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FALL 2008

# sun valley

## GUIDE

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Idaho's  
changing  
**climate**

### **Heart of a hunter**

The emotional core of  
Idaho's original sport

### **Autumn harvest**

Pear particulars

### **Get out there**

Local guides lead the way

MAPS | LODGING | DINING | OUTFITTERS | GALLERIES | HOMES | CALENDAR



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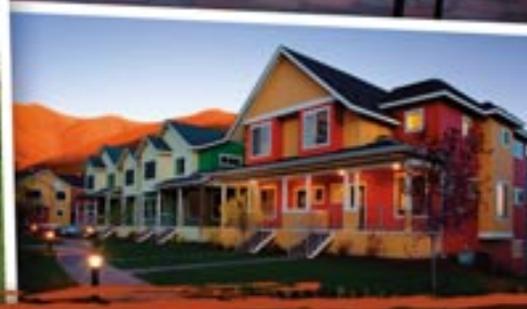


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# contents



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## features

### COVER STORY

#### 14 The Unforgiving Sky

Idahoans who work the land are seeing their climate change. As ranches go dry and rivers run low, many Boise politicians deny that global warming exists at all. Behind the politics, lives are adapting.  
*by Dean A. Ferguson*

#### 20 Heart of a Hunter

The choice to hunt is not a light one; this is not the suburban American quandary of choosing a restaurant for dinner. The hunter takes a sacrament when he kills. Pulling the trigger demands respect of the mystery.  
*by Chuck Oxley*



## regulars

#### 8 Valley View: Craters of the Moon

In 1969, NASA astronauts led a training mission to Craters of the Moon National Monument. Just a small step from the valley, Craters remains an otherworldly fall getaway.  
*by Ken Retallic*  
*photo by Kirsten Hepburn*

#### 10 Sun Valley Guides

Whether on horseback, mountainside, or with shotguns shoulder-slung, these are the locals who help us get out there.  
*by Dick Dorworth and Dana DuGan*

#### 25 Chef's Specialty: Pear Particulars

Cortney Burns picks the pear for elegant autumn harvest desserts. And Boise wine connoisseur David Kirkpatrick has just the wine to pair.  
*by Michael Ames and David Kirkpatrick*

#### 34 Last Exit

*Night Driving by Dick Dorworth*

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Photo by Matt Leidecker

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## information directory

- 24 Luxury Living
- 28 Dining guide
- 30 Gallery listings

- 31 Fall festival calendar
- 33 Lodging, equipment rentals  
outfitters & guides

# SUN VALLEY CENTER FOR THE ARTS



## A new home for the arts, in the heart of Ketchum ...

As our community grows and evolves, The Center is ensuring that the arts have a permanent home in the Wood River Valley. A place where people can come to learn, be inspired and explore their creativity for generations to come.

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FROM THE  
**editor**



PHOTO BY CHRIS PILARO

**I**n the fall, the valley relaxes. And it's not just our bustling grocery store aisles and busy streets that simmer down. When high summer ends, crisp mornings open quieter days and the Wood River Valley seems a bit truer to itself.

But once the crowds have thinned and a sort of privacy returns, nature loses her inhibitions. Aspens and willows go off, flared with sudden change. Amid this colorful riot, festivals punctuate the calendar with activity. If it's not mules and wagons filling Ketchum's Main Street, then it's a boiling flock of sheep, trotting and jumping and clinging together as the wool and mutton flow south to warmer winter pastures.

In central Idaho, autumn is a paradox. We breathe deep and walk hushed streets. Then a weekend comes along and shatters the calm with concerts, celebrations and feasts.

This fall, the *Sun Valley Guide* explores change in its many forms. Two veteran Idaho journalists—Dean Ferguson and Chuck Oxley—are first-time *Guide* contributors, and both bring new voices to these pages.

On a Carey ranch, Ferguson finds the withering signs of drought in southeastern Blaine County. He meets Idahoans marking climate change in real time in "The Unforgiving Sky."

Oxley's first big-game hunt taught him the basics of tracking white-tail deer, but his journey is ultimately an education in self. To kill a majestic wild animal, he learns, requires a stilling of the heart and an initiation into a new state of mind.

In a Craters of the Moon photo essay, Kirsten Hepburn and Ken Retallic land on southern Idaho's youngest volcanic formations. Hepburn captures a long view of basalt flows that, in just a couple hundred years or so, may transform again.

Change is not always smooth. In it we find the anxiety of the unsettled, but also the intimate beauty of a kaleidoscopic autumn leaf. At the *Sun Valley Guide*, we remain open to the great variety.

## contributors

**Dick Dorworth**, pictured with granddaughter Grace, has lived, worked, skied, climbed and driven through many nights in Europe, Asia, Alaska and South America. His work has appeared in many publications and his book *Night Driving* was published by First Ascent Press in 2007. A registered Democrat, Dorworth thinks his party needs more calcium in



its diet. He is also a member of the Sierra Club, but thinks Deep Ecology is closer to the mark. Today Dorworth writes, skis and climbs from Ketchum, Idaho, where he is a reporter and columnist for the *Idaho Mountain Express*.

**Chuck Oxley** is a native Iowan who became a Westerner in 1983, when the U.S. Air Force sentenced him to four years at Mountain Home Air Force Base. Following that service, he moved to San Francisco, and enjoyed the world's most beautiful city. He has held newspaper reporting and editing positions in Portland, Oregon; Ogden, Utah; Pocatello and Boise, Idaho.



**Kirsten Hepburn** would love the luxury of shooting only travel images. Idaho took quite a toll on her gear, with one lens crashing down a granite pinnacle at City of Rocks and another doing a face-plant in the cinders at Craters of the Moon. Her wide-angle lens remained and she used it to capture the craters one late October afternoon.



**Dean A. Ferguson** is a fifth generation Idahoan who grew up on a horse ranch in Bonners Ferry. He has worked as a farmhand on the Palouse, cowboied on the Snake River Breaks, thinned trees in Montana, and led horseback trail rides in the Alaskan wilderness—not to mention numerous less romantic jobs. Dean is formerly a political reporter for the *Lewiston Tribune* and spent four years covering the Idaho State Legislature.



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**D**rivers heading east out of Carey will see familiar views of sage-covered plains and irrigated farm fields abruptly end. A vast and forbidding sea of contorted black lava erupts on both sides of U.S. Highway 20 and flows south to the horizon.

Welcome to Craters of the Moon National Monument, a crescent-shaped lava field nestled against the foothills of the Pioneer Mountains and extending 60 miles south to the rim of the Snake River canyon. Straddling a fissure in the earth called the Great Rift, the monument's 618 square miles encompass the largest young lava field in the continental U.S.

