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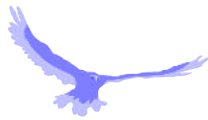
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# The Cat's Pajamas

By Omayra Acevedo

No, my cats don't wear pajamas, but I think you know where this is going. Those of us who have cats or any animal companions, know that each one has their very own distinct personality. That's because, just like people or any other living creature on Earth, they all think, feel and express themselves differently. We also know how fortunate it is to experience that one-of-a-kind special bond.

Cats have a reputation for being curious felines, but humans are not so different. Do we not get up in the middle of the night when we hear a sound? Do we not feel curious when we first learn about something? Do we not react when we smell something different or visit a new place? For thousands of years humans and cats have been co-existing, and that's because as long as we let them do whatever they want, we'll get along just fine.

Cats, unfortunately, also have the reputation of being mean or destructive. Why is that? I have my own theories, and in my humble opinion, we have no one to blame but ourselves – as in the human race as a whole. If we stop for a moment to practice a little patience and observation, we can get to the bottom of many animal behavioral challenges. What are we feeding them? Have we, via our environment – including our own temper, altered their personalities in some way? How are we treating them in general? Are we showing or giving them enough love and respect? The sum of these things has helped me figure out a great deal about animals. Especially, when it comes to their behavior.

Some scientists and historians have discovered that cats pretty much domesticated themselves. With grain cultivation came mice, and where there were mice (and other rodents) cats began to frequent more and more often. Farmers took notice and were so grateful for the pest control that through time and trust, the cats became part of their life. So, the next time you see a cat, remember to say thanks!

What did the cat say when the mouse got away? "You've got to be kitten me!"

Come on. That was a little funny, right? Cats are funny! Still don't want a cat around? Don't invite mice to your home. Clean, don't leave food out and don't be so messy!!! Kidding. Sometimes, we can't control who or what comes around, but that doesn't

give us reason to be mean to animals. Personally, I'd take the animal over a human visit any day. For those that prefer humans, there are plenty of resources that help keep animals away that we don't want to encounter. One simple way to find these resources is...online research! Yay, for technology!

Technology is great, but cats are AWESOME! I'm not going to deny that my cats are probably the most spoiled kitties on the planet. I've done so purposely as I feel that they deserve only the best. They get fresh home-made cat food, treats and they even walk on leashes/harnesses. Worried about the horror stories you hear about the furniture scratching? There is a plethora of things you can do and use to avoid this. Here are solutions that have worked for me. Place a scratching post in each room they spend the most time in. I have a cat that acts more like a dog than a cat. So, I give him dog toys to play with and that keeps him from chewing on other things. After vacuuming, take a clean spray bottle and fill it with about 10-20 drops of lemon oil (or Eucalyptus oil) and fill the rest with water, shake it and lightly spray over the carpets or furniture you don't want them scratching on. Just be mindful that some furniture may need to be wiped down immediately after spraying. Some other tips I will share are these: Don't offer them treats when they are doing something you don't like just to get them to stop. Try shaking a plastic bag in the air (apparently cats don't like the sound). Offer them treats when they are doing something good like playing with their toys, sleeping, bathing, or using the litter box. Over time they will learn how to associate their good behavior with rewards. Try to ignore *(Continued on next page.)*



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## Highlander Animals

negative behavior. Cats are sensory animals. Meaning, they have sensory receptor cells that detect signals from their surrounding environment that are communicated to the body via the nervous system. In cats those signals are first detected with their whiskers, tails, fur and of course, like all animals, instinctively. Needless to say, if you're a cranky butt, don't be surprised if your cat is too.

I'm not going to lie, considering that all animals are unique, it can take a little more work with some of them than with others, but it's worth it. The unique bond I share with my critters is so special that I have been able to train them as I would any creature. They sit, stand, spin and jump on command, and when I have a bad day, nothing makes me feel better than a cuddle and a purr from them. They've even traveled with me to Europe and back. They've filled my life with so much bliss, I feel beyond blessed.

I'm not here to brag – well, maybe a little - nor tell anyone what to do. I will surely not offer any advice or try to change anyone's mind. However, I will confess to you that many times it feels as if my cats actually saved my life and not the other way around. So how about it? Want to have your own four-legged snuggle buddy? Just think about it. It can truly be life-altering and so easy to welcome one into your family. An important part about rescuing a kitty is that most shelters will also include or even waive

the fee to have them fixed. Which is vital in helping to keep less of them in adoption centers or in the streets. So many just want a place to call home, get a safe night's cat nap and a human in whose lap to keep warm. Prrrrr...

Why do I bring up the importance of having your pet spayed or neutered? For many reasons. Process it for a moment... If we took it upon ourselves to make sure our companions were fixed, there would likely be less and less cats residing in shelters all the time. Less and less of them roaming free and getting into trouble – or even being run over in some cases. Trust me when I say that I get it. Get a cat and let it be free. It's part of how we express our love for them. However, if you so choose to offer your loved one some freedom, how about building a catio? That's right. A patio for a cat. A catio. It's also a great place to keep the litter box so it's not as much of an issue if it were kept indoors. They're so easy to make; your kitty will remain safe while still having the sense of roaming wild and you will have a companion to give you cuddles at night.

