



1st CHOICE REALTY

18401 E. Highway 24, Ste. 204
Woodland Park, CO 80863

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My contact information:

Direct Phone: 719.687.1516
Toll Free: 800.905.3811, Ext. 1516
Fax: 719.687.0488
Cell: 913.707.7547

Website:
www.davidmartinekc.com

Email:
davidmartinek@1stchoicerealtycb.com

The Legend of Carl Mangurt



David Martinek
Colorado Realtor



Top Photo: Pikes Peak
by David Martinek

Carl Mangurt sat on his front porch steps looking up at the Ponderosa pines scattered densely along Lovell Gulch trail. His home was an old one-room bark log cabin nestled almost invisibly among the trees a few hundred feet west of the Pike National Forest boundary near Woodland Park. A frail, wrinkled 80 year-old man, Carl wore his long white hair in a pony tail. Sewn on the left sleeve of his tattered old Army field jacket was a faded 'Big Red 1' patch.

"I wandered in the forest nearly everyday. It got to be *my* place. At some point most of the animals in the area grew quite comfortable with me being around, particularly the deer. I respected them." He spat again and offered me a chew from his Kentucky Twist. I gracefully declined.

"There were a lot of mule deer then. They're plentiful now, but back then you could almost step on them. Sometimes they would follow me along the trail. They're very inquisitive, you know? Or, they would lay under the nearby trees in the sunlight, chewing their cud and watching me as I sat. Best damn combat decompression there ever was. I re-discovered myself in that forest."

He scratched his head and stared back in his memory. And began this story...

"It was a March day like this one," he said. "Looked like it might snow a little so I delayed my daily hike until the afternoon. Sure enough it snowed, 'bout an inch, then slacked off. I figured it was safe; so, with a canteen of water and a sandwich, I headed up towards that ridge over there." He stretched out a skinny arm pointing with a finger.

"About two miles in it began to snow again, heavier this time. I walked on another half a mile or so, then realized I was in a white out." Carl smiled. "I was crazy

venturing out in a spring blizzard like that, but I thought I was invincible, after the war and all."

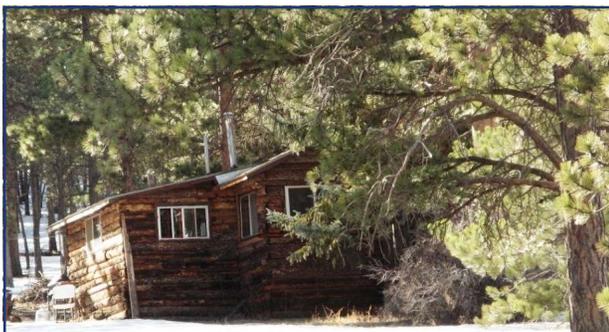
"I felt my way along a little bit more on what I thought was the trail back towards the cabin. But when I passed the same old lightning-stuck dead tree a second time, I knew I was going in circles. So I just sat down next to a log. I ate my sandwich, drank some water and waited for the storm to calm down. It didn't."

Before long there was a foot of snow around me with no signs of letting up. Big flakes!" I was cold." He ran his hand over his unshaven jaw and looked at his fingers.

"I noticed my fingers getting kind of numb. I had gotten frostbit on my toes in France but never my hands. I took my gloves off and rubbed my fingers to restore circulation." Unconsciously, he began to rub his knobby hands together as he relived the moment. (see page 2)

"I used to hike these trails a lot," he said with a smile. "...when I was younger." He squinted up towards the morning sun, remembering.

"These trails and Rampart Range were a magical place to me," he said, as he spat some tobacco juice and wiped his mouth with his sleeve. "I came here after my Army discharge in 1946. I was at Normandy; I'd seen enough of France. I was barely 25; no family. Banged up mentally, I guess. I just wanted to go somewhere and be alone for awhile to collect myself, you know?" A faded tattoo, a scarlet heart, was silhouetted on his bare left forearm and a wide scar ran up his neck just inside his shirt collar. "I stayed," he said.



