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FRESH-the Movie
Chris Garre - Pres. TEG
Craig Gurian-RemappingDebate.org
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Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer - ;if you listen'
Randy Udall-Writers on the Range-HCN
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To Follow A Swallow

Article and Photographs by Diane Bergstrom

As distant hot air balloons rose in the cloudless Colorado sky, the early morning sunshine lit up the barnyard and warmed the air. A circle of barn swallow researchers, huddled in quiet conversation and passed around adult barn swallows, plasma tubes, leg bands, color markers and shared information on current research studies being conducted at US universities. A sleepy horse listened from a nearby corral.

Before dawn, black mist nets were stretched across open barn doors and windows to catch hungry swallows as they left their nests in search of food. Stragglers in the rafters were herded by climbing researchers and steered with brooms. They are quickly extricated from the nets, placed in paper bags, and

processed. Each bird is identified, banded with a registration number and weighed in a paper cone. Wing and tail, or streamer, feathers are measured and closely

examined for parasites. Researchers gently blow back the feathers on the brood patch (abdomen) to count parasites on the bare skin that comes in contact with the nest eggs. Tiny blood samples are taken and one or two inner tail dots are color-coded with permanent markers so that later, a bird can be identified easily from a distance or while in flight. Barn swallows are the only swallows in the US with long deeply forked

tails. Data is recorded and within minutes of capture, the swallow makes a swift lift off of a researcher's open hand.

Swallows migrate to South America for the winter, and in the summer, after reaching breeding age, will return to the same barn and same nest if conditions are favorable. They arrive in May, stay until September, and will mate with a previous mate if it returns. The females lay two clutches on average, with three to five nestlings per clutch.



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Forty-eight nesting sites in three counties, including Boulder, are being observed: eggs are counted, hatchlings are monitored, nestlings are weighed, and fledglings are banded-their legs grow thinner as they age. Parasites are surveyed by counting how many lice and mites land on a bare hand held in a nest for 30 seconds. The range could be between 0 and perhaps thousands. The nests are constructed of mud pellets, lined with grass and feathers, and woven with horsehair. Swallows are aerial insectivores, adept at



catching flies and mosquitoes on the fly.

The Lab Research Team, led by Dr. Rebecca Safran, is comprised of students within CU's Department of Ecology and Environmental Biology. Dr. Safran was recently awarded a five-year grant to study barn swallows around the world. Ph.D. candidates Joanna (Joey) Hubbard, Amanda Hund, and Matt Wilkins are studying how swallows are changing their patterns of mate selection in various geographical

locations, and possibly creating (Continued on next page.)

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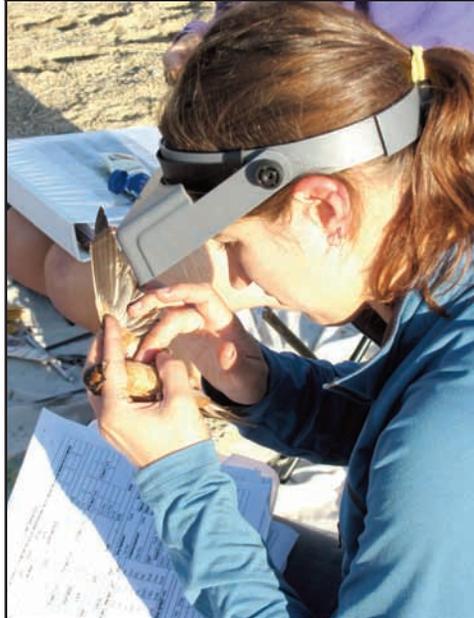
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subspecies. Undergraduates assisting them with the research include: Lauren Brooks, Michelle Foreman, Matt Aberle, Caroline Glidden, Abdul Hussein and Allison Mitchell. The hypothesized subspecies might result from the female swallows' change in desired characteristics and behaviors of their chosen mates. Females in the US prefer males with darker front plumage and common shorter tails; females in Europe choose males with longer tails; and females in Israel choose darker males with longer streamers. The research, founded in curiosity, starts with questions. Joey is



studying the effect of plumage color in mate selection. Amanda is evaluating the correlation between parasites and male traits important in mate selection, finding that darker males have fewer parasites and therefore are more desirable to females. Matt is evaluating the variances of song characteristics in sexual selection. How do we define a subspecies? Joey said, "That's the philosophical question of evolutionary biologists. How do we define a species? What

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looking for different traits in sexual selection, those traits become exaggerated over time. Reproductive barriers result-a

actually is a species? What are the lines between a species and subspecies? What if they stop cross breeding across geographical locations? Does it matter?" Amanda stated, "The species are different all over the world. They used to be the same species and now they are starting to be different. The females are using



male from one subspecies won't be attractive to a female of another subspecies. Females choose. We get populations that no longer breed and that's the start of a new subspecies." She reflected, "Like a mule, in the evolutionary world, that's a dead end." The highly committed team will continue to study the body

different criteria to pick their mates. If you have a species

characteristics, songs, calls and

(Continued on next page.)

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dances of birds, which all have meaning; signals with information in them. Amanda offered, "What that information is and why it changes in different populations will help determine how new species are created. Sexual selection pushes characteristics into the next generation. Breeding restricted to local subspecies makes (the next generation) more adaptable to the environment."

European lore



suggests that a barn swallow nesting on a property will bring good luck. May they also bring good luck to those committed to studying them into the future!

Side note: Swallows are classified as migratory songbirds and protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty of 1918. The students carry federal permits in order to handle and treat birds.

A permit must be obtained to remove a nest by anyone, and only issued for very compelling reasons.



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Colorado Department Of Public Safety

Colorado State Forest Service: Lead State Agency for Forestry, Wildfire Mitigation Information

Following recent changes related to the state's wildfire command and control duties, the Colorado State Forest Service continues to be the lead state agency providing forest stewardship and wildfire mitigation assistance to private landowners.

On July 1, wildfire management and prescribed fire responsibilities transferred from the CSFS to the Colorado Department of Public Safety centralizing the state's fire management functions into a single, statewide point of contact for wildfire management. The transition occurred after the Colorado General Assembly passed a bill in the 2012 session, following a joint recommendation from Gov. John Hickenlooper and Colorado State University President Tony Frank.

"This transition will allow the Colorado State Forest Service to concentrate even greater efforts on forest management and forestry outreach objectives," said Frank. "We look forward to strengthening our focus on helping landowners and communities accomplish sound forestry practices on their land to achieve their stewardship objectives. As a service and outreach agency in the Warner

College of Natural Resources at CSU, the Colorado State Forest Service remains committed to its core mission of achieving stewardship of Colorado's diverse forest environments for the benefit of present and future generations."

The forest management, applied research, education and outreach aspects of the CSFS remain with CSU and are fully available to agencies, organizations and landowners. The CSFS also will continue to provide technical assistance and outreach related to home and community protection from wildfires, through its State Office in Fort Collins and 17 districts around the state. As in the past, CSU and the CSFS will continue to work closely with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources to achieve the greatest benefit for Colorado's citizens.

"We will continue to offer every available resource to Colorado landowners to help them manage their forested lands and urban trees, and to ensure that they have the knowledge to fully prepare for future wildfires," said Jeff Jahnke, state forester and director of the CSFS. For more information about the recent transition and landowner resources related to forestry and wildfire mitigation, go to www.csfs.colostate.edu.

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Update - Buffalo Field Campaign

Summer is the time for family for me. It is also usually the slow time for buffalo harassment. This week combined the two and this story has come out of it. A week before my parents, along with three of my four sisters and three more nieces and nephews arrived on July 2nd, I was entertaining my two 14-year-old nephews. In the middle of rafting, hiking, swimming in Hebgen Lake, and other outdoor fun, we heard the news that on Saturday June 30th the Dept. of Livestock (DOL) shot and killed a bull buffalo.

The day my parents and rest of the family were to arrive, a story of a big bull buffalo that had gored a dog just up the hill from our cabins had the DOL, Gallatin County Sheriff and our local Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) game warden combing our neighborhood in search of the bull. According to locals this dog was aggressive and attacked anything it could, mainly people. In all of the chaos the buffalo showed up in our yard and came up to my cabin. He squeezed between a woodpile and my cabin and bedded



down out of sight from the agents who were looking for him.

Minutes after he had taken refuge in my yard, the local FWP officer drove onto our property and I went to talk to him. He asked about the buffalo and told me that he had gored a dog that attacked him. As little white lies came out of my mouth I told the agent the buffalo had just passed by our land. This bull buffalo spent three and a half hours bedded down in my yard and after all the agents left for the day he came out for food. My nephews said to me the buffalo know where they are safe and it opened their eyes to my other family: the buffalo and Buffalo Field

Campaign. The buffalo then wandered down valley and was not seen again until sunset.

At that point, the rest of my family had arrived and watched the buffalo briskly walk through our yard and back up to the housing area where he had gored the dog. We followed with video and still cameras to make sure he was not shot. The next day he had wandered a few miles back towards Yellowstone National Park and our patrol was out there to document a DOL agent on horseback and an FWP agent on an ATV go after the buffalo. The bull ran from them and jumped into Hebgen Lake and swam over to Horse Butte for safety. The agents did not follow and our friend is still at large today. These days will forever be



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in my heart. The buffalo have shown my family and me just how special and magical this relationship is and our work to protect them. Our families are linked for life.