I'm not saying that you should go out and rescue every single cat there is to adopt. The world doesn't need another crazy cat person more than it needs more suffering pets. Clearly, if you don't have time for pets, then it's probably best you just admire them on funny YouTube videos – or simply volunteer at a shelter or make a monetary contribution when/if you can. There are plenty of ways you can help in the 'rescuing' process. Where can you go?

Here are some places to consider visiting if you're considering adoption, volunteering or donating: Almost Home in Westminster, Dumb Friends League in Denver, Rocky Mountain Feline Rescue also in Denver, Foothills Animals Shelter in Golden, Evergreen Cat Lodge in Evergreen, Farfel's Farm in Boulder.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way it's animals are treated." I can't even begin to express how much I believe this to be true. As a professional pet sitter, I can tell you firsthand that the animals with the best homes and families are the ones that are truly loved and respected. Hence, why I am convinced I have the best kitties on the planet. To me, these felines truly are the cat's pajamas!

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# BoCo Land Use Director States (1041) Needed

**Land Use Director issues determination  
in response to Denver Water  
(Gross Reservoir Dam Expansion Proposal)  
request**

**Determination states that Denver Water  
must obtain a permit under Article 8 -  
Location & Extent Areas & Activities of  
State Interest (1041)**

**Boulder County, Colo. (Oct. 23, 2018)**

On Oct. 12, 2018, Denver Water requested that Boulder County Land Use Director Dale Case determine the applicability of the Boulder County Land Use Code to Denver Water’s proposed expansion of Gross Reservoir.

Denver Water has argued that it is exempt from having to submit its project for Location & Extent Areas & Activities of State Interest (1041) review under Article 8 of the Land Use Code.

Director Case responded to Denver Water on Oct. 22. His determination is that Denver Water’s proposed reservoir expansion project is subject to review under Land Use Code. Before undertaking the project, Denver Water must obtain a permit under Article 8 of the Code.

**Documents:**

Gross Reservoir Dam expansion proposal determination letter to Denver Water, October 22, 2018

Determination request letter from Denver Water, October 12, 2018

Denver Water may appeal the decision to the Boulder County Board of Commissioners as provided for under 8-406(B).

**Land Use Code Section 8-406**

Determination of Whether a Proposed Activity or Development Must go Through the Permit Process states that “The Director shall determine the applicability of Section 8-400 to the conduct of any proposed activity or

development. The Director shall make this determination within 10 calendar days after the Director receives a written request from the applicant stating the reasons why the proposed activity or development is not subject to Section 8-400.”

**Background**

The Board of Water Commissioners for the City and County of Denver, aka “Denver Water,” is in the process of applying for a planned expansion of the Gross Reservoir Dam in southwest Boulder County. While this is not a Boulder County project, the reservoir resides entirely in unincorporated Boulder County.

The Army Corp of Engineers issued its Record of Decision granting Denver Water a federal permit for the project in July 2017. However, before it can commence the project, Denver Water must still receive approval of its hydropower license amendment application from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Boulder County has intervened in the FERC application noting many reasons why the county finds the application to be deficient. In its motion to intervene, the county outlined nearly 20 points of contention with the project.


On March 20, 2018, the county responded to FERC’s Supplemental Environmental *(Continued on next page.)*

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## Highlander Issues

Assessment, once again pointing out the deficiencies that Boulder County finds in Denver Water's FERC application and FERC's environmental assessment of the project. The county plans to further address impacts and concerns during a county (local) land use review process and has explained to FERC that Denver Water must obtain required county permits before it undertakes the project. Denver Water has not yet applied for a permit under Article 8 of the Boulder County Land Use Code (also known as a 1041 permit).

### **A 1041 review would allow the Boulder County Planning Commission and the County Commissioners to conduct public hearings and review the application according to the criteria in the Code.**

#### **More Information**

More information can be viewed on the county's Gross Reservoir Dam Expansion Proposal information webpage. Also, individuals can sign-up to receive Boulder County-related hearing and meeting announcements concerning the proposed Denver Water Gross Reservoir Expansion Project. You can unsubscribe at any time.

To receive notices about the Gross Reservoir project from Denver Water, look for the "Sign Up for Email Updates" option at the bottom of the page on the Gross Reservoir project website. All notices of meetings, minutes, and updates on the proposed project (also known as the "Moffat Collection System Project") can be found on Denver Water's website at <https://grossreservoir.org/>.

This excerpt was **to Jeff Martin**, Denver Water Prog. Mgr. **from** Boulder County Land Use Dir. **Dale Case**: "Denver Water contends that, as of May 17,1974, Boulder County zoned the land on which the Gross Reservoir expansion is located for this use and, therefore, the statutory exemption to the applicability of H.B.1041 regulations in C.R.S. ñ 24-65.1-107(l)(c) (known as the "zoned land exemption") applies.

