

## A Snowstorm in June: Stepping Back in Time

by Laura Lee Yates for North Fork Senior Connections

*Claudia King will be 86 years old in September and plans to purchase another ski pass for Powderhorn. She lives independently, still gardens, and serves as a docent and board member for the Paonia Historical Museum. She recalls the old days in town:*

“Now you listen to me, Willis Sutliff, and stay put! Don’t you dare go past Robin Nest Hollow!”

“Ah, hesh up, you old bookworm!” Willis yells back, even though he’s only six, and I’m three years older. “I can go as high as I want and you can’t stop me!”

I sigh. He’s right. Even though it’s my job to run the lobby of the Cottonwood Hotel, assigning the guests—who are all kids in the neighborhood—to the rooms we built on the sturdiest branches of the old cottonwood, I can’t seem to keep Willis in line all the time. He wasn’t much help building the platform for the lobby or the walls since he’s no good with a hammer (unlike me) but he did go round to the neighbors, even the old lady with the mean German Shepherd Dog whose eyes turn red when he’s going to attack, and Willis scrounged most of the discarded wood we needed for our big project. Daddy says we did a pretty good job of construction and it oughta hold up for awhile, as long as we don’t let big people like Bubbles Bross be guests.

Bubbles’ family has its own hotel, anyway, a lot fancier than ours—they have ten rooms while we only have four, and ours mostly don’t have roofs. The Bross Hotel is where grownups and their families stay if they come visitin’ to Paonia, ridin’ the passenger train all the way from

Delta. They even have entertainment at their hotel, since Libbie Atkins plays honkytonk piano. Some folks say Bubbles Bross drinks too much, but every time I cross his path on the way to pick up our mail at the post office he gives me a big piece of that new Bazooka Gum. We stand on the corner, both of us grinnin’ and chewin’, chewin’ and grinnin’, and even though I blow the best pink bubbles I can he always blows his twice as big. Sometimes he tells me I have pretty yellow hair, which makes me go all shy. Boys are bad enough, but grown men? I’d rather hide in this tree. I like sittin’ here in the Cottonwood Hotel, listening to the train conductor blow the whistle as it’s hauling fruit my daddy picked to faraway markets. I remember when I was five and how we all jumped up and down and hugged each other that the War was over and they kept that whistle blowin’ on and on...



The strong arms of this Onarga cottonwood are a great place to read. Willis is right about one thing—I *am* a bookworm. Our library, tucked in beside the Paradise Theater, isn’t very big but I’ll bet I’ve read every book in the place—at least the ones the nice librarian considers suitable for a young girl. Perhaps I’ll be a librarian when I grow up. Or maybe a teacher. I just love my English teacher, who rode

continued p.2

the narrow-gauge railroad from the university in Denver to Paonia, but then she got married so she lost her job, which doesn't seem fair. Could I be a librarian AND a teacher? And maybe even write a book? I'm going to college for sure. Even though I'm only nine I'm already saving up.

Mother's good at thinking of ways for me to make money. When I wove potholders out of those loops all the colors of a rainbow she bought the ones nobody else picked. Daddy's sister, who's one of those Fundamentalists, says my mother Irene is well-bred, like she's some kind of fancy Thoroughbred horse, and is an intellectual just because she doesn't say 'ain't.' I think Mother's really pretty and I like how she encourages me to have adventures—some of my friends come from families that preach fear of spiders and tramps and anything that could possibly be sinful, which is pretty much all the fun stuff. In the winter when the snow's good those kids don't even get to go sledding on McNutt's Hill. One of the bigger boys sledded all the way down and couldn't stop even when he got to the northbound train—we were scared he'd be lying there squished and bloody on the tracks when the train passed on but he sledded right between the sets of wheels under the baggage car and he didn't get hurt one bit. "Don't you be tryin' a stunt like that," Daddy said—and I told him I'm not that crazy....

I guess cottonwood trees are sort of like old folks. After many years their bark turns gray and gets deep furrows like the lines beside Mrs. Gilenwater's mouth. Cottonwoods don't last forever, I understand that. But while they're here they really live, tossing their cotton all over everybody's lawns like a snowstorm in June, spreading their seeds far and wide and standing up tall to wind and hail and blizzard. Someday I'll be one of those elders, and I'll be tough, too, and brave, regardless of what comes. You can count on it.

*Claudia King did become a teacher, librarian, and author. This story is excerpted from an interview for StoryShare, presented by our Blue Sage Center for the Arts. Don't miss its next incarnation!*

## CRAWFORD CORNER

The Crawford Senior Center is going strong! At noon on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Crawford Community Church, gather with your fellow elders for lunch and a stimulating program. August 6th, local favorite The Boardwalk will cater the meal, followed by "Tales from the Good Ol' Days," an interactive endeavor with Yuri Chicovsky. Yuri, a gifted teacher, filmmaker, and musician, has long facilitated a lively memoir group at the Paonia Senior Center; in Crawford he wants to hear YOUR stories, especially about Crawford way-back-when. Memories matter.

On Wednesday August 20th, enjoy a program with Marianne Potje, the new manager of the Crawford Library, who will update us on offerings to enrich the lives of patrons of all ages. We'll enjoy a great lunch from the folks at AP Catering, who always put on a delicious feed. Join us!

To make reservations (required) for the catered meal, please call Wanda Gofforth, NFSC board member, at 970.216.6345. \$6 donation.

