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BELLEVUE PICABO CAREY

WOOD RIVER WEEKLY

YOUR VOICE IN THE WOOD RIVER VALLEY

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"February is the border between Winter and Spring."
- Terri Guillemets

HIGHER GROUND: SERVING THOSE THAT SERVE OUR COUNTRY

BY ISIAH FRIZZELL

If you've heard of Higher Ground, you're in the know. This national therapeutic organization dedicates time, money and passion to working with victims of trauma and most often the fine men and women who have put their lives on the line, fighting for the freedoms we hold dear in the U.S. Constitution. Birthed and active in Sun Valley, they deliver, in part, courtesy of the fine organization, Sun Valley Resort, that has a history of working with the military.

See the Sun Valley Resort, Hollywood and WWII article at <https://woodriverweekly.com/index.php/2024/01/09/sun-valley-resort-hollywood-and-wwii/> for a bit of wartime history on this longstanding Blaine County marvel.

Piecing together PTSD

When civilians enlist and take off for recruit basic training, they're immediately thrown into a high-pressure, high-stakes community where the camaraderie and ultra-ordered chaos of the martial machine sets the tone for the next few years of their lives, and for some, their entire life. Waking before sunrise, extreme detail in the manicuring of both person and possessions, and severe physical entrainment commence with a bang. You've probably seen Full Metal Jacket and, while dramatized, R. Lee Ermey was an actual series commander and drill sergeant who brought an experience-shaped reality to Stanley Kubrick's hyper-real masterpiece.

Recruit Basic Training (boot camp) is not a CrossFit workout where you finish, hit the couch and zone out to Netflix with a glass of red wine and cheese popcorn. From sleep deprivation to caloric confinement, obstacle courses to daily runs while chanting, the men and women who join our militaries are experiencing stress and eustress to the point of physical and psychological exhaustion. Try singing a song on your next jog or bike ride. Do you have the wind?

One of the most interesting things about this type of strenuous conditioning is that it's done with a group—a group you're melded with for 6-13 weeks. Whether friend or foe, these people become your immediate family. This is what's often known as trauma-bonding. The people next to you are experiencing the same rigorous schedule but with their own psychological issues to deal with—thoughts of the family they left



Volunteers assist a child learning to ski on Dollar Mountain. Photo credit: Higher Ground

behind, dreams of the future, concerns for the possibility of battle. This adds up and while the physicality of the program helps move the mental energy, it can also compartmentalize it and create egregores that must be dealt with, massaged and worked out.

All of these elements crystallize as the recruit gets into formal shape and takes on that first assignment—often in a foreign environment, sometimes right into battle. Putting your life on the line and knowing you may die at your job is a primal, existential demand shoved onto your psyche. Once the recruit has finished the mission and returns, whether seeing the fight or not, the entire experience completes a lifestyle, fueled by the intensity and pressure not entirely unlike being on a sports team in the finals, where every play counts, or working on a film set where every penny is counted for and sheer performance requires pinpoint accuracy in motive and engagement. But winning or losing here means actual life or death. This changes people and

PTSD is often the result. The psychological longing of that particular military lifestyle leaves many without meaning, without direction, when they attempt to re-enter civilian society. They're cut off from their military family and beset by memories of camaraderie in the act of ultimate survival.

Enter Higher Ground

We're fortunate to have people with the passion and foresight to address these issues and work together to re-integrate the heroic individuals who have returned perhaps unscathed physically but absolutely shook mentally. Strong, actionable men and women with skills and sharp but strained minds have to now find their way in the orderly life of mainstream society. The

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Higher Ground

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excitement is mid and the stakes are low, comparatively. Sometimes even just having someone to talk to who's shared the experience can make all the difference. That's what Higher Ground offers with a bonus.

Higher Ground is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization funded by sponsors both private and public, many from Sun Valley, where the program began 20 years ago. With a stated mission of "Enhancing quality of life through therapeutic recreation and education" (highergroundusa.org), this consortium actively helps children and adults of any age, veterans and first responders who have cognitive, developmental or physical disabilities, many of whom are veterans struggling with the challenges of civilian life after a traumatic injury—visible or invisible. We can't always see the effects of PTSD, yet they plague the victims. To qualify for entry in a program, one must have experienced trauma such as post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma or the like, which has led them to seek rehabilitation.

Higher Ground focuses on therapeutic recreation. "It's the power of human nature, activated by the wonders of Mother Nature" (highergroundusa.org). The goal is to unite people with camaraderie in a natural setting. With two primary programs, Adaptive Sports and Veterans/First Responders, the organization fully funds the entrants as they heal through physical and mental therapy.

Working with the best

Justin Reujawitz started his career with Higher Ground in 2017. As a newly commissioned officer in the Army, his first assignment was in Idaho with the National Guard. He saw an article on Higher Ground and recognized an opportunity to intern, get involved with other veterans and develop his skills as an officer. Reujawitz fell in love with the mission and is now a senior program manager. As an active Civil Affairs Officer for the Army Reserves, he works on the veterans and first-responder side, which runs around 30 events a year across the country. Reujawitz lives in Arkansas but this work with those in need offers him a chance to see the United States while making these philanthropic programs happen.

What does a program look like?

"From when they leave their door to when they get

back home, they don't pay a thing. Our program is six days long with a travel day at each end, so it's four true program days. The model stays consistent with themes on each day and the themes stay the same while the activity may change. We fly in folks from all over the country. It's a really neat opportunity to take care of and love on these people who have given so much for us." Reujawitz glows when explaining the benefits he helps oversee. "Typically, what we see we call the Big Three—they struggle with a sense of purpose, identity and community. When you're no longer in the military, it's like, OK, what do I do? Who am I outside of this uniform? And compounded with that is the loss of the brotherhood, the sisterhood of that environment. When we bring them together, back around their peers, people who understand their experiences, it's a really special opportunity for them to step away from that isolation, to be around people who it's OK to talk with about those experiences... to be open about how stressful being in that environment is where you're constantly exposed to these traumas, sort of what that can do."

"One of the primary goals is community reintegration. They may feel like no one can understand what they've gone through, so they're paired with volunteers. There's so many people who pour into this program and even if they don't have a military background, they start to see, wow, somebody does care about me, somebody cares enough to support this program and that helps build that trust. And we stay in touch with them. We have a three-year followup to help support them in the goals that they set within the program."

Reujawitz speaks passionately about his beneficiaries. "We just started our Community Resiliency Units where those who are really motivated, taking this recreation and noticing the benefits and quality-of-life improvements, we can support them and partner them within their home communities to run their own events. We have several of these crews popping up across the country where our past participants are putting on these events to work with veterans and first responders in their home communities."

In Sun Valley last week, Higher Ground had eight couples, for a couples trip, skiing and snowboarding. Next is an ice-climbing program for Special Operations Veterans in Montana. Higher Ground will be back in Sun Valley in March running a snow sports program.

Higher Ground is year-round

"We've got something for every season, for every interest, ability, for everything. We only have so many spots on each program but, depending on the season,

we have equestrian programs, fly-fishing, mountain biking, whitewater rafting, kayaking, even a couples partner dancing program. Anything you can imagine that involves recreation and moving your body, we've done it. We stay pretty busy all year-round." Reujawitz acknowledges the holistic approach they take, the mind and the body are one and work together. As you may know, trauma is a nervous-system affliction. By getting physical and sharing with like minds, the opportunity to heal is further enhanced.

People are willing to help

Higher Ground began in Sun Valley as Sun Valley Adaptive Sports and has grown with the help of the VA Adaptive Sports grant, private donations and grant money. "The community here in Sun Valley is so incredibly supportive. Our most historical member is Penny Weiss, a board member now, who has a ranch down in Bellevue and she is just amazing and incredibly gracious. It really does take an entire community to help support programs like this. We can't do it without the support of all of our stakeholders."