I disagree with Denver Water's interpretation of the zoned land exemption and Boulder County Land Use Code, and I have determined that 8-400 applies to Denver Water's proposed expansion of Gross Reservoir. The zoned land exemption is a narrow exception to a local government's otherwise broad authority to regulate the use of land within its jurisdiction. For the exemption to apply to the Gross Reservoir expansion the County, as of May 17,1974, would have had to have zoned the property in the area of the proposed expansion for use as a reservoir. The County did not have such zoning in place and, therefore, the zoned land exemption is inapplicable to the proposed reservoir expansion. You indicate that the zoned land exemption would apply so long as a reservoir was a use by right as of May 17,1974. Even under Denver's Water's Interpretation of the exemption, the Gross Reservoir expansion is not exempt. As of May 17,1974, the land on which the Reservoir is located was zoned Forestry. The applicable zoning regulations did not list reservoirs as a permitted use within the Forestry District and such a use would not have been allowed. Nonetheless, Denver Water asserts the Reservoir was located within the Flood Regulatory Area overlay and that reservoirs were allowed as a use by right within this overlay district. Both assertions are incorrect. Although a portion of Gross Reservoir is within the 100-year floodplain under current County regulations and mapping, the property was not within a Flood Regulatory Area on May 17,1974."

**Editor's Note:** Stay tuned for further updates in this publication about any public hearings as the most recent newsletter from Denver Water says nothing about these issues or acknowledges the need for the 1041 permit. All CDOT works to mitigate Hwy 72 or Gross Dam Road have stopped pending the outcome of this permit process.

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# Looking For Some Good News Today

By Diane Bergstrom

Looking for the good news; that seems to be a popular theme after last month's midterm elections. After the results, I was simultaneously feeling hopeful, relieved, incredulous, angered, and stunned through most of November. Too much head scratching led to too many hairs falling out. It's a complex challenge to find positive outcomes and progressive actions after absorbing the daily craziness being telecast over the news, social media, Twitter, Facebook, etc. The challenge heightens when we realize how often the highlighted sensational event's coverage is manipulated to distract us from other decisions and events. These other high impact events are being slipped under the wire while we're not looking in that direction. And we have to look. Many people currently state they're taking news breaks (myself included), only to realize the precariousness of becoming too unplugged and consequently uninvolved. There's nothing status quo about these times. My hope keeps rising as more and more people plug back in, to vote, to canvass, to run, to help other's voices be heard, to address real issues in our communities, to challenge the status quo, to move agendas forward that are pertinent, life-sustaining, and timely within our local communities, and on a statewide, national and global scale.

When overwhelmed with news, to do lists, necessary actions, etc., we've been told to break ideas and strategies down into manageable steps. Take the first step, not the whole road. Divide the parts. Prioritize the actions. Distract your overloaded mind with anything peace-summoning. With all the relative affirmations and colloquialisms out there, one of my favorites is, "You're too far down the road," when anticipation and expectation are spinning out of bounds. My friend Anita told me while I was clearing out a home, to tackle one square foot at a time, starting with an area readily in view so that the visual success can be an anchor to spur myself on. Great advice that's transferrable to many situations. Focus on what can be, and was, accomplished, to keep momentum going through to new accomplishments. Keeping our emotions in check is another thing, especially when our thoughts are driving them off a cliff.

Fred Rogers (of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood children's show) explained how, when he was a young boy, his mother directed him through fear to hope, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping,'" and added, "Because if you look for the helpers, you'll know that there's hope." (Outstanding documentary on him released this year titled, *Would You Be My Neighbor?*) Taking Mrs. Rogers'

advice, I first looked for the helpers close to me. Working neighborhood to neighborhood, my friend Cheri canvassed all over Boulder and Longmont, knocking on up to 100 doors a night to encourage people to vote. In the final days leading up to the election, she was encouraging people to get in their ballots, educating them of drop off locations, informing them that new registration is possible on voting day in Colorado, and connecting people with rides to the polls. My friend Debbie and I met for post midterm results processing, Italian food, and comfort wine. We each shared our frustrations and outcomes that gave us hope. Over the house linguini, she casually mentioned that in addition to sending out postcards, she texted over 6,000 get-out-the-vote messages for *Indivisible*, plus responded to those who wrote back. Check [www.hustle.com](http://www.hustle.com) to become engaged. I always feel more informed after talking with her, and personally want a state level politician to hire her for aid in strategy and communication. I am also encouraged by the record numbers of young people turning out to vote, to work, and to run in our political process. According to the Colorado Secretary of State, Colorado voter turnout was second highest in the nation at 61.9%, trailing Minnesota with 64.3% voter turnout.

Abhi Rahman, a great example of youthful participation, started working for Democratic gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams before the primary as the Deputy Communications Director and Research Director. After Abrams, with her tireless team, won the primary by 51 points, Abhi was promoted to Senior Communications Strategist and handled investigating opponents and responding to the attacks leveled at Abrams coming from opponent Brian Kemp, the RNC, and the Georgia Republican party. She was even targeted with racist robo calls. While Brian Kemp remained in his position of Secretary of State overseeing the election he was running in (fox guarding the henhouse comes to mind), 53,000 voter registration applications were held up, err, "pending," in his office in October. Abrams and her team brought to light systemic disenfranchisement of thousands of voters resulting in voter suppression. *(Continued on next page.)*



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## Highlander Politics

An experienced politician and former Georgia House of Representatives Minority Leader, skilled lawyer and articulate novelist, Abrams stated, "I'm planning to get back into the ring." I asked Abhi how he keeps his hope alive. He responded, "I drew inspiration from the mission and knowing that we had a chance to do something really good. Unfortunately, we didn't succeed but progress is slow and Stacey made great progress for the state of Georgia." Hope rises with the helpers and the quality candidates who match their concerns with their constituents. They make hope float.