## Two Senior Excursions to Local Farms!

The hemp grows high out at Fields of Glory Organic Farm. Owners Claire and Steve Schauer invite local seniors for a tour and picnic along the North Fork River on Monday, August 25th, at noon. It's a brown-bag affair, so bring your own lunch and tableware. If you'd like to attend, please email Laura Lee at [nfseniorconnections@gmail.com](mailto:nfseniorconnections@gmail.com) or leave a message at 970.527.3482 by end-of-day 8/22 so we can carpool and know how much lemonade to bring! Great CBD products available for sale

This month for her 'Seniors on Farms' event, amazing chef Chrys Bailey is taking us to Zephyros Flower Farm. Take a tour and meet the farmers, enjoy a farm activity involving flowers, and then share a bountiful lunch featuring organic produce from around the valley. Join us on Wednesday, August 13th, from 11:30-2. Please reserve a spot by texting Faye on 970-209-9721. Suggested donation \$25.

## August Birthdays



Lee Overton 8/2  
Bonnie Quinn 8/13  
Carol Kiese 8/20

## Happy Birthday to:

Paula Harper 8/6  
Janice Ruppert 8/14  
Tom Hayden 8/31

## August Calendar

### What's Happening in August

Mark **TUESDAYS @2 on your calendar**. 2pm each week at Paonia Senior Center. 8/5 Breathe to Save Your Life\* w/Derek Udy; 8/12 Song Circle w/ Ellen Stapenhorst; 8/19 Breathe to Save Your Life\* w/Derek Udy; 8/26 Book Club will discuss Biographies. \*Note: Breathing classes last 45 minutes and start promptly at 2: don't be late!

**RIVER WALKS now on Thursdays at 9AM** led by a volunteer. Meet at the Gazebo in River Park parking lot and enjoy exercise in congenial company and beautiful surroundings. Sun and mosquito protection/water recommended.

**Here & Now MEDITATION**-Meg O'Shaughnessy facilitates this ongoing group at Paonia Senior Center Thursday mornings at 9:00-10:00. All are welcome.

**Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)** Exercise and fall prevention classes presented by the North Fork EMS: Paonia Senior Center Tues & Fri 8:45-9:45 or 10-11; Hotchkiss Memorial Hall – Mon & Thurs @9:30; Crawford Town Hall 10-11 Mondays, advanced classes continuing Tues & Thurs 5:30-6:30 pm.

**Write Your Life**- Memoir for Seniors at Paonia Senior Center on Wednesdays at 1:30. Please call for more info/to join.

**Senior Meals**— Paonia Senior Center open for VOA Lunch (also available for Pick-up) M,W & F: Call Debbie at (970) 874-7661 for more info or to sign up.

**Hotchkiss Senior Center** serves hot full meals cooked on the premises Tues, Wed and Thurs, all at noon. No reservation required, to-go or-

ders available. 872.3494

**KPP Dinner** at the Creamery benefitting NFSC Monday, August 18th. Please join us (See poster pg 4)

**ASEDD, the Dementia caregivers support group**, meets in person at Hotchkiss town hall, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 1:30.

**Chrys Bailey Senior Luncheon** @ The Trading Post on Wednesday, 8/27, from 11:30 -2 pm. Enjoy amazing food and fabulous presenter Norm Lewark. Please reserve a spot by texting Faye on 970-209-9721. Suggested donation \$25.

**Catered lunches @ Paonia Senior Center** Thursdays @ Noon. 8/7 Rio Bravo; 8/14 TBD; 8/21 Sweetgrass; 8/27 Potluck! Reservations for catered meals required—sign up starts Friday before next Thursday's lunch by calling 527.3435, or signing up in person at the Senior Center. \$5-6 per person. Potlucks are free—please bring a dish to share, with no reservations required.

Thanks to our generous sponsors:



Thanks to our generous coffee sponsor:  
We appreciate your support!



# North Fork Senior Connections

*Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place*

P.O. Box 1738 Paonia, CO 81428



August  
2025

## Board of Directors

Bruce Woodside, Chair  
Bonnie Eisenberg, Vice Chair  
Brad Thacker, Treasurer  
Marsha Brezonick, Paonia  
Wanda Gofforth, Crawford  
Carol Jaques, Paonia  
Paula Martin, Paonia  
Lindi Mereness, Paonia  
Mark Sullivant, Hotchkiss  
Facilities Manager  
Laura Lee Yates,  
Program Manager

**Printed by High Country Printing and Graphics**  
Print production by John Valentine on Adobe InDesign

Enjoy an evening at The  
Creamery with fun entertainment  
by the Monday Session and  
delicious locally-grown food!

## North Fork Senior Connections

at a

### KIDS' PASTA PROJECT DINNER



Monday, August 18th  
6:00 pm

at

The Creamery

165 W. Bridge Street in Hotchkiss

## Serving

Appetizers, Lasagne, Salad,  
Artisan Bread & Dessert

\$25 adults / \$15 for 12 and under

Wine Grab!

## Reservations Required!

Email [kppreservations@gmail.com](mailto:kppreservations@gmail.com)  
or text Moni at (970) 250-6836.  
Please make reservations by Friday,  
August 15th at 5:00 PM.

Vegetarian and gluten free options  
available but must be noted when  
making reservation.

*Celebrate with Us!*