"We do processing groups at the end of every day. It's really easy to find the worst in people. You're exposed to the worst of times. Our veterans have seen really tough things. Through these programs it helps shift minds when they see so many people to step up and support missions like this and be there to help each other out. We have an amazing relationship with Sun Valley Resort, that provides lodging and conference spaces to do group activities. Sometimes it's one big house where everyone stays together or on the river we'll all be camping together. We like to make it as communal as possible."

How can you apply?

Visit the Higher Ground website, fill out an application and find a slot and a theme that interests you. There are volunteer opportunities run by Reed Mason, a Sun Valley resident who pairs the participants with a volunteer instructor. "Many of these volunteers have been around for years as volunteers. There's some really neat opportunities to be involved as a volunteer and support the mission in that way. It's incredible to see the transformation that can happen over a short period of time."

Reujawitz notes the next program in Sun Valley runs March 10th through the 14th. Now may be your moment to give back to those who have given. Volunteer, recommend someone in need or sign up at <https://www.highergroundusa.org/>

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Public School vs. Homeschool



With online instruction from an iPad, a student gets assistance at home. Photo credit: Shutterstock

Community Questions

BY ISIAH FRIZZELL

“Some people think they are in community, but they are only in proximity. True community requires commitment and openness. It is a willingness to extend yourself to encounter and know the other.” —David Spangler

Do you have children in public schools? As of May 4, 2023, Blaine County School District was serving 3,207 students from kindergarten through 12th grade. There has reportedly been a change in the atmosphere and learning environment in public schools since the pandemic. A source, name withheld, has made a decision to resign, as they have expressed concern for the level of aptitude and participation on the part of both the students and the teachers. “The kids have ipads and phones. I know it sounds cliché, but that’s what they’re doing, entertaining themselves. When they do show up to school, they don’t have the drive to do their assignments. Even the teachers are losing the ability to design curriculums. It’s really bizarre and no one knows what to do about it. I mean, there’s other ways to teach, but the district is a source of employment and many parents need us.”

Your mileage may vary. Like working out in the gym, when you want to do something, you do it with intent, and many children approach the institutional path of learning this way. They’ll put their time into an essay or biology class as they have the drive to know and absorb knowledge that may or may not contribute directly to their potential career path but holistically allows them to problem solve with deeper insight into the human condition.

Nature vs. Nurture

In the January 30, 2023, journal “Nature Human Behavior,” a study was published examining what they term a “learning deficit.” The team writes that the “pandemic has led to one of the largest disruptions to learning in history. To a large extent, this is due to school closures, which are estimated to have affected 95% of the world’s student population. But even when face-to-face teaching resumed, instruction has often been compromised by hybrid teaching, and by children or teachers having to quarantine and miss classes.

“The effect of limited face-to-face instruction is compounded by the pandemic’s consequences for children’s out-of-school learning environment, as well as their mental and physical health. Lockdowns have restricted children’s movement and their ability to play, meet other children

and engage in extracurricular activities. Children’s wellbeing and family relationships have also suffered due to economic uncertainties and conflicting demands of work, care and learning. These negative consequences can be expected to be most pronounced for children from low socioeconomic family backgrounds, exacerbating pre-existing educational inequalities.” (nature.com)

The study found that learning deficits increased dramatically in the areas of math and reading, and had no variation across grade levels, indicating an overall decrease for all students, however with emphasis on the socioeconomic status of families—the less affluent, the more the impact. Would you rather be the smartest person in the room or a member of a team of brilliant people? Which scenario provides better outcomes for a community?

Many parents in Blaine County have expressed dismay at the change in their ability to speak to the faculty. During the pandemic, the district policy changed from in-person to email-based queries for the parents—emails that were, reportedly, often unanswered or given scant attention. Blaine County School District seeks to remedy the situation with their Continuous Improvement Plan, which can be downloaded at <https://www.blaineschools.org/domain/1373>

If we know the public school system is facing hardships, what are the solutions? Vaccinations or controversial pandemic treaties won’t fix the effects of another lockdown.

Mom & Pop Instructors

Some have chosen to forgo public schooling and either homeschool or unschool their children. Do you have the time and resources to teach your child prealgebra in a way that they could integrate it into their interests? Do they need to? This would be a subjective position to take. It plays into the idea behind the ‘unschooling’ movement.

Wikipedia defines unschooling as “an informal learning method that prioritizes learner-chosen activities as a primary means for learning.” (Wikipedia.com) Unschooling, often begun in a Montessori school, is child-led. The student is not given a curriculum but rather encouragement and resources to proceed with what interests them most. The effectiveness of this method has, as of yet, been somewhat difficult to gauge on a large scale but individual testimony has been

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NEWS

EDUCATION

Community Questions

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largely positive. A good article on post-pandemic unschooling can be found at: (<https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/family/story/unschooling-kids-learned-70038672>)

Wikipedia defines homeschooling as “the education of school-aged children at home or a variety of places other than a school” (wikipedia.com). But what kind of education? The two systems somewhat harmonize where even if a child attends public school, homeschooling takes place when a parent interacts with their child in pursuit of learning—whether morals, folkways, mores, household chores or learning aspects of a parent’s trade—the children are learning all the time. Educator, lecturer and author John Holt popularized the idea of homeschooling in the 1970s with a newsletter that connected those interested, “Growing Without Schooling,” circa 1977. (responsiblehomeschooling.org) The newsletter still has a following as a website johnholtgs.com.

Les Cameron, of the original Wood River Welding, who homeschooled his children, tells an intriguing story of how a retired Idaho Power linesman, Bob Foyer, opened the door for homeschooling in Idaho. A couple who were homeschooling their children had come under pressure from the state. They were told their children were truant and they were to be charged. Foyer, a friend of the family without law training, dug into Idaho code and found a section that places the responsibility of teaching and training children on the parents. They were absolved of any wrongdoing due to the extracurricular ingenuity of Foyer. If the children are in a situation where they’re not learning, the parent is responsible for taking them out of the situation and placing them in one more suited to education.

It’s in the letter of Idaho code that the responsibility is on the parent to ensure their child’s education, however that may look.

But what are parents to do who can’t afford an alternative route to educating their children? Public schooling is a tax-funded resource that offers social intelligence, STEM education and employment for many who wish to see the betterment of their society.

Most community members want to see their whole community thrive and it is the community that must come together to answer these questions. Is the next wave of education a type of village private schooling? Holding alternative schools at Sun Valley Resort? Can you teach a child programming or electronics if they don’t have the math skills to back it up?

Judging from the recent spate of layoffs, predicted to continue, Artificial Intelligence (AI) just might do the work for them. But who will program the AI?

NEWS

IN BRIEF

Carol Nie Concludes Impactful Term as Board President for Spur Community Foundation

Ketchum, ID -- Spur Community Foundation offers gratitude to Carol Nie as she concludes her term as Board President, having left an indelible mark on the organization’s growth and community impact.

During her two-years as President, Carol Nie steered Spur through its transition from a startup phase to one of strategic and impactful growth. Under her guidance, the foundation developed a comprehensive strategic plan that will shape its trajectory through 2026.

A standout achievement during Carol’s presidency was the expansion and diversification of Spur’s nonprofit services, particularly its training programs for nonprofit leaders. Additionally, she played a pivotal role in professionalizing the framework for Spur’s grant-making process, which resulted in \$932,000 being awarded to local nonprofits during her tenure.