Hope also rises with righteous pushback and deserving results. Two North Dakota precincts were shut down prior to the election due to "budgetary reasons." Interestingly, they land smack in the middle of oil country. Hmm. The new confusing North Dakota Voter Identification law, whose byproduct surely resulted in voter suppression on reservations where the required physical addresses have not been established, spurred unexpected results. At least for the law sponsors. Sioux County, encompassing the Standing Rock reservation, had a voter turnout of 105% up from the last midterm elections. Tribal leaders, advocacy groups, and justifiably angry Native American voters turned out in record numbers. Ruth Buffalo became the first Native American Democratic woman elected to the North Dakota legislature. She ran on local issues, knocked on 6,500 doors, and listened to people. Then she unseated the primary sponsor of the bill, State Representative Randy Boehning. (*Maggie Astor, The New York Times*)

More heartening numbers! There are nine new science-credentialed elected officials going to Congress, including an ocean expert, nurse and biochemist. The first female doctor was also elected. The *314 Action* non-profit

political action committee dedicates, recruits, trains and funds scientists and healthcare workers who want to run for political office. "Scientists are problem solvers,"

Shanghnessy Naughton, President of *314 Action* said, "Who better to be tackling these issues (climate change, cyber security, healthcare) than scientists?" Over 100 women are going to the House, including first Muslim, Somali-American, and Native American representation. This will resurrect crucial conversations on reproductive rights and equal pay issues.

(*Hilary Brueck, Peter Kolecki, Business Insider*)

The new U.S. Representative-elect for New York's 14th congressional district is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, at 29 years old. As a working class Bronx resident, she is authentically real, tough, outspoken, and on fire. She's already putting pressure, with support, on elder representatives to pay attention to working class issues and climate change threats, while promoting the urgency of implementing a Green New Deal, based on the intent of the New Deal which was created to save the country through the Depression years. She is a visionary to watch and has a brilliant future ahead.

While midterm results ranged from hopeful to disheartening, I find promise in the participation we saw last month, the preceding months, and years of building momentum for constructive initiatives and candidates. Harry Kraemer, author of *Values To Action*, wrote, "Are you saddened, angry, or overwhelmed by our nation's current political climate? Do you find yourself wanting to take action but doubt your ability to make a difference?"

If this resonates with you, check his website at [www.valuestoaction.com](http://www.valuestoaction.com). His book includes four essential principles: (1) self-reflection, which increases

self-awareness; (2) balance, which encourages you to seek multiple perspectives to gain a global perspective; (3) true self-confidence, which helps you identify your strengths and weaknesses and to feel comfortable in your own skin; and (4) genuine humility.

In a *New York Times* magazine piece, Rhonda Harvey, a chief operating officer of a behavioral healthcare agency, was quoted, "In social work there are three things for good mental health: something to do, something to love, and something to hope for."

Here's to hope and to all those whose efforts turned hopeful outcomes into reality!

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Roy's Last Shot Restaurant and Bar has been a local mountain gathering place for years. Folks living near or traveling along the Peak to Peak Highway between Central City and Nederland have had this establishment to count on in more ways than just a place to grab a bite to eat, catch up with friends or have an adult beverage.

Over the years this eatery and saloon has done a lot for the folks in the neighboring communities: from supporting the Gilpin Food Bank to organizing fundraiser buffets for school students to raise money for trips to Italy. Roy and Barbara Stewart have big hearts for community causes and utilize their place of business to further the needs of the people in the place where they live and work.

This holiday season they have given back to their loyal patrons at Thanksgiving and now wish to highlight children during the Christmas Season with a Santa Clause visit and gift giveaway in addition to a generous and delicious supply of free food for

*(excluding alcoholic beverages)*

anyone dropping by, everyone is welcome.

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Roy's often make a point of coming back to the area just to drop by as part of their vacation tradition.

You can count on plenty of artwork on the walls to

enjoy, the shot glass collection is world class and they've just completed a renovation to the floors to polish up the place. For the party on December 16th there will be

holiday music and decorations along with a massive amount of food to get us all in the mood to celebrate the season. Stop in to enjoy our local treasure!



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# Cold & Flu Season Tips

Unfortunately, germs are everywhere. Fortunately, only small portions of germs are known to cause infection. And there's more good news, a few simple steps can reduce your exposure. Infection occurs when germs enter the body, increase in number and then cause a negative reaction in the body.

There are three main things that have to align for an infection to occur: a source where the germs live, a susceptible person (a way for the germs to enter) and then transmission (the way germs are moved).

Sources: So just how long can germs live on a surface? It depends on the type of bacteria or virus, what kind of surface they are on and what the surrounding environment is like. There are actually four kinds of germs: bacteria (one-celled microorganisms that can reproduce outside the body), viruses (need a host to reproduce outside the living cell), fungi (multi-celled, plant-like) and protozoa (one-celled organisms that live in moist areas and spread disease through water). Most viruses that cause colds only survive on hands for a short amount of time. Some only last for a few minutes; however, 40% of rhinoviruses, a common cold-causing virus, are still infectious on hands after one hour.

