

Idaho Statesman



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2006

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50¢

BOISE STATE CLIMBS IN BCS STANDINGS

SPORTS 1

WINTER GARDEN AGLOW — 250,000 LIGHTS AND LOTS OF FUN

LIFE 1



SYRIA OFFERS TO HELP IN IRAQ

MAIN 11

56° 46°
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State Edition

Democratic also-rans consider their futures

Brady says he's through with politics, but other candidates eye 2008 races

BY SHAWNA GAMACHE
IDAHO STATESMAN

Democratic governor candidate Jerry Brady said he is fin-

ished with politics.

"I've done my best," said Brady, 70, president of the Post Co. publishing company in Idaho Falls. "Twice is enough." He plans to

travel the state thanking supporters and possibly return to nonprofit work in the Third World.

But the rest of Idaho's major Democratic candidates — all of whom lost on Nov. 7 — aren't done with politics yet.

Election Day isn't two weeks past, but Larry LaRocco, Larry

Grant and Jim Hansen already have their eyes on possible congressional runs in 2008. Other candidates are looking at statewide or smaller seats.

CONGRESS

> **Larry LaRocco:** The former congressman who lost for lieutenant governor against Gov. Jim

Risch, is considering a possible bid for U.S. Sen. Larry Craig's seat in two years.

If Craig doesn't run again, LaRocco thinks he has a shot. LaRocco, who raised \$800,000 in his 1994 congressional re-election campaign, said fundraising is much easier for a congressional race than for lieutenant governor.

That will help him get his message out, he said.

"I'm not discouraged one bit," LaRocco said. "Except for the outcome, it was a great experience."

Meantime, LaRocco will continue his work as president of Coeur d'Alene software compa-

SEE DEMOCRATS ON MAIN 2

seven wonders of Idaho

day 1:

salmon river country

frank church river of no return wilderness



Downtown living is coming to Eagle

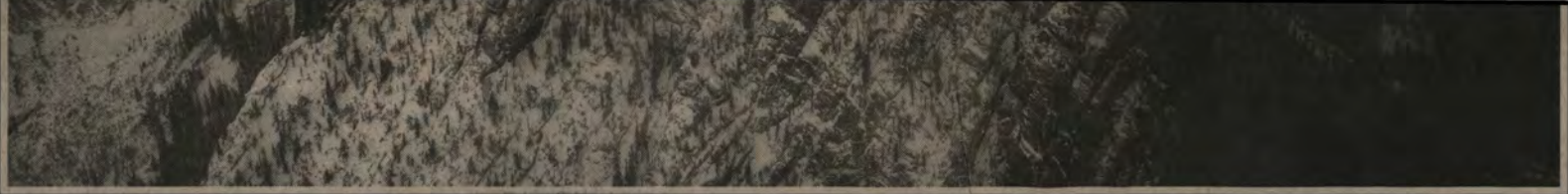
Developers plan condos, apartments but chafe at city regulations

BY KATY MOELLER
IDAHO STATESMAN

It's never difficult for Mark Butler and Shawn Nickel to rent the apartment above their downtown Eagle offices.

An hour after a sign is posted in the window of SLN Planning Inc. on North Second Street, the calls start coming in.

"We usually get 15 calls the first day," said Butler, a former Eagle



Katherine Jones / Idaho Statesman

The solitude of Ship Island Lake and stunning vistas of the Bighorn Crags are the rewards for those who are determined to get there. Deep in the heart of the 2.2 million-acre Idaho wonder, the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, the crags are a series of jagged summits that cradle more than a dozen clearwater lakes.

Heart of Idaho beats in the Salmon River wilds

The Salmon River and "the Frank," as the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness is affectionately called, epitomize everything that Idahoans love to boast about: our water, our mountains, our wildlife, our people.

The Salmon River moves as if somehow, it has a heart and soul, as its flows range from calm, still and reflective to the raging rapids that gave it the "River of No Return" moniker.

Magnificent mountains and canyons of the Church wilderness teem with wildlife — soaring eagles, howling wolves; bighorn sheep, white-tailed deer, elk, bobcats, cougars, coyotes, rattlesnakes, bears and more. The wilderness has been called "the Serengeti of North America" for its concentrations of large animals.

This vast, wild country has a tale to tell.

It's a story best told by its people, from past to present, from its native Lemhi Shoshone Indians — Tukudika, or the Sheepeaters — to resident research biologists. From frontiersman "Cougar" Dave to today's outdoor enthusiasts. Through their stories, this land comes alive.

Jeanne Huff

Butler and others, including M&H Development of Eagle, are working to bring more second-floor — and possibly third-floor — residences to Eagle's downtown, which radiates outward from the corner of Eagle Road and Old State Street.

"There's a sense of pride that you're bringing something to downtown that's not here," Butler said.

There's also some frustration among developers, who say that the city's height restriction, parking space requirements and fees for removing trees for development can make downtown projects difficult.

Butler said the city fees for removing about 10 trees on one downtown property could mount up to as much as \$150,000. The fees go to the city's tree fund.

City officials say they are open to the idea of raising the maximum height for downtown buildings — to a point. The concern has been that tall buildings would block the view of the Foothills.

Currently, the maximum allowable height for buildings in Eagle's downtown core is 40 feet.

SEE EAGLE ON MAIN 3

Photos and stories on Main 4-5 • Online photo gallery at idahostatesman.com • Poster available

5 MINUTE UPDATE

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Valley / State

Saving musical history

Nampa's Majors & Minors musical group ended its 35-year run of performances in 2005, but its massive collections of sheet music and costumes live on through the Character Depot, a business launched to preserve the collection and serve local actors, singers and dancers. MAIN 2

tim woodward Dizzying heights



Everybody's afraid of something. For Tim Woodward, it's heights. And a recent assignment tested his limits.

MAIN 2

Nation / World



The Associated Press

Fishermen are discussing how a proposed expansion of marine protected areas will affect their industry.

Protecting marine life

Despite intense opposition from many fishermen, California wildlife regulators are creating stretches of ocean where fishing will be banned or restricted. MAIN 11

Sports

BSU likely gets BCS bowl with win Saturday

For the Broncos, it appears to be a simple proposition: Beat Nevada, play in a major bowl game. SPORTS 1

Lotteries

Saturday's results

IDAHO POWERBALL: There was no jackpot winner for a \$45 million drawing. Saturday's numbers: 1-8-19-36-42, Powerball 20, Power Play 2. Next jackpot: \$54 million.

IDAHO WILD CARD: There was no jackpot winner for a \$361,000 drawing. Saturday's numbers: 12-17-20-21-31. Wild card: J♣. Next jackpot: \$380,000 (estimated).

Opinion

Courage & Commitment

Rob Cronin, a cancer survivor, devotes much of his time and money to help children with cancer have fun during a weeklong summer camp held every August near Ketchum. MAIN 8

Life

Kim Komando

Vista is almost here. Businesses with volume license agreements can get it Nov. 30. Home users must wait until Jan. 30. But you should get ready. LIFE 3



NOTICE TO OUR READERS: Going on vacation? To stop your paper effective Thanksgiving Day, call 377-NEWS (6370) prior to 9:30 a.m. Wednesday.

seven wonders of Idaho

- New wonder inside today's edition
- Photographed by the Statesman staff

Purchase 1 or all of the Seven Wonders of Idaho... Beautiful for framing! Details inside

Albertson College to receive \$5 million grant

The Evergreen grant will be used to launch a \$17 million fundraising campaign to renovate science facilities

STATESMAN STAFF

J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation has awarded Albertson College of Idaho in Caldwell a \$5 million per year Evergreen grant, plus an additional one-time \$5 million grant to launch a \$17 million fundraising campaign to renovate the school's science facility.

The goal of both grants, according to university spokeswoman Beth Zborowski, is to support initiatives to help the college look more like a U.S. News & World Report Top 100 National Liberal Arts College.

The \$5 million Evergreen grant replaces the final installment in a three-year, \$17 million grant Albertson College received from the foundation in 2005. ACI already has received \$12 million of that previous grant.

The new grant will be funded continually on a three-year cycle. Should the funding ever be canceled, the university will have a three-year warning, Zborowski said.

The grants have been used to invest in various departments such as biology, business and education, she said. Funding also is used in recruitment and scholarships and to give profes-

sors resources and enhance salaries.

ACI used some of the grant to expand the Albertson Heritage Scholarship — a full-tuition scholarship for students with outstanding high school records who also rank in top one percent of the ACT or SAT pool, said Zborowski.

The profile of this year's freshmen was again the best in the state, with 40 percent ranking in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class.

The top quarter of the freshman class was in the top 7 percent of the national ACT/SAT pool and had a high school grade-point average of 4.0 or better.

ACI president Bob Hoover said the grant "gives the college the financial

stability to focus on long-term priorities" that will keep educational standards high.

The Boone Science Hall was constructed in 1967 and is nearly 80,000 square feet. The fundraising campaign will remodel and update the building's infrastructure, classroom technology and laboratory spaces and equipment, said Zborowski.

"We believe with more national recognition and an increased focus on distinctive areas such as science education, ACI will continue to attract the best and brightest students from Idaho and elsewhere and give them the kind of experience which will lead them to remain and contribute to this state," said ACI Trustee Kenneth C. Howell.

Store rents sheet music, costumes

BY SANDRA FORESTER
IDAHO STATESMAN

Nampa's Majors & Minors musical group ended its 35-year run of gala performances in 2005, but its massive collections of sheet music and costumes live on through the Character Depot, a business started by a former member to preserve the collection and serve local actors, singers and dancers.

"We all thought it was an awesome thing that we could contribute even more to the public," longtime Majors & Minors member Sylvia Pool said of the music and costume donation.

Majors & Minors, made up of 20 to 60 community residents each year, presented one or two musical reviews each year, featuring 30 musical numbers per show. Members sewed all the costumes, Pool said.

"I really miss that," she said.

In 2005, group leaders decided to call it quits because of the rise of many other local musical groups and activities that competed for audiences and group members, Pool said.

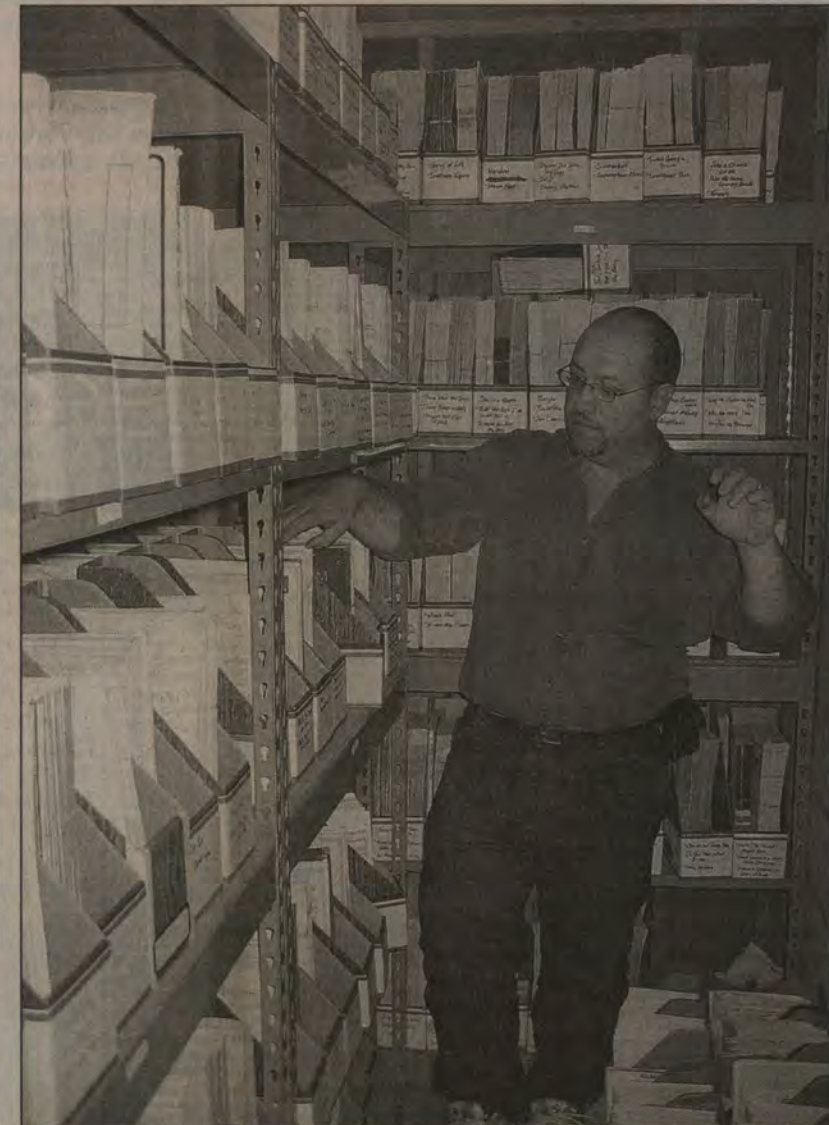
Majors & Minors created an endowment fund for operations of the Nampa Civic Center's auditorium with the balance of its accounts and donated its grand piano to the center. The music and costumes were given to Jeff and Caye Young, who launched



This black-and-silver sequined number is part of the Majors & Minors collection at Nampa's Character Depot.