As Carol Nie passes the leadership torch, Spur welcomes Mary Wilson as the incoming Board President. Wilson is known for her deep commitment to community service and her passion for making a positive impact on the lives of others.

“I have been so profoundly affected by the ecosystem of generosity that makes the Wood River Valley a uniquely wonderful place, that I want to ensure it endures and increases now and for future generations,” said Wilson. In her role as Board President of Spur Community Foundation,

Mary Wilson is well-equipped to build upon the foundation laid by her two predecessors Carol Nie and Spur’s founder, Tim Wolff, and to guide Spur towards even greater impact on the community. Carol Nie will continue to serve on Spur’s Board of Directors.

Reflecting on her term, Carol Nie expressed gratitude for the support received from the foundation’s dedicated Board, Advisors, and donors. “It has been a privilege to witness the growth and impact of Spur over the past two years. I am confident that under Mary Wilson’s leadership, the foundation will continue to flourish and make a meaningful difference in our community,” said Carol Nie.

Spur Community Foundation extends sincere thanks to Carol Nie for her dedication, vision, and invaluable contributions to the organization’s mission. The legacy of her leadership will undoubtedly resonate in the foundation’s ongoing pursuit of ambitious goals outlined in its strategic plan.

To learn more please visit spurfoundation.org.



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Giving Back Through Cycling

Rebecca Rusch uses wheels to heal

BY SABINA DANA PLASSE

Dedicating her life to being a professional athlete, Rebecca Rusch's connection to community is foremost, especially as she continues to expand her vision as a humanitarian in her effort to promote cycling as a vehicle to connect to people and mental and physical wellbeing—everywhere.

As a world-class explorer, professional athlete, acclaimed speaker and author, Rusch's Be Good™ Foundation is one of three organizations, including Rusch Ventures and Rebecca's Private Idaho, that support Rusch's life mission for the mind-body connection through endurance, perseverance and resilience. The Be Good Foundation elevates leadership, business, and life based on Rusch's commitment to wilderness wisdom.

"I launched the Be Good Foundation in my father's name in 2015 after I rode the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia," says Rusch. "As an ultra-endurance athlete, I embraced this 1,200-mile bike ride to connect with my dad and find the place where he was shot down in 1972. I realized I could do more with my athletic career, world championships, and hall of fame accomplishments because the bike was a healing mechanism I could share with others."

For Rusch, it became clear that the bike had a larger purpose for her, and it inspired her to launch the Be Good Foundation, which is named after how her father would sign his letters home from Vietnam with the words "Be good."

Rusch's Ho Chi Minh Trail ride was the subject of her Emmy Award-winning film *Blood Road*, becoming the first person to bike the 1,800-kilometer Ho Chi Minh Trail. In addition, her bestselling memoir, *Rusch to Glory: Adventure, Risk & Triumph on the Path Less Traveled*, is centered around the human potential, holistic performance, failure as fuel, and lessons on inner and outer being, which Rusch continues to emulate through all her work.

"It has become my mission to find more healing, connection, and community through bikes," says Rusch. "People everywhere suffer from mental, physical, and isolation issues, and the bike is a beautiful tool, which can bring people together and move with each other in the outdoors."

The Be Good Foundation has a local, regional, national, and global reach all centered around bikes bringing people together, which ranges from children and those recovering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and military veterans to paracycling athletes and everyone in between using sports for recovery, healing, and wellness.

With a solid commitment to Idaho, Rusch is dedicated to supporting her local community of the Wood River and Sawtooth valleys and her global humanity efforts. Elevating cycling opportunities to support exploration, self-discovery, and building community for all cycle en-



Rebecca Rusch celebrates her continued success with Rebecca's Private Idaho. Photo credit: Rebecca Rusch

thusiasts, the Be Good Foundation awarded 15 scholarships and \$65,000 in grants to individuals and organizations at local, national, and global levels in 2023.

A hands-on scholarship program committed to removing financial barriers and providing more cycling opportunities for any individual, including those from underrepresented communities, the Be Good Foundation offers a chance to change one's life through the benefit of cycling. In addition, a global-reaching, multi-purpose grant program offers organizations funding for communities and groups that use bicycles for healing, empowerment, and evolution—using the power of cycling to elevate people and communities for progress—it's a game-changer for some.

“My mission is to find more healing, connection, and community through bikes.”

—Rebecca Rusch

All the beneficiaries who received grants and scholarships are tied to one or all of the Be Good Foundation's focus to increase inclusivity and accessibility to cycling—building community through a bike.

"Delivering upon the mission of the Be Good Foundation has allowed individuals and organizations to use cycling to bring together and serve their communities while inspiring individuals to live a better life," said Rusch. "The merits of these individuals and organizations represent an array of people, places and needs, which the Be Good Foundation is proud to honor."

Grants in 2023 were awarded in Idaho to the Wood

River Trails Coalition and the Sawtooth Society in the Wood River and Sawtooth valleys, Valley Adaptive Sports, based in eastern Idaho's Teton Valley, and Idaho Interscholastic Cycling League.

Across the nation, grants were awarded to NorCal Interscholastic Cycling League in Northern California, Latinas en Bici, based in Rogers, Arkansas, Ride for Racial Justice, a national organization increasing opportunities for BIPOC cyclists, Soldiers on Singletrack, a nationwide active duty service members and League of American Bicyclists.

On a global level, grants were awarded to the Mines Advisory Group, removing unexploded ordnance in Laos, and World Bicycle Relief, providing life-changing bikes to women and doctors in Africa.

The Bikepacking Scholarships, which is part of the Be Good Foundation's scholarship disbursement funds, were granted to Edyn Tietge, Jen Gadoua, Jackson Long, Luis Orozco-Sanchez, Jeremy Raeszler, Megan LaBeth, and Jaime Baeza. These individuals are a range of students, military veterans, paracyclists, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ cyclists.

Supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in cycling by donating to the Be Good Foundation scholarship program makes a real difference in the lives of deserving individuals who could not afford to participate in cycling, whether it's gear, competition, or training. Bikepacking scholarships range from \$250 to \$2,000 in financial, gear, and mentorship support for any individual to achieve their bikepacking dreams.

To learn more about the Be Good Foundation, visit rebeccarusch.com.

Men's Second Chance Living Awarded St. Luke's Grant

Men's Second Chance Living House (MSCL) is thrilled to announce that it has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the St. Luke's Community Health Improvement Fund (CHIF). The fund was established to provide financial or in-kind support to nonprofit organizations that are also working to improve the health of people in the community. Priority is given to nonprofit organizations that support St. Luke's Community Health Needs Assessment significant health needs. They encourage collaborative and equity-driven approaches to address community health needs or social determinants of health which, in the Wood River Valley, are focused on access to health-related services, mental well-being, and high cost of living.

The work of MSCL directly aligns with St. Luke's expressed priorities in the Wood River Valley and the grant will support MSCL House programs for affordable housing and healthcare. This award will help MSCL residents by providing rental assistance for the critical first month of residency for those who do not yet have a job, and will help to pay for appointments to support access to mental, physical, and dental healthcare.

"We are incredibly thankful to St. Luke's CHIF for this very generous grant," said Sonya Wilander, executive director of Men's Second Chance Living House. "This funding will enable more residents to successfully begin their lasting recovery journey and commit to the programs available to them at MSCL. It directly supports our focus on the 'four r's': recover, rebuild, restore, and re-enter, which, together, improve not only the individual's future, but create a positive ripple effect throughout the entire community."

About Men's Second Chance Living House (MSCL): Men's Second Chance Living is a nonprofit organization based in Hailey, Idaho, dedicated to providing support and resources to individuals recovering from substance use disorders. MSCL offers a safe and supportive environment where individuals can access essential recovery services and opportunities for personal growth, with the goal of helping them reintegrate into the community as productive and empowered citizens.