Flu viruses can survive on hard surfaces for 24 hours. Infectious flu viruses can survive on tissues for only 15 minutes. However, all flu viruses can survive as droplets in the air for several hours – longer in lower temperatures. Which is why we see more flu in winter.

Bacterial or viral germs that typically cause stomach bugs survive on hard surfaces or fabrics from one to four hours. Some viral germs can last even longer like norovirus and C. difficile. Norovirus can survive for days or weeks on hard surfaces. In one study, C difficile was shown to survive for five months! If someone at your house is ill, disinfect hard surfaces frequently.

Susceptibility: To avoid getting sick, a top tip is simply to wash your hands the right way. Properly washing your hands should take you about as long as it takes to sing Happy Birthday twice. Always use soap and water if you can – or hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol content if needed. Hand sanitizer can reduce the number of germs on your hands, but may fail to remove stuck on chemicals, pesticides and heavy metals.

Aside from frequent hand washing, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth and get your seasonal flu vaccine. You can also keep your immune system strong and healthy by eating well, exercising regularly and getting adequate sleep.

Transmission: To help reduce spreading germs, stay

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home if you feel ill and be proactive with your cleaning measures. Since many germs thrive – even multiply – in damp situations: make sure to keep things like clothes clean and dry. When it comes to disinfectant, carefully read the label to see if it mentions cold and flu viruses. Remember not to follow a disinfectant wipe with a dry paper towel in an effort to dry the surface more quickly.

Leftover residue from the wipe continues disinfecting as you walk away and will dry on its own. Looking for greener options? Vinegar is a natural product that is shown to kill cold and flu germs. Mix hot water and vinegar for the best results.

**Germiest Spots:** A comprehensive study by the National Science Foundation international looked at different areas of our environments to see which spots tend to harbor the most germs. **The top nine surfaces that contained the most germs were: Dish Scrubbers, Video Game controller, Remote Controls, Pet Toys, Kitchen Sink, Car Door Handles, Bottom of Purses, Countertops and Toothbrush Holders.**

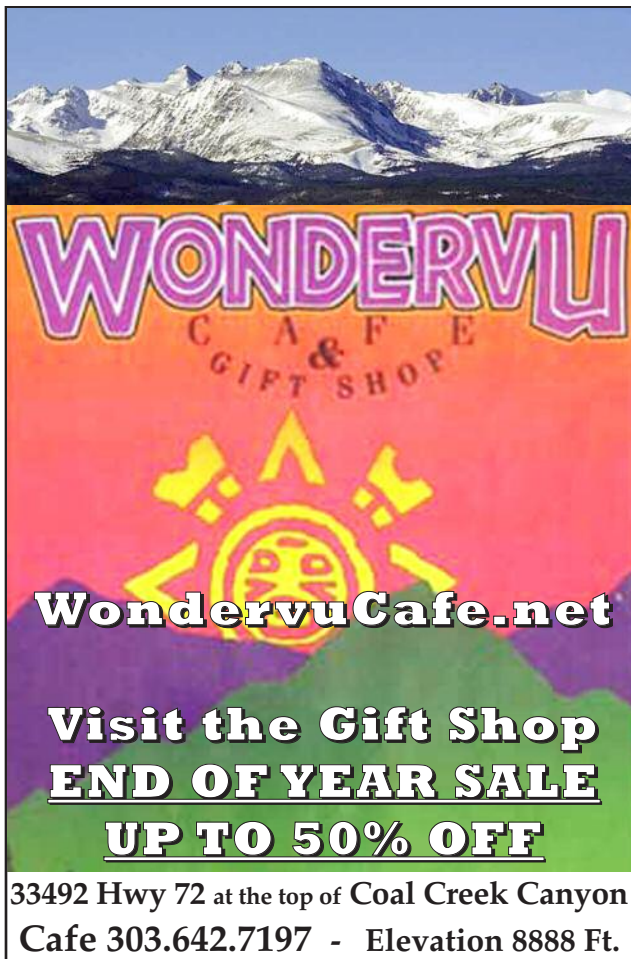
If a cold or the flu does attack and get you: Stay home and drink plenty of fluids, water being the best, hot tea and lemon juice with honey is recommended. Zinc supplements have been shown to shorten the length of your illness.

Many homeopaths suggest Goldenseal tea, which is an acquired taste but does help a sore throat better than most teas. Celestial Seasonings’s Zinger teas are by far easier to tolerate taste wise and come in a variety of flavors.

Gargling warm salt water and/or using a neti pot are proven to help mitigate most sore throat symptoms. The neti pot use is highly effective, but only on a short-term or irregular basis as if used too often can wash out normal cellular effectiveness. Use only purified, distilled or boiled water in the neti pot to avoid sinus contamination from regular tap water.

Having a higher level of humidity in your sleeping and living environments helps the body get over an illness and higher humidity than is normal in Colorado can help prevent dry nasal passages and throats. The newer cold mist humidifiers last longer and if kept clean by only using purified water and regular washing are your best bet to increase the ambient humidity of your living spaces. They are no longer noisy or need to be replaced regularly and are small enough to enable you to have them close to your most used living areas. Getting extra sleep and rest is very important in trying to get over a cold or the flu so staying home to recuperate also helps to avoid spreading germs.