A bark-logged cabin similar to one described in the legend. Lovell Gulch trail runs up toward the Rampart Range area northeast of Woodland Park, CO. Photo by David Martinek



Pikes Peak looking from the crest of Mills Ranch Road, just west of Lovell Gulch. The Rampart Range area is to the east (left). Photo by David Martinek

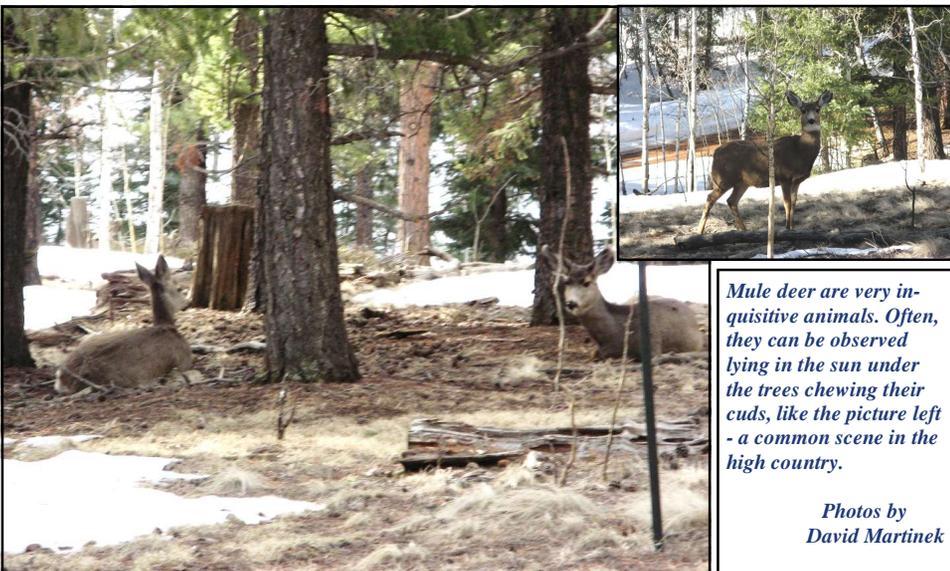
“I sat there a long time. I started shivering, and then I got sleepy. You’d think after fighting through a French winter, I would have known what was happening. But it was a different situation; I wasn’t as alert. Plus, I was in my twenties, and stupid,” he chuckled. “When I woke up it was dark.”

“I *did* wake up,” the old man reassured me. “I didn’t know the time but it was still snowing.” His words got softer. “I woke up warm,” he said. “All around me were these dark shapes just barely visible, like shadows. I put out my hand and touched...fur. I pushed on one of the shadows, and it pushed back!”

“First, I got scared because I thought they were bears. But bear don’t sit around in a friendly circle as a rule, I reasoned; and besides, the fur was short and wiry. It was deer! About five or six of them sitting around in a close circle with me in the middle, keeping all of us warm! Damnedest thing I’d ever seen! I was wide awake!”

“They made no noise nor moved.” His voice choked and I strained to hear him. “They just sat there, like silent angels.” He closed his eyes for a moment, and I could tell the memories were flooding back.

“After awhile the snow let up some, but I still couldn’t see very well in the dark. I guess the deer noticed too, because they all stood up and started a line walking back along the trail. I followed them best I could, keeping a white tail in my sight.”



Mule deer are very inquisitive animals. Often, they can be observed lying in the sun under the trees chewing their cuds, like the picture left - a common scene in the high country.

Photos by David Martinek

“Well, they led me nearly back to the cabin. At least I walked with them back that way; close enough so as I could tell where I was; came the rest of the way home by myself. Those merciful animals probably saved my life and then just melted into the snow storm. It was nearly 40 years ago, but I remember it like it was yesterday.”

He leaned close to me and put his wrinkled hand on my arm. “I swear it’s the God’s-honest truth.” He spat on the ground for emphasis, stood up and stretched.

“Of course, I don’t much care whether you believe me or not,” he said, brushing some dust from his pant legs. “I know it happened. I was there. I have been living here ever since; probably won’t leave this place alive. I owe it to *them*.”

He climbed his porch steps with some difficulty and started for his cabin door. But he stopped and looked back at me. For an instant I thought I saw a young soldier, full of energy, adventure... sadness and searching, peering through the old man’s eyes. “This is their land,” he said. “We are just visitors.”



Epilogue:

Who can deny that in some space of time the normal barriers of communication between men and animals could sometimes disappear? There’s an old tale that animals talk at midnight on Christmas Eve, but Carl’s legend tells of another moment when benevolent creatures, acting naturally (perhaps) according to their instincts, happened to include a human in their winter survival tactics – saving his life and changing it at the same time.