There's an amazing array of volcanic formations here: spatter cones, cinder cones, fissure vents, raft blocks, lava tubes and caves. Lava formations include ropy, twisted flows called "pahoehoe" and chunky fields called "aa," which means "hard on the feet." Both names originate from Hawaiian volcano studies. Still more lava "bomb" forms have evocative names like "cow dung" and "breadcrust."

In 1969, NASA sent Apollo astronauts here on a lunar training mission. To appreciate the scale of this massive zone of molten stone, they likely scrambled up 820-foot Big Cinder Butte, the park's highest point. From atop the broad peak, you can follow the Great Rift's southeasterly line by the chain of cinder cones fading away into the distance. To the east, the Big Southern Butte rises out of the desert. At 2,500 feet, the volcanic dome served as the dominant landmark for Oregon Trail pioneers short-cutting the Snake River Plain. To the north, vistas of snow-capped Lost River and Lemhi mountain peaks are framed by the gnarled, wind-sculptured branches of limber pine.

Based on geologic history, another eruption is due within the next millennium, perhaps as soon as 200 years from now.

Stay tuned.

—Ken Retallic



...one giant leap for  
mankind

a small step to

# Craters of the Moon

Photo by Kirsten Hepburn



# getting out there

In a community so connected, it is common to feel as though we know everyone. A trip to the supermarket brings hellos from familiar faces. A yard sale is a social happening.

But when our lives hook into repeating orbits, we lose sight of neighbors riding different tracks. Then, just when we think we've met every set of eyes there is to meet, shaken every hand there is to shake, we meet someone new, traveling a different and unseen path.

In this fifth gathering of *Sun Valley Guides*, we sought out friends who can help us get out there, into the spaces between our well-worn roads. Whether on horseback, mountainside or with shotguns slung, these are the folks who live the life and can show us the way.



## Elizabeth Hendrix & Julie Zapoli

*the women of fly society*

For Julie Zapoli, hunting and fishing are lifelong passions first pursued as a young girl in Michigan and Florida. For Elizabeth Hendrix, Zapoli's business partner, passion for the outdoors came as a post-divorce revelation. Today, the two own and operate Ketchum on the Fly, a retail and guiding outfitter catering to women.

Zapoli's first mentor was her uncle Joe, and her description of Joe as an old man after a caribou hunt in Alaska says it all: "The picture I have of him shows the bright blue Alaska sky overhead, the lichen and blueberry covered mountains all around him, his hands holding up the animal's head for the photo. But it's his eyes, still like a young boy's, that show you everything. They were as bright as the color of the sky, filled with both the thrill and sadness of the hunt, his passion for the outdoors, and most of all his gratitude to the caribou."

Hendrix's outdoor initiation came later in life, but her need for the outdoors was innate and her self-knowledge is apt. She has written thoughtfully on the memories: "I remember picking up that fly rod. It was the first one I touched, and I knew it would become my own. I was drawn to it months before I actually stepped into the fly shop. I decided that being a recently divorced woman raising two small children on my own wasn't going to be the thing that defined me. I took that beautiful Winston rod, the handful of flies the shop sold me, the borrowed reel—I couldn't afford a reel in those days—and I went to a river outside Winthrop, Washington. I taught myself to cast, and in the process I learned to breathe deeply again. In the warmth of the sun, among the verdant,

warm wilderness I began to take back my life, first by casting my fly into a tree, then finally into a riffle."

Zapoli and Hendrix met more than five years ago at a fund-raiser for The Conservation Fund and realized their mutual interest was helping more women discover the outdoors. They soon met again on an Alaskan float trip Zapoli was leading. On that excursion, Zapoli said, "all we talked about was how to get women in the outdoors."

They acted first on Hendrix's forward-thinking idea: an outdoor Web site for women. This virtual space was followed by a physical address on Sun Valley Road. Today, Ketchum on the Fly is distinguished as a Filson dry goods dealer, and for the first time in the Northwest company's 111-year history, Filson is producing outdoor clothes for women. The company's 2008 spring catalog was shot locally and features Zapoli and Hendrix on the cover.

Ketchum on the Fly is not a bottom-line driven enterprise. "Our mission," Hendrix says, "is about impacting the community, conservation of the environment, and helping women have great life experiences." Four women she recently guided on a Silver Creek canoe and casting trip reported they hadn't laughed that much or slept that well afterwards in years. They felt "energized" by the day.

Zapoli said, "We want to encourage women—really all people—to get out and experience the beauty, connection and the sense of accomplishment that the world of the sporting traditions give us."

—Dick Dorworth

## Jeff Bitton

### *life in the saddle*

Jeff Bitton is a happy man. He considers his lifestyle blessed, and the 54-year-old native Idahoan has spent a large part of each of the last 40 years in a place he sees as one of the most beautiful on earth: the Stanley Basin and the Sawtooth Mountains.

Jeff and his wife Deb Bitton have owned and operated Mystic Saddle Ranch since 1980, when they purchased the outfit from Jeff's parents. Today, the Bittons offer customized and catered horseback trips from two locations: Galena Stage Stop and Redfish Lake Corrals, 25 minutes and an hour north of Ketchum, respectively. Their equestrian trips include hunting and fishing excursions, backcountry hiking and camping, and a five-day "Horse Adventure Camp" filled with "horses, fun, laughter and education." When Bitton talks about his life with horses, the word "fun" pops up with noticeable frequency.

His mission is to "provide a recreation horseback experience that is a lifetime memory for people." Indeed, horses are an integral part of the West and the Sawtooth Mountains are among its loveliest and least traveled spaces. Anyone who combines the two will not soon forget the experience.

Bitton's father, a south Idaho rancher, trained and loved horses and raised his son to love them as well. After buying an existing guiding permit in 1969, the elder Bitton started Mystic Saddle Ranch, and Jeff feels lucky to have grown up helping his dad with the business. But Bitton didn't grow up as an athlete, and steered clear of traditional sports as a boy "Hunting, fishing, riding and being in the backcountry were plenty for me."

The Bittons permanent home, where they raised two children, is in Fisher Creek on the east side of the Stanley Basin. Though Jeff is a director with the local electrical cooperative, the Bittons spend their winters near Phoenix, Arizona. Two years ago, they bought Cave Creek Trail Rides, a similar, Southwestern outfitter in the Sonoran Desert north of Phoenix.

This summer was Jeff's 40th in the Sawtooth Valley, "a great place to live and view what others get to see only on vacation." His life has been rooted in place and that sense of connectedness—combined with his love of horses and the outdoors—has contributed to his noticeable happiness. "I have fun every day," Jeff Bitton said.

—Dick Dorworth





## Kirk Bachman guiding in the land of one-hand clapping

Kirk Bachman is one of those rare people who followed his passions to define his lifestyle. His passion is mountains, his disciplines are skiing and climbing, and his ethic is no more complex than, as he explained it, “taking ideals and applying them to everyday life.”