*(Sources: Mayo Clinic, NSF, MyMagazine) By A.M. Wilks*



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# Reconciling Wildness & The American Dream

By Jack Andritsch – High Country News

## A writer finds a home in the wild landscapes of the West.

I got a text a few months ago from my sister, a senior in high school, asking me, “What is the American Dream?” At the time, I was splint-taping my bruised and swollen fingers, fingers that barely had the dexterity to punch out my reply: “The American Dream is dead.”

I was midway through my first trails project as a crewmember with the American Conservation Experience in Buckskin Mountain State Park in Arizona. The project had taken its toll on me mentally and physically. We were camped out for eight days at the park-affiliated campground, which straddles the Arizona/California border and is apparently the desert destination for the noisiest, most obnoxious motorized recreation equipment money can buy. The park knew its constituents well; the “campground” stretched its irrigation piping and yellow lines far beyond the paved compound, all the way out to the highway.

Our tents were set up unceremoniously behind the lavatory (complete with a half-dozen hot-water showers) on a plush plot of green, a selfless gift on behalf of the

mighty, though dwindling, Colorado River, adjacent. I was fresh off nearly six straight months of wielding a chainsaw for ecological restoration projects — felling stringy, matchbox ponderosa pines in overcrowded stands, dirtying up a chain in the hairy belly of saltcedar along the San Pedro River — doing work that I felt really mattered, that felt somehow disentangled from the consumerist American dream of life.

My American dream is no dream at all. It is the stark reality of a freely flowing river, a banner of stars and the smeared cream of the Milky Way overhead. I’ve found myself living at the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, and in the remote fissures of the Absaroka Mountains in the Washakie Wilderness of Wyoming.

My last night at Buckskin, I dreamt of waking to a dry Colorado River.

For the past three years, I’ve threatened my own social accessibility and mental stability by experimenting with wildness, both physically and philosophically. It began the summer of 2014, when I moved in with my grandparents on their ranch outside of Cody, Wyoming, in the heart of the Absaroka Mountains. Born and raised in the suburban Midwest, I transitioned directly from one dream to another. I can compare my development and exposure to life to that of a piece of steel — molten, impressionable, oblivious in the safety of suburbia, then dunked, subdued and set in the cooling waters of wildness.

How do people go about deepening a story they don’t know the beginning of?

I’ve contemplated the conception of my wildness stranded up the cliff-embanked Castle Creek with my dog, Mesa. I found only my body, as a vessel for life. Shouting for direction in the Maze District of Canyonlands National Park in Utah, I heard only dizzy distortions of the same question, intensified, echoed back to me a thousand-fold. I’ve found more direct answers in far less isolating, intensive pursuits. While reading D.H. Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* in Chaing Mai, Thailand, the roar of a million motorbikes faded to a nearly inaudible hum — I found my

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**Highlander Observations**

down on the bony streams, still recklessly teeming with feeding moose, thirsty willows and rising trout. The congregating sandhill cranes are a friendly reminder that livestock aren't the only beneficiaries of alfalfa hay fields.

Recently, with more dexterous fingers and an evolving Earth-humanist mindset, I redefined the American dream for my little sister, and for myself. That first summer in the Absarokas, when the roots of my passions were exposed, ugly notions of humanity arose with them and prompted subsequent hermitage, isolation and varying states of misery. In disengaging so viciously with my upbringing,

life revealed, clearly, in the character of Will Brangwen. Terry Tempest Williams' words have woven together my own strangled thought-feelings of love and life — love of life. And Ed Abbey, the barbaric, masculine, self-critical genius, sat around the campfire with us that cold winter night in the Colorado mountains, sharing a bottle of cheap whisky and sentiments.

As I write this under the straggle-limbed influence of a richly ridged cottonwood trunk, I feel the changing of seasons. Bursts of life flurry forth in the late autumn of Pinedale, Wyoming. Reds, yellows and oranges, painted over pockets of north- and northeast-bearing foothills, glow

*Photo courtesy Howard Ignatius/Flickr CC*

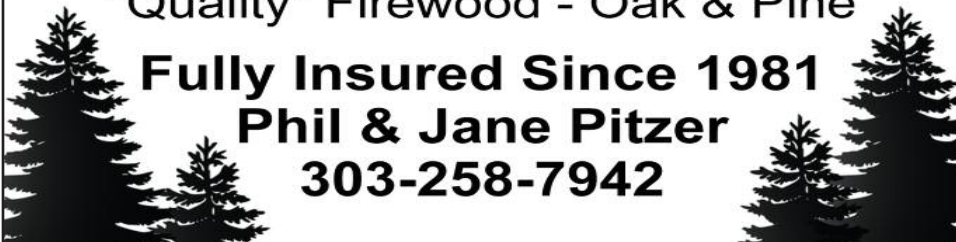
I neglected to address the innocent human tendencies that evolved from wildness to form the foundation of a (distorted) sense of place, community, home, in my Midwestern upbringing. I was dreaming of a wilder world, a world in which I was not fully engaged.

