

Gene Scritchfield

May 31, 1970 ~ Oct. 29, 2008

"It only took one ride into base camp on an elk hunt to learn that Gene loved life and his family. He appreciated everything he was blessed with, you could see it in his eyes."

— Mark White, Sable Mountain Outfitters' client

Well-known Meeker resident Gene Scritchfield, 38, died tragically Oct. 29, 2008, at Pioneers Hospital following a tractor accident.

Gene was born May 31, 1970, in Delta but was raised in the mountains surrounding Meeker. From the time he was a boy, he helped his grandparents at the Fritzlan's Guest Ranch where he learned the White River National Forest and Flat Tops Wilderness areas like the back of his weathered hand. He attended Meeker Schools, graduating with the class of 1988.

In September 1989 Gene entered the United States Army. After basic training in South Carolina, he was stationed in Giebelstadt, West Germany, for two years and then proudly served his country during the Persian Gulf War where he was awarded a Bronze Star Medal. After his discharge he lived briefly in Louisiana before returning to Meeker.

Upon returning to Meeker, Gene discovered he shared a common passion for life, horses and the mountains with class-mate Ann Marie Nielsen. This led to them purchasing two outfitting businesses to create Sable Mountain Outfitters.

Gene was truly a mountain man and greatly admired by his many clients. He had a wisdom and knowledge of the land far beyond his years. He and Ann Marie raised not only horses but cattle and sheep as well. He was proud of his lifestyle but more importantly Gene was proud of his family, his 13-year-old son Mason and his 2-year-old daughter Eva as well as the love of his life, his wife Ann Marie. They lived a dream life every day, a life that was envied by many.

Gene loved his community and was happy to serve in any way he could. He helped 4-H



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children, fellow ranchers and anyone else who needed a hand. Gene will long be remembered for his horse and wagon rides he offered to many throughout the community. He gave rides to wedding parties, attendees at the Sheep Dog Trials as well as during the Christmas holidays. Gene was honored to use his team and wagon to escort local folks on their last ride to their final resting place.

In addition to Ann Marie and his children, Gene is survived by his parents Mona and Al Avey of Meeker, his grandmother Arlene Fritzlan of Meeker, his brother, Mark and his wife Melody of Meeker, his sister Christi Roady and her husband Dave of Farmington, N.M., step-brother Nathan Avey and his wife Kessie of Big Springs, Texas, his father-in-law Grant Nielsen of Meeker; four aunts, Beverly Bloch of Yorba Linda, Calif., Betsie Thompson of Meeker, Jackie Bissell of Kearney, Neb., and Sandie Fritzlan of Pueblo as well as his great-uncle and fellow outfitter Tom Fritzlan of Rifle. Gene is also survived by numerous cousins, a host of friends and legions of hunters whom Gene guided through the years. He is

preceded in death by his grandfather Cal Fritzlan and mother-in-law Pia Bjerregaard.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, Nov. 8 at 11 a.m. at the Sable Mountain Outfitter Corrals at the Marvine Campground upriver. Military honors will be provided by the Fort Carson Army Base Funeral Honor Detail. Those unable to attend the service are invited to join the family at a dinner Saturday at 3 p.m. at the Fairfield Center. A visitation is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday at Cochran Memorial Chapel.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Mason and Eva Scritchfield Educational Fund through either Mountain Valley Bank or Cochran Memorial Chapel.