A philosophy major at Idaho State University, Bachman, 53, was as deeply influenced by the eastern philosophy he studied as the Western cowboy culture of his outdoor upbringing. Born in Nebraska and raised in southern Idaho in a cattle-business family, Bachman’s path to Stanley is easily recognizable to that tribe of people who follow their mountain passions.

Bachman learned to ski at Boise’s Bogus Basin at age 10. From then on, he said, “Skiing was my foundation.” When his family moved to Idaho Falls, his skiing continued in Jackson Hole. He skied “all day at every opportunity, often with the members of the ski patrol, who I thought were the coolest people on the planet.” He became a ski racer and at age 15 learned to climb in Wyoming’s Teton Mountains. The fundamentals were in place.

He describes his early climbing education in the Tetons, Idaho’s City of Rocks and the Sawtooths as a “cowboy-style, howling at the moon” school of climbing. On an early trip to the City of Rocks, he and his friends didn’t know how to get a rope down from a climb, so they tried to shoot it down with a .22. But their climbing was better than their shooting. The rope was lost.

Bachman soon had his own clients. Guiding an ascent of the Grand Teton’s classic and difficult Petzoldt Ridge, he had a serendipitous encounter. At the top, he found Paul Petzoldt, an icon of American

climbing and the route’s pioneering namesake. By then an old man, Petzoldt had just taken an easier summit path and greeted Bachman by announcing to his own partners, “Now these lads have just climbed a real route.” The historical context still pleases Bachman; it is one of his fondest mountain memories.

Bachman’s backcountry skiing began on wooden skis with pine-tar bases, corduroy knickers, long hair, and a 15-pound ski repair kit hauled on every trip. Like many mountain dwellers, he became an expert kayaker and worked as a guide after college. Between gigs, he learned carpentry skills. “You pick up your carpenter belt when the guiding season is done. That’s how you get by,” he said. In the 1970s, Bachman built the first North American backcountry ski yurts in the Sawtooth Mountains and today is well known as one of the best yurt builders in the area.

In 1985, Bachman moved to Stanley—what he calls “the land of one-hand clapping”—to start Sawtooth Mountain Guides. It became the first guide service in Idaho certified by the American Mountain Guides Association, and its staff includes some of the best known, most competent climbers in Idaho, among them Pete Patterson, Aimee Barnes and Erik Leidecker, who in 2002 became co-owner with Bachman.

These days Bachman guides mostly winter backcountry ski trips, builds beautiful yurts and lives in the quiet of Lower Stanley. He studies and practices a philosophy he aptly describes: “I think all observers of nature would highlight the process as the primary principle, rather than the importance of the end goal.”

—Dick Dorworth

# Mark Farris

*reels and wheels innovator*

Entrepreneurs see opportunities everywhere. Mark Farris is an entrepreneur.

In the mid-1980s, Farris and fellow industrial designer Michael Harrison gazed at their own feet before designing one of the very first clipless mountain bike pedals. Not long after selling the innovation to Cannondale, they formed C1 Design Group in Ketchum. In 1996, Farris and partners developed Waterworks, a brand of ultra-lightweight fly reels designed from scratch. "We're not a typical fly-fishing reel company," Farris said. "We design, do prototyping, product design, research and development."

One of their first products, the Ketchum Release, is one of Farris' 16 patents. Another, the Ultra Large Arbor fly reel, is among the strongest on the market.

Farris's vision made his company "a 13-year overnight success story." In a gadget and gizmo industry, his minimalism sets him apart. "I'm essentially a Bauhaus guy in the wrong era." But Farris is more than

a designer with a modernist flair. Another impulse sparks the work.

"At the core, we are environmentally aware people," he said. "Either that means you're working on the environment or on things that get people out into it. You only protect the things you love. We want to make it easier for people to drag their sorry asses out into the hills."

When Farris has a moment, he rides his bicycle—to Carey—for fun. He blasts south on his VO2 bike made by a company he started with Ketchum's Tom Knudson. "It's the lightest steel bike you can buy—the most precise, light, immaculately crafted steel bike that you could ever lay your hands on."

Farris is a design Renaissance man. In addition to fly reels and bikes, he is also a jewelry maker. His wearable stainless steel and titanium art is sold in galleries and studios in Toronto, Seattle and San Francisco. In design, he strives for the bare essentials. But in life, Farris lives large.

—Dana DuGan



PHOTO BY DEV KHALSA



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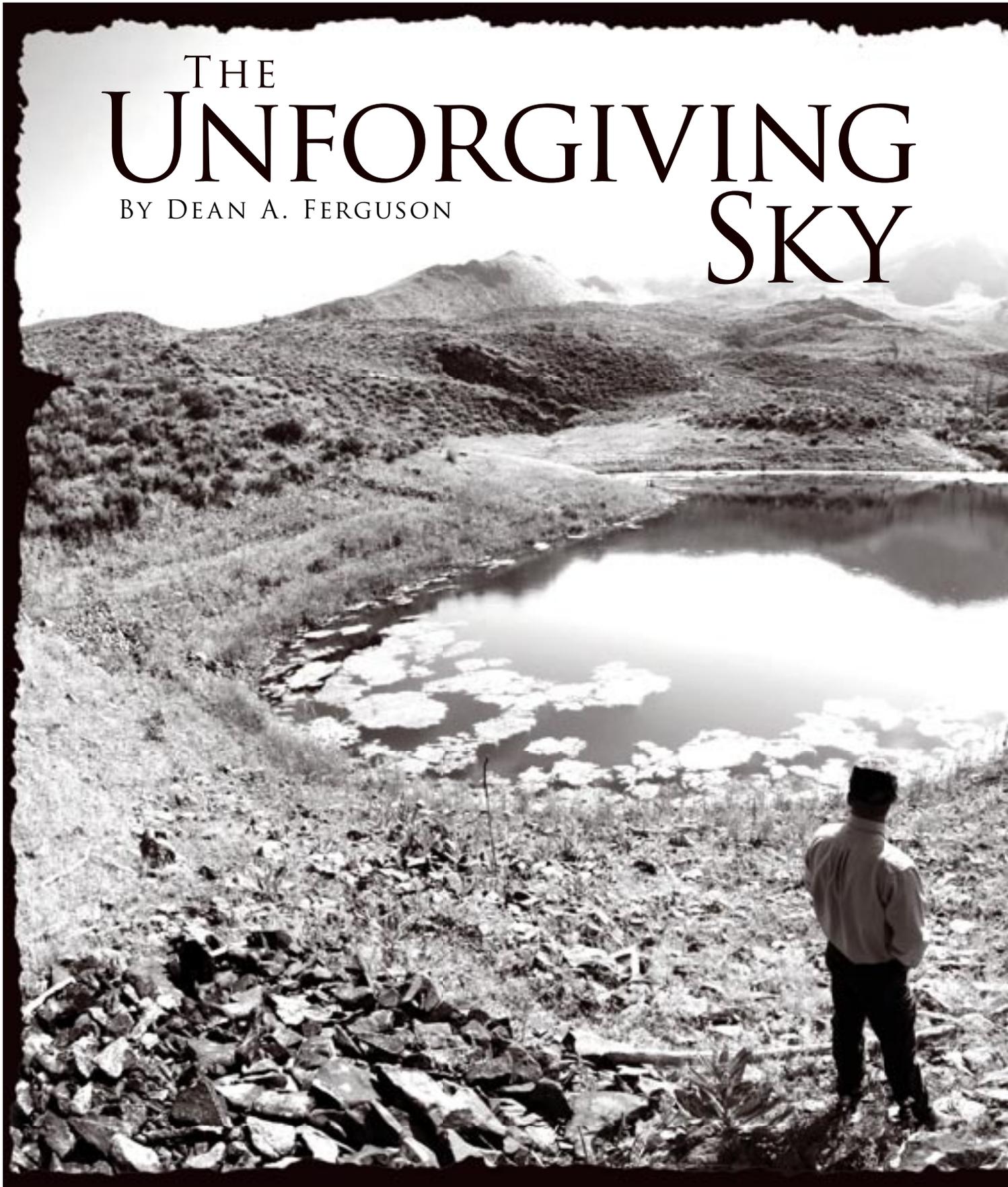