The American dream is, in fact, dead. The American life awaits living — in the abundance of life's forms, in the shared company of kindred spirits, in a place called "home."

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## Public Lands Rebel

By Jonathan Thompson - High Country News

**Sagebrush Rebel appointed to Interior Dept. Property rights lawyer Karen Budd-Falen will give legal counsel on wilderness, wildlife and many policies she's spent her career attacking.**

The conservation community let out a collective sigh of relief earlier this year when Karen Budd-Falen, a Wyoming property rights lawyer, withdrew from consideration as the new head of the Bureau of Land Management. The reprieve was short-lived, however. In October, the Interior Department announced that Budd-Falen had instead been appointed deputy Interior solicitor for wildlife and parks — a more obscure, but still important position, and one that aligns with the Trump administration's apparent desire to push the American public out of the public lands.

Budd-Falen's four-decade-long career, which includes a stint under James Watt, Ronald Reagan's notorious Interior secretary, has been built on the defense of private property, part of a movement that is often opposed to federal oversight and environmental regulation. In 2011, she told a gathering of county sheriffs in Northern California that "the foundation for every single right in this country, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote, our freedom to petition, is all based on the right of ownership of private property."

This sounds like a noble cause, standing up for ordinary landowners when the government or corporations mess with their homes. And sometimes it is: Budd-Falen represented the legendary Republican-turned-anti-oil-and-gas activist Tweeti Blancett in her attempt to get the Bureau of Land Management to clean up the mess it made on and around her New Mexico ranch, and her firm often works with landowners to get the best deal from energy companies developing their property. But more often than not, Budd-Falen's vision of private property rights extends beyond a landowner's property lines and onto the public lands and resources — at the expense of the land itself, the wildlife that live there, and the people who rely upon it for other uses.

In a telling article in the *Idaho Law Review* in 1993, Budd-Falen and her husband, Frank Falen, argued that grazing livestock on public lands was actually a "private property right" protected by the Constitution — a notion that would certainly make it hard for federal land managers to regulate grazing. In 2012, Budd-Falen defended Andrew VanDenBerg, who bulldozed a road through a wilderness study area in Colorado's San Juan Mountains to access a mining claim, arguing that a 150-year-old statute meant to provide rights of way to miners and pack animals should apply to motorized travel and bulldozers. In 1995, she represented Wyoming



landowners who felt that they had the right to kill more big game — a public resource — because limiting the number of hunting tags issued to them “effects a constitutional taking” of their property.

Budd-Falen’s property-rights crusade has put her in questionable company. In the early 1990s she represented a number of southern Nevada ranchers — including Cliven Bundy — in their beef with the feds over grazing in endangered desert tortoise habitat. And while she condemned the Bundys’ later anti-federal conflicts in Nevada, her work and words — often hostile toward environmentalists and federal land agencies — helped provide an intellectual underpinning for the Bundy worldview.

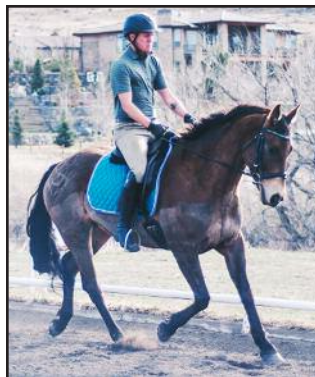
Budd-Falen is a lifelong Sagebrush Rebel, a veteran of the 1980s-era conflicts over public-land management in the West. She is an alumna of the Mountain West Legal Foundation, which spawned the so-called “Wise Use” movement and helped launch the careers of both Watt, who tried to dismantle the Interior Department from within, and Gale Norton, George W. Bush’s drill-happy Interior secretary. In 2007, she told HCN’s Ray Ring that her most important case was *Wilkie v. Robbins*, in which she used RICO, an anti-racketeering law, to intimidate BLM agents who had cited her client for violating grazing regulations.

Outside the courtroom, her rhetoric has helped provide justification for those inclined to take up arms against federal agents, as when she described land-management agencies as part of “a dictatorship” intent on taking away “private property and private property rights.” In the 1990s, Budd-Falen encouraged counties to create land-use plans that turned the National Environmental Protection Act against the federal government. Catron County, New Mexico, adopted a template with her help, in a plan that said, “Federal

and state agents threaten the life, liberty, and happiness of the people of Catron County ... and present danger to the land and livelihood of every man, woman, and child.”

Now, Budd-Falen is a fed. Her job will be to provide legal counsel to the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Geological Survey, on wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, environmental protections and endangered species protection. Few if any of those matters will benefit from a person whose worldview is so opposed to public resources, especially at a time when so many environmental laws and regulations are under attack. She’ll be working under the acting solicitor, Daniel Jorjani, who was responsible last year for declaring that oil companies, wind farms and open-pit mining firms are not liable for the deaths of migratory birds. Nothing in Budd-Falen’s record suggests she’ll work hard to protect anything other than the dubious private property rights of people and corporations. If she seems these days to be less on the far-right end of the spectrum, that’s because the spectrum has shifted.