With the Buffalo, Mike Mease

HOT OFF THE PRESS! Newsletters & Wild Bison 2013 Calendars. BFC is proud to present our 2013 "Yellowstone Country Wild Bison Calendar." This is our third year of producing these amazing calendars, and this year's is our most thrilling and inspiring version yet! Loaded with amazing new photos, artwork, poetry and wild buffalo facts, this calendar is a must have. Great for your home or office, and a wonderful gift idea. Celebrate wild buffalo 365 days a year with BFC's 2013 Wild Bison calendars! **ORDER TODAY!**

Join BFC for Wood Cut Week at BFC September 10-15, 2012 Mark your calendars and come to BFC! The week of September 10th through the 15th is BFC's Annual Wood Cut Week! We will be gathering, cutting and stacking wood for the coming winter field season. Bring your chain saw if you have one, and bring lots of friends! Room and board provided, and there's also plenty of camping space available. Please contact Mike Mease
mailto: mease@wildrockies.org for more info by email or call 406-646-0070.

Last Words - "Wherever you go there once were buffalos & forests. Plant & protect Danny's trees & buffalos for life.

Trees are the lungs of the earth & the buffalos are the spirit." ~ Bette Mioduski -This poem was inspired by Bette's son, Danny, who took her to Yellowstone to meet the buffalo, before he left this world far too soon.

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Gross Dam Expansion, TEG & You

From Chris Garre, TEG President

TEG (The Environmental Group), formed in 1990, is a non-profit (501c3) organization in Colorado whose mission is: **To protect and improve the environment, To promote open space and land conservation, To further and encourage better ecological education, And to provide current information to the community regarding the environment in which we live. Our area of responsibility is the foothills and mountainous regions of the Front Range, to the northwest of Denver.**

Ever since Denver Water first announced its intent to seek an expansion of Gross Dam Reservoir, back in 2003, many folks have been ready to throw in the towel, making claims such as, “You can’t beat those guys, they’re too big,” and “You can’t stop development.” It’s unfortunate that we citizens have been so beaten back that we can’t even imagine that we would have any influence shaping the world in which we live. But the truth is, at least in the case of the proposed expansion of Gross Dam, we do have that power.

Colorado House Bill 1041, also known as the Areas and Activities of State Interest Act (“the Act”), was enacted in 1974 and allows local governments to regulate a variety of

development activities with guidance from the state. The Act authorizes local governments to designate as activities of state interest the site selection and construction of major new domestic water and sewage treatment systems, major extension of existing domestic water and sewage treatment systems, site selection and development of new communities, and efficient utilization of municipal and industrial water projects. [24-65.1-203(1), C.R.S.] **Local governments may not pass regulations that are completely prohibitive of the building of municipal water facilities and expansion of existing projects; rather, the Act allows the locality to require a permit with designated conditions prior to construction.** The 1041 permit application process is extensive and includes the submission of detailed specifications concerning the affected environment and impacts of the proposed development.

In 1994, the Colorado Court of Appeals upheld the use of Eagle County’s 1041 regulatory powers when the cities of Aurora and Colorado Springs wanted to divert water from the Eagle River basin for the Homestake II Reservoir near Minturn. After a series of public hearings, Eagle County denied the cities a permit because the project failed to comply with the county’s 1041 regulations. The cities appealed the denial in district court and the Colorado Court of Appeals ultimately held that evidence supported



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Eagle County’s denial of permits based on the cities’ failure to satisfy county regulatory criteria concerning wetlands protection and nuisance abatement, amongst other issues. *City of Colorado Springs v. Eagle County*, 895 P.2d 1105, 1115 (Colo. App. 1994). **In plain language, the utility was denied permission to build the reservoir because Eagle County exerted its 1041 authority.**

Denver Water cannot expand Gross Dam without first obtaining a permit from Boulder County. Denver Water will need to submit “detailed specifications concerning the affected environment and impacts of the proposed development” to Boulder County but, as we’ve already seen, Denver Water has the wherewithal to present “studies” that show just about whatever they want. Boulder County is relying on TEG to supply studies that accurately present the impacts of the project (and, likely, contradict Denver Water’s studies). Given the multitude of environmental and residential impacts, a significant amount of time and resources will be required in order for TEG to competently conduct these scientific analyses, and this is where you come in...

Even a cursory examination of Denver Water’s plan reveals that the project is unnecessary and destructive to ecosystems, communities, and economies. Together, we can give Boulder County the scientific studies it would require to deny Denver Water their permit; we can shape the world in which we live. If you’re not already a member of TEG, join at **TEGColorado.org** - it’s quick and easy to join instantly online, and it’s **only \$15**. If you’re an engineer, your community needs you - contact us through **TEGColorado.org**. If you’ve

got energy to put toward protecting your home and your environment, your community needs you. If you’re blessed enough to be in a financial position to make a contribution beyond a \$15 membership, your community needs you. **There is a clear path of action laid in front of us.**

All we need to do is walk it.

Twice in August TEG is hosting a Documentary Film Double-Feature evening at the community center. Both films, *No Water to Waste* and *The Mono Lake Story*, will show

both nights, **on the 15th and the 30th**. Admission is free to current TEG members (\$5 otherwise), so why not take this opportunity to join! *(Photo of the existing Gross Dam.)*

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Live Music~Documentaries~Mitigation~Online Issue

Letter to the Readers,

AMERICAN RIVERS speaking at CCCIA regarding the proposed Gross Dam expansion Wednesday, August 8TH, 6:00-7:30pm at Coal Creek Canyon Community Center (CCCIA) 31528 Highway 72. This is the new date for this event which was previously cancelled due to the Flagstaff fire. In the spirit of learning more about what options the community may have to delay or stop the expansion of Gross Reservoir come hear from American Rivers Conservation Director, Matt Rice.

The meeting, organized by TEG (The Environmental Group, TEGColorado.org) is for community members to learn more about the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) permitting processes and how it relates to the potential expansion of Gross Reservoir. American Rivers (<http://www.americanrivers.org/>) has expertise on FERC permitting processes and often testifies (for or against) particular projects. There may be appropriate interventions that could be applied to delay Gross Dam expansion (when the time comes). The meeting with American Rivers will explore options.

The meeting is free and open to the public. Chris Garre

Dear Readers,

Live music at the CCCIA, 31528 Hwy 72. Oregon Songwriters: Anne Weiss & Carl Smiley - **Saturday, August 11, 7pm - 9pm** Open to the Public, BYOB, \$10 Door Charge Kids 12 & Under are Free and Welcome with an Adult. Coal Creek Canyon Improvement Association (Community Center).

Join us at the Coal Creek Community Center for an evening of original Blues & Folk music! About Anne Weiss: anneweiss.com Poetic, political, humorous and sensual, Anne Weiss' music and songwriting has been called a cross between Joni Mitchell, Bonnie Raitt, and Aretha Franklin. Anne has performed with Ani DiFranco, Taj Mahal, Dar Williams, Dan Fogelberg, Mary Flowers, Connie Cohen, Chris Smither and many others and received the Allen Ginsberg Award for poems from her poetry book, *Making Paper From Leaves*. She is based in Portland, Oregon and tours nationally and internationally.

About Karl Smiley: sonicbids.com/karlsmiley Heartfelt singer-songwriter Karl Smiley has been making music since the 1960's. Last May he won the Willamette Valley Music Festival's singer/songwriter contest and performed at the Cuthbert in Eugene, Oregon. He has five CD's under his belt and charms audiences nationwide. Mostly he sings

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and plays guitar but often spices things up with harmonica, banjo and whistling. Chris Garre

Letter to the Editor,

Sunday, August 12TH, 7pm @ Nederland Community Center (Backdoor Theatre) Gretchen Peters for Claire Levy for State Representative Fundraiser.

Aspen Meadows Productions is presenting Grammy-nominated Nashville singer-songwriter Gretchen Peters at the Nederland Community Center. The evening, including a reception at 6pm, is a fundraiser event for Claire Levy for State Representative. The Nederland Community Center (Backdoor Theater) is located at 750 Highway 72 North, Nederland CO. Tickets for the concert only are \$20 in advance and \$25 if purchased at the door. Tickets for the 6 PM reception are \$15 advance, \$20 door. No-fee advance reservations can be made at http://tinyurl.com/amp12Aug12 -gretchenPeters- call 303-835-3550 with questions.

About Gretchen Peters: gretchenpeters.com Gretchen Peters started performing in the Boulder, Colorado folk circuit as a teenager. Inspired by Paul Simon, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell and a new generation of songwriters rising out of Nashville that included Steve Earle, Nanci Griffith and Rodney Crowell, Peters relocated to Music City in the late 1980s. Martina McBride's 1995 recording of Peters' "Independence Day," the gritty story of an abused woman's revenge, made her a songwriting sensation. The performance received a "Best Country Song" Grammy nomination and won the Country Music Association's "Song of the Year" title.

After that a string of great vocalists - Pam Tillis, Trisha Yearwood, Patty Loveless, Neil Diamond, George Strait, Etta James - began to record Peters' songs. Peters also signed her own record deal, yielding her 1996 debut album The Secret of Life. The title track was cut by Faith Hill in 1999 and hit number five on the country charts.

Since then Peters has recorded five other solo albums: Gretchen Peters (2001), Halcyon (2004), Trio Live (2006), Burnt Toast and Offerings (2007) and Northern Lights (2008). The compilation Circus Girl was released in 2009. And that same year Peters collaborated with one of her favorite songwriters, Tom Russell, for their One To the Heart, One To the Head.