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# THE UNFORGIVING SKY

BY DEAN A. FERGUSON



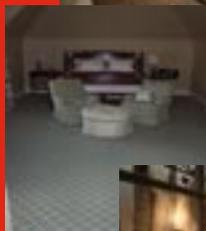


**A pond on Tom Peavey's Flat Top Ranch** in Carey has suffered from years of drought. "It's not a like a flood or a storm that hits you all once. It's all ever-dying, every-worrying." Peavey said.

Ranchers, farmers and river outfitters are seeing Idaho's sky lose its predictability. In the span of 30 years—the age of a youthful tree—folks who live close to the land are finding generations of weather wisdom useless. They are marking gradual change in the climate and adjusting their lives. Weather is hardly idle chatter for these people. Greet them with a “Nice day, isn't it?” and they might think hard before responding.



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Fourth-generation Idaho rancher Tom Peavey didn't hesitate before recalling his favorite weather-related memory: a day filled with silence and peace and a great white desert stretching to infinity.

Peavey was 17 years old in 1982. His family was gathered for the holidays at the Flat Top Ranch, on land they have owned since 1929. Here, 20 miles east of Bellevue, the Peaveys were socked in the whitest Christmas the family had seen in years.

"We got a big wallop of snow over the holidays and couldn't feed the cattle for a few days," Peavey recalled.

Tom and his brother David loaded an old pickup truck hood with hay bales, rigged it to the back of a pair of snowmobiles and dragged the improvised sleigh toward the stranded cattle. It was tough work, digging and pushing through waist-deep snow. The sled bogged down and the brothers dug it out again and again. Wary from the work, they paused. The mountains that make Sun Valley famous ringed the boys to the north. To the south, where the Peaveys' sheep and cattle ranged in the spring, foothills slipped into flattened desert.

David told Tom to listen.

"It was so quiet in the middle of the winter that you noticed it," Tom said. "No trees ruffling. No wind. You can hear the neighbor five miles away talk to his horses."

Winter silence is still out there. That hasn't changed. But recent years have been tough at the Flat Top; the land has become drier and drier. Alfalfa fields only grow enough for one good cutting, much less than in years past. The last big drought was in 1977, but the mid-1990s saw drought six out of seven years. And 2007 was grim, "pretty close to '77," Peavey said.

Drought kills hay fields, it kills wheat and barley, kills animals. To a rancher,

drought feels like it is killing him. "It's not like a flood or a storm that hits you all at once," Peavey said. "It's all ever-dying, ever-worrying. It just sucks the life out of you." Natural ponds in the desert, where livestock find water, go dry now. The Peaveys have invested in wells and 46 miles of pipe to keep far-flung watering troughs full. In this southeastern corner of Blaine County, the weather has become unpredictable, Tom said. The storms are less frequent, but more violent. And the timing always seems the worst.

"You can still predict it's going to rain if you have your hay down," Peavey said, cracking the same defiant grin that shows even when soggy hay rots in the fields. Given the stresses of his work, it is little wonder that silence amid deep snow is where this rancher finds peace.

DROUGHT KILLS  
 HAY FIELDS, IT  
 KILLS WHEAT  
 AND BARLEY,  
 KILLS ANIMALS.  
 TO A RANCHER,  
 DROUGHT  
 FEELS LIKE IT IS  
 KILLING HIM.  
 "IT'S JUST VERY  
 SLOW AND  
 ONGOING."

—TOM PEAVEY,  
 CAREY RANCHER

Michael Jennings says that the changes Peavey is seeing on his Carey ranch are the beginning of "early stages of rapid change." Jennings, a University of Idaho professor and senior Nature Conservancy scientist, traveled to Boise one cold, snowy day last January to address a panel of lawmakers about the possible effects of unchecked global warming. Some scientists fear the globe is nearing some possible point of no return, he said, terrible precisely for what scientists don't know about it. Jennings

claimed 99.9 percent of the world's 3,000 to 4,000 top climate scientists agree on one thing at least: "It's under way now."

At the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Moscow, plant geneticist Gerald Rehfeldt predicts a changed Idaho in 80 years. North of Coeur d'Alene, the climate will be wetter, he says, and the land will resemble the coastal temperate rainforests of Washington state and British Columbia. South of Boise, the desert will be drier and hotter, replicating the Sonoran.

In the Sawtooths, the alpine flora that fills today's postcards may not be as permanent as it seems.

Clint Stennett, Blaine County's State Senator, was on the nine-member Senate committee that earlier this year asked for a report on Idaho's greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. The committee's request was rebuked by the full Senate and proved again that, in Boise, debate about big business affecting the climate can turn as hot as south Idaho blacktop.

Monty Pearce is typical of the climate change skeptics in the Idaho Statehouse. The New Plymouth farmer is passionately opposed to the theories of global warming and has railed against devoting any energy or money to studying greenhouse gas emissions.

"We're talking here now about building a bureaucracy on top of theory. That's really it," Pearce said during debate on the Senate floor. "We're opening the tent up and saying, 'Camel, stick your head under,' and not recognizing that the camel has bad breath."

Prior to the debate, Pearce plied his peers with his own research: copies of "Environment and Climate News," a Heartland Institute publication. Heartland is a nonprofit that trumpets free market solutions for various national policy woes and has been partially funded by oil interests—about \$800,000 from ExxonMobil between 1998 and 2006, according to SourceWatch.

