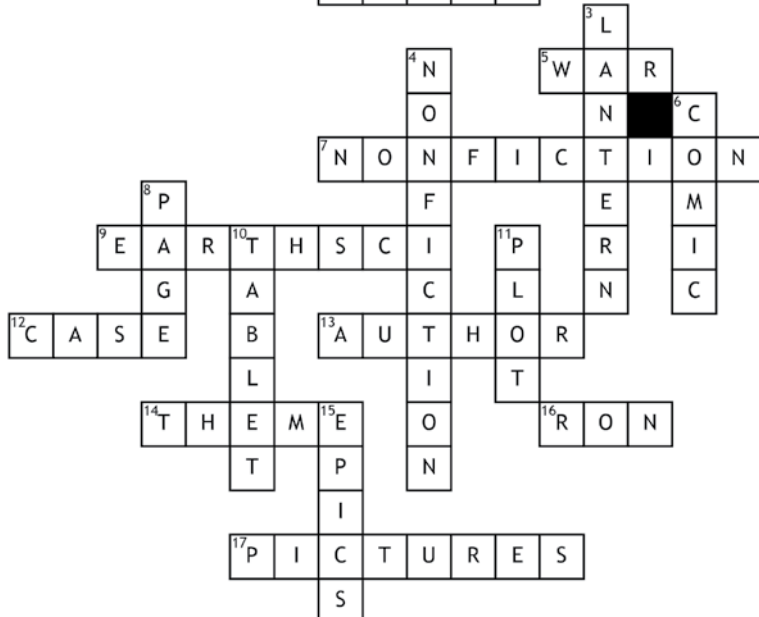
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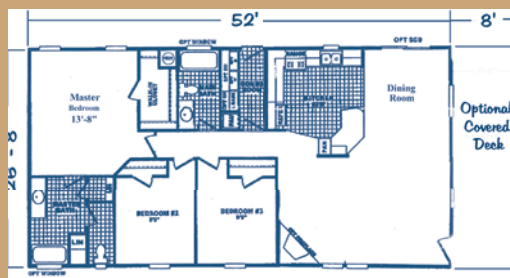
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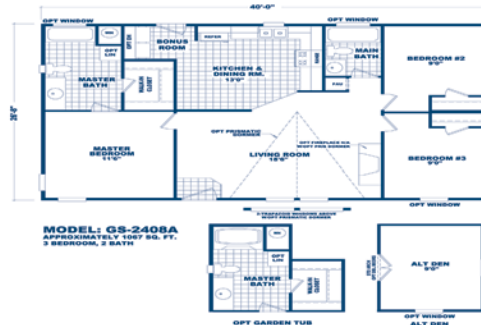


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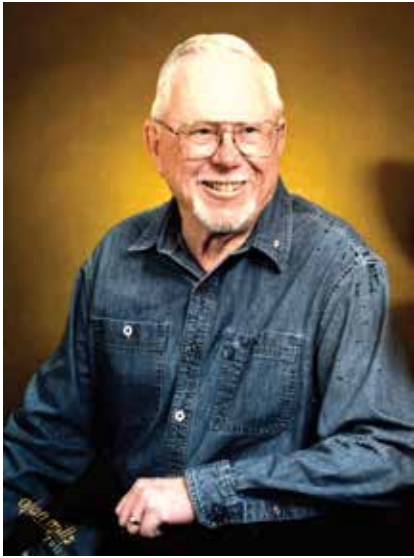
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# IN LOVING MEMORY

## ALLEN JUUL TRABER



Born in Omaha, Nebraska, on April 14, 1932, and passed away on December 12, 2024, in Flagstaff, Arizona.

His family moved to Arizona in 1940. He spent most of his life in Arizona but traveled extensively throughout the United States as well as other parts of the world. He moved to Munds Park in 2005 where he and his wife Patricia enjoyed the quiet beauty of their community.

He enjoyed wood carving from a young age and continued carving his entire life. He won many carving competitions with his detailed pieces.