About Claire Levy: clairelevy.org Claire Levy has represented Colorado's 13th House Dist. in the Colorado legislature since 2007. House Dist. 13 reaches from the former coal mining town of Marshall in Boulder County to the continental divide in

western Clear Creek County and from the heart of the city of Boulder to Kremmling. It encompasses all of Gilpin, Clear Creek, Jackson and Grand Counties along with the western half of Boulder County.

Looking forward to her last term representing House Dist. 13, Claire will be working to strengthen education at all levels so our children and young adults have the opportunity to succeed in today's competitive environment. She will keep working to foster energy efficiency so we reduce consumption of fossil fuels. She will work to rebalance control over hydraulic fracturing so communities have a say in where and how hydraulic fracturing is conducted. She will continue her work on reforming criminal laws so we reduce recidivism and reserve expensive prison beds for those who cannot be safely managed under supervision in the community. She will work for civil unions so all Coloradans have the same rights regardless of who they love. And she will support legislation that makes our government as efficient and transparent as possible so everyone has confidence their tax dollars are being spent wisely. (Continued on next page.)



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Highlander Letters

More can be read about Claire Levy and some of the legislation she has sponsored during her six years in office by visiting clairelevy.org.

Dear Readers,

Environmental Documentaries Double-Feature at the CCCIA 31528 Hwy 72, Coal Creek Canyon. **Both films will be shown, starting at 6PM, on both August 15TH & August 30TH** TEG (The Environmental Group, TEG-Colorado.org) is screening two documentary films at the Coal Creek Canyon Community Center (CCCIA) this month. Each film is a little over a half-hour long and there will be time for discussion between and after. Admission is \$5 at the door and free to current TEG members. Membership to TEG is \$15/year. Come watch these compelling films on the Community Center's new oversized LCD screen!

No Water To Waste (nowatertowaste.com) reveals the concentrated and organized effort by local politicians and developers to push sprawl in Jefferson County. In the name of money, pro-development forces want to take more water from the Colorado and Fraser Rivers, damaging these ecosystems, and expand Gross Dam. Developers' plans would build more homes on open land, create more traffic congestion on sub-par public roads, further degrade our air quality and build a private toll road on contaminated land (Rocky Flats), threatening public health. The film, co-

directed by Chris Garre (current TEG president) and Gabrielle Louise, was an official selection of the Colorado Environmental Film Festival, 2012.

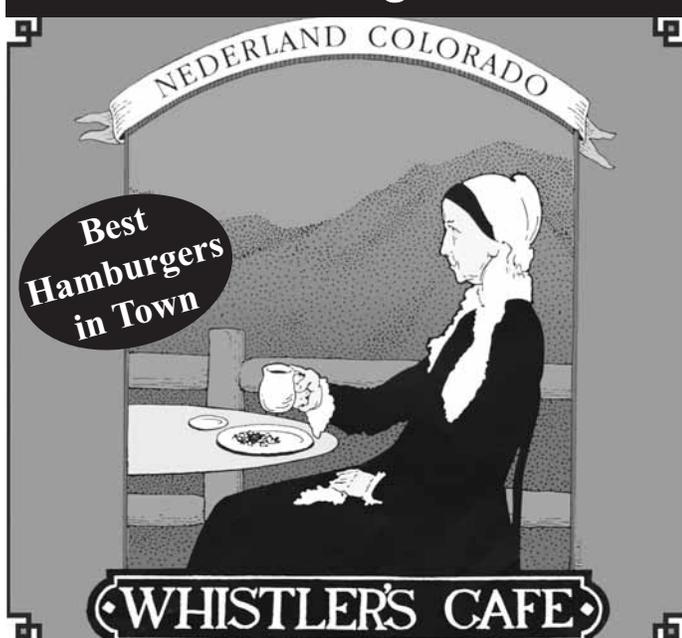
The Mono Lake Story (monolake.org/about/film) recounts a rare environmental success that can inspire and inform the environmental challenges of our time. In 1941, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power began diverting Mono Lake's tributary streams 350 miles south to meet the growing water demands of Los Angeles. Deprived of its freshwater sources, the volume of Mono Lake halved, while its salinity doubled. Unable to adapt to these changing conditions within such a short period of time, the ecosystem began to collapse.

Appalled by this prospect, David Gaines formed the Mono Lake Committee in 1978 and began talking to conservation clubs, schools, service organizations, legislators, lawyers and to anyone who would listen about the value of this high desert lake. Under David Gaines' leadership, the Mono Lake Committee grew to 20,000 members and gained legal and legislative recognition for Mono Lake. Since 1978, the Committee has achieved many accomplishments in the fight to protect Mono Lake. Working with the public and an extraordinary coalition of government agencies and non-profit groups, the Committee has brought negotiation, legislation, and litigation to Mono Lake's support. Chris Garre

Letter to the Editor,

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may subtract from federal taxable income 50% of the costs incurred in performing wildfire mitigation measures that meet the following qualifications and limitations:

The taxpayer must own the property upon which the wildfire mitigation measures are performed. The property upon which the wildfire mitigation measures are performed must be located in Colorado. The property upon which the wildfire mitigation measures are performed must be located in a wild land-urban interface area.

The wildfire mitigation measures must be authorized by a community wildfire protection plan adopted by a local government within the interface area. The total amount of the subtraction may not exceed \$2,500. An approved community wildfire protection plan identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatments. It also must recommend measures to reduce structural ignitability. Additional information regarding community wildfire protection plans can be found online at www.csfs.colostate.edu

Costs include any actual out-of-pocket expense incurred and paid by the landowner and documented by receipt for performing wildfire mitigation measures. The following expenses are specifically excluded within statute and do not qualify for this subtraction: Inspection or certification fees; In-kind contributions; Donations; Incentives;

Cost sharing; Wildfire mitigation measures include the following activities to the extent that they meet or exceed any Colorado State Forest Service standards or any other applicable state rules:

Creating and maintaining a defensible space around structures; Establishing fuel breaks; Thinning of woody vegetation for the primary purpose of reducing risk to structures from wildland fire; Secondary treatment of woody fuels by lopping and scattering, piling, chipping, removing from the site or prescribed burning.

For information regarding these and other wildfire mitigation measures, visit www.csfs.colostate.edu and for information about the tax credit, check www.taxcolorado.com **Natalie Davidson, LumberJacks Logging & Firewood 303.642.0953**

Dear Editor,

I love your online version, especially last month with all the color photographs and ads. I used to live in Broomfield and work in Boulder but got transferred to Georgia recently. I always picked up a hard copy in Boulder and was missing my Highlander fix so when you started your online copy it was great. I still have friends and family in the foothills outside Golden and Boulder so it is nice to know what is happening and someday I hope to move back to the area so I love reading the real estate ads.

Keep up your great work with animals, wildlife and the environment. Your magazine is exceptional, informational and entertaining. Thank you for giving me a way to read it from afar. I was planning on getting a subscription, now I don't have to. Megan Lawson

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August

2012

PAGE 17

Uncertainty ~ Fiscal Cliffs ~ Grand Bargains

By Craig Gurian - RemappingDebate.org

Having become disoriented in the fog of Corporate Uncertainty, I was trying to find my way when, suddenly, over the Fiscal Cliff I went. I plunged straight down - deeper and deeper into the abyss. I thought all was lost. But then I saw the Grand Bargain waiting for me, beckoning to me. For a moment, I rejoiced. The Grand Bargain hovered below me, ready to break my fall. A moment's reflection makes plain that the business-leader-at-the-mercy-of-uncertainty narrative is fiction.

But when it clasped me to its bosom, I realized all at once that I was in the hands of the most monstrous and merciless being. The Grand Bargain - leering now, suffocating, cold-blooded, and cold-hearted - dragged me down, deeper still, depositing me into a work pit already teeming with others who, as I saw in a flash, were sweating and exhausted but never allowed to end their labors. "Here you will stay," said the Grand Bargain. "You will learn to get used to it."

I awoke from my nightmare, or at least I thought I did. But the character of Corporate Uncertainty, the setting of Fiscal Cliff, and the seducing prospect of the Grand Bargain (it's true nature carefully concealed) are still present. They are, together, the critical components of a single, continuously repeated media fairy tale: you are in

danger unless you yield to the centrists who want only to save you from yourselves and any unrealistic ideas you may have about fairness, equity, and economic security.

Corporate leaders as befuddled and helpless? The way the story is told, "growth" is being hampered by the fact that business leaders find themselves uncertain about the future direction of various federal policies - especially those relating to tax, spending, and regulatory matters. These business leaders have even more uncertainty piled on them by the fact that the Bush tax cuts are scheduled to expire in tandem with a mechanism in place to begin to impose spending cuts at the start of the new year - the latter being what the media initially embraced as a technique to impose "fiscal discipline" last summer, but what it now invariably described as the "fiscal cliff."

It isn't true, of course, that investment decisions are driven entirely, or even primarily, by potential changes in government policy (some basic economic conditions - like the state of consumer demand - bear most heavily on those decisions). But let's focus exclusively on the influence that unsettled government policy is said to have.

One such strategic choice stems from the fact that corporate executives have learned that they can, without consequence, abandon the older practice of sharing productivity gains with workers, and instead seize all those gains for themselves.

A moment's reflection still makes plain that the business-leader-at-the-mercy-of-uncertainty narrative is fiction.