Pearce has allies aplenty. As chair of the state's budget committee, Dean Cameron wields substantial legislative power. The Rupert insurance salesman saw no reason to study a phenomenon that so many of his conservative peers reject. To finance the study, Cameron said, would be acknowledging that global warming is fact. "I don't know that I'm all the way there yet," he said.

Amid assertions that Earth is actually cooling and that higher carbon dioxide levels encourage plant growth, the overwhelmingly conservative Senate killed the study in a 20 to 13 vote. Stennett assumed a familiar state of dismay, but did acknowledge the historical context—this was the first time climate change was debated in the Idaho Legislature. Meanwhile, Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter has made some timid steps forward. He signed onto the Western States Climate Registry, a regional effort to establish a greenhouse gas monitoring system and

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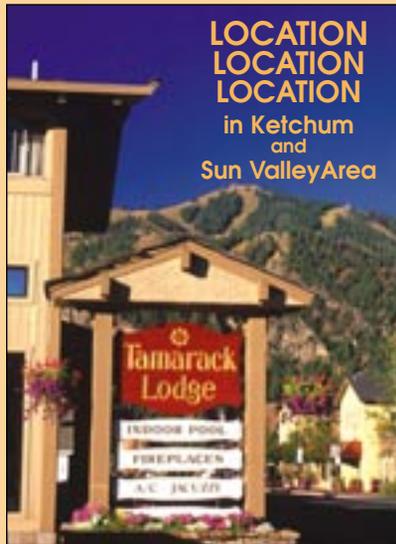
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has also ordered state agencies to cut emissions, starting with driving more fuel efficient vehicles.

In his 40 years in the Wood River Valley, Stennett has seen winters become milder. He has watched forest fires grow bigger, hotter and faster. Last summer's Castle Rock Fire (48,520 acres burned, 2,000 homes evacuated, \$25 million and 1,700 firefighters to suppress) renewed his fears for the Sawtooth forests that, plagued by pine-beetles, stand tinder-dry.

Stennett has seen the most change near his ranch in the Big Lost River Valley between Arco and Mackay. Lush, up-valley greenery has given way to dry creek beds. Skeletons of cottonwoods are an uneasy reminder of wetter times.

"Arco was an oasis. It was a beautiful oasis," Stennett said. "Now there isn't much there."

**R**anching and farming in southern Idaho is sustained by damming, diverting and irrigating precious river water. But in the north, the climate is wet enough that folks don't stop the clear running water as it flows past their fishing holes, hunting sites and cabins.

In 1976, Mike and Marie Smith bought Three Rivers Resort, about 100 winding miles east of Lewiston where two wild rivers, the Lochsa and Selway, join to form the Middle Fork of the Clearwater. A string of rustic wood cabins, a store and a bar had lured salmon fishermen for years. The Smiths saw paradise and invested their lives in it.

Each spring, the Lochsa gallops out of the mountains, tumbling down waterfalls and rapids like frothing white horses. People travel the world to find this kind of whitewater, and while the Smiths don't worry about losing the river any time soon, they have seen its cycles alter.

Smith rattles off the changes he's seen over the years without hesitation. "High water used to be June 6, now it's in mid-May every year," Smith said. In

summer, the resort's grass once needed twice-weekly mowing. Now he mows once a week and can stop entirely in August. Smith doesn't know why, but blue grouse have disappeared. He hasn't needed a bulldozer to remove the snow for years. Salmon used to run until July 4; today most are caught by May. "The fishing has gone to sleep," Smith said. Today, rafting trips bring in most of the family's income.

The Smiths' children are deeply involved in the business and are raising a third generation in the wilderness setting. A year ago, they witnessed the driest year on record. But this year, snowpack at Lolo Pass on the Montana-Idaho border—80

miles upriver—was 300 percent deeper than normal. Amid increasingly erratic weather patterns, the Smiths are watchful. If predictions hold true and snow leaves the mountains in spring torrents rather than summer-long flows, the Smiths—along with the plants and animals that surround them—will have no choice but adapt.

**G**iven the pendulum swings of weather, it's difficult for many Idahoans to accept the notion of the entire planet warming. While the Big Lost River Valley might grow drier, recent pounding winter storms and torrential spring rains hardly felt like warmth.

The changes noted by Peavey and Smith are one with broader trends of a destabilizing climate. Rather than the heat connoted by the term "global warming," many climate scientists now predict increasing weather extremes. On the heels of tornadoes that swarmed Midwesterners this summer, American scientists said to expect more of the same. In June, the U.S. Climate Change Science Program released the nation's first comprehensive analysis of past and projected changes in North American weather.

"We are now witnessing and will increasingly experience more extreme weather and climate events," said Tom Karl, director of the National Ocea-

"ARCO WAS AN OASIS. IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL OASIS. NOW THERE ISN'T MUCH THERE."

—CLINT STENNETT,  
STATE SENATOR

anic and Atmospheric Administration's National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, North Carolina.

The report predicts more abnormally hot days and nights with frequent heat waves. Arctic Ocean ice is expected to continue decreasing and may disappear entirely in summer. Rain and snowfall is likely to be less frequent but heavier. Droughts will intensify. The worst winter storms in the Atlantic and Pacific will produce stronger winds and higher waves.

This is the warning. Take it or leave it.

Stennett is taking heed. He is concerned about his state's role in a drying West and a future where, to paraphrase Mark Twain's timeless quip, water issues will rile up a crowd quicker than straight whiskey. Stennett fears that teeming southern cities like Las Vegas and Phoenix could one day force Idaho to share already contested waters in the Snake River and southern Idaho aquifers. He plans to continue pushing legislation that raises climate awareness among his peers in the capitol.

Change is not a welcome message to some, nor does a vague warning make it any easier to prepare. Given recent deep-snow winters and one of the longest, coldest springs in memory, it is difficult to trust science's forecasts and models. Is it not the nature of weather, after all, to change?

Idaho has always dealt with change, from displaced Indian tribes to the wild times of logging and mining boomtowns. Just as Idahoans in the 1970s shook their heads in disbelief as stove-up cowboys spun yarns about the wild West, people 50 years from now may be rapt by tales of verdant rangeland and summer-long mountain runoff.

More than most Americans, Idahoans are connected to the land. Just as those dead cottonwoods in the Big Lost River Valley can't pick up and leave, a family on a fourth or fifth generation ranch feels no less firmly rooted.

But Tom Peavey and Mike Smith are seeing something happen to their Idaho land. They mark gradual change and adapt. For many like them, the best days ahead may be found during the quiet times, those tantalizing moments during the calm between violent storms. **M**

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# HEART of a HUNTER by CHUCK OXLEY

Before last fall, I had never hunted big game. A good friend who owns land near Lewiston, in northern Idaho, invited me for an October weekend deer hunt. He said his rural neighborhood had been thick with does all summer.