He was a man of faith and loved his church family. He and Patricia were very involved in helping with church functions and bible studies.

His love for food was also a passion in his life and often said "it is not spicy but flavorful." He cooked mostly from scratch and would spend a good part of the day fixing a favorite dinner.

He enjoyed life very much, especially spending time with his family. Pictures of his kids and step-kids, along with grand- and great-grandkids filled his wall. He very much loved photography and his photos showed his keen eye. He was a perfectionist and would often critique his own work, and was also very proud of his photos that were published.

He had a special place in his heart for animals, he especially loved his cats. He had two cats that traveled with him and Patricia around the United States in their RV. Working at Yellowstone National Park during the summer was one of his most treasured adventures.

He took after his father and worked using a ham radio with a local Flagstaff group. He and Patricia also volunteered with the Pinewood Fire Auxiliary and Cert. His passion for volunteering was felt by the whole community.

He is survived by his children, Denna Bazdorf, Sharel (Roger) Chapa, Eric Traber, Bonnie (Mike) Pullano, Jim (Kathy) Burch, Adri (Carl) Epps; many grandkids, great-grandkids and two great-great-grandkids; a brother, Ray (Bert) Traber; several nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

He is preceded in death by his wife Patricia Burch Traber and his daughter Vickie Traber Williams.

He is dearly missed by family and friends but lives forever in our hearts.

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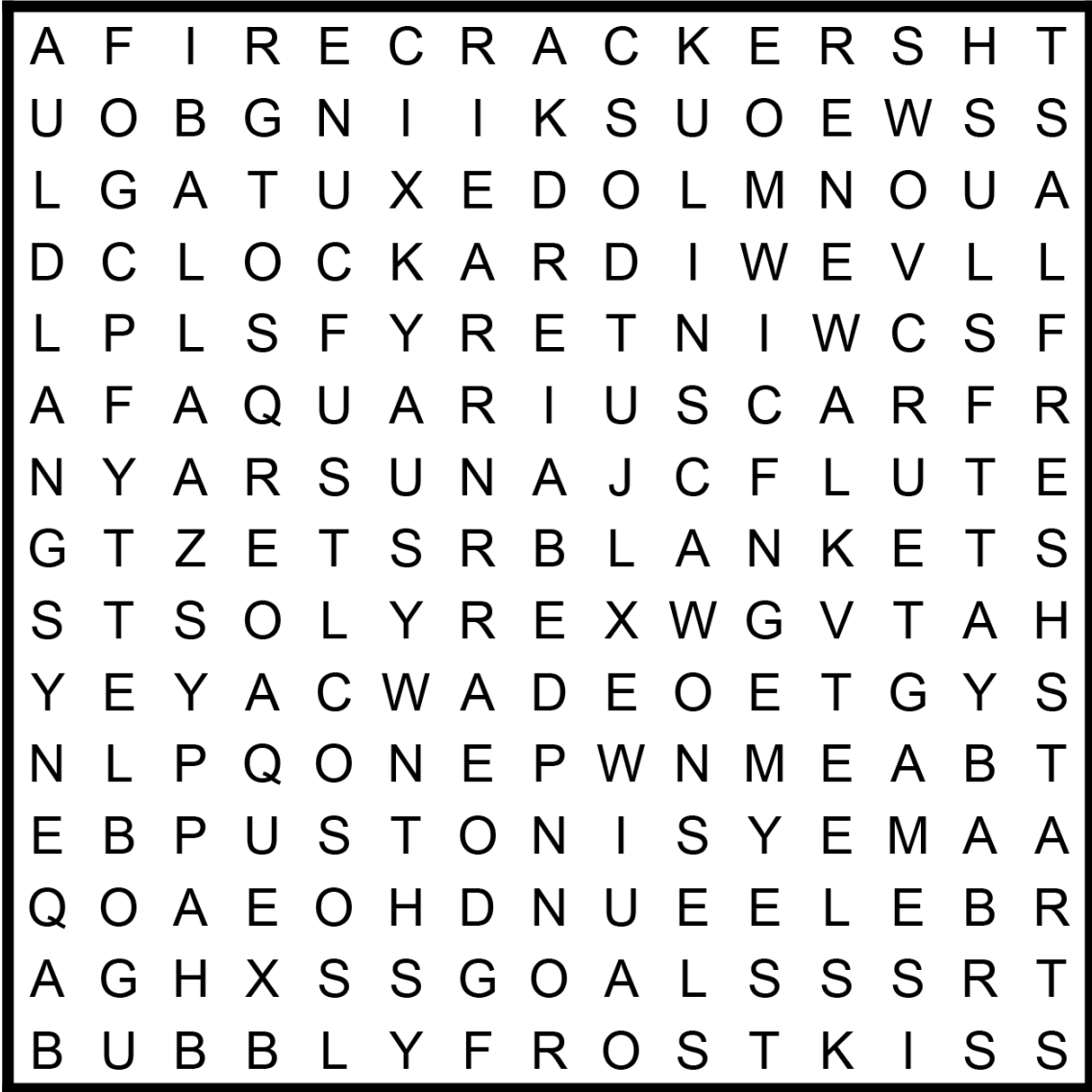
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# WORD SEARCH