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Corporate decision-makers, like any others, examine different scenarios to determine what course of action will benefit them most. It turns out that, insofar as government policy goes, the current scenario is and has been delightful for them: historically low taxes, historically low interest rates, a Democratic Party eager to be corporate-friendly, and regulations far less robust than might have been imagined in the wake of economic meltdown and repeated corporate scandal.

The lack of investment - or at least the lack of investment in activities that create jobs for American workers - reflects not corporate uncertainty about government policy but rather active, strategic corporate choices about how to maximize profitability (that is, the same choices corporations always make).

Another is the sense that a Republican victory could bring an era of even more spoils on which to gorge (there isn't much worry about current spoils being taken away because national Democrats, at most, only seek to nibble at the margin). If corporate executives are "uncertain," it is not an uncertainty by which they are victimized; it is instead a bet they are choosing to place on the creation of a playing field tilted even more in their direction, and it is a bet that the uncertainty card can be as effective as an intimidation tool as "do what we say and no one gets hurt."

All the money disappears on January 1st? Calling the

January 1st prospect of the beginning of programs cuts and of increased tax revenues a "fiscal cliff" is a singularly inapt metaphor. Neither government programs, nor government revenues, nor the economy as a whole will suddenly go past a point of no return.

Depending on who is exerting what pressure, a Congressional impasse can be broken as easily in January or February as it can now. An expired tax cut that is reinstated in February, for example, can be made retroactive to January 1.

The real aim of many who cry "danger" at an approaching fiscal cliff is to generate a crisis atmosphere that can only be broken with what is described as "sensible," centrist "compromise," in other words, a perspective that sees even Clinton-era tax rates as too high, and that treats entitlement programs as luxuries that cannot be afforded as they used to be. This perspective - a compromise between where mainstream Republicans were some years ago and where they are now - is but a variation of the deficit hysteria that dominated discourse throughout 2011 with the goal of yielding a Grand Bargain that would squeeze government programs, including entitlement programs, into a fixed percentage of GDP, rather than determining what programs are needed and budgeting accordingly.

The real worry of those

(Continued on page 21.)

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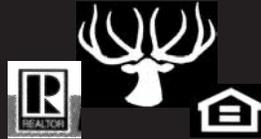
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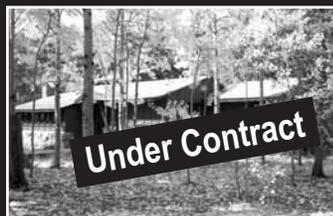
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claiming pre-traumatic fiscal cliff syndrome is that Democrats - for once - will not surrender preemptively and that people will have an opportunity to see that the danger that has come to pass is substantially less than advertised.

When, for example, it comes to the year-end expiration of the tax cuts that were originally scheduled to be eliminated at the end of 2010 (until President Obama yielded to the GOP and extended them for two years), people will begin to learn whether having to pay taxes at Clinton-era rates is such a disaster after all, or whether we can live quite well with those rates. Surely the wealthy will get on just fine; perhaps middle class taxpayers will as well. Maybe, forced to choose, the Pentagon will offer up one of the many weapons program that actually isn't necessary in an era where the U.S. retains overwhelming military superiority (and spends overwhelmingly more on the military than any country, too).

For those who insist that January 1 is a drop-dead date, there is a silver lining. R. Glenn Hubbard, the Columbia Business School Dean and advisor to Mitt Romney, was recently reported to have described the "fiscal cliff" as the number one source of corporate uncertainty, even above the debt crisis in Europe. Once we're past January 1 and over the cliff, corporate leaders will touch themselves, see that they are still very much alive, assess the facts on the ground, and do so without the uncertainty that supposedly has been plaguing them.

Finished uncertainty! Unless, of course, "uncertainty" is just code for not giving up on the hope that politicians of both parties, as well as pundits, will continue to buy the evidence-free idea that general prosperity comes from corporations being kept fat and happy.

(This article originally appeared in Remapping Debate, an online public policy news journal. Reprinted with permission.)

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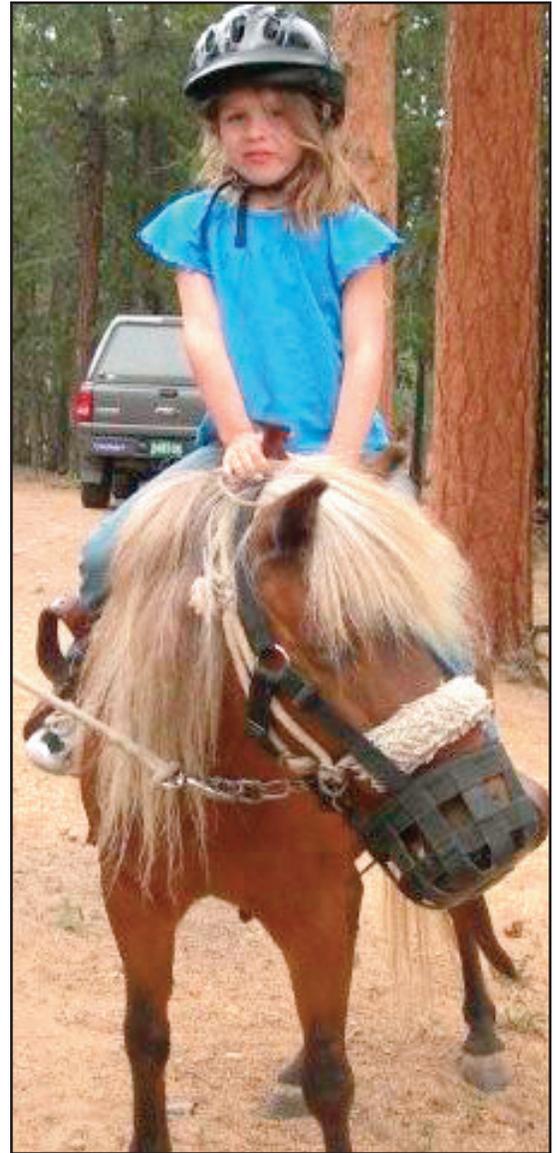
Page 21



*Top Left:
Jordan &
Miley.*

*Top Right:
Aly on Rudy*

*Bottom:
Summit
County
stray needs
a home!*





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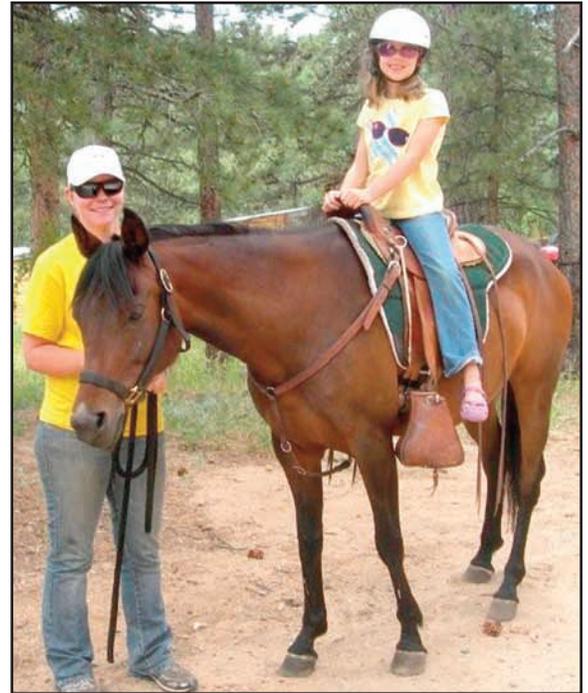
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Top Left: Lara & Aly take a lesson from Julia at Star Peak Stables.

Top Right: Sarah holds Abby with Lara in the saddle.



Bottom: Lara on Sassy, Aly on Rudy and Chanel in foreground.

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CSU Vets Recommend Rabies Vaccinations

CSU veterinarians say an inexpensive, widely available vaccine can help **protect livestock, horses and pets from exposure to rabies**, which is being carried by an increasing number of skunks in the state. Bats have spread rabies in Colorado for many years, but more skunks in Colorado have become infected, which has increased risk in livestock and horses. Contributing factors include skunk and wildlife habitat changes as well as human movement that can spread the disease into other areas.

Colorado State University's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory provides disease testing services to veterinarians and their clients, many state and federal agencies, livestock owners and pet owners. The laboratory diagnoses and recommends further diagnostic strategies for ill animals. It also monitors the health of animals across the state and region, helping to detect and prevent diseases in animals and diseases affecting public health. CSU veterinarians recommend vaccinating:

Horses and livestock, particularly such pet livestock as llamas and alpacas, once a year. Commercial production livestock in locations demonstrating high skunk activity.

Cats and dogs. All warm-blooded animals, including

humans, can be infected with rabies. Most animals die from rabies within 10 days of developing signs of infection. If an animal is suspected to have rabies, avoid human and other animal contact, find a veterinarian who can assess the situation and contain the spread of the disease. "Symptoms of rabies can be difficult to distinguish from other illnesses, and you risk exposing animals and people while animals are being diagnosed," said Dean Hendrickson, director of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at Colorado State.

"The danger is especially high this year, and generally speaking, while it's rare for livestock or horses to contract rabies in Colorado, it is extremely important to work to prevent animals from contracting the disease." Wounds from a rabid skunk bite may not be visible or easy to detect on livestock or horses. Symptoms mimic other more common illnesses and could be confused with regular colic or a foot or leg injury.

Rabies also can enter the body through cuts or scratches and can be spread to people through contact with saliva or bodily fluids. "A rabies bite to an animal that has not been vaccinated is invariably fatal," Hendrickson said. Among the signs of rabies in animals: Changed or altered behavior, Acting nervous or agitated, Vicious, (Continued on page 26.)