Driving the 250 miles to Bob's homestead that mild autumn night, I had mixed feelings about putting down big game. It did not seem wrong to me. Yet, it also did not seem quite right. I could make some ecological justification for the hunt—many animals that are not taken during the harvest season die of starvation, exposure or predation during the winter. Then there was the special overabundance of females in the area I intended to hunt. On and off, I wrestled with this question. As I drove north, I could not say whether I would pull the trigger when the moment of truth arrived.

Bob's land sits just below timberline on a high bluff. From his house at the bottom of the property, the land slopes sharply up several hundred yards to form a bucolic series of hayfield meadows, lined on either side by Indian hawthorne bushes and apple trees.

After an afternoon of target shooting in unsettled weather that included a brief period of sleet, we were back nesting in the house. A pot of chili was starting on the stove when Bob saw deer crossing his neighbor's pasture. It was time. With our boots on again, we returned to the hill.

The higher we climbed, the more we could hear and see deer all around us, but we were not welcome. Across the meadow and up on a ridgeline, a half-dozen white-tail were spooked by our presence and hurried out of the overgrown and wild orchards. Above us, a rafter of wild turkeys was gobbling noisily, raising a ruckus.





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We sat on the hillside, quiet again, as the sun dropped behind the mountains to the west. My heart raced for a moment when two fawns sped wildly down the field in front of us, hooves pounding in the field as they turned wide into the sunset and galloped over the far ridge. If nothing else, seeing those young animals leaning playfully into their turns was worth the entire trip.

But with the sun waning, I suggested we move up the hill. We resumed our climb, our chase and our wait.

The choice to hunt is not a light one; this is not the suburban American quandary of choosing a restaurant for dinner. That is a question of “where.” Hunters must first come to terms with “if.” It is assumed that, as Americans, we can and will get our dinner as a matter of course, either by cooking at home or by trading some of our hard-earned currency for a hamburger delivered on roller skates.

For hunters, the question is esoteric. What if there was no ready TV dinner? How much heart, how much pain and how much suffering would you sacrifice, and for what purpose? By what desire do we kill? Some might call this desire an extension of the soul, a profound longing to be so close to nature that you actually become it, or it becomes you through the timeless dance of the hunt.

When I sit down to a meal of game meat—the flesh of either fowl or fur-bearing animal—I take a sacrament. This fork-full of protein and sinew was born in the wild, had something akin to a childhood and grew into an adult. At the same time, I was working my job, raising my family, mowing my lawn. We each lived our lives until the moment of intersection, me as the hunter, the creature as the hunted.

When the time comes to make the kill, the hunter must momentarily stop his heart, turn it to granite. Because to take the life of a big beautiful buck with antlers out to the limit of my outstretched arms, or to blast a 12-gauge shotgun at an incoming sandhill crane like so much anti-aircraft fire requires a clear moment, free from sentiment. Put the crosshairs of the riflescope on the breast of a statue-still white-tail as the early-winter evening brings darkness to the deer's last sunset. Pull the trigger only with a deep understanding of your place in nature and in time.

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It was higher up the hill, just after sundown and in a light drizzle when I saw the big white-tail doe. I was crouched behind a bunch of cheatgrass when she walked down out of the high mountain timber and into the grassy center of the meadow slope. She was a deep gray in the dusk and magnificent, like a bride walking her aisle of hawthorne bushes.

She spotted Bob first, about 100 yards from her, and everyone froze. I was a bit closer, but out of view. I rose to my knees, shouldering the .30-30 Marlin lever-action rifle. I crept forward like this and knelt before a thick stand of thigh-high cheatgrass.

I still did not know if I was going to shoot. She was facing me straight on, leaving a poor shot. Holding the position for several minutes, my arm grew weary and the barrel began to shake. Slowly, I lowered the gun and watched.

After five minutes, she grew aggressive, stamping her front hooves at Bob. She let out a series of snorts, a sound like a cat's hiss, only lower, louder and deeper. I was close enough that I could see her mouth open wide and her tongue stick out to deliver her message.

Until this moment, I could not have predicted the outcome. I think it was that snorting—that defiant blast of air coming hot out of her lungs combined with her harsh, almost obstinate expression—that set our course. It's a vision that still plays in my mind. I realized that this was our moment, hers and mine, and that both of us had a job to do. It was my job to take her and her job to die, or to live, as nature and luck would have it.

She stood on that hill, her chest puffed out, snorting and hissing. I raised the rifle again. With all of her stamping, her body had rotated so that more of her right side was showing, nearly a full profile against the slate gray sky. I placed the scope on her heart and waited until my barrel stopped dancing. And then my finger, with slow pressure, settled onto the trigger.

A brilliant white-yellow flash erupted as the muzzle lit the darkening night. Instantly, the doe reared up and spun, kicking hard and high in mid-air with her hind feet. When all four legs landed, they were already moving as she dashed toward a gap in the brush.

And then, nothing. Complete quiet. Bob and I looked at each other wide-eyed and shrugged. It was possible that she could have dropped and neither of us would have seen her. We walked to the

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top of the hill where she had been standing, but there was nothing, not even a blood sign. Still, it was hard to tell with the fresh rain glistening the brush.

"I don't think you got her," Bob said. I felt a kind of silly relief.

Bob continued to search for blood, and I walked toward the gap where I saw her disappear, a wide swath leading to a smaller clearing. Then, something white in the darkness. After a couple of steps, I saw her head facing me. As I came closer, her eyes were open but vacant. She had made it about 30 yards before piling up. She had been dead several minutes.

We found the bullet entrance just behind her right front shoulder with the exit wound on her left side, behind her centerline. As I opened her belly, I felt warm, loose blood sloshing around her body cavity. I had hit the heart, just where I aimed. She did not suffer.

I was surprised and maybe a little ashamed at the lack of hunter's remorse I felt as we hauled the carcass down the hill to be cleaned and dressed in Bob's garage. It felt more like a completeness of something perhaps a little sad, yet not tragic. Still, I avoided her eyes.

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## Sunday broke bright.

I strode into the crisp morning to check on the venison we had left hanging from Bob's garage rafters. Just outside the door, I saw the animal's head and tail lying where I had put them the night before. With these in hand, I returned to the lower pasture. It was windy and cold and I wore no coat, but the sun and fresh air felt good on me. I hiked through the meadows to the top of the hill and saw magpies circling the gut pile.

I reached down and closed her eyelids. As I did, I felt a release, like a part of some deep grief letting go. I lingered for a few moments, long enough to relive the previous evening, the minutes of silence between first awareness and the kill. Before leaving, I wanted to say something, something profound, but everything I thought of sounded corny. All I had was a sense of thanks to this animal and to the earth that gave her to me.