MSCL House serves up to 32 men annually in our two sober living houses. Now in our sixth year of successful operation, we have provided 10,263 bed nights to 58

men, with more than 5,450 bed nights in 2023 alone and continue to operate with a waitlist. The need is so great that, in 2023, we were able to accept only 22 percent of applicants for available spots.

For more information about MSCL and its programs, please visit www.msclhouse.org.

Pulitzer Prize-winning play 'Disgraced' at Liberty

The Liberty Theatre Company (TLTC) presents *Disgraced*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Ayad Akhtar—playing at The Liberty Theater on Main Street in Hailey.

In *Disgraced*, we find ourselves immersed in the New York City life of Amir and Emily, a couple whose seemingly charmed existence is a compelling facade for the complexities beneath. *Disgraced* delves into the intricacies of personal and cultural identity, navigating the tensions that arise when these facets collide and fosters a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding diversity, religion, and self-discovery.

"I feel so incredibly grateful to be creating this production of *Disgraced* in communion with such a genuinely profound company of artists," says New York-based co-director Catherine Eaton. "The Liberty Theatre Company made the wildly brave choice of mounting this production at this important time - a time when we need to deeply consider how we are seeing each other, and what we are asking of one another - and I'm honored and thrilled to be a part of it, alongside my co-director Sami Bass, and an electrifying cast and design team."

When it comes to the artists involved in TLTC's final offering of its 2023/24 season, the company is pulling out all the stops to ensure the quality of this superlative play is on display for audiences of the Wood River Valley. In addition to the co-directing team of Catherine Eaton and Sami Bass, local artist and TLTC Executive/Artistic Director Naomi McDougall Jones is joined onstage by the likes of actors from New York City and L.A., with CVs containing credits ranging from popular Netflix,

Continued
NEWS BRIEFS
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Continued from Page 6

HBO and Hulu programs, such as *Better Call Saul*, *Pam & Tommy* and *The Sounding*, to accomplishments on Broadway, Disneyland and The American Shakespeare Center.

Just as exciting as the performers onstage is the news of the stage they'll be performing on... The Liberty Theatre Company will officially light up the stage at The Liberty Theater itself. Logan Frederickson and his partners (who are the owners of the Liberty Theater) have worked with local officials to get the building approved for use. With that approval, storytelling will return to the historic building in Hailey once more with an award-winning work of theater that asks us to connect with the past and with each other in a very immediate way.

TLTC is looking to bring audiences into deeper reflection and connection by offering Community Conversations in conjunction with *Disgraced*. These post-show discussions among artists and audiences will unpack the important ideas that the play explores and they are open to anyone who holds a ticket to any performance of *Disgraced*.

Disgraced will run from Feb. 16–March 2 at The Liberty Theater at 110 N. Main St. in Hailey. Community Conversations are open and free to *Disgraced* ticketholders on Feb. 17 at 8:45 p.m., and on Feb. 25 at 3:45 p.m. at The Liberty Theater. Purchase tickets for *Disgraced* at LibertyTheatreCompany.org. For questions, call (208) 582-8388.

2024 Sun Valley Food & Wine Celebration Expands with New Events and More Culinary Celebrities

With overwhelming response and enthusiasm, the Sun Valley Culinary Institute (SVCI) presents the second annual Sun Valley Food & Wine Celebration, March 13–16, 2024. The much-anticipated fundraising event to support SVCI student education and forging culinary career opportunities while sustaining the Wood River Valley's restaurant and hospitality community has expanded to include more events and celebrity chefs.

For 2024, SVCI's four-day Sun Valley Food & Wine Celebration will feature new celebrity chef participants Barton Seaver, award-winning chef, author and seafood expert, and John Sundstrom, James Beard Award winner, Northwest. As part of the inaugural Sun Valley Food & Wine Celebration, chefs Jonathon Sawyer, James Beard

Award winner, Great Lakes, Ethan Stowell, "Food & Wine" Best New Chef All-Star, and Britt Rescigno, "Chopped Champion" and Beat Bobby Flay are returning to participate in this year's expanded festival.

The Celebration will include wines from J. Dirt Wines, Blackbird Vineyards, and several other coveted wineries, along with Cazadores tequila, Warfield Distillery & Brewery Local IPA beer, Idawater sparkling water and other beverage products, including spirits produced in Idaho. In addition, the 2024 Sun Valley Food & Wine Celebration presents regional trout by Riverence, Alaska Weathervane Scallops and other delectable items, creating an extraordinary culinary experience.

Returning as the main event for the 2024 Sun Valley Food & Wine Celebration on Thursday, March 14, participating guest chefs will each prepare a course for the celebratory gala dinner at Sun Valley's Trail Creek Cabin with signature cocktails, including Cazadores tequila. The gala dinner is for sponsors and VIP ticketholders. The Celebration's 2024 guest chefs will also present an array of cooking classes at SVCI, which will host a wine seminar and knife skills class.

In response to Chef Britt Rescigno's "Big and Bleugie" burger at last year's *Après Ski Apple's Warm Springs* community party, which continues to remain on the Apple's menu, Chef Britt will present Britt's Burger Bash at Apple's, which is open to the public with DJ Marlin spinning for a classic après-ski party on Friday, March 15, 3 to 6 p.m. Expect a burger feast like no other, with all chefs in attendance.

New this year, the Sun Valley Food & Wine Celebration has partnered with the Limelight Ketchum Hotel to present an *Après-Ski Tasting* on Saturday, March 16, from 2 to 4 p.m., with all participating chefs, including international Cazadores tequila spokesperson and mixologist Manny Hinojosa. Tasting stations throughout the Limelight Lounge will be prepared by the Celebration's celebrity, regional and local chefs and the Limelight Ketchum Hotel. This grand tasting event includes wine tastings and signature cocktails. Tickets are \$175 per person and are available at sunvalleyculinary.org.

A limited amount of VIP tickets are available for 2024, and tickets are available for the Limelight Ketchum Hotel *Après-Ski Tasting*. To purchase VIP tickets and Limelight Ketchum Hotel *Après-Ski Tasting*, visit sunvalleyculinary.org.

The Sun Valley Culinary Institute is at 211 S. Main St. in Ketchum. To learn more, visit SunValleyCulinary.org or email info@SunValleyCulinary.org.



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FISHING REPORT



THE "WEEKLY"
FISHING REPORT FOR
FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 5
FROM PICABO ANGLER

Recent winter weather has boosted the snowpack in the region, and we expect some additional moisture during the next couple of weeks. With more of this cloudy, wintery weather ahead of us, we can expect good midge hatches, and more fish out and about looking to eat under the dark skies.

Silver Creek has been fishing well. The fishing varies from decent to excellent, depending on what day you fish and how happy the fish are. The one thing you can count on is the big fish will be out under the dark sky and under the cover of the dark water. When this happens, anglers have their best chance of the season to lay into a very big brown trout and even some good-sized rainbows. Streamer fishing is the name of the game on the Creek in the winter, so come armed, or stop by the fly shop and we'll get you the right patterns. Coffey's Sparkle Minnow is a top choice, as are small baitfish imitations and black leeches.

The Big Wood seems to always fish well when we see winter storms. The fish and insects in this river react to low-pressure systems, and good hatches get the fish up and eating, even during the duration of the heaviest snowfalls. Nymphing with Rubber Legs, Girdle Bugs, Rainbow Warriors and Zebra Midges is productive, as is swinging olive sculpin imitations.