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#3 PICK & DRAW	\$15/rider	50%

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COWBOY CHURCH – 7:30AM SORTING-SUNDAY – 8/26/12 – 8:30 AM					
PEN 1			PEN 2		
DIVISION	ENTRY FEE	PAYOUT	DIVISION	ENTRY FEE	PAYOUT
ALL-LEVELS HANDICAP – PICK & DRAW		\$30/rider			50%
#9-PICK & DRAW	\$30/rider	50%	#4 – PICK & DRAW	\$30/rider	50%
<i>Youth Classes Start on the next cattle change after Noon!</i>					
SR YOUTH (11 & over)	\$10/rider	BUCKLES	JR YOUTH (10 & under)	\$10/rider	BUCKLES
DRAWPOT (5 RIDE LIMIT)		\$30/rider			50%
#7-PICK & DRAW	\$30/rider	50%	#2-PICK & DRAW	\$15/Rider	BUCKLES

Remember! Get there early—talk to people, let them know you will ride—there are rides waiting!
QUESTIONS? John Shifty
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Directions to Gilpin County Fairgrounds (230 Norton Dr., Blackhawk, CO) from I-70 West:

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Highlander Animals

unprovoked attacks, Excessive salivation and difficulty swallowing, Roaming or separation from the herd, Unusual sexual activity, Abnormal vocalizations, Ascending paralysis, typically beginning in hind limbs, Signs of colic such as lying down more than usual or getting up and lying down repeatedly, rolling, standing stretched out, repeatedly curling the upper lip, pawing the ground and kicking at the abdomen, Depression, Self mutilation, Sensitivity to light.

Vaccines range in price for different animals. Cattle vaccines are available for less than \$5 each, and horse vaccines range from \$10 to \$15, depending upon the number of animals vaccinated. **Rabies vaccination should be repeated annually for horses and cattle.** Some rabies vaccines are good for three years in sheep. Camelids - a group of animals that include alpacas and llamas - may be effectively vaccinated with any vaccine labeled for sheep or cattle. Due to the lack of formal government approval on vaccines for camelids, state veterinary and public health officials may still treat camelids as non-vaccinated animals during an incident.

CSU veterinarians recommend that camelid owners consult with their veterinarian before beginning a rabies vaccination program for their animals. Rabies vaccines do not have to be administered to livestock or horses by a

veterinarian, but animals not vaccinated by a veterinarian may be treated differently by officials who respond to a potential rabies case. "If the vaccinations for cattle, sheep and goats are given by a veterinarian and proper records are kept, then those animals should be considered rabies vaccinated by Public Health officials if there is exposure.

Vaccinations can be given by the producer in order to save cost but animals may not be considered rabies vaccinated if exposure occurs," said Dr. Rob Callan, head of the university's livestock veterinary service. "This distinction affects the length of quarantine and how animals are handled after exposure." **If an infected skunk, bat, raccoon or dog has been identified with rabies, do not handle or approach that animal or that animal's carcass.** If possible, safely secure the body; veterinarians can submit the body to test it for rabies. **To reduce the chances of livestock, pets or human exposure to rabies:**

Do not feed or handle wildlife.

Do not relocate rabies reservoir species such as skunks or raccoons. Exclude bats from homes, barns and other outbuildings. Rabies virus does not live for long periods outside of a human or animal and is easily destroyed by soap and water or common household disinfectants.



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Make It Great!

By Melissa E. Johnson

*“When I think something nice is going to happen
I seem to fly right up on the wings of anticipation;
and then the first thing I realize
I drop down to earth with a thud.*

*But really...the flying part is glorious as long as it lasts...
it's like soaring through a sunset.
I think it almost pays for the thud.”*

~L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea*

A couple of years ago I watched a documentary on the mating rituals of Moose. Fascinating, and a bit disappointing, really, for reasons you'll soon understand.

There's such hullabaloo in the ritual. Come autumn, as if on cue, the bull moose begins to shed the soft velvet on his antlers. “Shed first mate first” might well be their motto, and the mature males usually go first, kicking off the rutting season by thrashing antlers about in the brush. This alerts nearby cow moose (hey, ladies!) and other bulls that the game is on, confirming their prime status and challenging nearby bulls to a little stiff (ahem!) competition.

The bull then digs a hole (a few inches deep and a couple of feet wide)-his rutting pit of love-into which he urinates and then splashes around to cover his head and antlers and whatever else he can soak in his smell. Strangely, this robust smell triggers ovulation in a nearby cow, which sends her into heat.

Other bulls close by respond to her smell and his call, fighting and knocking antlers and pushing each other around as they pound their proverbial moose chests, challenging each other for the chance to breed with the cow. The cows are just sort of hanging out waiting to be chosen before their “time” runs out. This

process takes days (and about 25 minutes of a 30 minute documentary) to sort itself out. Then, finally, the superior bull makes his move . . .

It's fairly anti-climactic after that (pun intended), for the actual sex act between them takes just seconds to consummate. Prime bulls may mate up to six times in the one-month season and, if my memory serves me correctly, I think the statistic was something like a whopping 90% of cows get pregnant on the first go in healthy moose populations! Shortly thereafter, the bulls lose interest in the cows and the mamas basically raise their babies alone. The end. And just like that, the documentary was over.

I couldn't help but laugh at the obvious comparison. Okay, so moose mating rituals and the human experience are entirely different things, but in a similar way do we not build-up-even dramatize-the major events and relationships in our lives, planning each detail in our fascinating minds, plotting each move; soaring high with anticipation about how wonderful and great it's all (Continued on next page.)

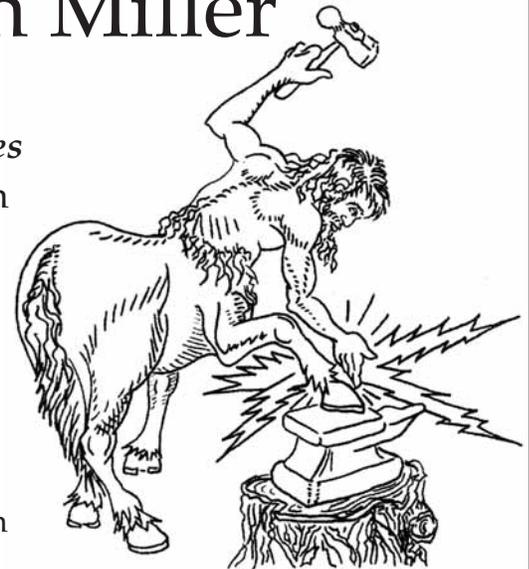
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Highlander Wisdom

going to be when “it” goes down? Only later to discover that the actual event was nowhere near as exciting as the road we took to arrive there.

Apparently this sort of event anticipation is quite common among us two-leggeds. Take vacations, for example. A study conducted by researchers in the Netherlands (reported in the journal Applied Research in Quality of Life) found that the simple act of planning a vacation boosted individuals’ happiness quotient for eight weeks compared to the more baseline levels of happiness (or stress) that the same folks reported upon returning from the vacation. (To read more, check out the NY Times article “How Vacations Affect Your Happiness,” published February 18, 2010, www.NYTimes.com.)

Among other things, this study illustrates in simple terms the impact of excitement and anticipation on our happiness and overall sense of wellbeing. Whether we’re planning a vacation, plotting a career change, making preparations for a wedding, dreaming of climbing that mountain or whatever other thing we can conjure in our minds, we’re wise to slow down and savor the delicious anticipation and



excitement along the way. Indeed, it’s not just about the outcome but the journey itself. Make it great!

Melissa is a writer, photographer, artist and lawyer. Read more on her blog at www.HeartLaw.blogspot.com, or visit her website at www.MelissaEJohnson.com.

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Extend The Life Of Your Fresh Produce

From *FRESH* the Movie

At this time of the year, your kitchen is probably full of strawberries, tomatoes and sweet corn, the abundant pleasures of summer produce. In fact, between farmers markets, CSA shares and our gardens, sometimes it's hard to know where to store all those fruits and vegetables, especially if you're trying to avoid using plastic bags. So, we were thrilled to discover a handy list of storage tips from the Berkeley Farmers Market. Take a look at these ideas for creative and waste-free ways to extend the life of your produce, in and out of the refrigerator.

Asparagus -Place the upright stalks loosely in a glass or bowl with water at room temperature. Will keep for a week outside the fridge.

Basil -Difficult to store well. Basil does not like to be cold or wet. The best method here is an airtight container/jar loosely packed with a small damp piece of paper inside, left out on a cool counter.

Beets -Cut the tops off to keep beets firm, and be sure to keep the greens! Leaving any top on root vegetables draws moisture from the root, making them lose flavor and firmness. Beets should be washed and kept in an open container with a wet towel on top.

Beet greens -Place in an airtight container with a little moisture from a damp cloth.

Berries -Don't forget, they're fragile. When storing, stack them in a single layer, if possible, in a paper bag. Wash right before you plan on eating them.

Carrots -Cut the tops off to keep them fresh longer. Place them in closed container with plenty of moisture, either wrapped in a damp towel or dunk them in cold water every couple of days if they're stored that long.

Corn -Leave unhusked in an open container if you must, but corn really is best the day it's picked.

Greens -Remove any bands, twist ties, etc. Most greens must be kept in an air tight container with a damp cloth to keep them from drying out. Kale, collard greens, and chard do well in a cup of water on the counter or fridge.