Were." The collection includes medleys of music by Weird Al Yankovic, Josh Groban and Frank Sinatra.

"There is some wonderful music — 'Phantom of the Opera,' '100 Years



Photos by Sandra Forester / Idaho Statesman

Jeff Young, co-owner of the Character Depot, pulls out the "Monster Mash" choral arrangement from the Majors & Minors sheet music collection. The collection in-

BOISE COUNTY

Boise man dies Saturday in motorcycle crash

A Boise man was killed in a motorcycle wreck Saturday night in Boise County, Idaho State Police reported.

Timothy Perry, 43, was heading west on Pearl Road just after 5 p.m. near the top of Horseshoe Bend Hill west of Idaho 55 when his Honda motorcycle veered off the road, police said.

Perry overcorrected and was thrown from his motorcycle, police said. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

CALDWELL

Thieves taking copper, aluminum and electricity

Thieves have targeted copper, aluminum, electricity and gasoline in five separate thefts recently in Caldwell, according to Sandy Brooks of Caldwell Police Department's crime analysis.

In October, motor parts made of copper were stolen from a recreational vehicle. About 300 pounds of copper wire were taken in a separate incident. And a Caldwell police officer responded to a vandalism complaint in progress midday on the overpass near Interstate 84's North 10th Avenue exit. The officer discovered that suspects removed sections of the aluminum handrail with a hacksaw.

During the first weekend of November, one resident discovered gasoline had been siphoned from a vehicle parked in a driveway overnight.

A week later at another residence, a resident reported an extension cord was plugged into their house and strung across the yard to another residence without permission.

Officers hope to make residents aware and encourage them to keep an eye on their property.

HAILEY

Former airport security guard sentenced to 6 months in jail

A former federal Transportation Security Administration airport guard was led away from 5th District Court in Hailey in handcuffs after being sentenced to six months in jail for misdemeanor child enticement.

Judge Robert J. Elgee refused to allow Robert J. Harrison Jr. to remain out of jail while he appeals his sentence.

Harrison was found guilty in September of enticing a 10-year-old elementary student into his car in Ketchum on April 10. The same jury that convicted him of the misdemeanor count acquitted him of felony second-degree kidnapping.

The boy was released unharmed, and Kevin Cassidy, Harrison's public defender, argued his client never had any sinister intent.

Before his arrest, Harrison was a security guard for the TSA at Friedman Memorial Airport in Hailey.

Statesman staff

Correction

Steve Rly, a member of the panel that se-

"It has most benefited the schools," he said.

Last school year, the Nampa High School Dance Team used about 20 of the group's black jackets with white trim. And Nampa Christian High, Skyview High, Idaho Arts Charter School and varied church and community groups have used the tuxes, gowns, military uniforms, sequined shirts or sparkling jackets in green, yellow, black and pink.

The crowning jewel of the Majors & Minors legacy may be multiple copies of hundreds of choral arrangements from "Monster Mash" to "The Way We

solos, such as original arrangements of Bob Hope classics, Young said.

Alumni of Majors & Minors can borrow the music for free with a deposit and rent the costumes at a discount, he said. School groups also receive discounts.

Young said the donation of music and costumes allowed him to start the business he had been dreaming of since about 2003.

"It was basically the shot in the arm that we needed to get going," he said. "They could have donated the costumes and music to a number of groups, but they thought that it was

Majors & Minors was born out of a benefit concert more than 35 years ago that raised money to buy new choir robes for St. Paul's Catholic Church, longtime chorus member Sylvia Pool said. Participants had so much fun that they decided to make a musical review an annual event, she said. The group raised thousands of dollars for the Nampa Civic Center's theater and its proposed expansion to start next year.

The group's collections of costumes and music arrangements now reside at the Character Depot, a business that opened last year at 411 Caldwell Blvd. For more information, call 467-5777.

important that they be made available for the general public to use." To offer story ideas or comments, contact reporter Sandra Forester at 377-6464 or sforester@idahostatesman.com

have graced more than 200 covers of magazines and other publications, including National Geographic's Traveler and Adventurer magazines. He works for a number of clients internationally and is represented by five international picture agencies, including Getty Images, the largest in the world. Bly has traveled extensively through Idaho and has run and photographed the Middle Fork of the Salmon River more than 20 times. His latest book, published in 2001, is entitled "Idaho Wild and Beautiful."

He and his wife, Pam, live near the Greenbelt on the Boise River. Information published on Main 4 of Sunday's Idaho Statesman was incorrect.

Having a fear of heights makes living in Idaho a bit treacherous

Everybody's afraid of something. For some, it's enclosed spaces. For others it can be anything from the dark to flying to hunting with the vice president. My phobia is heights. Flying doesn't bother me, but high bridges, tall buildings and mountain roads can grip me with an irrational fear bordering on hysteria.

So where do I end up spending my life? Idaho — the Northwest's answer to Bolivia.

Last month, a Statesman photographer and I spent two days in a small town ringed by mountains. To get there, we drove a road that clings to the walls of a canyon the way a flea clings to a mountain goat. The whole time we were there, I was trying not to think about the drive back.

One of the people we inter-



tim woodward

viewed in the town was an elderly gentleman who, when the interview was over, suggested driving us to something called "the meadow." He said it would make a nice photo. There was no reason to believe it would be anything but a pleasant drive in the country.

"How far is it to the meadow?" I asked him.

"Not far. About a mile and a half."

We'd gone about a block and half when the road began to climb. Soon we were rising on

slopes steep enough that I was sweating and trying hard to concentrate on the pattern of the car's upholstery. The valley was falling away at an alarming rate, and our driver seemed oblivious to what struck me as way more than enough speed for a narrow mountain road with dizzying dropoffs.

Nothing remotely like a meadow — or for that matter a guard rail — was anywhere in sight.

"How much farther is it?" I asked.

"About a mile and a half."

"A mile and a half? That's what you said when we started! We've gone at least that far already."

His response was to step on the gas. We were climbing fast and already high enough that the road was dusted with snow. It looked slick to me, but we

didn't slow down a bit. Every few hundred yards, a heart-stopping ridge offered sickening views of the town far below. Above us were more mountains, more switchbacks.

"Maybe you'd better stop and let me out," I suggested. "I have this thing about heights. You go on without me. Take the pictures and pick me up on your way back."

"Fear of heights, eh? Well, don't worry. It's not much farther now."

He obviously didn't understand. By this point I couldn't have cared less about seeing some bug-infested meadow. I've seen hundreds of meadows and to me they all look the same. As far as I was concerned, his meadow could drop right off of the planet — which in view of the vertical terrain it had an excellent chance of doing.

"How much farther is 'not much farther?'" I asked, sure the meadow from hell had to be around the next bend.

"About a mile and a half," he said again, this time with a sadistic grin. "A mile and a half straight up."

I liked this witty new friend. He was a breath of mountain air. I considered strangling him, but then I might have had to drive back down myself.

And my fingernails were too deeply embedded in his upholstery. We were careening over a relatively flat stretch of snow-covered road when he nonchalantly pointed out his window.

"There it is," he said.

"There what is?"

"The meadow."

The car slowed almost imperceptibly, then shot upward again.

"Wait! That was it! Why did-

n't you stop?"

"I figure we might as well go on up to the summit. You can see seven peaks from up there."

We could, too, or would have if some of them hadn't been lost in clouds. One of the peaks we could see was aptly named after one of the Alps.

On a shoulder of the summit was a surprising sight: a cross decorated with plastic flowers.

Our leadfooted driver speculated that it was somebody's idea of a joke, but given his sense of humor I doubted that.

I think it was the final resting place for someone who died of fright.

To offer story ideas or comments, contact reporter Tim Woodward at woodward@idahostatesman.com or 377-6409. Read his past columns at IdahoStatesman.com/Woodward.

DEMOCRATS

CONTINUED FROM MAIN 1

ny Neo Kinetics.

> **Larry Grant:** The former Micron executive said there is a "high likelihood" he will make another run at the 1st District House seat he lost to Republican Bill Sali.

"Folks keep asking, 'What did we do wrong?' and I tell them we didn't do anything wrong, we did everything right," Grant said. "We started with an unknown candidate in a tough district and got 45 percent of the vote."

Grant, an attorney who retired from his corporate job five years ago, said he would need to decide by June or July and make an announcement by Labor Day to have a shot at Sali's seat covering Western Idaho.

"I'm pretty sure Bill Sali started running for the next election the day after this one," Grant said.

He said some have asked him to consider a run at Craig's seat, but he said he wants to stick to the House.

> **Jim Hansen:** Hansen returned Nov. 13 to the top position at United Vision of Idaho in Boise, where he will continue work on campaign finance reform, pushing for a voluntary system of public election financing. He won 34 percent of the vote to incumbent Republican Mike Simpson's 62 percent.

But Hansen said he might give the 2nd District seat in eastern Idaho another go.

"I'll never rule out the possibility of running many more times," Hansen said. "We've got to own the elections. The people

have to own the elections."

STATE RACES AND SMALLER

Howard Faux said he will run again for treasurer in 2010 if he is able, and schools superintendent candidate Jana Jones said she won't rule out another try. But controller candidate Jackie Groves Twilegar said she might try for a seat with better odds for Democratic success and attorney general candidate Bob Wallace said he wants to focus on building the party.

> **Jackie Groves Twilegar:** "I'm also not crazy, and I have no desire to waste my time and waste people's money, and you have to look at where the Democrats were successful," Twilegar said. In Boise, for example, Democrats defeated five Republican incumbents in the Legislature.

Twilegar took 41 percent of the vote to Republican Donna Jones' 59 percent.

She said Democrats should have run for every seat in Ada County.

Instead, Republicans running for assessor, coroner and treasurer were unopposed, she said. Still, she isn't sure she'll run.

"It's like saying to a woman who's just had a 10-pound baby, 'When are you going to have another one?'" Twilegar said. "I'm not ready to answer that. But I'm not ruling it out."

> **Jana Jones:** She is still working as deputy to Democratic state schools Superintendent Marilyn Howard until Republican Tom Luna takes office in January. Jones, who got 49 percent of the vote to Luna's 51 percent, said she doesn't have any immediate plans af-

ter that, though she is eagerly awaiting the arrival of a granddaughter in the next few weeks. She may run again in four years.

"It was a great opportunity, and I believe in what I was doing — I believe in the public education system of Idaho," Jones said. "I've learned you never say never because it comes back to bite you every time."

> **Howard Faux:** The 79-year-old Sandpoint real-estate agent, whose career in banking spanned more than 40 years, said he considered his race against incumbent Republican Treasurer Ron Crane a success even though he got 36 percent of the vote. Faux (pronounced 'fox') said the vote was close in northern Idaho, which shows that people there want representation at the state level.