If you haven't been to the lower Lost River in some time, think about making a trip between storms and staying for a few days in Mackay. This can be a great little respite for local anglers looking to get out of town for a few days, and it's a great option for visitors looking for a slightly different experience than the Big Wood. Use your Big Wood River arsenal of flies and techniques.

The South Fork of the Boise is another option, but try to avoid the canyon when winter weather sets in. It is not uncommon to drive all the way to the hill above the dam, only to find it closed from top to bottom.

Get out and have fun in this weather, but please be safe doing it.

Happy fishing, everyone!



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COMMENTARY

NO BONES ABOUT IT

FRAN JEWELL

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS THE UNTRAINABLE DOG?

BY FRAN JEWELL

Absolutely! Although I refuse to tell anyone that their dog cannot be trained.

What makes a dog untrainable? Free access to furniture, sleeping areas that belong to others, food, height, affection, and any resource the dog has claimed as his own. Notice the key words here are FREE ACCESS. When a dog has free access anytime to the things that are important to him, then he will no longer have any respect for his owner or others, including people and other dogs. He will have no interest in learning or working.

There is a simple term for this. It's called "spoiled." Spoiled dogs have no need to work, to learn or do anything because everything important to them comes free.

Dogs are opportunists. They are fully capable of determining what is easiest to get and what they want. So, if there is nothing valuable to "work for," then it is impossible to train them.

It is my belief that when someone comes to me with a difficult dog to train, a huge portion of the training becomes "un-spoiling" them or making them work for anything that is important to that dog. This is called "LEADERSHIP."

It is further my belief that almost every



All dogs can be as great as Lassie! Photo credit: Fran Jewell

problem a dog has stems from lack of leadership IN A MANNER THAT THE DOG UNDERSTANDS.

In very, very unusual cases, there are dogs that are so fearful they cannot get through the fear to trust someone to make learning

possible. Studies are now showing that fearful temperament is mostly genetic. Environment does play a part, but not as much as genetics do. There are dogs that have been extremely abused and come out smelling like a rose as if it never happened. Then there are dogs that act as if they were abused, but were not, and can only process slight learning outside their fear.

And then there are cases of dogs that have grown up feral that never learned HOW to learn. These dogs usually spend all their time operating from a place of total instinct because it is the only way they know how to survive.

So, are there dogs that are untrainable? I still contend that all dogs can be trained and learn, but ONLY if the owner is willing to NOT spoil the dog in the first place, or "un-spoil" the dog that is already spoiled. Sadly, if the owner is not willing to do what is necessary to train the dog, then yes, the dog will most likely be untrainable.

Fran Jewell is an IAABC Certified Dog Behavior Consultant, NADOI Certified Instructor and the owner of Positive Puppy Dog Training, LLC in Sun Valley. For more information, visit positivepuppy.com or call 208-578-1565.

SCIENCE OF PLACE

HARRY WEEKES

ON FERRUGS

BY HARRY WEEKES

In early February, I traveled to Great Falls, Montana, for a hockey tournament. There were six teams in our division and 12 overall, with the majority of these teams coming down from Canada. Each of these Canadian teams was from Alberta, "Wild Rose Country," according to the license plates.

It doesn't matter where you go, the signature of place is evident. There are times when this signature is like John Hancock's on the Declaration of Independence—big, bold, and impossible to miss. The best example of this is walking through any airport and looking at the passengers waiting for planes at gates departing for Seattle, or Austin, or Honolulu.

There are times when the signatures are subtler, like trying to figure out which ski town someone is from, or which side of the Canadian border. While I could go on about the hockey presence of parents from Alberta, or how everyone's glasses were just a little different, or that each team traveled in a bus rather than packs of different cars, this piece is about birds. Or a bird.

You see, you can cruise up and down the highway, and you will start to learn the signatures of birds along the way. The obvious ones come in obvious ways—size, color, shape: the unmistakable head and tail of the bald eagle cruising near Picabo; the pairs of ravens croaking along the road as you turn up I-15 and head to Dubois; the 5,000 Canada geese sprinkled across the fields outside of Helena.

Then, there are those subtler birds. Some are too small to appreciate as they explode in little flocks off the road (why does "snow bunting" spring to mind?); the lone kestrel pumping its tail on a power line. And what about those big hawks sitting on top of fenceposts right next to the road? The ones who look shaggy, less because of the array of their feathers than because the colors always seem to be some kind of wild mixture of white, russet, and a slew of browns.

These are the birds that initially hide in plain sight. When I say, "There," and point, the people in the car are expecting to see something smaller, as I am pointing toward the ground. Nicely, on an eight-hour drive, I get to calibrate my directions. "There, on the fencepost, about four feet from the ground."

"Whoa, what's that? That looked like some kind of hawk. And it was all streaked, or something."

These are the ferruginous hawks — a large soarer that oddly, to me, perches close to the ground, surveying the expanse of territory that in western Montana stretches practically to forever.

I have never seen a ferruginous actively chasing any of the small mammals it enjoys. While I know they must do this from the air, they must occasionally also come in low and flappy, hitting the ground running. Perhaps the confusing coloration and low perching are similarly perplexing to prairie dogs and rabbits.

These birds somehow related or referenced or reinforced the cities of the trip. While Great Falls hit me with the Missouri River and its

"Electric City" moniker, and Butte disoriented me with the scope and scale of the Berkeley Pit of the Anaconda mine, Helena slid by betwixt the two.

I am not sure I would call ferrugs (as they can be called) the Helenas of the hawks, or the Albertans of raptors, but a subtle similarity emerged among the three. Something at once understated and also distinct. Like a drawn-out 'o' in about, or a wild rose.

Harry Weekes is the founder and head of school at The Sage School in Hailey. This is his 52nd year in the Wood River Valley, where he lives with Hilary and one of their three baby adults—Simon. The other members of the flock are Georgia and Penelope (Georgia recently fledged from Davidson College in North Carolina and Penelope is at Middlebury College in Vermont).



The ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*) is a large bird of prey and belongs to the broad-winged buteo hawks. Photo credit: Andeansolitair, licensed under Creative Commons

MONEY MATTERS

SUZANNE HAZLETT

WHAT IS PHILANTHROPY?

BY SUZANNE HAZLETT, MBA, CIMA®, CFP®

Personal finance involves more than the machinations of transactions, compounded interest, and the downfall of overextending. It's about identifying our priorities and where we attribute the most value. It's about working toward a successful outcome and sometimes failing.

Twenty-one years ago, when I was a new resident of our valley, I contacted the local schools to create a financial curriculum that would appeal to middle and high school students. It was a middle school teacher who took me up on my offer.

We agreed we wanted to create experiences over the academic term that would particularly interest eighth-graders. I suggested we ask the kids themselves what was on their minds. What about personal finance, did they wonder? They responded with lots of questions.

"WHAT IS PHILANTHROPY?" Charity and donations were familiar terms to these students; philanthropy was not. Philanthropy entails a broader scope of passion and selfless concern for a cause. We took this topic on, and we explored regional charitable organizations with the students.

It was essential to identify a cause that resonated with them emotionally. When I asked how many in the class had rescued pets, nearly every hand in the room was raised. We had our hook. The students selected our local animal shelter as an organization they would like to learn more about. During one class session, we invited staff members and a couple of their four-legged charges. The children learned the difference between a for-profit enterprise and a tax-exempt nonprofit. They gained an appreciation of the organization's daily costs and how donations of money, in-kind gifts, and volunteer support help sustain the care and feeding of animals they shelter.

Takeaway: If charity is vital to your family, teach your child to give. Provide the child in your life with a list of charitable organizations to choose from and a proposed donation amount. With them, research the variety of organizations that pique their interest. Design the review process to fit your child's abilities and comprehension. Then, find the cause that touches them. Visit the organization with your child. Make the gift in the child's name and ask that the charity's acknowledgment and thanks be sent to your child.