Melons -Keep uncut in a cool dry place, out of the sun for up to a couple weeks. Cut melons should be in the fridge; an open container is fine.

Peaches (and most stone fruit) - Refrigerate only when fully ripe. Firm fruit will ripen on the counter.

Rhubarb -Wrap in a damp towel and place in an open container in the refrigerator.

Strawberries -Don't like to be wet. Do best in a paper bag in the fridge for up to a week. Check the bag for moisture every other day.

Sweet Peppers -Only wash them right before you plan on eating them as wetness decreases storage time. Store in a cool room to use in a couple of days, place in the crisper if longer storage is needed.

Tomatoes -Never refrigerate. Depending on ripeness, tomatoes can stay for up to two weeks on the counter. To hasten ripeness, place in a paper bag with an apple.

Zucchini -Does fine for a few days if left out on a cool counter, even after cut. Wrap in a cloth and refrigerate for longer storage.



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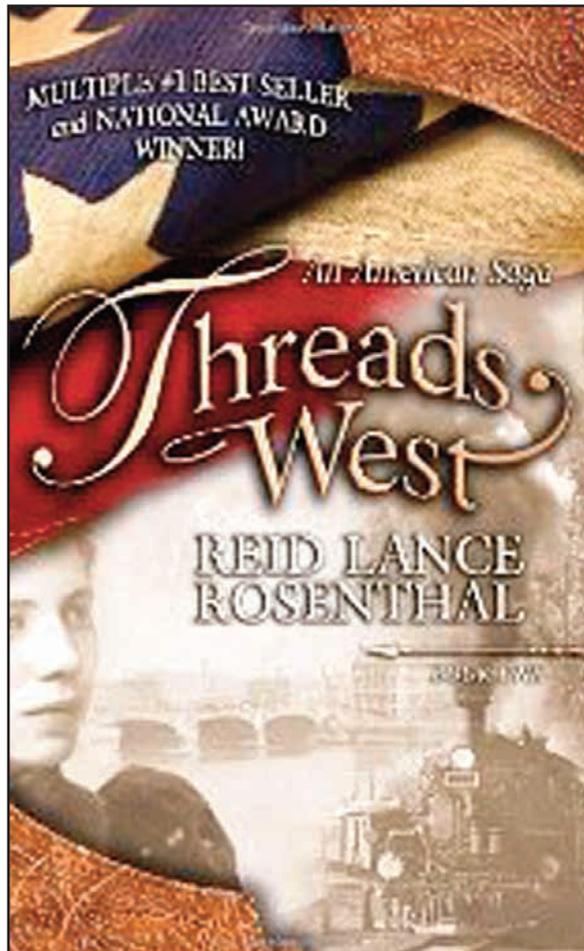
Threads West & Maps Of Fate

By A.M. Wilks

An American Saga is how Reid Lance Rosenthal describes his first two books in a series. While *Threads West* gets the reader invested in colorful, interesting and complicated characters, book two, *Maps of Fate* takes the characters' development even further. These two books are well-written and engaging depictions of the old west in our region of it.

In a style popular nowadays, the author jumps from one character to another chapter by chapter and interweaves their lives and experiences. Some readers find this distracting and others find it more interesting than the entire story told from one character's point of view. As with some authors I found a male's perspective of a feminine mind unrealistic but not as faulty as most.

The historical references and places are familiar to locals, but I wonder if readers not from these parts would find the place names as



entertaining. I read both books back to back, but felt disgruntled when I learned the author has put out another book instead of the third book in this series.

Once you are enthralled into these particular lives it is hard to wait for the next chapter, much less the next book. I hope Rosenthal doesn't take too long to satisfy my curiosity or I may have to re-read for the third to have the same impact it would if I could have read it right away. This can be problematic with a series, but since I've kept the books instead of loaning them out yet... I should be able to catch up.

Reid is fourth generation land and cattle and his cowboy heart captures the spirit of the western landscape and its influence on generations of settlers. There is a bit of the poet's pen describing and Lonesome Dovelike. If you're into romance in the old west

you're sure to love this series. Rockin' SR Publishing out of Cheyenne, Wyoming -both are available at Amazon.com

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*the bugling of
september elk,*

*the sharp
barking fox,
the shrill
chirp of pica*

*the squawking
hunger of*



gray jay

*to foreign to
interpret,*

*to present to
ignore,*

*you hear me
right,
says the rock*

*this is the
time for
deep
silences*

*this is the
season for song*

*and here in this lupine-strewn meadow
i swear i hear the language of rock*

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Wildlife, Drought & You

Article By Diane Bergstrom - Photographs by Diane Bergstrom and Cook Rodgers

As I sat with friends for a tea break in front of Cook Rodgers' picture window to watch goldfinches feed on her sunflowers, I mentioned that all the front range squirrels I've observed appear to be very skinny for this time of year. They agreed. I have also noticed fewer cherries on the cherry tree in the yard and therefore, fewer robins coming to feed and fewer nests in the trees. The growing season started about a month early this summer and the drought and fires have threatened food sources for our wildlife.



During the recent extreme drought that hit west Texas, one tenth the normal number of bugs were found which made it

harder for birds and animals who count on them to feed and reproduce. Birds of prey including hawks and owls were showing signs of malnutrition as their available prey animals and food sources were severely reduced. Amanda Hund, while researching barn swallows (article *To Follow A Swallow*), found dead nestlings who couldn't survive the heat rising inside

Boulder County barns. Acres and acres of corn across Weld County are drying up.

During the July 12th broadcast, Chief Meteorologist Mike Nelson (ABC Channel 7) reported that across the state, drought conditions ranged from "severe" to "exceptional," along with much of the central and eastern



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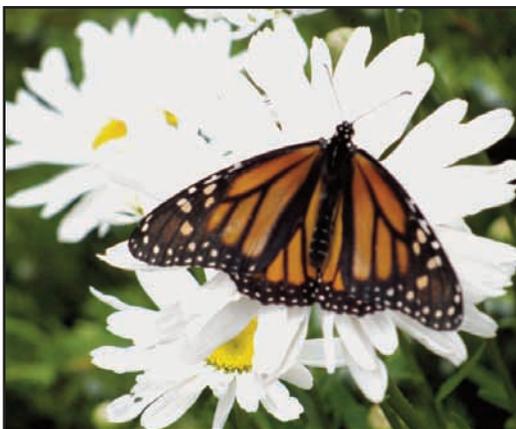




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United States. He added, "The recent rains we had have not put much of a dent in that. One of the reasons we're seeing moose and elk in unusual places is the hot dry weather and the fires." On June 20th, a young bull moose got stuck in the Nederland skate park and an otherwise healthy animal



died of hyperthermia, or overheating (Daily Camera, June 22, 2012). The one-year-old was headed for Barker Reservoir when he was startled by fishermen, then ran to and got trapped in the skate park. I wonder how many people photographed the moose without ever realizing he was suffering. He never recovered from being tranquilized, and died. A hungry bear tried three cars in a driveway off Flagstaff Road (Daily Camera, July 3, 2012) before getting trapped in an SUV that housed a few packets of enticing juice powder. After the bear was released, Jennifer Churchill, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, stated, "They are becoming more aggressive looking for food because of the dry weather."

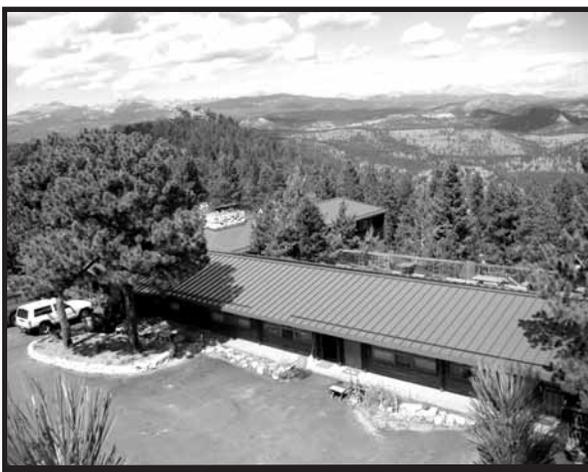
Drought conditions can be found worldwide. In the United Kingdom, people have been urged to put dustbin lids with dollops of mud in their yards and gardens to help nesting swallows and house martins whose mud sources are drying up. In Texas, people kept birdbaths full and put out foil roasting pans of water for small animals. ~Keep this water well-away from your pets.~ They also were encouraged to plant

drought-tolerant stands of flowers to feed monarch butterflies as they migrate through the state in the fall. In the UK, they are planting drought-tolerant rosemary,



thyme, sage and lavender to help pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Planting Rocky Mountain indigenous

flowering plants will help our pollinators too. Cook noted bees love the wild growing chicory in her yard. Her sunflowers provide food for at least three species: first the bees eat the nectar and spread (Continued on next page.)