I thought of the meat that my family and I would enjoy: venison jerky for future bird hunts and venison steaks for my extended family at Easter. It was one of those moments when words are neither good enough nor necessary. ❧

# pear particulars

**F**or pears, Cortney Burns forages Wood River Valley farmers' markets. For this private chef, poaching fruit in spiced wine makes for a simple, rustic fall dessert. And while apples get the job done, Burns "chooses the pear, honestly, because of its delicate texture and elegant shape." Photos by **Paulette Phlipot**.

## spiced autumn pears

1 (750-ml) bottle white wine  
4 cups orange juice  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar  
1 whole vanilla bean, split and scraped  
5 cardamom pods  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 bay leaf  
6 cloves  
1 star anise  
4-6 firm Bartlett, Anjou or Bosc pears, peeled with stems intact

Add wine, orange juice, sugar, spices and vanilla bean into a 4-quart saucepan and bring to a boil. Decrease heat to medium-low and add pears—standing upright. Simmer for 30 minutes or until tender, but not falling apart. Remove pears and vanilla bean from saucepan, increase heat to high and reduce the syrup to approximately 1 cup—approximately 20-30 minutes. Spoon sauce over pears and serve.

For a creamy addition, whip mascarpone with honey and dollop a spoonful alongside.  
—Michael Ames

*For in-home dinners, contact Burns at [reservedtable@hotmail.com](mailto:reservedtable@hotmail.com)*

# pear logic with riesling



Cortney Burns poaches pears in quality whites.

*“The first rule is, never cook with something you wouldn’t drink.”*

—David Kirkpatrick

Fall is the season to shift back to red wines and heartier whites. This time of year my favorite meal finale is a simple plate of cheese or a fruit-based dessert. Give me a pear tart or a bowl of poached pears. And of course, I’ll take a nice glass of white wine to go with it.

Poaching pears in wine is a double seasonal approach. The dish calls on both the orchard harvest and the heartier whites fit for colder weather.

The accompanying recipe calls for a Viognier or a Riesling for the poaching medium, but you can use other varieties. The first rule is never cook with something you wouldn’t drink. Next is, keep it simple. You want a wine with balance—something not too dry, not too acidic and definitely no oak. A nice Moscato is a good alternative, and for something a little different, perhaps a Prosecco. And naturally, pairing any dish with the same type of wine you cooked with typically works best.

Viognier, with its floral honeysuckle aromas makes for a great fruit pairing. It tends to be a richly textured wine with ripe flavors that work well with poached pears. One of the best is from a hot, relatively new Chilean winery called Cono Sur—their 2006 Vision Viognier retails for less than \$15. The grape also thrives in Idaho. Two of my Gem State favorites are the 2006 Williamson, crafted by Greg Koenig, and the

2007 Cinder, both priced under 20 bucks.

Riesling’s advantage is that when properly vinified, this white balances some level of residual sugar with high acidity. The combination makes for a wine perfectly matched with many foods. When poaching pears, you want some sense of sweetness to come through. Germany’s Leitz Dragonstone (under \$15) has that quality. And again, Riesling shines in Idaho. For less than \$10, you can buy a bottle of 2006 Indian Creek, 2006 Snake River or 2006 Sawtooth, all great wines.

While not ideal for cooking, Italy’s Moscato d’Asti, with its naturally sweet fruit and light touch of spritz, is a classic pairing for cooked fruit. Look for the 2007 Saraco, 2007 Marengo Scarpona or the 2007 Chiarlo Nivole, all priced around \$20. That country’s Prosecco pushes the bubbles up a notch and is a deliciously different match. You don’t want a bubbly that is too dry—I’d go with the Anselmi Prosecco Brut or the Adami Prosecco Garbel, both available for around \$15. It’s the season of thanks and feasts. Might as well treat yourself with the best.

—David Kirkpatrick

*Idaho native David Kirkpatrick has worked in the wine business for 30 years. For the last 20, he has lent his expertise to the Boise Co-op Wine Shop. He writes the Wine Sipper column for the Boise Weekly.*



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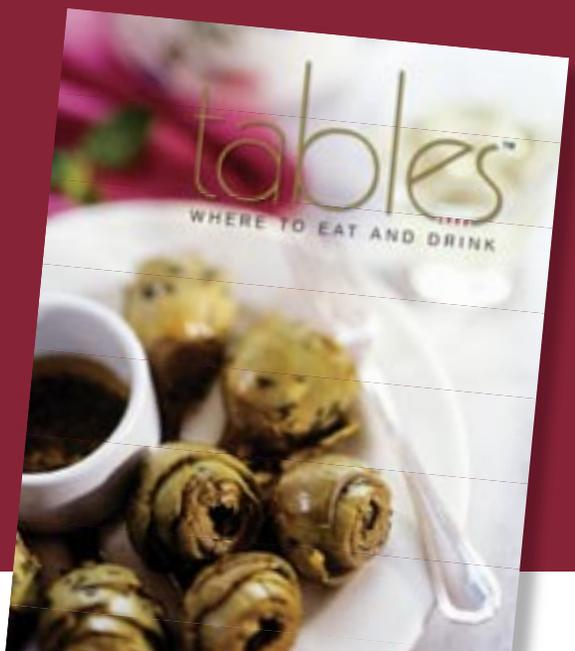
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**Details:** [www.wagondays.com](http://www.wagondays.com) or 1.866.305.9899 or pick up a free copy of the *Idaho Mountain Express*.



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**Details:** [www.svspiritualfilmfestival.org](http://www.svspiritualfilmfestival.org) or 208.726.2777 or pick up a free copy of the *Idaho Mountain Express*.

estival guide

Autumn festivals celebrate the valley's heritage and progressive culture

## Ernest Hemingway Festival

Sept. 25-28

Celebrate the life and times of Ernest Hemingway, Ketchum's most famous resident author, at the fourth annual Ernest Hemingway Festival. This year's theme is Hemingway in Cuba, with Hemingway's niece Hilary Hemingway presenting her documentary *Hemingway in Cuba*. Other literary libations on offer include a book fair, readings by Hemingway scholar Dr. Susan Beegel and an Evening in Cuba party. Also catch guided tours of Hemingway hangouts, open mic events and a special fund-raising dinner at Hemingway's last home in Ketchum.

**Details:** [www.ernesthemingwayfestival.org](http://www.ernesthemingwayfestival.org) or 1.866.549.5783 or pick up a free copy of the *Idaho Mountain Express*.