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Suzanne Hazlett, MBA, CIMA®, CFP® is the founder of Hazlett Wealth Management, LLC.

ON LIFE'S TERMS

JOELLEN COLLINS

BOOKING

BY JOELLEN COLLINS

Most people who downsize their living places know the angst accompanying the disposal of once-treasured things, like old cards and photos, ancient wedding presents, and personal treasures like, in my case, former student compositions and my own academic records. I also delayed deciding what to do with my vast number of photos, often duplicates (I am the family historian), and my gorgeous collection of vivid batiks and brilliantly patterned fabrics which I so enjoyed using during the years I created hand-woven appliqued recreations of places and people I knew and often loved. I did find someone who welcomed these richly hewed silks and other woven pieces. I am no longer able to sew by hand.

However, the toughest disposal process came with my wall of books. As I have been told, people are listening to or reading online, many classics and best-sellers, and certainly as a society we are reading less. Even local libraries may be overstocked with secondhand book donations. I offered several people a chance to come into my home and pick out whatever was still on the shelves. Some did, after I had winnowed out the most precious tomes I would miss.

Many of the books I kept were poetry collections and personal favorites of fiction and nonfiction, which I sometimes need to access. I still would rather see words on a sheet of paper, so I can scribble notes and praises in the margins, and I am tiring of opening my laptop every time I need to reference a favored passage or thought accessible with a simple turn of pages.

Now I have assembled my transported library in odd places in my studio apartment. Some rest under a large harvest table which also supports others on its wide top surface. I enjoy seeing them and often recalling the pleasure I had from these books, clearly visible from my couch or bed. They remind me of the loves and friends and stimulating ideas I have been blessed to encounter in my decades of life. This is a comfort I am happy to have carried with me., especially from the time as a teenager when I saw, on a high shelf of my mother's closet, hidden editions of books considered "controversial," like *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. I always knew Mother had guts! Nowadays, many schools have even banned *To Kill A Mockingbird*: why, I'll never comprehend. I suppose she would have saved a dog-eared copy for me if that had been the case then.

Just yesterday, as I saw dozens of bright yellow daffodils gracing a gentle slope outside my patio, I smiled at the simple joy of being in a warmer climate, gazing at these bright, hopeful blooms mid-February, another case for accepting the changes I have made. But the final pleasure was pulling out one of my anthologies of British poetry and savoring Wordsworth's paeon to nature, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." Like Wordsworth's, "my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils."



JoEllen Collins—a longtime resident of the Wood River Valley—is an Idaho Press Club award-winning columnist, a teacher, writer, fabric artist, choir member and unabashedly proud grandma known as "Bibi Jo."

INSPIRATIONS FROM MY HEART

DOVE

Valentine's Day

BY DOVE

Every once in a while, the beings that create things for us to spend money on get a good idea. This celebratory day was a result of two Valentines being executed on February 14th by the Roman Emperor Claudius II and most probably the Catholic church made them saints due to a rumor that they healed a child while imprisoned.

However, the original celebration came from a ritual called Lupercalia, a pagan holiday that welcomed spring. Legend tells us that one of the imprisoned Valentines sent the first greeting after falling in love with a young girl who visited him while he was in prison and signed the letter, "From your Valentine." I find it so interesting to explore where our customs originate and why. Anyway, this is one of the better ones because it has suggested that we express love to those we appreciate and cherish.

From my perspective, love is best expressed frequently and sincerely to the Earth, the animals, the trees, and those we love. How you do that is up to you. Making a good meal, cleaning the toilets, washing the clothes are to me representative of creating an atmosphere of caring. Making a home that is comfortable and welcoming is an act of love. Examine the acts of love you do daily and make a list. Look at those things you do for others and then be sure and do things for yourself also. Putting yourself last is not the journey. Fill your life with love and then you will have plenty to share with others.

I remember the first Valentine I received from my husband when we were in college. It said, "I like you better than chocolate-covered Easter Bunnies and boy do I like chocolate-covered Easter bunnies." Sixty years later, I can still see the card in my mind.

You will never know how the littlest thing you do can affect someone else. Look for ways to brighten other's days and yours will be fulfilled as a result. Do the unexpected and surprise someone who needs to be remembered. You don't have to give flowers or candy; maybe a kind word or a smile will change a person's day. It definitely will change yours.

Love comes in so many forms. It does not have to be romantic love, it can be a sign of gratitude. I think the most wonderful Valentine I ever received was when my husband gave me a gift that he knew would be something I loved but he could not relate to it. To me, that is true understanding, as he cared enough to explore his knowledge of me to gift something that was not of value to him.

Take stock of how you express your love for someone. Is it about you, or can you actually appreciate the other person for who they are, not who you want them to be?

This Valentine's Day, search your heart for your perfect gift of love. Give it freely and enjoy the result.



WRANGLER'S WRITINGS

BRYCE ANGELL

Hamburgers, Fries and Guilt

Get ready and listen 'cuz I'm about to tell you the story of my ride from my humble home to Idaho Falls. The travel time is about 90 minutes, give or take 30 minutes depending who is driving, me or my wife. Truth is, my wife likes being behind the wheel so usually gets the honors.

We have grandkids over that way so we make the trip often. And what's a trip to town without going to Scotty's Drive In? Scotty's ain't just burgers and fries, they are the staff of life, I'm telling ya.

So, after being dumped on by a foot-and-a-half of snow, and pushing and piling from hell to breakfast, I decided a trip to Scotty's was in order. It is a long way just for a hamburger, but I'm retired, so what the heck.

Sadly enough, my wife was, I call, trapped in the clutches of the sniffles. Her doctor called it pneumonia. It didn't take me long to figure I'd be the one driving. Acting reluctant, I left her, promising to bring back a delicious burger and fries.

I combed my hair with a washrag, put on my Cabela's hat, pointed my Chevy truck in the direction of Scotty's, and headed out. I made a quick stop at Elk Creek Station for a jolt of Red Bull and a large bag of peanut clusters. Essentials for any journey. Those two items were also on the staff of life list. This day was to be my moment of solitude.

I immediately turned on SiriusXM with its 200 stations. I tuned into Radio Classics and was absorbed in the tale of Jimmy Stewart's "The Six Shooter." After half an hour of gunfighting suspense, I noticed I was passing my hometown where I graduated 53 years ago.

I thought it might be fun to take the drive through memory lane on the route we called, back then, "dragging main." While dragging main, we would listen to the radio station KOMA Oklahoma City. Even though the station was 1200 miles away, it boomed in clear as a bell at night.

KOMA was so popular at our school, and the surrounding schools, we decided to advertise our Ag Ball through that radio station alone. I still remember the KOMA DJ hollering out the upcoming Ag Ball in St. Anthony, Idaho. What a thrill to hear our small town being advertised over the radio waves. The advertising was a huge success. Many students showed up from other schools for our Ag Ball.

Consumed with memories, I found my way back to the road and drove to Scotty's for the "staff of life." With a belly full of nostalgia and Scotty's hamburger, I headed home. Funny. Something was not sitting right.

As I walked through the front door, I noticed my wife was up and looking as spry as a brand new colt. I tried to play it cool, bragging about my adventurous day. And then she said, "The thought of your sweet gesture bringing home delicious Scotty's hamburger and fries inspired me to get out of bed." Her words hit me like a truck full of smoldering manure that had been sitting in the July sun for a month. With horrible guilt, all I could say was, "I'll be back in three hours."