Created by Paul Mason • Solution Page 34



- |                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Aquarius       | Janus    |
| Auld Lang Syne | Kiss     |
| Baby           | Last     |
| Ball           | New Leaf |
| Blankets       | Old      |
| Bubbly         | Party    |
| Cleanse        | Renewal  |
| Clock          | Scarf    |
| Cozy           | Skiing   |
| Day            | Sleet    |
| Detox          | Slush    |
| Evening        | Snow     |
| Firecrackers   | Soup     |
| Flute          | Time     |
| Fog            | Toast    |
| Fresh Start    | Tuxedo   |
| Frost          | Vow      |
| Games          | Winter   |
| Goals          | Year     |
| Goblet         |          |
| Gown           |          |
| Happy          |          |
| Hat            |          |
| Hope           |          |

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# JANUARY HOROSCOPE BY CAKE

*Astrology vibes with the cosmos, connecting us to the energy of the stars and planets swirling above. It's like tuning in to the universe's rhythm—a reminder that we're all part of this cosmic dance. Each shift in the sky reflects a shift within us, lighting up our paths, moods, and growth. The stars aren't just far-off lights; they're guides, sending us little nudges and whispers, helping us find our way. It's the universe's way of saying, "We're all connected."*



## ARIES, MARCH 21 - APRIL 20

January asks you to embrace change, Aries. Learning something new will light a spark in both your mind and spirit. Take a class, try a hobby, or dive into a topic you've always been curious about. You thrive on challenge, so let your curiosity lead you. This is the perfect time to step outside your comfort zone and trust that every new experience is shaping you into something stronger. Growth starts with a little bravery—be bold and embrace it.



## LEO, JULY 23 - AUGUST 22

Leo, your vibrant energy lights up any room, and January invites you to channel that brilliance with clarity and focus. This is a great time to embrace habits that leave you feeling mentally and physically strong. Whether it's cutting back on indulgences or making space for healthier routines, small shifts can have a big impact. By stepping into the world with your full strength, you'll rediscover your natural courage and shine even brighter. This month is all about feeling your best.



## SAGITTARIUS, NOV 23 - DEC 21

Your adventurous spirit is unmatched, Sagittarius, and this January invites you to turn that energy inward. Focus on personal growth—refine a skill, prioritize your health, or take time for meaningful self-reflection. By investing in yourself, you'll naturally inspire others through your actions, without needing to say a word. Embracing this path of self-improvement will not only bring fulfillment but also set the stage for an exciting and rewarding year ahead. Let your journey start with you.



## TAURUS, APRIL 21 - MAY 20

This month, Taurus, rethink what truly matters. Money isn't everything, but being smart with it ensures stability and peace of mind. Take time to review your spending and make thoughtful plans for the future. Separately, consider contributing your time to a cause you care about—giving back can bring a sense of fulfillment that money alone can't provide. Ground yourself in gratitude for what you already have, and let that inspire acts of kindness that enrich your soul.



