



RIDGWAY EVENTS  
**CALENDAR**

See the Arts, Page 5  
for related events

**THURSDAY, Dec. 31**

**NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY.** at Ouray Elks Lodge, open to the public starting 6 p.m. with karaoke starting at 7:30 p.m. Finger food and drink specials, open to the public. Fireworks in Ouray at midnight. Info: 626-4239.

**SATURDAY, JAN. 2**

**OURAY FLAT ICE FESTIVAL** weather permitting, in support of the Rotary Ice Rink. Food, refreshments, skate rentals, and family-centered events and contests. Info: 325-0088.

**THURSDAY, JAN. 7**

**BETH MOORE BIBLE STUDY.** The United Church of the San Juans will host Moore's study of "The Patriarchs: Encountering the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" from 9-11 a.m. Program continues each Thursday until March 11. Childcare is available. Info: Donna Whiskeman, 729-0273.

**THURSDAY-SUNDAY, Jan. 7-10**

**15TH ANNUAL OURAY ICE FESTIVAL.** Annual gathering of ice climbers, exhibitors, and spectators. Events include the featured mixed-route climbing competition, interactive climbing clinics from beginner to advanced, Kids Climbing College, and gear demos. Info: www.ourayicefestival.com

**WEATHER  
IN REVIEW**

DATE	HIGH	LOW	PCP	SNOW	SOG
14	42	1			2"
15	43	2			2"
16	45	8			1"
17	46	5			1"
18	34	5			1"
19	48	3			
20	40	9			
21	38	20			
22	37	21			
23	29	0	.08	7"	7"
24	26	-8			5"
25	26	-7			5"
26	24	-10			5"
27	24	-3			4"

As recorded in Ridgway by NOAA observer Dick Crabb will resume after the holidays

**THE RIDGWAY SUN**

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## Chimney ignites Christmas fire

### Huge response by fire agencies saves three-story house

PLEASANT VALLEY – A smoldering chimney fire nearly destroyed a home at the base of Log Hill Mesa during the afternoon and evening of Christmas Day, leaving the structure unliveable.

Firefighters from the Log Hill Fire Protection District, and mutual aid fire agencies from Montrose and Ridgway, responded to a page for a residential fire on County Road 1 beginning at 1:55 p.m.

The LHFPD responded with 15 pieces of equipment, Montrose FD with one and Ridgway FD with three, jamming CR1 at the home's driveway entry for hours.

Ouray County Emergency Medical Services personnel and the Ouray County Sheriff's office also provided support and traffic control.

The large, three-story, custom-designed cedar home was saved by the firefighters, but only after sustaining extensive damage



► Fire caused damage to high ceiling around the fireplace of the three-story house in Ridgeview Estates. Sun photos: Chris Pike



► Flames charred the first-floor walls adjacent to the fireplace where the fire originated. Sun photo: Chris Pike

throughout the roofing, ceiling and chimney areas from the flames, as well as smoke and water damage on all floors.

An insurance adjuster was on site Monday to assess damages.

The owners of the house requested they not be identified, because of concerns that the unoccupied house might be a target of crime.

After the fire started, flames burst through the roofing and could be seen from Highway 62 and beyond as late as 6 p.m.

According to Log Hill Fire Protection District Chief John Rogers, 25 firefighters were on the scene, commencing a "direct attack" utilizing all three agencies until the "clear time" of 9:45 p.m. when the fire was completely extinguished. Rogers reported that there were no injuries.

"The fire started in the chimney structure at

the top and all three floors were involved," Rogers said.

Firefighters faced some logistical challenges because of the terrain and siting of the house in staging their equipment for the fire.

Due to the height of the ceiling, and the fact that the fire was "running in the roof between the asphalt and the tongue-in-groove ceiling," the fire as such took longer to reach and contain.

Friends, neighbors and some EMS responders assisted the couple in saving furniture and belongings, which were removed and transported to other locations for temporary storage.

One neighbor in the subdivision gave the keys to his home to the couple at the fire scene, offering the couple refuge for the next few weeks.

— By Christopher Pike, correspondent

## Town finds GOCO money under tree

DENVER – The Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Board has awarded its final Lottery grants for 2009 and the Town of Ridgway has come up a winner.

The town was awarded \$42,500 for the second phase of work on the Ridgway Regional Athletic Park.

The town began work on the park in 2002 and, with GOCO support, has completed substantial work including multi-purpose athletic fields, restrooms, walking paths, tennis courts and a skate park.

The new grant will help with the construction of a gazebo in the Athletic Park to provide

needed shelter and shade for all users. The gazebo will be placed at the location in the park where two trails converge. The gazebo will be constructed of salvaged timbers from Colorado beetle kill. It is anticipated that the gazebo will see considerable use by sports teams, and by the community for events and gatherings.

Statewide, the GOCO Board awarded \$4.49 million for 44 projects. GOCO received a total of 92 applications requesting \$8.17 million. GOCO is the result of a citizens' initiative that was passed by 58% of the voters in 1992. It receives approximately half of Colorado Lottery proceeds—\$54.3 million in Fiscal Year 2009.

— Special to The Ridgway Sun

## Gift effort goes great

An effort to assemble care packages for military personnel serving on the front lines has gone "absolutely wonderfully."

That's according to Ridgway sculptor Mike McCullough, who along with his partner Lucy Boody has organized the project.

"Lucy and I are at this moment packaging them up and getting ready to send them," McCullough said on Tuesday morning. "Special thanks go out to Dick and ME Spirek, Gig and Annette Henry, Sydney Melzer, Susan and Tim Huet, and Christen Davis of Duckett's Market and Darin Hill of Mountain Market, Kathy Elmont of the Ouray City Hall, and especially to Michael Thomas, DDS, who gave us enough toothpaste for a whole regiment!"

McCullough and Boody's original concept was to send care pack-

ages to military personnel from Ouray County. "We wanted to find out what neighbors we have out there protecting our freedoms, and to tell them thanks," said McCullough, whose daughter Grace is currently deployed on the USS Essex/Japan.

But, McCullough said, "We found out that most of our soldiers are either state-side or stationed at a non-aggressive military station. They deferred Lucy and me to find front-line active duty soldiers serving in places like Iraq and Afghanistan."

So the scope of the project shifted. Only two locals – Grace McCullough, and Matt Ethridge (currently serving on the USS Ronald Reagan) – will be receiving care packages through this effort. McCullough and Boody found four additional recipients, all of whom are recently deployed, active-duty

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