"Considering what I did, why, I think I was quite a success," Faux said. "Not very often do you get a chance to show there is something else besides the Treasure Valley."

> **Bob Wallace:** The Boise lawyer, who won 38 percent of the vote to incumbent Lawrence Wasden's 62 percent, said he wants to volunteer time to help the Democratic Party build strength in Idaho.

"I don't like to use the word machine, but that's what the Republicans have and that's what we don't have," Wallace said. "I'm not going to run against Lawrence again."

To offer story ideas or comments, contact reporter Shawna Gamache at sgamache@idahostatesman.com or 377-6416.

ENVIRONMENT AT HOME

Be thankful for your environment, and show it

Buy food that uses little packaging and turkeys and potatoes that are grown nearby so it takes less gas to get to your table

BY JOE KOLMAN
SPECIAL TO IDAHO STATESMAN

This week, when many of us sit down around the big bird, a lot of us will try to think of something for which we are thankful. Friends and family probably rank pretty high, as does good health. But what about being thankful that each breath of air we take is relatively clean? How about a round of applause for tap water devoid of fecal matter? And

is there any way to be grateful enough for opportunity to take a quiet walk in the woods? It's mind-boggling to realize how much our environment has changed since that first Thanksgiving. We have roads and cars, planes and spaceships. We dam rivers and burn coal. We log forests and pave wetlands. Plastics and other products devised in science labs are mainstays of everyday life. All of those things have merit.

But as we have changed our environment in those large ways, it's become more important to do what we can to preserve what we have. For example, the United Nations reports that more than a billion people worldwide lack clean water. That dirty water kills 1.8 million kids under the age of 5 every year. That is more than AIDS, malaria, war or car accidents, according to the UN. The average American uses 40 gallons of water a day. Many folks agree that water in Idaho and the rest of the West will become more scarce and valuable. So cutting down even just a bit - fixing leaky

faucets, not washing the driveway - can help a lot. In the spirit of the holiday and doing little things that matter, here are a few more tips from the group Environmental Defense. Buy food that uses the least amount of packaging and look for packaging that contains recycled, post-consumer content. Turkeys and potatoes grown close to home require less gasoline to get to your table. Look for meat and poultry items raised without the routine use of antibiotics. This can help preserve the effectiveness of important medicines by not contributing to the growing problem

of antibiotic resistance, which is caused in part by the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture. Don't use disposable utensils, plates, napkins or tablecloths during the holiday weekend. Recycle beverage containers and aluminum foil. If you are a holiday guest, consider carpooling, taking the bus, or walking to your destination. If there are a lot of leftovers after Thanksgiving dinner, use this holiday as an opportunity to start composting food waste, and consider donating extra food to a shelter. For leftovers, choose reusable food containers that can

save resources all year long. Do you have an idea or tip for our weekly Environment at Home column? Let us know. Send an e-mail to Local@IdahoStatesman.com with subject line "Enviro at Home."

IDAHOSTATESMAN.COM/ENVIROTIP
Read more than 50 past columns.
COMING WEDNESDAY
Read how businesses are becoming environmentally friendly in the Environment at Work column in Business.

EAGLE

CONTINUED FROM MAIN 1

"I don't want the building structures to be the focal point of the city," said Mayor Nancy Merrill, adding she also doesn't want to see the canyon effect created by tall buildings placed side-by-side along city streets. "Three stories is the absolute highest I would go." Butler has submitted an application to the city to construct a two-story, Italianate brick building on East Idaho Street. It would have three second-floor residences above three commercial spaces. M&H Development has put on hold for now its plans to add second- or third-floor residences to the old Orville Jackson's drug-store building - they wanted to go a few feet higher than the city's maximum allowable height - but it is moving ahead on plans for two mixed-use two-story buildings on Idaho Street.

"We just think there's a market for it," said Greg Hall, a partner in M&H Development. "If an attorney wants to live up above his office, he can do it. I just think there's a use for it."

These buildings could usher in the next phase of Eagle's development of downtown, adding to the new mix of housing that's sprouted up in the past two years within walking distance of downtown shops and restaurants.

Proponents say condos or apartments in the downtown core would promote living, working and playing in Eagle - and offer



Developers Mark Butler and MaryFrances Agrusa submitted an application to the city to develop a mixed-use building in downtown Eagle that would sport several apartments above commercial space. Butler and a different partner already have the only similar building in Eagle, and they say there's plenty of demand for downtown residential development.

Lisa M. Collard
Idaho Statesman

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downtown businesses, which would presumably see an increase in customer traffic.

"I think people do want to live downtown," Eagle Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Teri Bath said, pointing to the success of new residential developments near downtown.

The two popular new developments near the downtown are Paddy Row, 24 Irish-themed townhouses off Second Street; and Winding Creek, a mixed-use development on the north side of

Old State Street. Winding Creek will have 58 bungalows and 44 condos when completed.

A chamber subcommittee is gathering information from prop-

erty and business owners, developers and the general public about how they want to see downtown developed. More than 40 people turned out for a meet-

ing at City Hall last week.

Contact reporter Katy Moeller at kmoeller@idahostatesman.com or 377-6413.

Production: Roger Stowell rstowell@idahostatesman.com	377-6491	Statehouse bureau fax:	331-0412
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		Weekend/evening news tips:	373-6627

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List of closings on Thanksgiving

Here's a list of what will be open and closed for Thanksgiving weekend:

- All schools in the Boise, Meridian, Caldwell and Melba school districts will have early release Wednesday and will be closed Thursday and Friday. All schools in the Kuna, Nampa, Vallivue and Middleton School districts will be closed Wednesday through Friday. Vallivue schools will be closed Monday, Nov. 27 for inservice.

- Boise State University will be closed today through Friday. Administrative offices will be closed Thursday and Friday

- City, county, state and federal offices will be closed Thursday. The cities of Meridian, Kuna, Garden City, Eagle, Star, and Nampa will be closed Thursday and Friday.

- ValleyRide city buses will not be in operation.

- Post offices will be closed, and only Express Mail will be delivered Thursday.

- Boise Towne Square mall and Boise Outlet Mall are closed Thursday

- All state liquor stores are closed Thursday.

- Most supermarkets are open Thursday. The Boise Co-op is closed.

- Most banks will be closed Thursday. Some bank branches inside other stores may be open. Check with your branch.

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Weather

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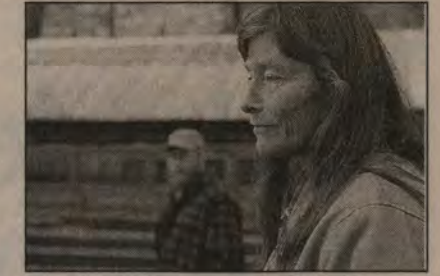
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frank church river of no return wilderness

seven wonders
of
Idaho

salmon river country

STORY BY JEANNE HUFF

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHERINE JONES

To get to the Taylor Ranch Field Research Station in the heart of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, you can hike or horseback for several days through some of the more remote and uninhabited country in the continental United States.

Or you can spend 35 minutes on a wilderness plane ride with Walt Smith.

The 29-year-old is a pilot for Arnold Aviation in Cascade, one of several such companies that serve the Frank. Ray and Carol Arnold started Arnold Aviation in 1972. At first, it was a part-time gig, but in 1975 they got the "mail call" business and went full time.

The couple chucked their jobs teaching in Cascade. Ray took to the skies. Carol took reservations and grocery orders.

They do it year-round. These days, they fill 35 to 40 weekly grocery lists in the summer, when it's "way more" busy, and deliver mail and people — friends, relatives, campers and hikers — to about 21 airstrips scattered throughout the wilderness. Then there are the hunters.

"Last year we took 250 hunters in and out of the Frank," Ray says.

It's a big place, yes, he says, "and it's a lot bigger on foot." Flying a small plane into the wilderness can be daunting. "There's a saying about flying: 'It's better to be on the ground wishing you were in the air than being in the air wishing you were on the ground.'"

Pilot Smith spirals the circa-1977 single-engine Cessna 206 ("made a month after I was born") down a steep, narrow canyon.



Today, none of Smith's passengers use the "sick sacks" but they find the fluorescent orange earplugs useful. It's a loud, short, and at times, white-knuckled plane ride. Air currents whistle through canyons, bubble up over mountains and buffet the small plane, which holds a maximum of five passengers. Smith deftly maneuvers the plane through a dizzying turn, a stomach-lurching roller-coaster dive, and into a sudden landing. The plane, with nose-down tricycle landing gear, bumps to a stop at the end of the remote airstrip at the Taylor Ranch research station.

The 65-acre Taylor Ranch lies between the Middle Fork of the Salmon River and Big and Monumental creeks, 36 miles from the nearest road. It was once an outfitter's ranch owned by

Above: Wolf B2, left, sprints toward freedom in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness in 1995. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife photo); Taylor Ranch, center, is on the alluvial fan of Pioneer Creek, surrounded by the Salmon River Mountains. Rush Creek Point is to the right. Jim and Holly Akenson, at right, are teachers and caretakers of the Taylor Ranch Field Station.

The 2.3 million acres of the Frank are set aside to be wild, a place where "infinite" and "infinitesimal" are terms to be grappled with.

Jess and Dorothy Taylor. They sold it to the University of Idaho in 1969 as an educational and research facility. Now, through grant and intern programs, lucky U of I students, including at least 19 this year, get to spend summers here.

MEET THE AKENSONS

Jim and Holly Akenson do multiple jobs as managers, research biologists, teachers and mentors for students. This is their second stint. They were here from 1982 to 1991 and returned in 1998. They and their students conduct research on wolves and bighorn sheep. They document bobcat, bear, cougar, fish and

SEE WONDER ON MAIN 5

About the wonder

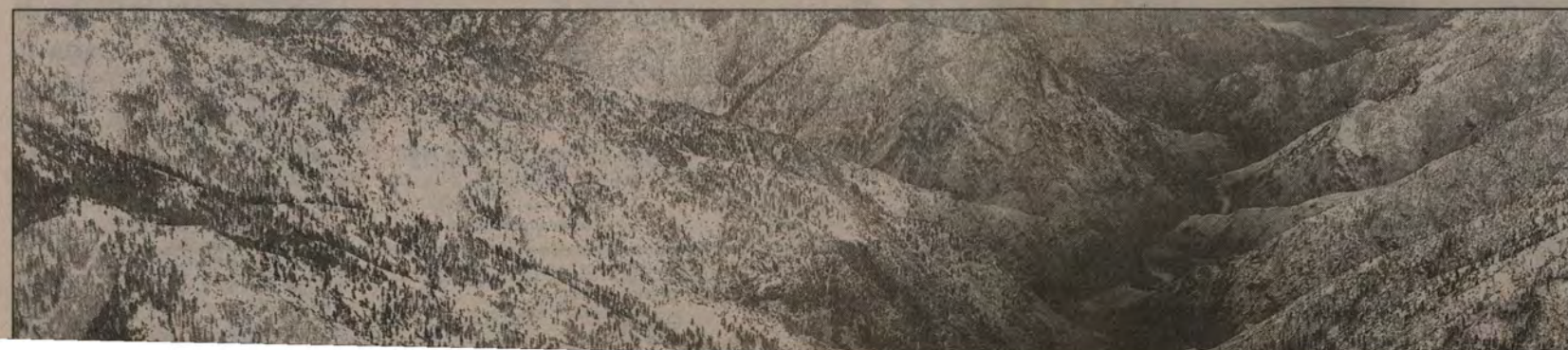
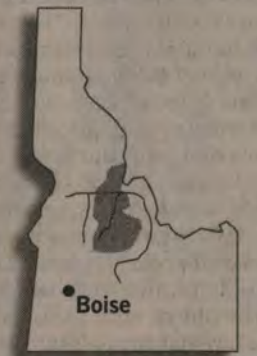
NAME: The Salmon River and the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness.