## VIRGO, AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22

This month, Virgo, let your natural love for growth push you to do more and expect more from yourself. Commit to a plan that balances work, play, and personal achievement. Read more to expand your mind, but don't forget to physically move—whether it's a stretch at your desk or an invigorating walk. This January, challenge yourself to step into your fullest potential, knowing that the effort you invest now will bring clarity and purpose to the rest of the year.



## CAPRICORN, DEC 22 - JAN 20

Capricorn, this month is your moment to embrace optimism. Get out into the world—volunteer, move your body, and spread your energy in ways that uplift yourself and others. Action is your superpower, and this January, doing small acts of good will ripple positivity into every part of your life. Moving your body and sharing your time will not only help others but also recharge your own spirit. Let this be a month of giving and growing.



## GEMINI, MAY 21 - JUNE 21

Gemini, your charm and wit light up every room, but January asks you to slow down and consider the impact of your words. When offering advice or sharing your perspective, take an extra moment to ensure your message truly connects. Meanwhile, step out of your routine and try something new—whether it's a class, a new spot to explore, or a creative project. This mix of thoughtfulness and adventure will leave you feeling refreshed and inspired.



## LIBRA, SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22

Libra, January calls you to focus on your dreams and what's truly important. Set aside distractions and take practical steps toward achieving what your heart desires. No one can make your dreams come true but you, and this is the time to get started. Break big goals into manageable steps, and take them one at a time. As you move forward, you'll feel a renewed sense of balance and purpose that aligns perfectly with who you're meant to be.



## AQUARIUS, JAN 21 - FEB 18

Aquarius, January invites you to step away from the screen and step into the beauty of nature. Look up at the stars, breathe the fresh air, and let the world outside inspire you. Moving your body will refresh your mind, allowing space for clarity and new ideas. This is your time to disconnect from distractions and reconnect with the bigger picture. The universe has so much to show you—just take a moment to look.



## CANCER, JUNE 22 - JULY 22

Cancer, the world feels softer when you're in tune with nature. January calls you to step outside, breathe deeply, and let your body move. A brisk walk, time in the garden, or a hike under the stars will refresh your spirit. While you're reconnecting with the Earth, open your mind to learning something new—it could be a skill or even a deeper truth about yourself. Nature holds the space for clarity; all you need to do is show up.



## SCORPIO, OCT 23 - NOV 22

Scorpio, January invites you to take chances and meet new people. Get off the couch and step into new spaces where connections can flourish. Whether it's through hobbies, work, or social gatherings, the people you meet this month could inspire and challenge you in ways you didn't expect. Embrace the courage to put yourself out there and let curiosity guide you. The world opens up when you step boldly into it—this month, the rewards are waiting for you.



## PISCES, FEB 19 - MARCH 20

Pisces, this January, it's time to focus on what really matters. Reflect on what's important to you, and practice gratitude for the people and experiences that make life beautiful. Avoid getting caught up in small stresses, and keep your eyes on the bigger picture. Gratitude will bring you peace, grounding you as you step into the new year with intention and love. Remember, it's the meaningful moments that count the most.





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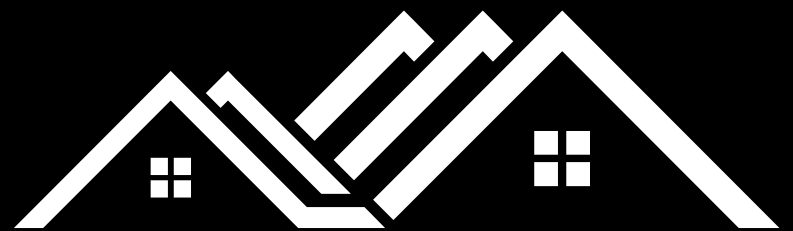
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# MUNDS PARK COMMUNITY CHURCH

## HAIRCUTS & HEMLINES

By Pastor Steve Bowyer

As a child of the 60s I am old enough to remember when haircuts and hemlines mattered a little too much. Churches had their rules and sometimes they went a little too far. As styles changed, the rules did not. So many young people felt unwelcome at church. That was never Jesus' intent.

