



## You Can Make a Difference!

By Jean Berman

At this time of year, peace and goodwill are a focus in many traditions. These traditions may inspire us, but how may we do our part to help make that focus a reality - not just now, but during the year?

Each one of us has the choice, every day, to look for and see the best in one another. Each person comes from the same source of life, with the potential to bring their unique gifts into the world. Perhaps within each person is a treasure, which may need someone else to see and invite it forward. Did anyone make a difference in your life by “seeing” you, and maybe seeing and supporting potential you were not aware of?

Interestingly, as we care for and respect ourselves, we are more able to care for and respect others. By looking for the best in one another, our own gaze is lifted and lightened, and we may extend a silent invitation to another. Maybe someone is feeling sunk in stress, depression, pain, or self-doubt, but if we look to see that person’s best self, there is an opening to be lifted out of that hard place.

Sometimes it is easier to see the best in someone who is an acquaintance. How about with someone who is closer, like a family member? Instead of focussing on things that annoy or upset me, can I see that person in a new light, appreciating their best qualities? Can I do that not just today or tomorrow, but over time?

We can indeed choose to make it a habit of looking for the best in others, which takes time and patience toward oneself first! In my experience, it’s a more relaxed and enjoyable way to be with

others, even if that other person never changes.

Thank you for the measure of peace and goodwill you give to members of our North Fork Valley Community and beyond, and the part you play, large or small, that makes a difference in our world!

Happy and meaningful holidays from your North Fork Senior Connections.

## We Celebrate!

Major December Holidays all celebrate light in darkness, and focus on what is held as sacred, peace, goodwill, family and community, meaningful observances, and food, gifts, music and decoration

- **Winter Solstice** - December 21 - Marking the shortest day of the year and the longest night in the Northern Hemisphere, Winter Solstice celebrations date from before recorded history, celebrating the “return of the sun” and longer days beginning.
- **Hanukkah** - December 14-22 - Remembering the recapture and rededication of the ancient temple in Jerusalem. Hanukkah means “rededication” and is a time to consider what individuals want to rededicate themselves to. As a Jew, Jesus would have celebrated Hanukkah during his life.
- **Christmas** - December 25 - Celebrates the birth of Jesus of Nazareth and is for many the most sacred day of the year.
- **Kwanzaa** - December 26 - January 1 - A celebration of African-American heritage, Kwanzaa highlights 7 values, including purpose, creativity and faith.

## Our Staff

Hi, I'm **Jess Ott**, and I'm grateful to be stepping into the role of Operations Manager here at NFSC. I'm excited to be working alongside Jean and with the Board, to support this community and be of service to our larger community in the NFV that I love so much. A little about me... My background includes many years supporting older adults in various clinical and community settings. I feel passionate about helping people stay engaged and active in ways that feel meaningful to them, organizing and offering support, and creating ways to connect communities. Things that bring me joy include coffee, hiking, camping, swimming, skiing, rainstorms, photography, music, dancing and a good soak in any hot springs. I look forward to getting to know each of you and connecting soon!

Greetings from **Jean Berman**, Program Manager. I am thrilled to work with Jess and be of use in this



growing, thriving North Fork community of seniors. I've been in Paonia for a year and am grateful to all who have helped me feel at home. For decades I've been involved in helping to make the end-of-life transition meaningful in various ways, am an ordained Interfaith Chaplain, enjoy being active outdoors including hiking and gardening, take several wonderful local movement classes, ferment veggies, sing in the North Fork Community Choir, occasionally write and paint, and sew buttons on all kinds of things just for fun.

## Our Newest Board Member

Welcome to our newest board member, **Betsy Marston!** Betsy is a 50-year resident of Paonia who started a local paper here with her husband, Ed, then became the editor of High Country News, where she worked for 35 years. She and her son, Dave, now run Writers on the Range, a western opinion service. She loves SAIL exercise classes,

## Thank You to Our Donors:

To the El Pomar Foundation, which is helping to underwrite our Senior Meal Program for much of 2026!



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To the Town of Hotchkiss, Paonia Farm & Home Supply, Dependable Lumber, and to Elena Goldstein, Paula Knighton, Paige Smith, Orval and Shirley Cotton, Debra White, JM Stark and R Caoua, and Bill and Carol Wellman.

Thank you to LightNorthForkValley for highlighting the NFSC as a chosen charity in our community. Thank you to Needlerock Mountain Realty and Land for a donation of a dump trailer for our use.

The NFSC Fundraiser 'A Night in Gay Paris' was a huge success! We would like to thank our sponsors: Don's Market, Paonia Farm & Home, Dependable Lumber, Fiona's Bartique. And our Musicians for donating their talent: Gertie & the Ghost Peppers Jazz Band. And Cami Esser for donating sweet treats from Coquelicot Pastries (Clemie).

## December Calendar

**Survey** - Would you please take 5-10 minutes to fill out this **anonymous survey** on-line or enclosed in your printed newsletter? This will help us to serve you better by understanding your needs. It also helps us apply for grants, and lets us know what kind of programs you are interested in, and when. Your voice matters here! Please complete the survey by December 15. Thank you!