SIZE: The Salmon is 425 miles long and the longest completely free-flowing river in the lower 48 states. The wilderness, comprising 2.3 million acres or more than 12,000 square miles, is the largest contiguous wilderness area in the lower 48 states.

DEPTH: The Salmon River Gorge is more than 6,000 feet deep and is the second-deepest canyon in the nation.

HEIGHT: Mountain ranges in the Frank include the Salmon River Mountains and the Bighorn Crags. At least one of the Crags is more than 10,000 feet in elevation.

HOW THE SALMON RIVER GOT NICKNAMED "RIVER OF NO RETURN": There is no written indication that explorers Lewis and Clark ever called the river by the nickname. Author Pat Cary Peek attributes the name to a 1935 National Geographic expedition. Some say it was Capt. Harry Guleky of Salmon who dubbed it the River of No Return. In the early 1900s, he would load equipment for miners and homesteaders on big, flat-bottomed boats to make deliveries all the way to Riggins. At the end of his journey, he'd tear the boats apart and sell the lumber because he couldn't go back up the river. He'd then hop a stagecoach to Salmon and do it all over again. Some believe the name came from the 1954 Marilyn Monroe movie "River of No Return," which was actually filmed in Canada. Idahoan Bethine Church says the river — and the Frank Church wilderness area — got the name logically: "It's one of those things that happens from use."





The Middle Fork of the Salmon River is one of the premier, pristine whitewater rivers in the world. The Middle Fork flows 100 miles from its headwaters in the Sawtooth Valley into the heart of Idaho and the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness.

What the experts say



Rozina George

Rozina is a member of the Lemhi Shoshoni tribe and the great-great-great-niece of Sacajawea.

'The Salmon River country is our homeland. In our language, we're known as "the salmon eaters." The Salmon River country is our identity. It's who we are.'



Private inholdings like the University of Idaho's Taylor Ranch were grandfathered in to the wilderness. "Our role here is to live with the environment rather than to impact it," says caretaker and teacher Holly Akenson. She feeds livestock with hay grown on the ranch and harvested by mule team.

Wildlife: At least 370 species of wildlife have been identified in the Frank.

History: The Salmon River Canyon has some of Idaho's oldest known rocks, dating to 1.5 billion years ago.

IF YOU VISIT: Respect the rules: Pack it in, pack it out. That includes all trash. Leave everything intact. Look all you want, but don't disturb historical artifacts, rocks and native plants. Minimize campfire impacts. Make small campfires, where permitted and make sure they are completely out and ashes scattered. Respect wildlife. Remember, this is their home, not yours. Never feed the animals. Respect others. Even though you're out in the wilderness, this is not a place to use your outside voice (unless there's danger).

The Salmon River flows northeast past the town of Salmon, where it is joined by the Lemhi River, then flows northwest and joins the Snake River just south of the Idaho-Oregon-Washington border.

The Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness encompasses the Middle Fork of the Salmon River and borders much of the Main Salmon River. It's connected to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to the north, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness to the northwest. The city of Salmon is one of the best jumping-off points to the Frank.

KEY PLACES:

➤ **Salmon** for fishing, hunting, river trips, pack trips, mountain tours. Don't miss The Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural and Educational Center, a 71-acre park dedicated to the commemoration of Sacajawea, her people and the Lewis and Clark expedition.

➤ **Riggins** for fishing, rafting, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, pack trips, camping, hang-gliding, paragliding and mountain bike riding. Take a 28-mile trip up the Main Salmon River Road and stop at Ruby Rapids — there are garnets in the roadbanks.

➤ **Shoup**, established in 1881, was once a thriving gold mining town. It still survives as a remote outpost (population 4) servicing tourists.

Sources: Wilderness.net, nps.gov, Kent Fuellenbach, public affairs officer, Salmon-Challis National Forest, SalmonChamber.com

posters available

Beginning today, the Idaho Statesman will offer a specially designed, art-quality poster of each day's Seven Wonders of Idaho. The posters, suitable for framing, are \$9.95 each or \$49.95 for the set of seven. To order, call 377-NEWS or go to idahostatesman.com.

the series

The Idaho Statesman and Today's 6 sent reporters, photographers and videographers around the state to capture the sights and sounds of the Seven Wonders of Idaho as chosen by a panel of seven experts.

Sunday: Meet our panel of experts.

Today: Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness and the Salmon River.

Tuesday: The second wonder revealed.

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WONDER

CONTINUED FROM MAIN 4

rattlesnakes. They watch how cougars and wolves interact.

"It's like National Geographic in Idaho," Jim says.

"The wilderness is a wonder," echoes Holly. "This place has more wildlife than Yellowstone. We see (bighorn) rams butting heads — they make a sound like chopping wood."

They've had "bears in the garden, cougars in the airstrip," Holly says, laughing. "In a sense, our role here is to live with the environment, not to conquer it."

"Our mission is understanding, describing and sharing with the natural world," Jim says. "Being here is somewhat of our life destiny."

You could say their destiny has been forged in fire. The 175,000-acre Diamond Point Fire swept over the field station in August 2000, and the Akensons had to flee Taylor Ranch on muleback. "You're at the mercy of nature — you make the wrong decision, you die. You make the right decision, you live," Holly says.

With their backwoods forensics, the Akensons could star in "Wilderness CSI." They understand the world around them as only wilderness biologists can. They can tell how a cougar died from starvation: He had lost two of his "toes" and couldn't kill prey. A coyote, killed by a cougar, had been living on borrowed time: "See these puncture holes here, and here, by his ear?" Holly explains, holding the animal's skull. "He was probably deaf. The puncture wounds were healing when he got in this last fight."

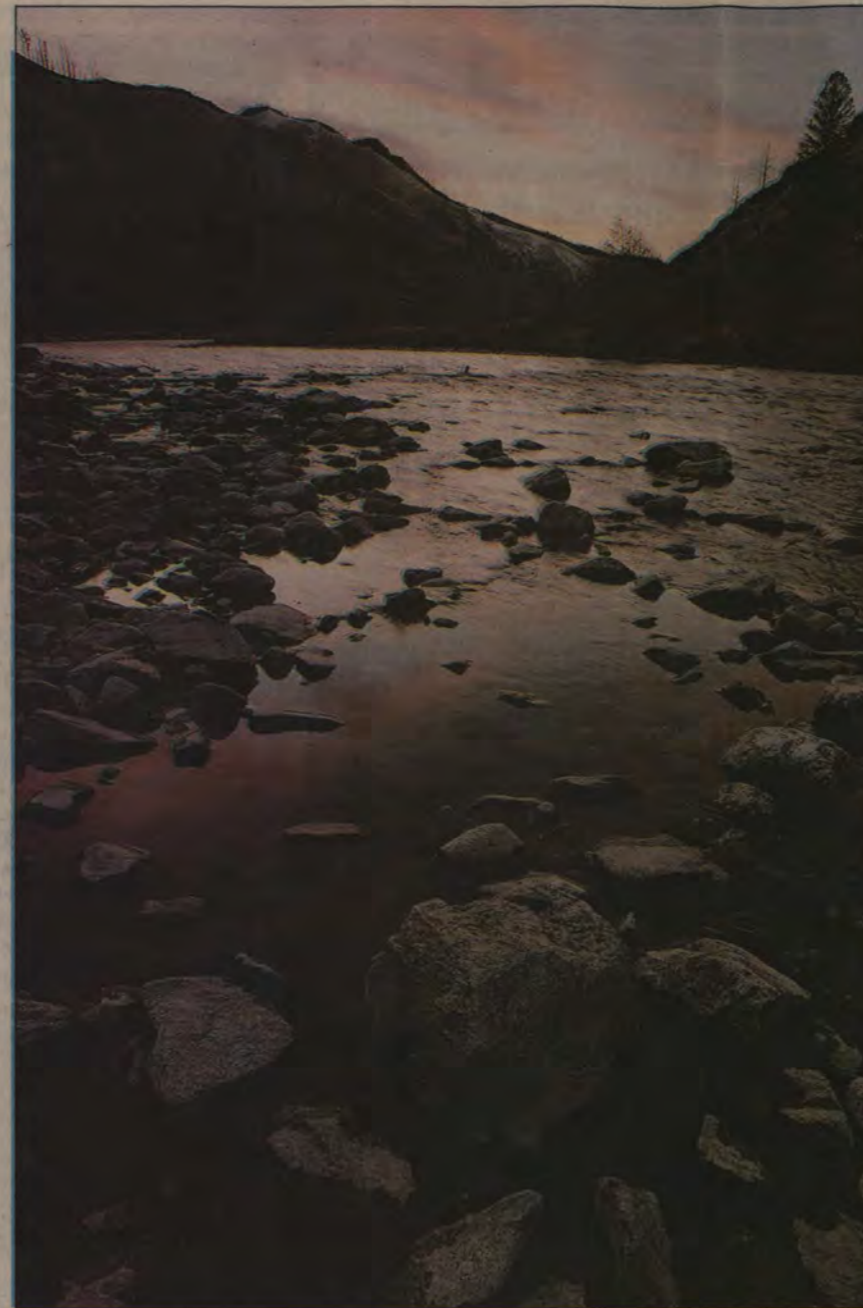
A trail at Taylor Ranch follows Big Creek. It's the same trail, she says, that everyone takes, whether traveling on two feet or four.

"Look, there's a bear footprint," she points out, reading the trail like a newspaper. Farther on, she points out a natural salt lick, wolf tracks, a tree that serves as the wolves' marking spot — it's stained a dull yellow and sports a wolf hair or two. Here is where the elk like to rub off their velvet — it itches. Here, the elk and deer have nibbled a bush down — that's because it's close to the trail, easy to reach, she says.

At an outcropping of rock, Holly asks: "Can you see the pictographs?"

THE SHEEPEATERS

The Tukudika, Sheepeaters, were a Lemhi Shoshone Indian band who



About seven miles downstream, Big Creek meets the Middle Fork of the Salmon River and enters Impassable Canyon. Big Creek is the largest tributary of the Middle Fork.

lived along Big Creek for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, in the wilderness area. There are signs of them everywhere — pictographs, projectile points, "house pits" — a group of round depressions where they made their winter homes, weaving tents so they could stay by the river, close to the bighorn sheep.

The Sheepeater Indian War of 1879 drove the Sheepeaters from their homes, first to Vancouver, then to Fort Hall. "The biggest thing we're missing here is not the clear pristine water or the trail-less vistas — it's the indige-

nous people," Jim says.

As an Army private said at the end of that campaign, "So ends the never-to-be-forgotten campaign of 1879. A number of animals made useless and men badly used up."

'COUGAR DAVE'

Taylor Ranch is served by no utility company. To have those kinds of luxuries, you have to rig them up yourself. If something breaks, you fix it, following how-to instructions on the Internet, if you're lucky enough to have a satellite dish, as the Akensons do.



Tukudika — the Sheepeaters — are the earliest residents, leaving behind hints of their lives in obsidian flakes, depressions that were their homes, markings on rocks. Historians hypothesize these pictographs symbolize a burial.

Life is pretty primitive at Taylor Ranch, although there's running water and electricity provided by a hydroelectric rig the Akensons fixed up — when it's working. The satellite dish provides wireless Internet and brings Jim the History Channel.

Before the Taylors owned the ranch, it belonged to "Cougar Dave" Lewis, who lived from 1844 to 1936. He became an outfitter of some renown, homesteading on the property. He got his nickname as a cougar trapper. His lodge, more than 100 years old, is still standing.

Lewis, who was known as a crotchety old man, also had a lesser-known tender side, Jim says. In the lodge, he kept a secret picture of the woman who had spurned his marriage proposal. The picture was discovered, Jim says, facing the wall, in a locked room filled with cobwebs.

IN PURSUIT OF SOLITUDE

Jesse Davis is 22. He's a graduate of U of I with a major in fisheries and a minor in wildlife.