— Bryce Angell



Bryce Angell - The outdoors has always been a large part of my life. My father was an outfitter and guide for 35 years and I was there to shoe and care for the horses and help him do the cooking. We took many great trips into the Yellowstone area. Even now that I'm older, we still ride into the Tetons, Yellowstone and surrounding areas. My poems are mostly of personal experience. I am now retired and enjoying life to the fullest. I plan to do more riding and writing.

The Lucha Continues

BY MONICA CARRILLO

OUR VOICE COUNTS

In collaboration with Wood River High School and the Crisis Hotline in Idaho, Juol Productions and PROJECTOOLSUCCESS are presenting the first “Lucha Libre” event, March 16 from 4–8 p.m. at Wood River High School in Hailey, to raise awareness for mental health.

Julio Cervantes, founder of Juol Productions, presented this idea to Herbert Romero, founder of PROJECTOOLSUCCESS, in which Romero was completely on board.

Completely Latino/Hispanic-led, Romero said the slogan for this event is “mask or no mask, fight for your mental health.”

Romero said that because it’s connected with a cause, much of the proceeds are going toward 5B Suicide Prevention Alliance, part of the Crisis Hotline.

“Community members can get their tickets at Don David’s Bakery, Novedades Angel, Atkinsons’ Market and other places in the Magic Valley, like Buhl and Twin Falls,” Romero said.

He said that he is “jazzed” and excited for this event to come and hopes that other parts of the Magic Valley can make it, as well.

“One of the pushes that we’re hoping for is to get other parts of the valley to join us for this event...[to have] our neighbors like Jerome, Twin Falls, Buhl, Gooding, Shoshone and Burley join us,” Romero said.

He said they also hope to do a meet-and-greet at the Jerome Catholic Church and St. Charles Catholic Church in Hailey before so people can go in and meet the wrestlers for the event.

NUESTRA VOZ CUENTA

En colaboración con Wood River High School y Crisis Hotline en Idaho, Juol Productions y PROJECTOOLSUCCESS están presentando el primer evento “Lucha Libre” de 4 a 8 p. m., el 16 de marzo en Wood River High School para crear conciencia sobre la salud mental.

Julio Cervantes, fundador de Juol Productions, presentó esta idea a Herbert Romero, fundador de PROJECTOOLSUCCESS, en la cual Romero estuvo completamente de acuerdo.

Completamente dirigido por latinos/hispanos, Romero dijo que su lema para este evento es “máscara o sin máscara, lucha por tu salud mental”.

Romero dijo que debido a que está conectado con una causa, gran parte de las ganancias se destinarán a 5B Suicide Prevention Alliance, parte de la línea directa de crisis.

“Los miembros de la comunidad pueden conseguir sus boletos en Don David’s Bakery, Novedades Angel, Atkinsons’ Market y otros lugares en Magic Valley como Buhl y Twin Falls”, dijo Romero.

Dijo que está “animado” y entusiasmado por la llegada de este evento y espera que otras partes del Valle Mágico también puedan asistir.

“Uno de los impulsos que esperamos es lograr que otras partes del valle se unan a nosotros para este evento, nuestros vecinos como Jerome, Twin Falls, Buhl, Gooding, Shoshone, Burley, se unan a nosotros”, dijo Romero.

Dijo que también esperan conocer y saludar en la Iglesia Católica Jerome y en la Iglesia St. Charles en Hailey antes para que la gente pueda entrar y conocer a los luchadores para el evento.



Mr. Tinieblas, Jr, & Alushe. Photo credit: Electroshock, courtesy of Herbert Romero

Don't Wait Until Spring To Sell Your House



BY ANNA & MICHELLE

As you think about the year ahead, one of your big goals may be moving. But, how do you know when to make your move? While spring is usually the peak homebuying season, you don't actually need to wait until spring to sell. Here's why.

1. Take Advantage of Lower Mortgage Rates

Last October, the 30-year fixed mortgage rates peaked at 7.79%. In January, they hit their lowest level since May. That means you may not feel as locked-in to your current mortgage rate right now. That downward trend in rates has made moving more affordable now than it was just a few months ago.

Another reason today's rates make now a good time to sell? More buyers are jumping back into the market. Many had been waiting on the sidelines for rates to fall, but now that that's happening, they're eager and ready to buy. That means more demand for your house. According to Sam Khater, chief economist at Freddie Mac:

“Given this stabilization in rates, potential homebuyers with affordability concerns have jumped off the fence back into the market.”

2. Get Ahead of Your Competition

Right now, there are still more people looking to buy a home than there are houses for sale, which puts you in a great position. But keep in mind, with the recent uptick in new listings, we're seeing more sellers may already be re-entering the market.

3. Make the Most of Rising Home Prices

Experts forecast home prices will keep going up this year. What does that mean for you? If you're ready to sell your current house and plan to buy another one, it may be a good idea to think about moving now before prices go up more. That would give you the chance to buy your next home before it gets more expensive.

4. Leverage Your Equity

Homeowners today have tremendous amounts of equity. In fact, a recent report from CoreLogic says the average homeowner with a mortgage has more than \$300,000 in equity.

If you've been waiting to sell because you were worried about home affordability, know your equity can really help with your next move. It might even cover a big part, or maybe all, of the down payment for your next home.

Bottom Line

If you're thinking about selling your house and moving to another one, let's connect to get the process started now so you can get a leg up on your competition.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ERIC PARKER

An open letter on S1220

Representatives of the Idaho House,

As an Idahoan who has been victimized by the political weaponization of labels, I'd like to fact-check the fear being pushed by Jim Jones and some private clubs in North Idaho. Jim Jones has had his op-ed published in every legacy media platform available to him. Jim's two main claims are: 1) S1220 would change the state domestic terror law; and 2) S1220 would make it impossible to adequately punish horrific criminal acts.

Addressing Jim's first claim, Jim's Terrorist Control Act (TCA) has no domestic terrorism clause. Period. S1220 would add one, with the proper safeguards in place to ensure that it is not used as a political weapon against citizens peacefully exercising constitutionally protected conduct. Jim's second concern equates to nothing more than fearmongering, using blatant misinformation, targeted directly toward the public. To suggest S1220 would limit the state's ability to adequately punish violent criminal acts, such as the bombings that took place in North Idaho in the 1980s, is simply an appeal to emotion, due to our collective disgust for the Aryan Nations.

"Idaho law was not adequate at that time to deter and sufficiently punish such violent activity..." Jim Jones.

I would say to Jim, the law may not have been sufficient at the time, but it certainly is today, given Title 18, Chapter 33. Idaho T18 3322 says, "Use of weapons of mass destruction includes bombs." It's a felony and is punishable with up to and including life in prison, without the ambiguous label of "terrorist" or "domestic

terrorist."

The maximum punishment for Jim's TCA is the possibility of life in prison, no more than 18 3322. I believe that Jim is part of a broader effort to use domestic terror laws as precepts for labeling, designating individuals or groups he disagrees with, and stripping them of due process. I think this is further proved by the email to our House Representatives, by the private clubs in North Idaho. While these private groups are just regurgitating Jim Jones's talking points, please note that by invoking the FBI, extremist groups, anti-government, and white supremacy, they are showing that they are only concerned with labeling groups they disagree with. They are not concerned with punishing violent criminal acts, perpetrated for political ends.

If this all seems partisan, I would remind our Democrat friends that the most recent example of a state using domestic terrorist charges was in Georgia, against members of "Stop Cop City," including an attorney for SPLC. The political weaponization of labels goes both ways and is not a partisan issue. The safeguard placed in the definition within S1220 would have stopped that. Leaving them to be charged with individual violent crimes or any conspiracy that could be proven.