Do you remember? If a guy's hair reached his collar in the back, or his bangs hung in his eyes he obviously was a rebel and unwelcome. If a girl's hemline showed her knees, she was obviously too loose in her morals. These things were just not tolerated in churches.

That is, until the Jesus movement in the late 60s when churches began to realize they were losing the next generation, and Jesus came to save people just like them. Rebels? Outcasts? Non-conformists? Jesus was the champion of all three.

Music was a big deal, too. If the instruments had cords that plugged into electric outlets, then they were evil. Of course, many churches had electric organs. But that was different. Drum kits, back beat syncopated rhythms were of the devil. Rock music had no place in worship services. Yet, that was the genre of choice of so many teenagers and 20-somethings.

Rules have their place. Even the length of a guy's hair can be a practical matter. I had a school basketball coach who required short hair on all his players. The reason was simple and practical. If his hair got in his eyes, he could not see to play the game. So, eliminate the distraction.

As these rules dominated the church, attendance was waning, especially among the young people. Then, something remarkable happened. A few churches opened their doors and changed their rules. The next thing you know, a church in California is baptizing hundreds of young, long-haired, short-skirted, rock 'n roll lovers, who found a new life in Jesus. The revolution was on!

Even today we have rules, written and unwritten. It is the unwritten rules that are the most challenging. The question is, are we welcoming? Jesus died for each one of us before we ever acknowledged Him and considered the need to clean up our act for Him. In fact, His message has always been, come to Him then let Him decide what needs to change, if anything, and He will help make those changes.

For a few weeks this past summer we had a young man come to church who was living in his camper out in the forest. He had a pet ferret that he brought with him to church. That stretched a few of us. Is it okay to bring an animal like that to church? The guy would not leave the ferret in his camper by itself. So his feeling was, if the ferret was not welcome, then he would not be either. But where was the best place for this guy to

be on Sunday morning? There was no better place for him to be, ferret and all, than sitting in the back of the church worshiping with us.

Do we need a rule, no ferrets allowed in the worship service? Jesus was always more concerned about people being helped by the rules to find God than any strict adherence to them. We need some rules. Like the bumpers in the gutters for kids when they go bowling. Something needs to keep their ball in the proper lane. We need some guidelines to keep our ball in the proper lane. But the point of the bumpers is to make the game more fun, so people want to participate. The point of rules in the church is to make people want to participate more.

Our ultimate responsibility is to be like Jesus. And Jesus is all about flexibility and freedom. People over policy. Relationships over rules. Freedom is bottom-up responsibility that helps people connect. Rules are top-down control that hinder people from connecting.

Repeatedly, Jesus was set up by the religious leaders. They had a rule, no healing people on the Sabbath. They would purposely have a person who needed healing sitting in the front row right in front of Jesus to see what He would do. On one such occasion Jesus was confronted with a man who had a shriveled hand.

"But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, 'Get up and stand in front of everyone.'...then Jesus said to them, 'I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?' He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He did so, and his hand was completely healed." (Luke 6:8-10)

Ironically, Jesus did not break their rule. He spoke. He did not even need to touch the guy. Still, they condemned Him for not playing by their rules. But the truth was, the guy with the shriveled hand did not feel welcome in the synagogue and was unlikely to participate with any regularity. But after Jesus healed his hand, what do you think his attitude was about regular participation? Exactly.

We have the freedom to help people connect to God and fellow churchgoers by welcoming them in, ferrets and all. We do not need to try to control them, making it difficult for them to connect. There is no better place to be on a Sunday morning than worshiping Jesus in your favorite local church. Let's make sure everyone feels welcome and can connect no matter what they bring with them.

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### WORD SEARCH

Solutions

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### KIDS WORD SEARCH

Solutions

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