



THE RETURN

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Weekend Edition THE Durango HERALD

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Foraging can offer residents health benefits, connection to land



JERRY MCBRIDE/Durango Herald photos

Catherine Girillos with Turtle Lake Refuge looks at mallow, an edible plant, while foraging for plants last week in Durango alleyways. The nonprofit wants to carry on the edible plant teachings of founder Katrina Blair, who died June 5.

IGNACIO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Resource officer accused of abuse

Preston Donald Rea allegedly pushed student to ground

BY ELIZABETH POND HERALD STAFF WRITER

An Ignacio School District resource officer has been charged with one count of child abuse after an incident in which the officer allegedly pushed a student to the ground during school hours.

Sixth Judicial District Attorney Sean Murray said the incident took place at 2:39 p.m. May 7 on the Ignacio Middle School campus. School Resource Officer Preston Donald Rea allegedly pushed a 12-year-old child to the ground. The child was in seventh grade.

"After a thorough investigation conducted by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, I have decided to file a charge against a School Resource Officer with the Ignacio Police Department," said a Wednesday decision letter signed by Murray.

Murray declined to share additional details about the circumstances surrounding the incident. He said he could not share footage of the incident - neither body camera nor campus security footage - because of the case being active and victim protection considerations.

"The district attorney's office takes use of force seriously and will continue to enforce the law without fear or favor if excessive

See OFFICER, 7A

Plants! It's what's for dinner

BY ELIZABETH POND HERALD STAFF WRITER

For Turtle Lake Refuge team member and longtime forager Catherine Girillos, foraging for edible plants is more than just a cool hobby: it's a source of freedom.

"It's just the anxiety that it takes away," she said. "I'm not going to starve to death, no matter how crappy things get. It might not be Burger King, but I'm not going to starve to death, and I'll probably be healthier because I'm not eating that stuff."

There are over 400 edible plants growing in the Rocky

Mountains, but many residents don't know how to identify them or take advantage of their health properties.

Girillos goes foraging around Durango three times a week, and some of what she collects is used in food and drinks served at the Turtle Lake Refuge Cafe on East Third Avenue.

Turtle Lake Refuge, a nonprofit founded by the late Katrina Blair, has been operating in Durango for close to 30 years.

Blair died June 5 after a battle with cancer. She was 56.

"We're carrying it on," Girillos said. "This family has



Mullein is commonly used in teas for respiratory support, and its flowers can be made into a hair rinse, according to Turtle Lake Refuge's Catherine Girillos.

done so much for this town, and we want to keep it going."

The refuge's mission is to "celebrate the connection between personal health and wild lands," according to the organization's website. The group forages, grows and prepares local, wild and living foods from the Turtle Lake Community farm and teaches the community and local students about sustainability, gardening and the value of wild foods.

Durango offers bountiful foraging options along the Animas River Trail, in neighborhoods and even in alleyways, and

See FORAGE, 7A

ELECTION 2026

La Plata County primary ballots are out. Who are these people?

Election day is June 30; mail-ins should be sent to clerk and recorder by June 22

BY JESSIE BOWMAN HERALD STAFF WRITER

Primary ballots should have arrived in most La Plata County mailboxes this week with contentious races playing out on both the Republican and Democratic tickets.

Voter turnout is expected to be higher than usual as a result

of the number of candidates and several important primary races, including the Democratic race for governor between Attorney General Phil Weiser and U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet.

The primary could also force U.S. Rep. Jeff Hurd, who represents Colorado's 3rd Congressional District, to defend his status as a Republican.

Hurd's opponent, Ron Hanks, a staunch supporter of President Donald Trump, has repeatedly criticized some of Hurd's actions as being at odds with the president's and the Republican Party's agenda.

La Plata County races seem tame, with La Plata County commissioner Elizabeth Philbrick running unopposed on the Democratic ticket, and no Republican candidates for county commission appearing on the Republican ballot.

Several other county positions are up for reelection, but candidates for clerk and recorder and coroner are absent from primary ballots and will likely run as unaffiliated in the November general election.

Primary election day is June 30, but mail-in ballots should be returned by June 22.

The Durango Herald reached out to all candidates - except those running unopposed - and requested 50-word responses to two questions each.

Candidates are listed in the order they appear on the ballot.

Republican ballot U.S. Senator

Mark Baisley - Unopposed

Colorado state Sen. Mark Baisley originally planned to run for Colorado governor. He has served in the Colorado Senate going on eight years.

See BALLOTS, 8A

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