Like the Akensons, Davis communicates with the outside via e-mail, but it's a dicey connection. With spotty

wireless coverage, he sometimes chats with his girlfriend, laptop perched on the edge of his bathroom sink, that evening's hot spot.

Davis doesn't mind the isolation. "I think a lot of people who come out here like the solitude. You get a plane that flies over once in a while, and you kind of get reminded of the outside."

Davis is nearing the end of his second stay at Taylor Ranch. Last year, he stayed through a grant he'd written to study cutthroat trout. This year, he's doing a stint as assistant manager.

His studies last year involved examining the diet of cutthroats. He did most of his research at night. Donning snorkeling gear, he jumped into Big Creek, caught live cutthroats, pumped their stomachs for content, documented the results, then released them back into the river.

"Living out here — it's like a story of the past," Davis says. "Not even many of our relatives have had the opportunity to do this. For our generation, it's more like stories."

To offer story ideas or comments, contact reporter Jeanne Huff at jmhuff@idahostatesman.com or 377-6483.

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COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALDWELL

Albertson students will stage 'Life and Limb' this week

The Albertson College of Idaho theater department will perform the dark comedy "Life and Limb" by Keith Reddin this week.

Performances are set for 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday with a matinee at 2 p.m. Sunday in the Langroise Studio Theatre.

The play is recommended for mature audiences.

Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and students at schools other than Albertson students. It is free for Albertson students, faculty and staff. To purchase tickets, call 459-5426.

NAMPA

NNU will present homecoming concert Thursday

Northwest Nazarene University's music department will present its annual homecoming concert at 7:30 p.m. Thursday in Swayne Auditorium in the Brandt Center.

The concert, "Just Beautiful Music," will include a wide variety of choral, instrumental, and piano music. Ticket prices are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children, students and seniors. To purchase tickets, call 467-8841 or get them at the door.

MERIDIAN

City encourages teens to apply for youth council

Meridian teens, ages 14 to 18, are encouraged to apply for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, which meets twice a month and discusses a variety of issues that impact youth.

The council includes students who live in Meridian and who attend Meridian schools or who are home-schooled. They serve on city commissions, involve themselves in city projects, and plan and implement service projects within the community.

If you're a teen who'd like to learn more about city government and leadership, or just make a positive impact in your community, consider joining. Application forms are available at Meridian City Hall, or call Bud Henthorn at 884-2468, Ext. 251.

BOISE

High school students can enter oratorical contest

Boise American Legion Post 136 will hold the local American Legion Oratorical Contest at 9 a.m. Dec. 16 at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 4601 S. Surprise Way.

The contest is open to high school students who give one eight- to 10-minute prepared speech and one three- to five-minute assigned topic speech on the Constitution of the United States.

Students from public, private, parochial or home schools who are interested in these scholarship funds and would like more information may con-

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Garret Nancolas
mayoroffice@ci.caldwell.id.us

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS • E-mail for all council members: citycouncil@ci.caldwell.id.us



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Rick Wells



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NAMPA

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David Ferdinand
dferdinand@canyoncounty.org

SPOTLIGHT THIS WEEK IN GOVERNMENT

The following are agendas for local government and agency meetings this week.

See Friday's Communities page for what was approved, denied and tabled.

NAMPA

Nampa City Council meets at 7 p.m. today at City Hall, 411 3rd St. S.

Agenda items include:

- Annexation and zoning for 0.91 acres at 1606 South 25th Street for connection to city water for Greg and Suzette Parsons.

- Annexation and zoning to rural residential for 14.17 acres on the south side of Lake Lowell Avenue owned by the City of Nampa; annexation and zoning to rural residential for 22.86 acres at 88 South Happy Valley Road owned by the LDS Church; and for 2.16 acres owned by the City of Nampa on the east side of Happy Valley Road, north of 88 South Happy Valley Road, all at the request of the city.

- Annexation and zoning for 1.65 acres at 6280 Cherry Lane for Gary Bauer.

- Development agreement annexation and zoning at 734 Burke Lane for Nampa School District No. 131.

beer and wine license for Cost Plus World Market, 16412 North Marketplace Blvd.

CALDWELL

Caldwell City Council meets at 7 p.m. today in the community room at the Caldwell Police Station, 110 S. Fifth. The meeting will be preceded by a workshop on the U.S. 20/26 corridor study alternative presented by COMPASS at 6 p.m. and a workshop on Treasure Valley air quality at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda items at the regular meeting include:

- Approve appointment of Mayor Nancolas, Bob Carpenter, Tracy Casper, John McGee, Bob Hoover, Steve Fultz, Randy Million, Dave Gipson, Dennis Cannon, ElJay Waite and Anne Marie Skinner to the Indian Creek phase II steering committee for a one-year term ending Dec. 31, 2007.

- Approve request for contingency funds to purchase furnishings for the Caldwell Train Depot.

- Approve recommendation for Award of Bid to Lambert Construction Company for Dishman Place Sanitary Sewer Project in the amount of \$32,356.

- Continue public hearing (quasi-judicial): Case No. ANN-127-06 (Harshman, Houston, and IFI Annexation) with the request to waive the rules, pass on the first reading, and approve the summary for publication.

2628) for Case No. ANN-127-06 (Harshman, Houston, and IFI Annexation) with the request to waive the rules, pass on the first reading, and approve the summary for publication.

- Continue public hearing (quasi-judicial): Case No. ANN-129-06 (White Pines/Stewart annexation), a request by Warren Stewart for annexation of 153.88 acres into the city with R-1 (single-family residential) zoning, a comprehensive plan map amendment designating the site for low-density residential use and a development agreement.

- Consider Bill No. 54 (Ordinance 2629) for Case No. ANN-129-06 (White Pines/Stewart annexation) with the request to waive the rules, pass on the first reading and approve the summary for publication.

- Continue public hearing (quasi-judicial): Case No. ANN-128-06 (Kapicka Commons annexation), a request by Landmark Engineering and Planning for annexation of 148.50 acres of land into the city with R-1 (single-family residential), R-2 (medium-density residential), R-3 (multifamily residential), C-1 (neighborhood commercial), and C-2 (community commercial) zoning, a comprehensive plan map amendment

Case Nos. ANN-132-06 and SUB-156P-06, a request by L-202-1 ID Peregrine Estates for annexation of 161.15 acres into city with R-1 (single-family residential) zoning, a comprehensive plan map amendment designating the site low-density residential, a development agreement, and for preliminary plat approval of Peregrine Estates subdivision with 507 residential lots and 23 common lots.

- Public hearing (quasi-judicial) Case Nos. ANN-131-06 and SUB-155P-06, a request by Landmark Engineering and Planning for annexation of 206.61 acres into the city with R-1 (single-family residential) zoning, for preliminary plat approval of Eagle Rock subdivision with 512 residential lots and 50 common lots, a comprehensive plan map amendment designating the site low-density residential and a development agreement.

KUNA

Kuna City Council meets Tuesday at City Hall at 763 W. Avalon St. Pre-council begins at 6 p.m. Agenda items include:

- Request by developer Clay Carley for a cooperation agreement.
- Discussion with John Sullivan.

has a first-place award of \$18,000. The national contest is in Indianapolis, Ind., in April.

SOMEBODY NEEDS YOU

> The Coalition for Economic Improvement is seeking volunteer preparers, greeters and translators for its free tax preparation centers. Training provided. Contact Vicky Wonocott at 387-2829, Ext. 340.

> Giraffe Laugh Early Learning Centers, a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening young families by providing quality, affordable child care and parent education to families of all incomes, needs individuals and groups to adopt families for the holidays. Call Lori Fascilla at 424-3387.

> The Salvation Army is seeking volunteers for bell ringing during the holiday season. Call Christina Messina at 383-4231.

> The Meals On Wheels Program needs volunteers to deliver meals to homebound elderly in Boise. As the holidays approach, fill-in drivers will be needed to replace regulars who may be on vacation. Each route takes about an hour to complete. Call Cheryl Johnson at 327-8552.

> Knights of Columbus, Council 12854 in Boise is looking for donations of used medical equipment and associated appliances that members will repair and recycle. The refurbished items — everything from walkers, canes and wheelchairs to crutches, shower seats and even a couple of hospital beds — are made available free to anyone in need. Call Dale Anderson at 888-3782 or Dick DeLeonard at 362-3710.

> CASA volunteers are needed to advocate for

CONTACT US



Kristi Coffman, news assistant, gathers information about Nampa, Caldwell and other Canyon County communities.
kcoffman@idahostatesman.com
672-6742

lores Littlewood.
> Resolution to Recommend Priorities for Transportation Improvement Program for 2008-13.
> Application for new off-premise

zoning, a comprehensive plan map amendment designating the site for low-density residential use and three development agreements.
> Consider Bill No. 43 (Ordinance

Case No. 308-1301-00, a request by Juan Tamayo for short plat approval of Rancho Tamayo subdivision with 1 residential lot.
> Public hearing (quasi-judicial):

report.
> Rezone/preliminary plat/Grayhawk, continued from Nov. 8.

abused and neglected children during court proceedings to ensure that decisions are made in their best interests. Call 345-3345, Ext. 120.

> Volunteers are needed to help with upkeep and improvements at the Patient Garden at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Van drivers are also needed for the patient transportation program to drive veterans to and from medical appointments. Contact Sharon Clark, volunteer program manager, at 422-1176.

> Ronald McDonald House, providing housing for families with children in local hospitals, needs pull tabs, aluminum cans, expired license plates and retired cell phones for fundraising. Drop at 101 Warm Springs Ave., Boise, or call Mary at 376-7620.

For more volunteer opportunities, visit www.unitedwaytv.org/volunteer. To submit items for Somebody Needs You, use the online form at www.unitedwaytv.org/snyrequest or call Neva Geisler at 336-1070, Ext. 122.

TODAY'S TRAFFIC

NAMPA

> Nampa-Caldwell Boulevard at Karcher Road remains one lane in each direction near the intersection due to work on the Karcher Interchange.
> North Midland between Karcher Road and Treasure Valley Marketplace remains closed until 2007 as part of the work for the Karcher Interchange.

BOISE

> Emerald Street west of Curtis Road has lane restrictions through Wednesday to abandon gas service.
> Cole Road north of Fairview Ave. has lane re-

strictions through Wednesday for utility work.

> Franklin Road at Allumbaugh Street has lane restrictions through Nov. 25 for signal work.

> Ada St. between 4th and 5th streets has lane restrictions through Nov. 11 for sewer work.

> Ustick Road west of Cole Road has lane restrictions through Dec. 1 for road work.

> Main Street at 3rd Street has lane restrictions through Dec. 3 for traffic signal installation.

> Myrtle Street between 8th and 10th streets has lane restrictions through March 6 for building renovation and sidewalk work.

MERIDIAN

> Fairview Avenue at E. 3rd Street has lane restrictions through Tuesday for Intermountain Gas service.

> Pine Ave. west of Cloverdale Road has lane restrictions through Wednesday for drain installation.

> Ustick Road west of Eagle Road at Troxel Way has lane restrictions through Dec. 1 for road work.

> Eagle Road north of Lake Hazel Road has lane restrictions through Dec. 4 for a water main installation.

> Ustick Road between Linder Road and Venable Lane has lane restrictions through Dec. 16 for utility work.

EAGLE

> Floating Feather Road west of Meridian Road has lane restrictions through Wednesday for trench work.

> Eagle Road north of Floating Feather Road has lane restrictions through Nov. 28 for utility work.

Horseshoe Bend Road north of Hill Road has lane restrictions through Dec. 15 for bike path construction.

FIND OUT MORE

> Idaho Road Report: For construction-related road conditions, call (888) IDA-ROAD (432-7623) or www.itd.idaho.gov and click on "Traveler Services."

> Idaho Transportation: For updates on road conditions, emergency closures and tourist information around Idaho, call 511 or visit 511.idaho.gov

> Ada County Highway District: For live traffic updates, go to www.achd.ada.id.us and click on any one of 51 traffic cameras placed around the Treasure Valley to see a real-time photograph of the traffic scene. Or call ACHD at 387-6100.