I would ask that all of you, Republican and Democrat, unite and stand for ALL Idahoans' civil liberties and due process, and vote yes on S1220.

Eric Parker
Hailey

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CROSSWORD

answer from page 12

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	LOPE	DIAZ	DAS
AMI	SHOETREE	DUEEAST	
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	POT	RAWEST	ANALYST
ALCOTT	ENACT	LOIRE	
CANVASBACK	EQUIVOCATE		
EMBER	ACHE	EVAS	MOLAR
DECRY	THAN	SCUM	AMAZE

SUDOKU

answer from page 12

7	2	8	5	1	4	6	9	3
5	1	6	2	9	3	7	4	8
9	4	3	6	8	7	2	1	5
4	6	2	8	5	9	3	7	1
8	7	1	4	3	2	9	5	6
3	9	5	1	7	6	4	8	2
2	5	9	3	4	1	8	6	7
6	8	4	7	2	5	1	3	9
1	3	7	9	6	8	5	2	4

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CHAMBER CORNER

MIKE MCKENNA

Liberty Theatre Company provides 'Radical Access to Theater'

BY MIKE MCKENNA

There once was a time when it seemed that the historic Liberty Theater in Hailey was destined to be destroyed.

The theater sat empty on Main Street for years. The building was said to be in such a state of disrepair that hopeless rumors about its future were floating around town. Some feared the theater was going to get torn down or get turned into condos.

Thankfully, Logan Fredrickson—the owner of the local Windermere real estate offices—stepped in to purchase the property and fix it back up to its glory days of hosting plays and films, talks and musical performances.

“He’s the good guy who stepped up to save the theater,” Naomi McDougall Jones said. “When we all walked back in there, we sobbed. It’s incredible to have a theater like this in Hailey.”

Naomi is the executive and artistic director for The Liberty Theatre Company (TLTC). She is celebrating her first full year on the job and the Liberty opening back up for the first time in years this weekend is the icing on the cake.

“It’s been pretty amazing. The community has been so supportive,” said Naomi, who moved to the Wood River Valley from New York City to take over TLTC. It’s the latest chapter in her impressive career as an author, filmmaker and actress.

Naomi had two goals when she arrived. One was somewhat simple, while the other one was downright radical. First, she wanted to start blending our rich pool of local talent with nationally-recognized theater artists. This has not only elevated the quality of their productions, but has been fun and inspiring for local actors and production crewmembers.

The second goal is what Naomi calls “radical access to theater.” She wanted to make sure that anyone who wanted to come see a performance, could. It’s why they created the “Pay What You Feel” program for last year’s shows. It was such a hit that it was hard to get tickets most nights.

Getting the community to come and enjoy theater is one thing, getting people to get involved



is another. That’s why TLTC created the 24-Hour Theater Festival last summer. It was, as Naomi explained, “wildly successful.” The show sold out and featured participants from eight to 93 years old.

TLTC is wrapping up its 2023/24 season with the Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Disgraced*, running from February 16 through March 2 at the Liberty Theatre.

On February 19, TLTC will team up with the Idaho Shakespeare Festival to put on an abridged *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, recommended for students sixth through 12th grades. On March 4, they will partner with Idaho Theater for Youth to put on *The Legend of Finn McCoy*, recommended for students from kindergarten through sixth grade. TLTC will be announcing its 2024/25 season in April.

With the Liberty Theatre back open, Naomi’s top-notch team at TLTC performing in front of big crowds most nights, and more locals getting involved all the time, there’s no doubt that theater is alive and doing very well in the Wood River Valley.

THE CHAMBER

HAILEY & THE WOOD RIVER VALLEY

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How To Play Sudoku

The Classic Sudoku is a number placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once.

CLASSIC SUDOKU

See answer on page 11

			5	1				
	1					7	4	
9	4		6	8		2	1	
4	6			5				
		1				9		
				7			8	2
	5	9		4	1		6	7
	8	4					3	
				6	8			

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Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)
NETWORKING: With intersecting explanations by S.N.

ACROSS	74 Leisurely run	7 Part of FYI
1 Belittle	76 Princess' voice in <i>Shrek</i>	8 Network "across"
6 Keyboarding mistake	77 Court VIPs	23 Across
10 Pear variety	78 Fiery heaps	9 Show awe
14 NCAA women's hoops powerhouse	79 "What __, a mind reader?"	10 Tennis great Boris
19 Seuss environmentalist	81 Footwear preserver	11 By mouth
20 Boxcar rider	84 Toward the rising sun	12 Horses' fathers
21 Dublin's land	86 LuPone or LaBelle	13 Network "across"
22 Salk's conquest	88 Had been	25 Across
23 Artist's implement	89 Makes lovable	14 Electronic transfer
25 Red semiprecious stones	92 Coat of a cat	15 Agree exactly
27 Not as humid	93 Poet Khayyam	16 Norwegian kingly name
28 Lower joint	94 Gibson or Brooks	17 High Court count
30 Carry	95 Saucepan topper	18 Meddlesome
31 HS gym course	96 Holder for hot sauce	24 What some port authorities are
34 Lowers oneself	98 Grilled sandwiches	26 Showy display
35 Lake, in Le Mans	100 Atlanta suburb	29 Maiden name predecessor
36 Sautéing acronym	104 Spanish compass point	31 Atonement
37 Bad-weather adjective	105 Poker prize	32 Highest peak
39 Glowingly beautiful	106 Least experienced	33 At home anywhere
43 Lipton competitor	107 Statistics specialist	34 Had no doubt about
45 __ culpa	109 Emerson's author friend	38 Thurman of filmdom
46 Cherry seed	112 Pass into law	39 Citrus cover
47 Sketch something	113 French wine valley	40 Pretentiously creative
48 Sofa section	114 Wild duck	41 Alliance acronym
49 Eroded	116 Hem and haw	42 Couples
52 Sir __ McKellen	121 Barbecue residue	44 Be entitled to
53 Brief quarrel	122 Sore feeling	46 Jambalaya cousin
54 Bright Crayola color	123 NASA spacewalks	50 Author Buchanan
56 Overplayed a role	124 Type of tooth	51 Game with five dice
59 "Help needed" signal	125 Speak out against	52 "Grr!"
60 Network "across"	126 As compared to	53 Intel gatherer
33 Down	127 Pond film	55 "Billionth" prefix
61 ATM inputs	128 Astound	57 Network "across"
64 Web programming language		68 Across
65 Network "across"	DOWN	58 Deploy
40 Down	1 Yodeler's perch	62 Trying time
67 School near Windsor Castle	2 Sort of snake	63 Satirical sketches
68 What real estate is worth	3 NL West team	66 Novelist Kellerman
71 Real estate measure	4 Little League locale	68 Verbal shrug
	5 Crowd scene actor	69 Mr. Potato Head part
	6 Remove grain from husks	70 Egg-grading agcy.

CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2024 STANLEY NEWMAN WWW.STANXWORDS.COM 2/25/24

72 Tough manager's only interest
73 Springsteen's __ Band
75 Frat letter
78 Mexican money
79 Each, informally
80 One of the Three Bears
82 Hasn't paid
83 Military volunteers
85 13th-century pope
87 Stumble on
90 Food plan

91 Summer hours in St. Pete
94 Some baseball gloves
97 Cellphone industry
99 Document certifier
100 La __ (region of Spain)
101 Get up
102 Camcorder button
103 Religion of China
106 Attain
108 Sweet smell
109 Completed with ease

110 Flimsy, as excuses
111 Network "across"
114 Across
113 Hawaiian banquet
115 Cave dweller
117 Network "across"
116 Across
118 Menu phrase
119 Bugs Bunny's whirling foe
120 Before, in odes

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