



SMALL-TOWN SPOTLIGHT

# La Veta, Colorado

**D**riving into La Veta, I couldn't help but flash back to the Frank Capra movie *Lost Horizon*.

Deep in the Himalayan Mountains, survivors of a plane crash are taken from the icy cold to a valley called Shangri-la, where they are stunned by its beauty and warmth.

Heading west from Walsenburg on U.S. Highway 160 and going south on Colorado Highway 12, you enter a valley with the Spanish Peaks, part of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, in the background. No matter what time of year, you may find yourself pausing for breath and startled by the sudden beauty of what lies before you.

Col. John M. Francisco came to La Veta in 1840 and helped found the town in 1862. After seeing the valley, he reportedly said, "This is paradise enough for me." La Veta translates from Spanish to "the vein" and probably refers to early gold veins rumored to be in the vicinity.

The town's population is less than 1,000, and the main street is about

two blocks long. Locals and visitors hang out in front of Charlie's Market eating ice cream and waving at the people who drive through town. After just a couple of days, you'll feel like a local, too.

Down the street is Ryus Avenue Bakery Farm Cafe and Market. Locals gather for the coffee, sweets, soups and salads. You don't need the address; just follow the wafting smell of fresh-baked pies. I had cherry when I was there but have vowed to try apple next time I'm in town. Hang out and talk about where to get the freshest bacon or local goat cheese.

La Veta has become a small mecca for artists, and the town hosts many festivals. The local Celtic Music Festival in the fall attracts many visitors from Scotland and Ireland. Oktoberfest and Art in the Park are also popular. On weekends, you can ride the old steam-engine train between La Veta and Alamosa to see breathtaking views and possibly bears, elk, coyotes and other wildlife.

Just outside of town, you'll want

**La Veta blends the beauty of old Spanish architecture with rugged natural beauty.**

to go for a drive along the scenic Highway of the Legends to see otherworldly rock formations unlike any others in Colorado. Go south through La Veta along Highway 12, as the road rises up to Cuchara Pass. If you're interested in history, continue on to explore the Old West town of Trinidad along the Santa Fe Trail.

Hikers and bikers love this area's many trails, which are suitable for all different skill levels. If you like ghost towns, check out Uptop just 15 minutes west of La Veta. Locals love to tell stories about the ghosts who still mingle around in this now empty town built back in 1877.

Just as in Shangri-la, it seems that time stands still in La Veta. I find myself coming back here again and again, and you will, too.

**Cathy Roy**  
Denver, Colorado



MOMENTS OF GRACE

## The Grass Is Always Greener

**Many are the sermons** and lectures, letters and talks on perspective. You know, the ones about the glass being half empty, or is it half full? I am sure that there is a great deal of wisdom to be found in many of them. However, the best illustration I have ever seen on perspective was delivered by a small herd of goats.

My goats can often be found munching their way along a fencerow in our pasture, stretching and straining their necks through the wire to the just-out-of-reach superior grass on the other side. No doubt it was greener as well.

Usually, this munching and stretching and straining continues down the fencerow until the goats reach a hole in the wire large enough for them to squeeze through to the promised land on the other side.

However, these shortsighted goats then work their way back up the same fencerow and begin munching and stretching and straining their necks through the wire to the very blades of grass that weren't worthy moments earlier.

It's funny how a new perspective changes things. Their old pasture now lay before them in a new and inviting light.

Those goats were just like me. How often have I looked at my lot in life and thought, *I was made for better stuff.*

And then, every once in a while, the Lord gives me a chance to slip through the wire and overhear others comment on what I have. I am always amazed to hear the envy in their voices.

But I have a pretty good pasture. I just forget that sometimes, until I slip through the fence for a spell.

**Alan Durham**  
Collierville, Tennessee

GOATS: GREGORY JOHNSTON/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; BULBS: STEVE COLLENDER/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



## Here Comes CHRISTMAS!

*Nobody loves holiday fun like folks in the country! Get a head start at these festivals.*

**Nov. 21**

### Hometown Holiday Horse Parade

GREENVILLE, OHIO

Jingle all the way with horses, bells and sleighs as the 12th annual parade kicks off the holiday season in downtown Greenville. Lighted carriages, hitches and riders will illuminate the route.

### Christmas Light Parade

BARABOO, WISCONSIN

Glittering floats, reindeer, horses, marching bands and local organizations celebrate throughout downtown. The winner of the kids coloring contest will ride in Santa's sleigh.

**Nov. 28**

### Lighted Tractor Parade

GEYSERVILLE, CALIFORNIA

This holly jolly event fires up the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Townsfolk gather for the tree-lighting ceremony and the tractor parade, showcasing farm vehicles decked out in lights.



A fire engine joins the parade in Geyserville.



# Home for the Holidays

**MY FAMILY HAD MOVED** away from our farm for nine years to be closer to our older parents and assist them as needed. But we now had an opportunity to return home and build a new house on the property.

With only the foundation and a few of the floor joists in place, my husband, B.D., invited our two sons, our son-in-law and their families to come over on Thanksgiving. They were instructed to bring hammers, nail aprons and saws and to arrive early. We told them dinner would be served at noon.

Of course, all of the family members gathered together. The grandchildren were excited by this new experience of seeing a house go up from the ground—just like in the old days. Everyone had a part in the construction, even the dog!

The neighbors heard the commotion and all came over to marvel at how fast the house was going up and to offer support. By the end of

Saturday, the 2,000-square-foot house was up and ready for the roofers, bricklayers and window installers to do their work.

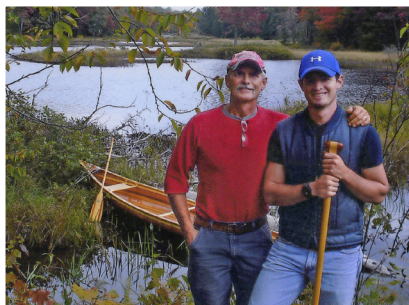
When we count our blessings, we remember the whole family taking part in building our house and enjoying the good food we prepared. The menu was the traditional meal of turkey and dressing, served with all the trimmings, wonderful Southern desserts and, of course, sweet iced tea.

We still live in that same house, and everyone gathers here during the holidays to enjoy good food and to welcome new members into the family, which now numbers eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Maybe we will have to build another house next Thanksgiving to show all the new members of the family how it's done!

**Marcella Spence**  
*Lewisburg, Tennessee*

**FATHER-SON TEAM** Brian and Jacob Olds of Frankfort, New York, handcrafted this strip canoe. The end result was worth the three years it took to build it.



## Helping Hands

Lois Cordell, my dear mother-in-law, showed my daughter, Leah, (above) how to make bread. It warms my heart to see old-fashioned traditions being passed on to the next generation. Lois loves *Country* and gives her five children subscriptions every Christmas.

**Vicki Cordell**  
*Sulphur, Louisiana*

## Preparing and Sharing

The Thanksgiving memory I cherish most is tagging along with Mom as she gathered fall flowers from her garden to put on the table. As I carried the cut flowers to the house, I felt the fun of preparing for the special day.

Mom understood that little hands love to help. By allowing me to set the table and take coats at the door, she taught me to feel proud of a job well done.

Thanksgiving was not only a time to share a meal but also to pass down traditions and practice manners. When I was young, I was taught how to fold a napkin and carve a turkey. I learned from my parents, who had, in turn, learned from their parents. Sharing in the fun of preparing helped build the strong relationships that made for many meaningful celebrations.

**Jan Blankenburg**  
*Donnellson, Iowa*

## CARE TO SHARE?

Send us stories and photos of your family memories and we may print them! Get all the details from our submission guidelines on page 88.