



Happy Trails!

by Laura Lee Yates for North Fork Senior Connections

Many years ago my mother died of congestive heart failure. I vowed that would never happen to me, that my heart would continue to grow until my last days on this planet. In my work with NFSC I discovered limitless opportunities to expand, uncovering more love than I ever imagined. Legendary radio host Bernard Meltzer said: "There is no better exercise for your heart than reaching down and helping to lift someone up," and I believe he spoke the truth.

As I retire from my job as Program Manager for this organization, I've been reflecting on how much the experience has taught me. Throughout the rest of my life I've been an independent self-starter, a creative wild card who never managed anyone or anything, and was determined that would continue until my final days. But life has a way of throwing a curve ball when we least expect it. I'd like to say it was easy and I hit a home run, but I'd characterize my performance as more of a sacrifice fly. Let's face it: nobody's good at everything.

Despite any semblance of organizational skills I know that I managed to accomplish quite a lot—because I cared (perhaps too much: boundaries are another weakness....) I cared about the people I worked with, and knew that together we could accomplish important things. I cared about our mission, believing it's crucial to keep our community's elders active and socially engaged, with volunteer help that can assist folks in staying in their homes as long as possible. The neighborly kindness of individuals in Paonia, Hotchkiss, and Crawford has truly been an inspiration: You know who you are, and words aren't enough to demonstrate my gratitude.

I had the good fortune to learn the ins-and-

outs of this job from the uber-generous Linda McCone, now in Costa Rica, then worked alongside the brilliance of Medina Ryan. Faye Sullivan evolved from valued Board member to Operations Manager, and her passion (especially for food!) and dedication brought new life to NFSC—and to me. We look forward to the birth of her second son just about the time of Fall Service Saturday.

This job would have been a LOT easier if I was an organized person like my wonderful replacement, the extraordinary Jean Berman. It is so reassuring to know that I leave you in hands far more capable than my own. She has the good fortune to have the assistance of a new volunteer, computer ace Cami Esser, who is whipping our archaic technology into shape to face the upcoming challenges.

I will miss the daily contact with the big-hearted senior community of Paonia, where I've inhabited the office for these past years. Lynne Bear and Bobbie Selk have given so much and served as role models. Board member Mark Sullivan and his wife Jeanette have extended our Handy Helper services to many Hotchkiss elders in need. This summer our expansion to Crawford, spearheaded by Wanda Gofforth—a true force of nature—provided me the chance to meet dozens of new elders, and I have high hopes that their new Senior Center will thrive and grow.

When I began this final article, I had no idea so many tears hovered just behind my eyelids. Excited about my future focus on writing fiction—especially my long-delayed historical trilogy set in the 1580s—I forgot how hard it is to say goodbye. So I'll just say fare-thee-well to every one of you from the bottom of my heart.



BLUE RAVEN
WELLNESS

INTEGRATING WELLNESS THROUGH BREATH, BODYWORK, AND NUTRITION

Derek Udy's program "Breathing to Save your Life" will now happen monthly! The first Tuesday@2 @ Paonia Senior Center will feature basic breathing mechanics, the how, what, when and where of breathing and how to apply to daily life for maximum benefits. Class will only last 45 minutes, so be ready to start September 2nd by 2pm! By donation.

Wild Sage Natural Burials



Wild Sage Natural Burials will offer a presentation September 30th around their nearing goal of establishing a green burial preserve in the North Fork Valley. What is it? How will it serve our community? What kind of a legacy do you want to leave? The presentation will be interactive and not without humor! Tuesday@2 at Paonia Senior Center

Therapeutic Yoga

Ashley Sargent of Paonia Yoga & Movement (also a great SAIL instructor!) will lead an introduction to Therapeutic Yoga on September 16th's Tuesday@2. We'll be using her studio a block away from the Paonia Senior Center at 215 Grand Avenue (next to the Paradise Theater). Limited to the first 16 participants; you need to be able to get down on the floor & back up (with help). Mats provided.

Senior Movies Return!

After a brief hiatus, the Paradise Theater is offering the classic drama "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" on Thursday, September 11, at 10AM. From a Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Tennessee Williams, the 1958 film stars Paul Newman, Elizabeth Taylor, and Burl Ives. After Brick Pollitt (Newman) injures himself while drunkenly revisiting his high school sports-star days, he and his tempestuous wife, Maggie (Taylor), visit his family's Mississippi plantation for the 65th birthday of cantankerous father, Big Daddy (Ives).



Please note: At this point in time, there is no grant money supporting this program, so no free popcorn and drinks for seniors. Support our community theater!

CRAWFORD CORNER

Twice a month, on the first and third Wednesdays, North Fork Senior Connections invites local elders to the Crawford Senior Center for food, friendship, and a program at the Crawford Community Church. On the first Wednesday, September 3, at noon, enjoy a catered lunch, followed by the wonderful folks from NFEMS, who will share information about the Community Paramedicine program, aka CARES. Learn about all the services you can receive without leaving your home! The third Wednesday, August 17, another tasty lunch precedes the experts from United Business Bank discussing elder financial exploitation in a presentation designed to "Take the Bite Out of the Scam Sandwich!"

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

*** If you can't make it, PLEASE let Wanda know so we don't order too much food!

September Birthdays

Happy Birthday to:



Sandy Chetnik-Norris 9/3
Mark Sullivant 9/12
Linda Driscoll 9/16
Laurene Bissell 9/23
Elaine Brett 9/30

Elaine Keaveny 9/5
Jan Hurley 9/15
Ellza Coye 9/22
Janet Oja 9/23

September Calendar

What's Happening in September

Mark **TUESDAYS @2** on your calendar. 2pm each week at Paonia Senior Center. 9/2 Breathe to Save Your Life (see article pg. 2); 9/9 Song Circle w/ Ellen Stapenhorst; 9/16 Therapeutic Yoga (see article pg 2); 9/23 Book Club—Local Male Authors; 9/30 Green Burial (see article Pg. 2)

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.

Here & Now MEDITATION—Meg O'Shaughnessy facilitates this popular 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 orders available. 872.3494/

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

Catered lunches @ Paonia Senior Center Thursdays @ Noon. 9/4 Chrys Bailey; 9/11 Flying Fork; 9/18 Clemie Bouton; 9/25 AP Catering. 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. \$6 per person

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We appreciate your support!

North Fork Senior Connections

Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place

P.O. Box 1738 Paonia, CO 81428



September
2025

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I SURE ENJOYED WORKING WITH YOU, LAURA LEE!*



Passing the torch:
Laura Lee Yates hands over
NFSC Program Manager du-
ties to Jean Berman.

James Schott, former NFSC
Board member, interacts
with a young waiter at our
successful KPP dinner on
August 18