Carl Mangurt has passed beyond this world. Perhaps he is resting now in the Allesian Fields on the edge of a special place where human beings and animals coexist eternally. We are left only with his story. Let us hope, in the telling, that we have not missed his lesson. *There are many mysteries of nature to be discovered in the high country of Colorado, if we will only submit ourselves to the land for approval.* **DM**

(This story is a work of fiction, based on legend. The reader is free to draw his/her own conclusions.)

Sample Buyers' Guide

These 12 properties are a sample of those offered exclusively by **Coldwell Banker 1st Choice Realty** in the Ute Pass region.

Prices and status are current as of March 22, 2007

Editor's Note: The special cover story in this issue is a departure from the normal area promotion I've followed in the past.

I heard of a legend about an old soldier who claimed to have been saved during a snow storm by a small herd of deer. The story portrays the reverence some folks feel today about conserving the high country, our mountain and the wildlife that is abundant on them. I hope you enjoyed it.
DM

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COLDWELL BANKER

1st CHOICE REALTY

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Email or call me for more information



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\$1,690,000

1512 Kylie Heights, Woodland Park
View of Pikes Peak. A Mansion! This 6 BR/6 BA, 8221 S.F. home has a formal LR, stone fireplace, hardwood floors, vaulted beamed ceilings, large deck. 35.01 acres. #589546



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\$649,900

1001 Ponderosa Ln., Woodland Park
5 BR/4 BA & 4-car garage w/ stacking elevator. 4280 S.F. Gourmet kitchen w/ granite counters, oak cabinets, stainless appliances. Formal dining and LR. Main level office. So much more! #459281



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\$475,000

5320 Kulsa Road, Cascade
Spacious contemporary on 1.54 acres. Open floor plan w/ 2 fireplaces, 4 BR/3 BA, 3097 S. F. Solarium w/ Koi Pond. Fenced yard w/ multi-layered waterfall. Don't miss this one! #508272



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\$409,900

263 E. Fountain Blvd, Colo. Springs Residential/commercial/investment!
This townhouse has an 800 S.F. office w/ upstairs living. 14-foot ceilings in great room; gas fireplace. 2732 S. F. 3 BR/4 BA. Upscale living. #593815



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\$360,000

1210 S. Park St., Woodland Park
Domestic well, new paint inside/out, new furnace, roof and kitchen. 3 BR/3 BA. 2090 S.F. 2 outbuildings. Hardwood floors on main level. Aspen, pine and wildlife. 500 S.F. deck. #533606



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\$334,850

721 Sunnywood Pl., Woodland Park
A charmer. 4 BR/2+ BA, 2978 S.F. New roof, finance, water heater, Maytag range w/ dbl oven & new carpet. A rare find. Mature aspen on 1 acre lot. Pella windows. #584492



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\$256,000

100 Peak View Lane, Florissant
2 BR/3 BA, 2374 S.F. w/ 1-car detached garage. Secluded MBR w/ sitting area on entire upper level. Tons of windows, decks & views to die for. 6.3 acres of wonderland. #488489



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\$219,900

935 Bennett Drive, Cripple Creek
Prepare to fall for this agreeable 3 BR/2 BA home. 3089 S. F. Cedar siding. Tile, great room, hickory cabinets. Covered porch. Built in 2006, a secluded home in a wooded area. #489768



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\$199,900

59 Apache Creek Drive, Florissant
An immaculate 3 BR/2 BA 1400 S.F. manufactured home on 4.8 acres. 20 x 10 ft. deck; open floor plan. 600 S.F. 2-car heated garage with workshop. A fantastic 8 gal/min well. #464609



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\$179,850

1260 Sundance St., Woodland Park
Affordable family home located close to schools & shopping. Low maintenance stucco exterior & large fenced yard. Storage shed. New roof. 4 BR/2 BA and 1680 S.F. #599143



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LAND \$85,900

0 Fairview Drive, Cripple Creek
Two mining claims south of Dome of the Rock/Mueller State Park. 19.26 acres of pine and aspen with spectacular views of Pikes Peak and the Sangre de Cristo mountains. #485502



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LAND \$15,000

228 View Lane, Guffey
Beautiful views of Pikes Peak and rock outcroppings. Spring-fed seasonal pond. Great horse property. Gently rolling hills; No covenants, easy access, modulators allowed. #452425