Click on the following link to take you to the survey (or mail back if you have a paper copy :

<https://forms.gle/487WERLGsC3WkxMg7>

*All activities - Paonia Senior Center unless otherwise noted)*

### Special Events:

**Deck the Paonia Senior Center** Wednesday, December 3 at 9:30am - come help decorate for the winter holidays in a festive atmosphere

**Crawford Lunch** Wednesday, Dec 3 at noon - AP Catering and "The Gift of Sight" DJ White will present her many eye missions to areas of need near and far.

Wednesday, December 17, catered by North Fork Boardwalk

**Souper Tuesday with Anthony**, Tuesday, Dec 16th at noon - Globally trained professional chef is volunteering to cook and serve healthy and nutritious soups. Please come enjoy fresh chicken, vegetables and rice soup and local bread. No registration necessary. Suggested donation \$2-\$3 or as you wish. Paonia

**Craft and Chat**, Tuesday, Dec 16 at 2 pm - bring your own craft project or relax and color while visiting with friends and neighbors. Snacks welcome. Paonia

**Game Afternoon**, Tuesday, Dec 23 at 2 pm - Rummikub, Yahtzee, Dominoes, Mah Jong, cards or bring your own and have some good old fashioned fun! Snacks welcome. Paonia

**Storytelling**, Tuesday, December 30 at 2 pm - Have a story to share? Each person who wishes will have up to 5 minutes to tell a meaningful, memorable, or funny story from their life. Snacks welcome. Paonia

### Regular Events:

**Dementia Caregivers Support Group** - 2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 1:30 Hotchkiss Town Hall (sponsored by ASEDD - Awareness, Support, and Education about Dementia for Delta

County)

**Meditation** - Thursdays 9-10 am. Meg O'Shaughnessy facilitates the Weekly Meditation Circle. All are welcome! Paonia

**Riverwalks** - Thursdays at 9 am. Meet at the Gazebo in the Paonia River Park parking lot

**Stay Active & Independent for Life (SAIL)** Mon & Thurs 9:30-10:30 Hotchkiss Memorial Hall

- Monday 10-11 Crawford Town Hall

- Tues & Thurs 5:30-6:30 - Advanced Classes Crawford Town Hall

- Tues & Fri 8:45-9:45 & 10-11 Paonia Senior Center

**Senior Meals at Noon**

- Mon, Wed & Fri - Volunteers of America Lunch (dine in or pick up) - for info call Debbie at 970-874-7661 Paonia

- Tues, Wed & Thurs - Hot meals cooked and served at the Hotchkiss Senior Center - no reservation required; to go orders available. 970-872-3494

- Thursdays catered lunches in Paonia** - sign up between Friday - Monday by noon, in person, or call 970-527-3435, \$6 donation - correct change appreciated (if you need to cancel, please call)

- December 4 - Rio Bravo

- December 11 - Chrys Bailey

- December 18 - Clemie Bouton

**Shakespeare Discussion Group** - Tuesday December 16, 6-7:30 - "Twelfth Night". Join us to discuss this merry tale of shipwreck, mistaken identity, and household mischief. Read the play, watch a film, or just show up to join us in discussion. 3rd Tuesday of each month. Paonia

**Tuesdays at 2 Paonia**

- December 2 - Breathe to Save your Life with Derek Udy, by donation

- December 9 - Song Circle with Ellen Stapenhorst

- Other Tuesdays - see above

**Write Your Life** - Memoirs - Wednesdays at 1:30 Please call for information or to join Paonia

**North Fork Senior Connections Board Meeting** - Tuesday, December 9 at 11:30 Paonia

## Board of Directors



- Wanda Gofforth, Chair (Crawford)
- Bonnie Eisenberg, Vice Chair (Hotchkiss)
- Brad Thacker, Treasurer (Paonia)
- Mark Sullivant, Facilities Manager (Hotchkiss)
- Lindi Mereness - Secretary (Paonia)
- Marsha Brezonick (Paonia)
- Carol Jacques (Paonia)
- Paula Martin (Paonia)
- Betsy Marston (Paonia)
- Jean Berman, Program Manager
- Jess Ott, Operations Manager

December 2025

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

Desks Needed! The Paonia Senior Center needs 2 desks for our employees. Do you have 1 or 2 to donate or sell? We'll pick them up!



**Colorado Gives Day** - December 9, 2025

You can Join the wave of generosity sweeping across Colorado on December 9 by making a contribution to support North Fork Senior Connections. Colorado Gives day connects thousands of Coloradans to the non profits making a difference in their own communities. Your contribution to Senior Connections sup-

ports the senior centers in Paonia and Crawford and all the programs and services we provide throughout the North Fork Valley.

New Monthly gifts will be matched by CO Gives, up to \$100! Monthly contributions can be set up with one click, and you will hardly notice the \$10 or \$20 a month that will mean so much to us. Here is the direct link: <https://www.coloradogives.org/organization/North-Fork-Senior-Connections#matching-grantshe>

Early giving is open now, so you don't have to wait until December 9.

Contributions to Senior Connections can also be made anytime on our website:

[nfseniorconnections.org](https://nfseniorconnections.org)

## Neighborly Rides

Free transportation for seniors, within Delta county, for medical appointments, grocery shopping and other errands. Call 970-527-1735, several days in advance, to schedule a ride, or to request a driver application.

## Calendar

Have you been wishing our calendar was in a printable form to tack up somewhere? That's what we're trying with this issue. Please let us know what works best for you!

[nfseniorconnections@gmail.com](mailto:nfseniorconnections@gmail.com)