QUESTION OF THE DAY

Question: What are the most popular used cars and trucks in this area?

Answer: The top four used cars sought in October in the Treasure Valley were the Toyota Tacoma truck, Honda Civic, Honda Accord and Ford F150 truck, according to Cars.com. To research cars locally, go online to www.Idahostatesman.com/cars.

Do you have a question of general interest? E-mail it to communities@idahostatesman.com; fax to 377-6449; or mail to Question of the Day, Idaho Statesman, P.O. Box 40, Boise 83707. Information submitted to the Statesman may be published or distributed in print, electronic or other form.

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Elk ranchers worry August escape makes them targets

Banning an industry that brings \$20 million to state economy would be an overreaction, industry group says

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

REXBURG — When 160 domestic elk busted loose from an eastern Idaho shooter-bull operation in August, Gov. Jim Risch issued a shoot-to-kill order on the animals.

Now, the state's nearly 80 owners of domestic elk ranches fear negative publicity from that incident will cause the 2007 Idaho Legislature to put out a shoot-

to-kill order on their livelihoods — by banning the industry on fear that future big-game breakouts will spread disease and genetic impurities to wild herds near Yellowstone National Park.

Lawmakers who oppose such ranches are counting on momentum from the summer elk crisis to win support for plans to follow neighboring Montana and Wyoming in banning the operations. Elk ranchers, meanwhile, say that would

be an overreaction that would snuff out a growing industry that brings in \$20 million a year to the state economy.

"We, as an industry, did nothing wrong," Cataldo elk rancher Gary Queen, who heads the Idaho Elk Breeders Association, told the Idaho Falls Post Register. "In fact, we've gone the extra mile to make sure we've done everything right."

Around Aug. 14, dozens of the antlered beasts stormed from Rex Rammell's fenced-in Chief Joseph hunting preserve



Rex Rammell

near Ashton. In intervening months, game wardens and private hunters killed more than 30 of the animals on orders from Risch.

Rammell, meanwhile, has made news by proclaiming the emergency hunt a violation of his property rights. He was arrested twice — once for allegedly socking a man, and again for interfering with officers trying to remove an elk they'd just shot.

But while Rammell has won lots of attention, Queen's elk ranching group

points out that none of his escaped animals that were killed had feared diseases including brucellosis, which can cause infected cows to abort their calves, and chronic wasting disease, which eats away the animals' brains.

"The results weren't surprising to us. You can test any elk ranch in (Idaho) and get the same results," said Queen, who suspects Risch and the state Department of Fish and Game have used the Rammell incident to demonize the industry to try to maintain their regulated-hunting monopoly and to distract from diseases now trickling into the state's wild herds.

For Alaskans, it's not just about turkey on Thanksgiving

Whale, caribou stew, moose roast and seal oil also find spot on table

BY RACHEL D'ORO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — David Smith was newly arrived to the North Slope village of Nuiqsut when the former upstate New Yorker cooked up a couple of turkeys and vat of chili for the Eskimo community's annual Thanksgiving dinner.

He was completely unprepared for another dish on the menu last year: Hundreds of pounds of gleaming red whale meat.

"I thought we were going to have a feast. I never assumed it would be a feast of whale meat," said Smith, 76, the village's city administrator who is originally from Fillmore, N.Y. With four bowhead whales landed this year, he can only imagine what Thursday has in store for people gathering at the village school.

"It's going to be a huge celebration," he said.

The same could be said for other Thanksgiving festivities planned in Alaska native villages around the state. For many the

holiday is a welcome boost in the dark, frozen season, which has plunged Nuiqsut to lows of 25 degrees below zero.

Tables at public and private dinners will be set with store-bought turkey and all the trimmings alongside delicacies made from subsistence foods like caribou stew, moose roast and seal oil. For dessert, there might be frybread or akutaq, whipped fat mixed with sugar and berries and sometimes greens or fish. Even in urban areas, natives might gather in groups to observe the holiday with Western and native fare.

Nuiqsut's gathering always includes a sprinkling of non-natives like Smith: teachers, government workers, North Slope oil crews. Former mayor Leonard Lampe enjoys the wide-eyed reaction from first-timers witnessing the whale feast.

"They're usually very curious," he said. "They're always asking questions, like, 'What part is this that you are eating? Is that normal to dip it in steak sauce like that?'"

In Nuiqsut each bowhead caught is divided into thirds, to be distributed at Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations, as well as a traditional blanket toss in June. Each event gives residents and visitors a chance to sample



Norma Thomas, 85, picks up a piece of whale blubber Saturday during an early Alaska native Thanksgiving dinner by the Anchorage Friends Church in Anchorage, Alaska. Many tables will be set with turkey and all the trimmings in Alaska, but alongside will be delicacies such as whale meat, caribou stew, moose roast and seal oil.
Al Grillo
The Associated Press

the bowhead, a species that can measure 50 feet or more and weigh up to 100 tons. Edible parts include the meat, tongue and muktuk, the blubber and skin.

Whaling crews and other residents of the Inupiat Eskimo community have spent weeks cutting up portions for the Thanksgiving feast, the first round in the whale-sharing cycle. As with the other

events, it is a time to reflect on the bounty brought by the bowhead to the community of 400, said Lampe, 39, who has lived in the village most of his life.

"It's about respecting nature," he said. "It's reminding people and crews that we live in a unique land and for a creature this size to give itself to the community is a real honor."

Whale can be cooked but it is eaten frozen and raw — never thawed — at the Nuiqsut feast. With literally tons of meat available, people will get at least 100 pounds of it to take home. Other Thanksgiving dishes will include the familiar turkey and mashed potatoes as well as local favorites like muktuk salad and teriyaki caribou.

Oregon looks to fix school funding problems

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEAVERTON, Ore. — Oregon could be poised to follow California and Washington's lead, by setting aside significant state money for school construction and allowing districts to levy developer fees.

Under the state's current system, school operating costs are paid for out of a common pot of money. But the costs of building or renovating schools are left entirely to local property taxpayers. It's especially tough for fast-growing districts and those with aging buildings.

A legislative work group has been trying to hammer out a solution to an issue that's come up before in the legislature, and never gotten anywhere.

The K-12 capital construction work group is headed by state Democratic Rep. Dave Hunt and new House majority leader Rep. Chuck Burley, R-Bend.

"I think there's philosophical agreement that schools should be recognized as part of the infrastructure, just as we do parks, water, sewer and roads," Burley told The Oregonian.

The group may recommend amending the constitution to

Wyoming democratic official says Dean understands the West

TETON VILLAGE, Wyo. — Democratic Party luminaries back East who think it was a waste of money to beef up local organizations in places like Montana and Wyoming don't understand the gains the party can make in the West, state party directors said.

The state party chairmen are firm believers in the 50-state strategy employed by Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean, who took his victory

chairmen who elected him.

"We have been able to build our party around the state by creating Democratic organizations in every county in the state, for the first time in anyone's living memory," said Jim Farrell, executive director of the Montana Democratic Party.

"In Washington, some people might tend to ignore Montana because it is so frequently considered a red state, but Chairman Dean and his 50-state strategy does-



Howard Dean

rell said. The DNC under Dean funneled more money to state organizations, which used it to hire full-time organizers and other staff to help organize Democrats and take their message to neighborhoods Democrats had forgotten about.

But some high-profile Democrats, led by Clinton strategist James Carville, attacked Dean — even in the wake of big election wins for Democrats. They argue more could have been done.

strategy are, by and large, big shot political consultants who have completely lost touch with the grass roots and fail to see its importance," he said. "We know how hard we have to fight to elect Democrats in a state that might be red. We know we can only win by strengthening our grass roots." Mike Gierau, the Wyoming Democratic Party chairman, said his party used money from the DNC to hire positions it never had before to employ a strategy that he says kept Republicans on the defensive.

proposed changes in double-majority rules. As it stands, property tax measures need both a yes vote and 50 percent voter turnout to pass in every election but November of even-numbered years.

The group is leaning toward recommending to eliminate the double-majority requirement in all May and November elections.

IDAHO

Group hopes road project will be moved

SANDPOINT — Opponents of a planned \$92 million highway diversion, who have been hoping an archaeological dig at the site could derail the project, now concede that discoveries like four human skeletons are historically fascinating — but not enough to convince officials to move the project elsewhere.

Six months of digging at the original site on the shores of Lake Pend Oreille have ended for the season, though archaeologists plan to return next spring.

Opponents are still holding out hope that a hearing today could throw a monkey wrench into the highway diversion.

UTAH

Gov. Romney leads in presidential poll

SALT LAKE CITY — The 2008 presidential race hasn't even officially begun, but a new poll shows Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney is the favored candidate among Utah voters.

About 44 percent of Utahns surveyed said they would vote for Romney if a presidential race were held now, the Deseret Morning News said in a copyright story Sunday.

Sen. John McCain R-Arizona was second at 15 percent, according to the poll of 416 registered voters conducted for the newspaper Nov. 14-16 by Dan Jones & Associates.

Father starts Dads Against Drug Dealers

PROVO — Lance Merrill, 53, recently lost his 19-year-old daughter to a heroin overdose. Now he's founded Dads Against Drug Dealers to strike back at those who peddle illegal drugs.

The group gathers information about people suspected of deal-

ing and photographs them. The pictures are then posted on a Web site.

Rewards of \$500 are offered to anyone providing information leading to an arrest.

CALIFORNIA

Turkey population triples in Monterey

MONTEREY — Wild turkeys are flourishing throughout central California, from the bustling streets of Carmel to remote hiking trails in the Santa Lucia Mountains.

One local birder estimated that the population in Monterey County has roughly tripled since 1990 to about 3,000.

Some say the birds are proliferating too quickly, eating flowers and leaving droppings on driveways and sidewalks.

Others say the birds are welcome — particularly around Thanksgiving. Turkey hunting season opened last weekend in designated areas.

Statesman wire services

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Cancer survivor helps kids forget disease

Rob Cronin made a deal with God he isn't going to break. On the day he was diagnosed with cancer, he promised that if he lived he'd make a positive difference in this world.

That was nine years ago. Since then, the 39-year-old Hailey resident has spent thousands of hours and thousands of dollars to help cancer-stricken children celebrate life.

"Each minute I spend with these kids gives true meaning to the reason I am still alive," Cronin said.

Cronin and his wife, Kris, have spent the last seven years devoted to Camp Rainbow Gold, a free weeklong summer camp near Ketchum for children with cancer. The event is sponsored by the American Cancer Society and has been providing a camping experience to about 75 kids every August for 23 years.

The camp has made tremendous progress since the Cronins got involved. They've increased awareness within the Wood River community, which has sweetened the donation pot by millions. In one night, the Cronins' community dinner and auction raised more than \$500,000. It has become a sell-out event.

"I've never had volunteers like them," said Meg Omel, the American Cancer Society's camp manager. "They are forever buying things and spreading the word about our needs. But more important than that is their attitude. Rob's love of life is contagious."

After Rob was diagnosed with tongue cancer, part of his tongue and lymph node were removed in an emergency surgery. He spent 10 days in isolation enduring intense radiation treatments. He has an enormous scar from ear to ear and has a noticeable slur when he talks.

He knows exactly what kids with cancer are going through,

and they like that about him. They can compare scars.

"He becomes their friend, mentor, brother and jungle gym," said Kris about her husband. "He makes it a joyous place, a celebration."

Some kids at the camp will survive their cancer, while others are preparing for the end of their lives. All battle a disease that comes with constant pain and daily medication. Cancer changes their lives.

So for at least one week of the year, Rob makes them leave their worries on the bus — have fun being a kid, he insists.

"I realized from the beginning all I could do is give them the best week of my life," Rob said.

He keeps his emotions positive, an amazing accomplishment under some of the circumstances, said Kris.