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pears, fruits with high water content, for the birds. ~Again, disregard in bear territory.~ Don't forget the obvious things we can do in our daily lives to reduce our

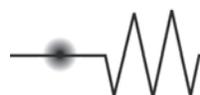
own heat emissions such as: not running appliances during the day (especially dryers); gassing up vehicles during night or early morning hours; leave grass clippings on the lawn to retain moisture; leave grass long as it locks in more moisture; reduce driving, especially during the heat of the day; monitor your water use and throw out grey water to nourish our parched ground. For more information on **Cook Rodgers' Wildflower Therapies For Children** and her seminars co-presented with Lois Hickman, contact Cook at (303)444-7757.

pollen; then the goldfinches eat the seeds; and finally the squirrels harvest and store the seed heads. Within 45 seconds of filling a small water fountain, seven sparrows and robins landed to drink and bathe. When the ground is dry and hard, they have greater difficulty digging for worms. Keep your feeders filled throughout the summer. ~But DO NOT do this in bear country.~ Gardeners in the UK are putting out chopped apples and

own heat emissions such as: not running appliances during the day (especially dryers); gassing up vehicles during night or early morning hours; leave grass clippings on the lawn to retain moisture; leave grass long as it locks in more moisture; reduce driving, especially during the heat of the day; monitor your water use and throw out grey water to nourish our parched ground. For more information on **Cook Rodgers' Wildflower Therapies For Children** and her seminars co-presented with Lois Hickman, contact Cook at (303)444-7757.



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High Noon For Solar

By Randy Udall

You know what fries my bacon? In 2011, Germany installed more solar power in one year than Americans have in 50. If it were just the industrious Germans, I could probably handle it. But the laid-back, Fiat-driving Italians did the same thing. The Italians!

The technology was invented at Bell Labs back in the 50s, when Eisenhower was president. Solar photovoltaics is as American as the hot dog is, but our country has never mounted a sustained effort to commercialize it. It's as if Steve Jobs invented a cool phone some years ago, then put it on a dusty shelf to be ignored for a handful of decades.

Thanks to NASA, we know that solar is the best way to power a satellite. It's also great for ocean buoys and highway signs and off-grid cabins. But unlike wind energy, which meets 10% of Wyoming and Colorado electricity demand, solar has yet to achieve 1% in any state.

So here's the question: Is solar just a cute diversion, like having a llama carry your backpack, or does it have the oomph to make a serious dent in the energy appetite of a

populous country? Is solar a toy or a tool? A llama or a mule?

The world may have learned the answer on a sunny weekend this May, when tens of thousands of solar installations on rooftops, factories, churches and farm fields in Germany produced 22 gigawatts of electricity. That's a stunning amount of power, equal to that provided by 20 large nuclear or coal plants, as much power as takes to run the Rocky Mountain states. The solar storm sweeping Europe has been driven by innovative policies that guarantee solar owners 20 years of lucrative payments. In America, we've always been told, "Keep your hands off that power line." In Europe, governments encouraged their citizens to "withdraw your money from the bank and redeploy it on your roof." And so they did, to the tune of \$150 billion.

Last year, Italy installed more solar every few months than California has in 50 years. Homeowners, church congregations, retirees, businessmen ... anyone can play, and many have. Farmers have been particularly keen. Why grow hay, when solar is 10 or 20 *(Continued on next page.)*

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times more lucrative?

This boom has been all the more remarkable because sunstans are rare and clouds are common in northern Europe. In contrast, a typical roof in the Rockies receives a deluge of sunlight, often exceeding 100 horsepower at high noon. Until recently little was captured for good use. We've dammed all our rivers, but never considered our roofs.

It's not that Americans don't like solar. On the contrary, it appeals to veterans, vegans, rednecks, techno-geeks, enviros, survivalists and hedge fund managers. But until recently, most of us haven't had much use for it, because it was too pricey.

But costs have plunged. A system that once was \$20,000 now sells for \$8,000, thanks in part to China. Numerous companies will lease such a system to you, no money down, guaranteeing you lower bills from day one. Unlike cars, which always need attention, solar has no moving parts. This is smokeless fire, as free of trouble as of carbon. It's a sexy technology, well worth marrying.

And it's getting a new look. Kit Carson Electric recently dedicated a 1.5 Megawatt system near Taos that will help power 30,000 homes. San Miguel Power Association in western Colorado is building a \$4 million system of similar size to serve the resort town of Telluride. In the last decade, Holy Cross Energy customers have installed \$30 million worth in the Roaring Fork and Eagle River valleys of Colorado.

Here in the Rockies, solar remains twice the price of wholesale power, but for retail customers generating your own is both a profitable and thought-provoking proposition. Someone once said that energy is the original currency. If so, what is money? The dollar is supposed to be a store of value, but as Yogi Berra once said, "A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore."

Experts keep telling me inflation is low. But why is gold \$1,600 an ounce, and a loaf of bread as expensive as a gallon of gas? Could it have anything to do with the way politicians are printing money - \$5 trillion worth of new debt since 2008?

I'm not sure. But I've run the numbers, and they suggest that a solar electric system could pay me 5% for decades to come. No, the sun doesn't shine at night, but it comes up fairly reliably every morning. Maybe this could be a good partnership, the sun and me.

Randy Udall is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News (hcn.org). He writes and consults about energy in the Roaring Fork Valley of western Colorado.

Ocean Debris - CNG - AC

Dear EarthTalk: Is there any environmental risk from all that Japanese tsunami debris that is starting to wash up on the U.S. west coast? — Bailey Thigerson, Seattle, WA

The Japanese government estimates that some 1.5 million tons of debris is afloat in the Pacific Ocean as a result of the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster. No one knows exactly how much of this debris will wash up on American shores or end up absorbed by the water column or trapped in mid-ocean gyres, but state coastal authorities from California to Alaska are readying response plans.

One certain threat is invasive species. Scientists from Oregon State University's Hatfield Marine Science Center



confirmed the presence of dozens of species native to Japanese coastal waters—including barnacles, starfish, urchins, anemones, amphipods, worms, mussels, limpets, snails, solitary tunicates and algae—that were on a large floating dock in Japan that washed ashore at Agate Beach near Newport, Oregon (*pictured here.*) in June 2012. According to researchers, the 66 foot long dock contained some 13 pounds of organisms per square foot, and an estimated 100 tons of living matter overall. While there is no evidence to date that anything from the float has established on U.S. shores, researchers fearing the worst but hoping for the best are continuing to monitor the situation.

Of course, what worries researchers more is that the dock may just be the tip of the iceberg, so to speak, in regard to what else might wash ashore. "I think that the dock is a forerunner of all the heavier stuff that's coming later, and amongst that heavier stuff are going to be a lot of drums full of chemicals that we won't be able to identify," says Chris Pallister, president of the non-profit Gulf of Alaska Keeper, a group dedicated to cleaning marine debris from Alaska's coastline. He worries that the onslaught of debris will be "far worse than any oil spill ... or any other environmental disaster we've faced on the West Coast" as a result of the sheer amount and variety of debris and the wide geographic (Continued on next page.)



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Highlander Environmental

scope it is likely to affect.

Officials at the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) believe the Japanese tsunami debris has already spread over an area of the Pacific Ocean roughly three times the size of the contiguous United

States. While some of the debris has already made landfall in the U.S., the bulk of it will take several more months to make it across the Pacific. Seattle-based oceanographer Curtis Ebbesmeyer, who has been tracking huge gyres of trash in the ocean for two decades and runs the Beachcombers' Alert website, thinks the majority of tsunami debris will reach U.S. shores as early as October 2012.

Hatfield Marine Science Center; www.hmsc.oregonstate.edu; NOAA, www.noaa.gov; Beachcombers' Alert, www.beachcombersalert.org.

Dear EarthTalk: I recently saw an article extolling the virtues of natural gas as an abundant, inexpensive and domestically produced automotive fuel. Is this going to be the automotive fuel of the future and how green is it? —

Jason Kincaide, New Bedford, MA

It is difficult to say which of the growing number of fuel options will power the cars of the future. But natural gas, given its domestic abundance, low price and lesser carbon footprint, is certainly a contender, at least as far as researchers at the federally funded Argonne National Laboratory are concerned. Some of the same engineers there who developed the batteries now used in electric cars have been tasked with improving natural gas powered engine technologies, thanks to anticipated consumer demand for vehicles powered by something cheaper and greener than gasoline but without the hassles of other alternative fuels.

“Our conclusion is that natural gas as a transportation fuel has both adequate abundance and cost advantages that make a strong case to focus interest in the technology as a real game changer in U.S. energy security,” Mike Duoba, an engineer at Argonne's Transportation Technology Research and Development Center outside of Chicago, told the Talking Points Memo news blog. “In terms of consumer ownership and use costs, the case to make a switch from current fuels to compressed natural gas (CNG) is much

more compelling than for other alternative fuels like ethanol and electricity.”

“At least for some time, compared to plug-in vehicle batteries, CNG storage offers lower weight, higher energy storage and lower costs—as well as faster refueling/recharging.” And while CNG vehicles would generate emissions from their tailpipes, the Argonne team believes that their overall emissions footprint would be smaller than that of an electric vehicle drawing power from the fossil-fuel-based electric grid.

But CNG faces the same major hurdle to becoming widely accepted as any other challenger to gasoline as king of the road: a lack of refueling stations. Whatever does finally unseat gasoline

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will no doubt have to have a system for refueling that rivals the convenience we've come to expect from our corner gas stations. *Argonne Center, www.transportation.anl.gov.*

Dear EarthTalk: Has an alternative to air conditioning to keep rooms cool been invented that is significantly cheaper and/or that uses significantly less energy than traditional air conditioning?— Ashutosh Saxena, Allahabad, India

Unfortunately the modern day air conditioner, with its constantly cycling, energy-hogging compressor and environmentally unfriendly chemical coolant, still reigns supreme throughout the world-and increasingly so in rapidly developing countries like India and China where possession of air conditioning connotes middle class status. And while the chlorofluorocarbon coolant widely used in air conditioners through the 1980s was phased out because its emissions were causing damage to the globe's protective ozone layer, the chemicals that replaced it worldwide, and which are now in use in hundreds of millions of air conditioners, are some 2,100 times stronger as greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide. We may have saved the ozone layer, but-whoops!-there goes the climate.