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## Sun Valley Swing 'n' Dixie Jazz Jamboree

Oct. 15-19

Put on your dancing shoes and start those toes tapping as the Sun Valley Swing 'n' Dixie Jazz Jamboree celebrates its 19th year. Over five days, jazz-lovers can enjoy more than 350 shows at 13 Sun Valley and Ketchum venues. The Jamboree swings into action with a free community concert by the Wood River Wolverine Jazz Band at the Sun Valley Ice Rink (Oct. 14, 7 p.m.). The festival features over 36 performers grooving for your listening pleasure. The line-up includes Big Band Swing Design, Night Blooming Jazzmen, Blue Street Jazz Band, Brian Nova and Dixieland Express as well as local favorites Forever Plaid, Joe Fos and the Cheryl Morrel Quartet.

**Details:**  
[www.sunvalleyjazz.com](http://www.sunvalleyjazz.com)  
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"THE YELLOW BUILDING"



PHOTO BY STACIE BREW

# Trailing of the Sheep

Oct. 10-12

Sheep traffic will again flock down Ketchum's Main Street during the Trailing of the Sheep Festival. Enjoy a weekend of suppers, stories and shearing while celebrating this year's theme, The Songs and Stories of Shepherding. Learn about cooking with lamb at chef workshops and lamb tastings; hear Western tales from the likes of Hal Cannon and Rosalie Sorrels during Friday's music and poetry event, Remembering When; and see sheep being sheared at Saturday's Sheep Folklife Fair in Hailey. Sunday, watch as the Trailing of the Sheep Parade brings Ketchum's tarmac alive with a wash of woolly mammals as hundreds of sheep travel to southern winter pastures. This commemoration of a 100-year-old tradition also features historic sheep wagons, the Oinkari Basque dancers and the Boise Highlanders bagpipers.

**Details:** [www.trailingofthesheep.org](http://www.trailingofthesheep.org) or 208.720.0585 or pick up a free copy of the *Idaho Mountain Express*.

View the calendar on the Web at [sunvalleyguide.com](http://sunvalleyguide.com)

All submissions for the Winter 2008-09 calendar should be sent to [calendar@mtexpress.com](mailto:calendar@mtexpress.com)

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PHOTO BY NATE GALPIN

## *Night Driving*

I developed into a night driver as a natural consequence of the demands of an early education as a ski racer. Long drives into the night in uncomfortable positions in crowded back seats were as real and familiar as Sierra cement, snowblindness, hands thawing after three hours of no feeling, politically-minded little-league ski parents (not mine, fortunately), monstrous ruts, ill-prepared courses and putting on chains before I was old enough to drive—back in the early 1950s when the saltiness of Truman gave way to the blandness of Eisenhower and his distasteful vice-president; Stalin died; the Korean police action ended; Marilyn was both vamp and victim of our society; Hemingway got his Nobel; Bill Haley rocked around the clock, Bo Diddley diddled the best and Chuck Berry stole the stage, but jazz was still king; James Dean touched a few nerves and unclogged a channel or two; that asshole McCarthy conducted his witch hunts; and my family periodically rose before dawn to watch the atom bombs light up the Nevada horizon of my childhood.

My first influence as a night driver was, not surprisingly, my good father. In the early Lake Tahoe years (1946-52), my mother and father spent their summer months working double shifts in the fabled Nevada casinos, and the rest of the year getting by on unemployment and a few moonlight jobs. That was before Tahoe got raped by the greed heads and their flunkies. And, since winter tourism didn't exist at Tahoe in those days, an entire subculture of winter unemployables thrived on that work/non-work schedule. Most of those people were coming off the wall of havoc World War II had played with their heads and lives. I think it was a healthy way for them to live at the time. This existence gave a young ski racer's parents lots of time to get into their son's skiing, and mine did. As a matter of fact, a sub-subculture developed in those days among junior-skier parents in the West which I have never seen rivaled for sheer funk; the equivalent culture of the present junior ski-racing circuit has too much money, too much organization and too much pressure—like the rest of society—and it, too, has some hard, much-needed changes coming around the next bend. My father drove us to all the races. My mother knew how but seldom drove. She hated the automobile, feared it, resented its wheel in her hands, loathed snow on the road and of course she dreaded those times when there was no practical choice but for her to do it herself. Only major family crises enticed her into an airplane, and her unhappiness on those occasions would have been funny were it not so real. I think now she may have been listening to a primordial wisdom deeper than the fear of bodily death we thought was at the root of it—she knew something unnatural and suspect lurked about engines and combustion noise and anything moving faster than a gallop.

—From *Night Driving*, by Dick Dorworth  
First Ascent Press, Livingston, Montana.

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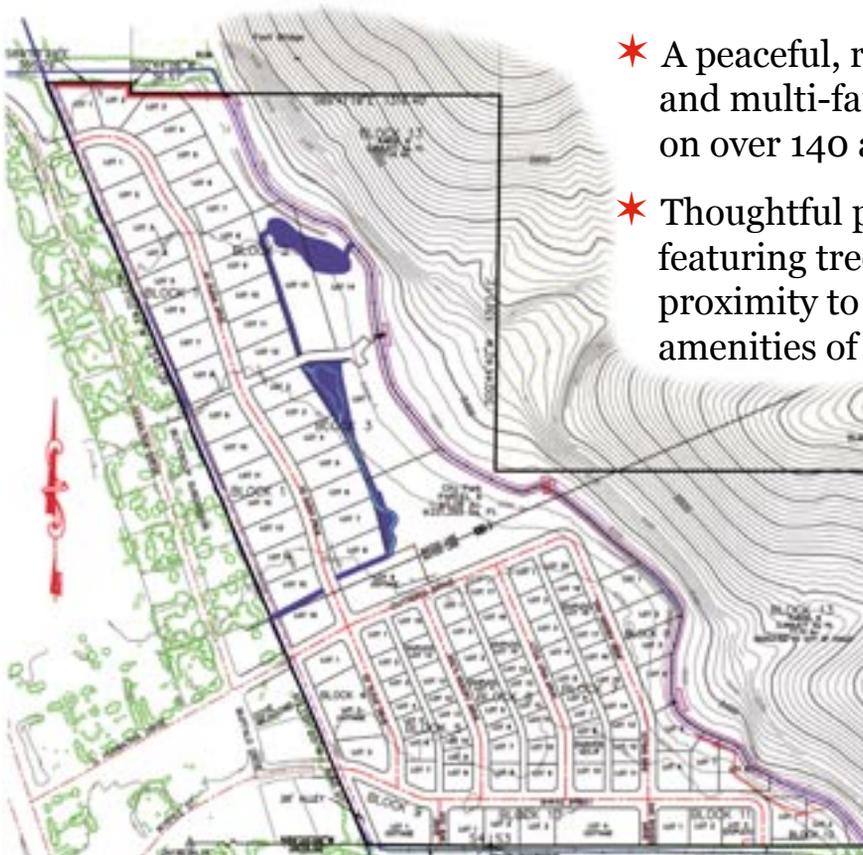


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