"It is particularly hard to say goodbye to a kid you won't see the following year," said Rob, who keeps in touch with most of the children and their parents throughout the year. They have made countless trips to hospitals.

Rob is a successful Realtor in Sun Valley, and the Cronins are part-owners in two Hailey restaurants. They exercise every day, and spend their free time outdoors snowmobiling, snowboarding, skiing or traveling.

They find time every day to work toward making their charity better. Rob says camp is a business all year, except for one week when nothing else in the world matters except the kids.

"Fifty-one weeks a year I think about dying. Camp is the one week I think about living," said 11-year-old Alan Jones, who was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2003 and has been to Camp Rainbow Gold for three years.

"This camp is a huge, huge part of our life," Kris said. "We work very hard and we're

courage & commitment



jennifer swindell

Send me your idea

Do you know someone who has shown unusual courage by speaking out when it wasn't the popular thing to do?

Or do you know someone who shows incredible commitment to something?

Share your ideas. I can be reached at jswindell@idahostatesman.com or by calling 377-6432.

To learn more

To find out more about Camp Rainbow Gold or to offer volunteer time or financial help, call Meg Omel at (208)422-0842.



Photo courtesy of Camp Rainbow Gold

Rob Cronin made a promise that if he survived cancer he would help children fighting the same disease. Here he poses with kids at Camp Rainbow Gold, a weeklong summer camp near Ketchum for children with cancer. He has given thousands of volunteer hours to support this camp, including fundraising millions of dollars in the Wood River Valley.

Cronin receives award from REALTOR Magazine

Rob Cronin was recently named one of five national recipients of the Good Neighbor Awards by REALTOR Magazine, the official publication of the National Association of Realtors. He will receive a \$10,000 grant for his charity, the American Cancer Society's Camp Rainbow Gold. The weeklong camp is for kids ages 6 to 16 who have cancer. About 75 Idaho kids attend every year.

"It was a total shock," said Cronin. "It was the most humbling experience I've had in a long time."

Over the past seven years, Cronin has filled every role at Camp Rainbow Gold: board member, fundraiser, counselor, activities director and camp director. He and his wife, Kris, have been instrumental in raising \$1.4 million in two years. The money will be used for a new scholarship program to send former campers to college and to help the camp buy its own land and facilities.

More information about the Good Neighbor Awards winners is at www.realtor.org/realtormag.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

God only knows

Do you sense it? A "moral and spiritual darkness" has descended on the city of Boise since we "turned our backs on God," by rejecting a plot to have city government endorse one sectarian religion to the exclusion of all others.

Yikes. I guess (former) Pastor Bryan Fischer knows something the rest of us don't: Ours is an angry, vengeful God that is very geographically particular. Yes, God has removed his protection over Boise because we have not only moved a promotional edition of the Ten Commandments about 1,200 meters, but just to seal the deal we also elected 12 (a co-

incidence?) "secularists" to the Statehouse. Sheesh. What were we thinking?

As Idaho voted to limit marriage to one man and one woman, we Boiseans damned ourselves to hell, by clinging to that quaint old concept of freedom of religion for all by refusing to require the city to endorse "our" religion. What were we thinking?

God only knows.

What really disturbs me is that my entire life I have been worshiping and serving a God that doesn't accept me because I don't meet Brother Fischer's definition of "conservative." If only I would have known. Man, what was I thinking?

Michael J. Devitt, Boise

We welcome Christ himself

BY ADRIANE WRIGHT

Like millions of other Americans, many of my ancestors came to this great land seeking a safe, prosperous place to call home. They fled countries that threatened their religious, political, economic and social well-being, and hoped for a fresh start in a faraway land. They settled in, created a home and worked hard to provide for their families. Their stories resonate with courage, crisis and hope.

As I consider the stories of contemporary immigrants, I cannot help but notice the similarities. People throughout the world are still drawn to this country in hopes of achieving the American dream. They yearn for the opportunity to provide for their family, to live healthy, happy lives, and to secure the freedoms we sometimes take for granted. Unfortunately, contemporary immigrants continue to face the anti-immigrant sentiment historically faced by our ancestors.

As I read this paper, I read messages which demand immigrants return home, stated perhaps without regard to the horrific conditions they have fled and the often treacherous journeys they take to arrive at our land of the free. I read of English-only advocacy efforts, which are requested perhaps without ac-

knowledging the irony that our American language is a hodgepodge of other languages, or that other countries embrace bilingual and even trilingual learning for all citizens. Other articles seek to lessen or otherwise disenfranchise newly arrived persons by inadvertently generalizing and characterizing all new persons as criminal, unmotivated, unintelligent and lacking family or social values. We know this is simply untrue — for if it were true today, would that also mean it was once true of our immigrant parents, grandparents and great-grandparents?

Reading such views evokes a deep sadness for the individuals behind these views who may never take the opportunity to learn about the beautiful and diverse cultures from which we originate. I am concerned these people may have forgotten our national legacy of welcoming immigrants and promoting a message of hope through our lovely Lady Liberty — "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

What brings about the greatest sadness in this national immigration debate is the apparent disregard for Christ's teachings. Christ teaches us to unconditionally love all people (Matthew 5:43-48), to do unto others as we would have done

READER'S VIEW

The Statesman is committed to providing in-depth analysis on critical issues. A Reader's View is a reader's guest opinion, selected by the Statesman. Due to space constraints, we cannot publish all guest opinions we receive, so we try to select Reader's Views with the broadest reader interest.

unto us (Matthew 7:12), to be hospitable (Hebrews 13:2) and to refrain from partiality (James 2:1). One scripture in particular, shines light on the response we should have to immigration. In Matthew 25:35-36 Jesus states, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me." Jesus teaches us to love unconditionally, to care for all his people. In this national debate on immigration reform, let us remember when we welcome the stranger into our midst — the migrant, immigrant, and refugee — we welcome Christ himself.

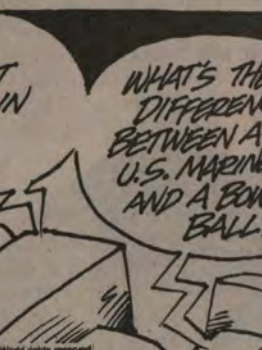


Adriane Wright of Boise is a legislative advocate intern for the Catholic Charities of Idaho.

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torials, or writers with unique knowledge or expertise on a subject.

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► **We run one letter per month**

per writer, and one Reader's View per three months. Preference is given to in-state writers.

► **Submit letters** online at IdahoStatesman.com; by e-mail at editorial@idaho-statesman.com; by fax at (208) 377-6449; or by mail at

Letters to the Editor, The Idaho Statesman, P.O. Box 40, Boise, ID 83707. Letters to the editor, opinions and editorial columns, and articles submitted to The Idaho Statesman, may be published or distributed in print, electronic or other forms.

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Bloomberg wise to dismiss 'pipe dream'

On Election Day, voters said something that might have moved a less sensible billionaire to succumb to the siren song of those urging him to spend, say, \$500 million of his money on an independent presidential candidacy. But over lunch three days later, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who does not do coyness, dismissed the idea as a "pipe dream." Sometimes nothing so validates a politician's wisdom as his ability to circumscribe, or to recognize that circumstances circumscribe, his ambitions.

Bloomberg has demonstrated, in both the public and private sectors, what the electorate cried out for on Election Day: "Competence, please." His business acumen has given him a net worth of \$5.3 billion, making him No. 44 on Forbes magazine's list of richest Americans. After five years as mayor — which began after eight years of dramatic improvement of the



George Will

city under Rudy Giuliani — Bloomberg's successes include: The unemployment rate (4.1 percent) is the lowest on record, and the city's credit rating is at the highest level ever. With crime down 20 percent since

Bloomberg took office — after a 57 percent reduction during the Giuliani years — the FBI rates this as the nation's safest large city, which is one reason for the sharp increase in applications to Columbia University and New York University. Welfare caseloads, which numbered 1.1 million a decade ago, are fewer than 400,000. In 2005, the percentage of high school students graduating on time was the highest since the city began keeping that statistic in 1986. Bloomberg credits his crusade against smoking with the decline in heart attacks that has helped make the life expectancy of city residents higher than that of the rest of the

nation. He talks about public policy with an agreeable lack of interest in being agreeable. About schools' accountability under the No Child Left Behind law: "It's pass-fail and they dumb down the standards." About there being no correlation in schools between financial inputs and cognitive outputs: "It's worse than that" — unlike in business, government increases investments in failures, so there is no incentive to do well. About Republicans' recent misadventures: "The country is not as stupid as they think," with their grandstandings about flag burnings and Terri Schiavo. About crime: "Eighty-five percent of all murder victims have criminal records." Exaggerating, slightly, he adds: "If you're not a drug dealer, you won't get murdered." About illegal immigration: Citizens should have Social Security cards with their fingerprints; when employers are afraid to hire illegal immigrants, the problem will abate.



Finally: "I am a supporter of the U.N. — and of John Bolton."

Bloomberg was sufficiently serious about a presidential run to ask his lawyers about the states' ballot access laws. But he has decided not to run. He probably knows that third-party candidates who win electoral votes usually have three attributes: a burning issue, a vivid

personality and a regional base. Strom Thurmond in 1948 and George Wallace in 1968 had all three and won 39 and 46 electoral votes, respectively. In 1992, Ross Perot had a vivid (to put it politely) personality, and the budget deficit was a burning issue because it incorporated all discontents with Washington. He lacked, however, a regional base, so his 18.9 percent of the popular votes earned him no electoral votes.

Bloomberg would have had no regional base, unless a New York state of mind counts as a region. This city's intelligentsia, one of America's most parochial cohorts, is despondent about the city's, the state's and its own diminished political weight. Time was, the state was an incubator of presidents: In 1868, New York had a higher percentage of the nation's electoral votes than California has today, and in the 80-year span of 1868-1948, New Yorkers appeared on more than half of the two major parties' presidential

tickets, and five times served as president.

But in 2010, Florida may supplant New York as the nation's third most populous state. Furthermore, it has been 46 years since the nation elected a Northeastern president, John Kennedy. Before John Kerry, the last Northeastern nominated for president was Michael Dukakis in 1988, which was not fun. Still, three New Yorkers — Giuliani, Hillary Clinton and Gov. George Pataki — today have presidential yearnings of widely different degrees of plausibility. Bloomberg, who made his billions in data systems, might share with those three this datum: None of the last three national tickets that included New Yorkers — vice presidential candidates William Miller (1964), Geraldine Ferraro (1984) and Jack Kemp (1996) — carried the state.

Write George Will, Washington Post Writers' Group, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ELECTIONS

Protect voting

Regarding Our View, Nov. 14: The vote-by-mail ballot creates an opportunity for unscrupulous people to undermine our democratic system. How? The vote-by-mail ballot compromises the democratic principle of voter secrecy. The vote-by-mail process gives a dominating spouse the opportunity to "help" a partner fill out the ballot. Same is true for union members and church members. The vote-by-mail ballot also makes possible the opportunity for apathetic or destitute people to "sell" their vote. The vote-by-mail ballot allows a voter to "prove" the candidate selection of the ballot before the ballot is sealed and mailed. One of the recent U.S. Senate races was lost by less than 10,000 votes. If the party in power had the opportunity to "buy" 10,000 votes for \$10 each, they could have held that

provided water, candy and soda for their fellow Americans. Next year, I'll vote with an absentee ballot.

Jan Smith, Meridian

An end to 'robocalls'

I second the Statesman's call for Idaho to vote by mail. Here's another benefit: Mail voting would lessen the effectiveness and thus the frequency of 11th-hour negative campaign ads, misleading "push polls" and endless automated "robocalls."