Just because people aren't using them much doesn't mean there aren't some good alternatives. The best known is an evaporative cooler (AKA swamp cooler). Better for hot, dry climates, these electrified units cool outdoor air through evaporation and then blow it inside. They make for a nice alternative to traditional air conditioners, using about a quarter of the energy overall. They are also quicker and cheaper to install, and can be moved around to different rooms as needed. But swamp coolers can require a lot of maintenance and may not keep the interior space as cool as some AC-hungry inhabitants might like.

Apartment/condo and commercial/industrial buildings might consider augmenting their existing roof-top air conditioning systems with the cooling power of ice. California-based Ice Energy makes and sells the Ice Bear system, essentially a large thermal storage tank that makes ice at night-when the cost and demand for energy is lower-and then doles out ice water into the air conditioning system during the day to efficiently deliver cooling when it's needed. Since the air conditioner's energy-intensive compressor can remain off during peak daytime hours, the electricity required for cooling can be minimal, with some customers achieving 95 percent electricity savings using the system. And utilities across the country are starting to encourage its use by large customers.

Stanford University has been utilizing its own version of similar

technology since 1999 to keep its campus buildings cool. Since upgrading to an ice-based cooling system, Stanford saves some \$500,000 a year on its campus cooling bill. If such technology could be adapted to augment home air conditioning systems, it could go a long way toward reducing air conditioning's environmental footprint overall.

Of course, let's not forget that a small investment in a fan or two to create a breeze or wind tunnel through inhabited interior spaces can go a long way to offset summer heat. Even better, get a professional to install a "whole-house fan," which draws in cooler air through lower level open windows and exhales hotter air through specially designed attic vents synced to open when the system is operating.

The race has been on in the air conditioning business for some time to find a coolant that doesn't destroy the ozone or add to global warming, but progress has been slow. Meanwhile, global warming itself will beget the need for more air conditioning, which will only exacerbate an already dire situation, especially as the rest of the world starts to demand artificial cooling just like we've enjoyed in the West for decades. *Ice Energy, www.ice-energy.com.*

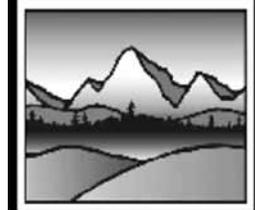
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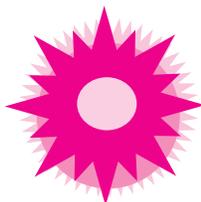
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Lack Of Ethics In Mainstream Media

My satellite TV has shown a new series on HBO as a preview (I don't pay for extras) and the Newsroom is a breath of fresh air concerning how our mainstream media feeds us only what they want us to know. I've voiced my opinion many times over the years about educating ourselves and searching for the truth amidst the entire hype of network and now cable station programming. If we think only other countries allow their viewers to see and hear propaganda approved by the ruling class, well we are among those 'protected' masses.

It isn't easy to stay informed, but it gets less complicated if you choose what to watch and weed out the news that has a hidden agenda. With so many choices it is up to each and every one of us to determine what will let us form our own opinions from the facts. A prime example is the way our local network news anchors are allowed to voice their own opinions of elected officials. It is not their job to do so, they are supposed to be objective and keep their opinions to themselves, but they don't. How convenient for the station stockholders that they hire so-called journalists that only give slanted news to the viewers. I won't even go into the lack of respect some have for our Executive Office.

We are three months away from our national election and I'm so sick of the slick ads from all sides that I mute all of them now. It might be radical but I would vote to keep election ads off the airways completely and no direct mail either. Good journalism could cover who, what, how and when about candidates and their platforms to let voters decide by actions instead of strategies of the campaign managers.

Some say the writer of the new series, Newsroom, has his own agenda and is using this new program to promote it. I've watched it and think his agenda is highly transparent and relevant to our current situation. The message is what I've said all along and try to promote in this publication, let the readers decide from just the facts. It insults the average American to be 'fed' information so slanted you can only think the way they want you to.

There are news shows that give you just the facts to let you stay informed and allow thinking individuals to form their own opinions. If you are so lazy you only watch 'entertaining news programs' with shock and awe tactics then you are not doing your job as a voting American to stay informed so you can vote wisely in November. Sure, it

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is not as compelling to watch documentaries or Democracy Now, but if the truth puts you in a coma state then keep your mouth shut when the wrong person gets elected to govern us and make critical governmental decisions for our country.

On a documentary about Canadian television, viewers compared their programs to ours and are aware of the drastic differences. Prominently the main difference is a lack of positive news. They know we are fed the negative to keep us afraid and compliant so we won't want the opposite and change the channel to what is more important. They pity us and our lack of choices, but also know we deserve what we're getting because we're like sheep to slaughter. Accepting the lack of straight factual reporting puts us at a distinct disadvantage in a world of people who demand quality journalism instead of corporate propaganda. You see that blind acceptance every time you watch someone buy and support the tabloids in the grocery store checkout line. The real news is not supposed to be just entertainment, it should be aimed at informing the population.

I actually know people who complain about our elected officials and yet they know next to nothing about current events or political policies. They spout mindless trivialities with nothing to back up their opinions. I know for a fact that they don't read, and many brag about their lack of effort to get and stay informed. This travesty comes from us having so many freedoms we take one such as voting for granted. Don't fall into the trap of apathy because that is more the enemy than the wrong leadership. Get and stay informed, make time to watch coverage that is not slanted. Read material that doesn't insult your intelligence and stop contributing to a national problem by being satisfied with less than the real facts.

This recent tragedy in Aurora was mishandled by so many networks and cable stations. The fact that they preempted regular programming just kept the negative easily accessible by having it covered 24x7. One anchor speculated the mother of the suspect knew he was capable of such heinous crimes. Even if that were true, it is not necessary to broadcast it. Leave the details to the authorities responsible for such things.

Give us updates, but don't choose an awful tragedy just so that folks are traumatized and fear for their lives even going about their daily routines. Too much coverage about the alleged shooter is tantamount to making him a celebrity. His picture should not be on air any more than a couple of seconds for reasons to garner information from

anyone who may have known him. To sensationalize the crime by overcoverage should be outlawed by the federal agencies who oversee our airwaves.

The real fear of copycat crimes is heightened by so much detail in mainstream media coverage. This is an example of what we don't want or need from our information age. Turn off the TV or change the channel to anything of a positive nature, there really are some alternatives. We can dictate what is given us by our lack of acceptance, so do it and don't be the sheep.

By A.M. Wilks.

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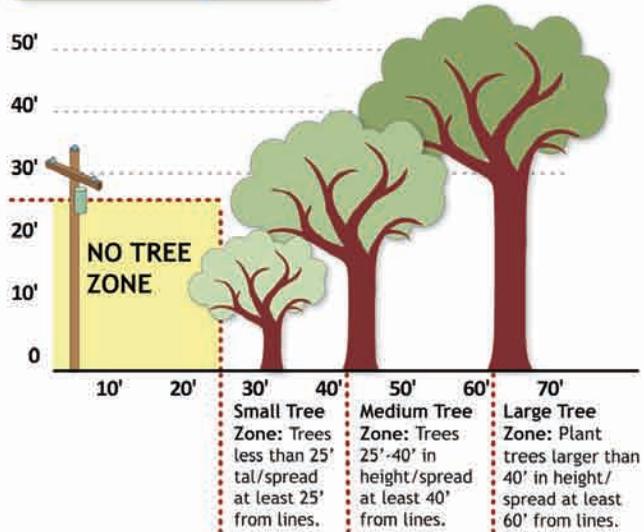
Shading Your Home Safely

Nothing adds a more stunning touch of beauty to a home than beautiful trees lining yards and shading living spaces. However it's important to remember that power lines and trees don't mix. While utility easements seem like attractive, open spaces to fill with trees, the consequences for planting in these areas are difficult for the utility and the tree. Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind when planting trees.

- Before planting anything in your yard call 811 and have someone locate the utilities on your property. This will make the planting process safer, and help you avoid an unnecessary power outage.
- Avoid overhead power lines – always. Trees that grow into power lines are a danger to everyone. They can start fires and can pose an electrocution risk. Trees that grow into power lines need to be aggressively trimmed back, which is stressful on the trees. Avoid this problem in the future, by avoiding overhead lines when planting trees.
- Today's sapling can be tomorrow's mighty oak. Consider the type of tree you're planting and what the final growth pattern will be for the tree. Ask about the final height and width of the tree at maturity. Even a tree placed away from power lines can grow into the lines if the tree has a large crown shaped top.
- Consider using trees to lower your costs for heating and cooling your home. A leafy tree is an excellent source of shade for a sunny side of your home in summer. Additionally, when the leaves come down in the fall, you can enjoy some added solar gain from the sun warming your home. Most communities in United Power's territory now have arborists on their staff – so contact the city or a local nursery for more information on what trees work best for your home.

If you have a tree that is growing into our lines near your home, please call United Power at 303-659-0551 so we can arrange for a tree trimming crew to cut the tree back. Tree trimming is just one of the many ways United Power is working throughout our territory to keep our system safe and more reliable.

Tree Planting Guide



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