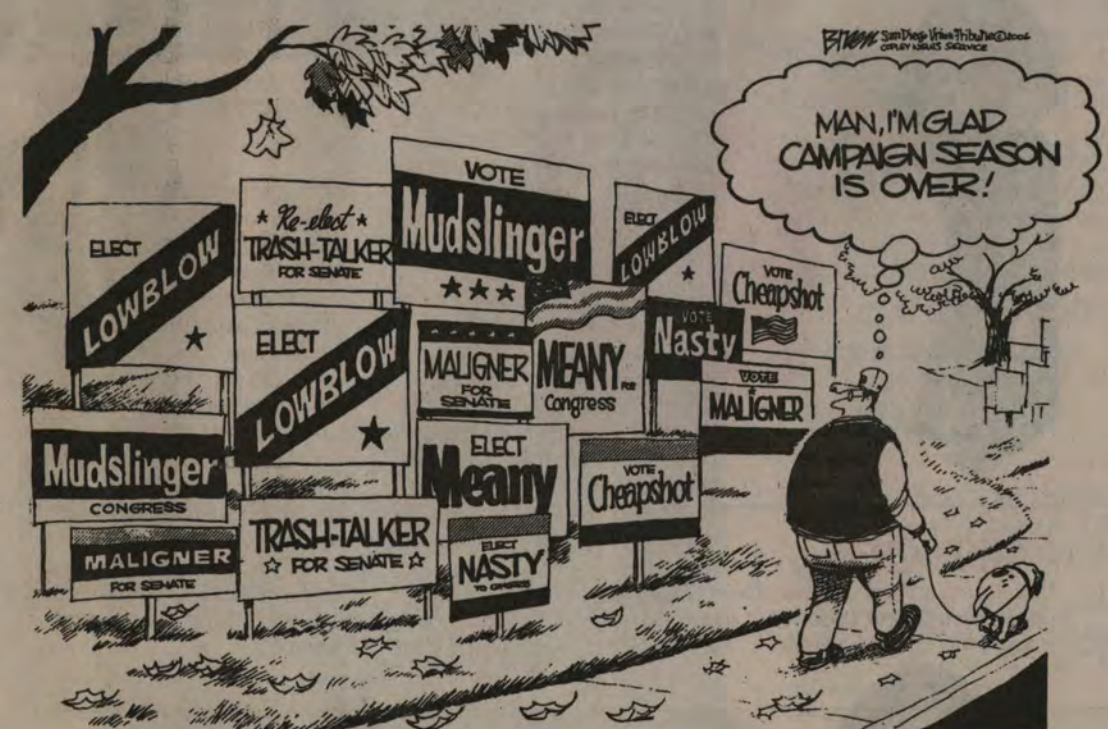
In the final week of the campaign alone, Bill Sali was blessed with more than \$350,000 worth of shilling and shenanigans paid for by carpet-bagger groups including the National Republican Congressional Committee and the extremist organization Club for Growth, which seeks to eliminate Social Security, privatize schools and end farm subsidies.

1. Why couldn't Idaho Democrats even defeat an "idiot?" (That must sting a little.)

2. Why did the Democrats win 18 seats nationally by fewer than 5,000 votes each?

The answer to both questions is the same and it's not because of scandals, the war and certainly not Democrat ideals. Marriage amendments, private property and anti-affirmative action won — all conservative ideals. Broad anti-abortion initiatives only failed by a slim margin. Democrats won when they campaigned to the right of their opponent — which in some cases wasn't very difficult.

Democrats will either govern as the "conservatives" they campaigned as, or show their true colors as liberals and suffer the consequences in '08 elections. Either way, conservatism wins, which is what America wants. Do you know al-Qaida rejoiced with the re-



With a secret ballot, it is impossible to sell votes because the seller cannot "prove" how they voted. A secret ballot allows people to agree politically at the dinner table yet vote for their preferred candidates in the privacy of a ballot booth, protected by observers at the local voter precinct.

Ron Bengtson, Meridian

Vote by mail

As voters who have voted "absentee" for over 10 years while living in California, we encourage vote-by-mail for Idaho. It allows more people to vote who might have difficulty getting to polling places, including many seniors who do not have easy transportation. It gives people the opportunity to vote over a period of time as they learn about the issues and those running for office. It eases the number of people appearing at the polling places and gives working people, especially those with other than 9-5 work schedules, and those with young children, the opportunity to cast their votes easily. It is a win-win situation for everyone (except for those who lose the vote).

Wilma Pile, Meridian

Absentee ballot

I am one of the thousands of voters who waited in excruciatingly long lines election night to exercise my right to vote. Personally, I find it criminal that only eight voting booths were available for Precinct 8. The people in charge of organizing these elections must have known that eight voting booths would not be adequate for the fastest growing precinct in Idaho. I arrived at 4:30, thinking I would avoid the after-work rush. I waited for two hours and 37 minutes to cast my vote. As I left, the line had taken a turn out the door and around the building. From what I understand, those people waited for more than three hours.

I saw several people give up and leave when they realized how long the process was going to take. The fact that all of the people who wanted to vote couldn't vote is wrong. My hat's off to all of those people that waited in that line. Especially the pregnant ladies, and parents with several young children. Also, thank you to the kind people who ordered pizzas and

gave far less of the last-minute slime that helped secure Sali's 49.94 percent victory.

Working folks who can least afford to wait three or four hours to vote are the ones who most need to have their voices heard. I was brought up to love the ritual of voting in person, but it's time for a change that will better ensure that all Americans get their say. And heck, if we can start voting by mail, maybe we can even get rid of the antiquated Electoral College.

Julie Fanselow, Boise

Monument vote

In your wrapup of the election results, the article about the Ten Commandments measure says, "With 103 of 104 precincts reporting, Boise voters made a statement at the polls that religious monuments don't belong on public property."

I beg to differ.

First of all, the measure lost by a 52 percent to 47 percent margin — hardly a mandate.

Second, the measure was asking Boise voters if the monument should be returned to the park, not whether it belonged there. I'm confident if the vote had been taken before the monument was relocated in the first place, a sizable majority would have voted to leave it be. I know I would have. It was our spineless mayor and council members, who kowtowed to "Pastor" Fred Phelps and moved it off public property. (Unlike Nampa and Caldwell, who told Phelps to take a hike, and where the monuments remain quietly in their original spots, not doing anybody any harm.)

I didn't vote on that particular measure. I figured the damage was done, and to continue our petty bickering would make Satan smile rather than God. It's better to close that sad chapter of Boise's history. The only winners were Satan and his errand boy, Fred Phelps.

Steve Hulme, Boise

Conservatism wins

Throw the bums out. I have been so tired of record economic growth, record low unemployment, 33 percent drop in gas prices, record stock market levels, \$3,000 tax break for middle-class households with kids. Whew, am I glad that's over.

Here are two questions to answer:

Keith Hoene, Garden Valley

Any nut can win

With the election of Bill Sali, Idaho has proven once again any nut will be elected as long as they are Republican.

Red may be my favorite color, but this is getting embarrassing.

I can just imagine Sali on national news telling the entire U.S. public how women get breast cancer.

Idaho, what have you done?

Leslie Barringer, Boise

Pelosi's on her way

In his campaign ads, Bill Sali claimed that voting for Larry Grant would ensure that Nancy Pelosi became speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

So, I voted for Larry Grant and sure enough Nancy Pelosi is on her way to becoming speaker of the House.

Thanks for the insight, Billy.

Gary Bennett, Emmett

Who's uneducated?

Hello Idaho — it seems that we are not worthy enough to live among the liberals in our great state. We are uneducated, closed-minded, we should bow at the feet of those who know more about what we need than we do.

I thought that the liberals were about live and let live. Freedom of speech, the right to vote any way we please.

If we are as stupid as the letter writers in the Nov. 12 edition say we are, is that not our God-given right? Can I use the word God? I don't know, your side of the fence has that all screwed up, too.

I'm not even a Republican, I'm an independent. I'm smart enough to know both parties stink. I just believe yours stinks a little more.

We are stuck with Bush because you gave us Kerry. Now who's uneducated?

Vito Rosati, Kuna

Durst is good news

Congratulations to District 18 for electing Branden Durst to the Idaho Legislature. I watched as many progressive views lost at the Idaho polls Nov. 7 — but Durst's sound and strategic defeat of Field was a bright spot. Personally, for me, it is the best news of the entire election.

Debbie Field was no longer an effective advocate for her

lence unacceptable. She and I faced off in the House Judiciary Committee over the definition of hate when I testified in front of her committee.

I watched her strut around the Statehouse — considering her political future untouchable.

I watched her use unfounded fear of gay marriage to divide legislators and I knew that eventually her district would say enough is enough.

Perhaps now the 18th District will find out what it is like to be represented by someone who focuses on their constituency.

Congratulations Representative-elect Durst, you are going to be so good for the Idaho Legislature.

Enjoy your retirement from politics, Debbie — perhaps Rick Santorum can join you for a game of golf.

Bob McDiarmid, San Francisco

Libertarian votes

To the 550 of you who voted for liberty and freedom, I thank you for your support. The fact that your votes were more than three times the difference between the same two old alternatives was most gratifying. At the very least, they might have played a role in unseating the incumbent.

The main reason I chose to run for House Seat District 18A in this year's election was to provide an alternative to the same old tired perspectives that always lead to the same old tired results: more government, constant calls for more money, more programs with questionable results, and more laws of dubious if not negative value to most Idahoans.

The second reason I ran was to market liberty and freedom. Though liberty and freedom

words rarely make an appearance after an election. They so infrequently emerge in the course of lawmaking, that they will possibly soon be placed on the endangered species list of valued ideas.

The formula to keep them alive is simple: more liberty and freedom — less government.

Thanks again for your support.

James Oyler, Libertarian, Boise

Women leaders

In his excellent column on Idaho's loss of woman leaders, Dan Popkey fails to mention the loss of a woman in the position of superintendent of public schools. I know Dan was concentrating on losses in the state Legislature, but I wish he had mentioned the loss of Marilyn Howard due to retirement and the failure of Idaho voters to elect a woman replacement in the person of Jana Jones. Jones, who holds a doctoral degree in education, serves as Howard's deputy and knows the ins and outs of Idaho's complex education organizations. She also has extensive classroom teaching experience. The superintendent-elect, Tom Luna, has none of these qualifications. In addition, I would venture to say from listening to him speak, he also has little of the understanding and compassion for Idaho's children and youth that Dr. Jones has.

The loss to Idaho of Marilyn Howard and the loss of the opportunity to have an eminently qualified woman continue in the position of superintendent is a great loss indeed. Perhaps Mr. Luna will not disappoint us in the position. Let us hope not.

Roger Manwaring, Garden Valley

swered a long-lasting question. Much is said about Idaho values, and I was never quite sure just what these values were.

We voters have made the answer clear. We elected a governor who was a congressman in Washington, D.C., for the last six years, who listed "rancher" in the employment section of his brochure, broke the "wetlands" federal laws three times in 10 years, was arrested on a drunken-driving charge while lieutenant governor and won a barroom tight pants contest in his 40s.

Our temporary governor, re-elected lieutenant governor, is a practicing attorney and long-time politician who also alleges to be a rancher. Our new controller is a glowing example of success as a high school dropout, with an \$85,000-per-year job that requires a strong educational background and business experience. As a former legislator, she was selected over a highly qualified individual, proof that you don't need an education to succeed in politics.

We now know that Idaho values are ranching, breaking laws repeatedly to increase land values, drunken driving, frivolities and a poor education. It can't get any better than that.

Raymond E. Bowden, Emmett

Republican sweep?

It wasn't too smart of Idaho voters to send Bill Sali to a Democratically controlled Congress, was it? He wasn't the best candidate to begin with, and now won't be able to do anything for Idaho. The best he'll be able to do is get a spot on the Janitorial Committee.

Tom Nagle, Eagle



Thanksgiving reminds us of too many blessings to count... we'd like to thank all of the unsung heroes that make our community so great: our teachers, police officers, firefighters and especially our soldiers who fight to preserve our freedom everyday.

Thank you all for a fruitful year.

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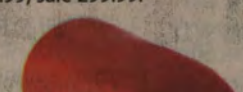
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