Budd-Falen, not so much. *Jonathan Thompson is a contributing editor at High Country News.*



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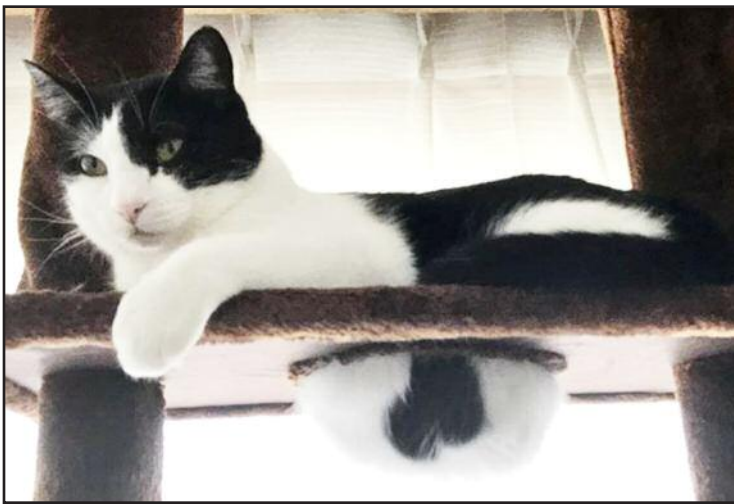
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*Top: So many Toes. Right: Ashiki  
Left: Cat tummy sinks thru furniture!  
Bottom Right: Baloo on Henry.  
Below: Midas and Jax.*

*Next Page: Top Left: from Isabella Rosa Grant.  
Middle: Barn Cat on Roary, from Karen Cassidy.  
Top Right: Kitten Yawns. Bottom Left: Purrtacular  
Bottom Right: Bella - from A.V. Page*





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# Perspective

By Ingrid Winter

I know people  
 who question  
 what we do at Greenwood-  
 Save a squirrel?  
 a pigeon?  
 a starling?  
 What on earth for?  
 There seem to be  
 so many of them  
 and  
 who needs them?  
 Take squirrels, for example-  
 (don't tell anyone but we save  
 hundreds of them every year!)



so many people  
 do anything  
 they can  
 think of  
 to keep  
 them away  
 from their  
 bird  
 feeders  
 in an odd belief  
 that somehow  
 a squirrel's  
 life  
 is less important  
 than a finch's  
 a woodpecker's  
 a magpie's

I won't argue - I can only say this:  
 If you ever had the chance  
 to hold a baby squirrel in your hand  
 feeding it and  
 watching how eagerly  
 it accepts food  
 how cheerfully  
 it receives your care  
 how passionately  
 it wants to live  
 You, too would change  
 your perspective  
 and would see  
 this little creature  
 Not, as an enemy  
 but as a friend  
 a relative even  
 worthy  
 of compassion  
 kindness  
 and love!



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# Avoid Injuries: Shoveling Snow & Airbags

From Jim Plane – State Farm Insurance

## SNOW SHOVELING

Wear the right clothes. Breathable layers: Stick to cotton and silk over heavy wools. Waterproof boots with good traction. Thick, warm socks. Head covering to prevent loss of body heat. Mittens or gloves to protect your hands

Sunscreen and lip balm to protect exposed skin. Stretch. It warms up your body and may prevent muscle strains.

Use proper form: Push—don't lift—snow. If you have to lift: Squat down with your legs apart; back up straight and heels grounded. Never throw snow to the side or behind you.

Get outside as soon as you can. Fresh, powdery snow is easier to clear than wet, compact snow. Shovel after every few inches of accumulation. Work slowly and take breaks.

Shoveling snow is exercise: It raises your heart rate and blood pressure. Pause every now and then to prevent exhaustion. Take time to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.

If you have a medical condition or don't exercise regularly, consult with your doctor before shoveling snow or using a snow blower.

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3. Front and back side airbags. Protect torso.
4. Side curtain airbags. Protect head. Shield from flying debris. Stay inflated longer to provide greater protection in side impact and rollover collisions.

### Airbags can help save lives.

Frontal airbags helped save 2,213 lives in 2012. Frontal airbags help reduce deaths among drivers by 29% and

front-seat passengers by 32%.

Side airbags with head protection help reduce driver death in driver-side crashes by 37% in a car and 5% in an SUV.

### But they also can cause injury.

From 1990 to 2007, airbags seriously injured 38 children and 15 adults and killed 180 children and 104 adults.

These tips can help minimize airbag injuries. Always wear a seatbelt. Keep no fewer than 10 inches between both the driver's body and the center of the steering wheel airbag and the front-seat passenger and the dashboard airbag.

Move the seat as far back as safely possible.

Never let children younger than 12 ride in the front seat. Service airbags immediately if the airbag light is illuminated or blinking.

### Always replace airbags after deployment and if your vehicle is part of a recall for airbags.

- 1) Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Highway Loss Data Institute; <http://www.iihs.org/>
- 2) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; Special Crash Investigations; Counts of Front Air Bag Related Fatalities and Seriously Injured Persons; <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>



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# Eco-Prayer

By Valerie Wedel

What if prayer could heal our earth? Could ocean temperatures return to normal? Would coral reefs grow again? Could the polar ice caps regenerate? Can our endangered species return? Would we all renew our love for earth, and each other, as we travel through space together on our beautiful, blue marble? Would we create paradise, right here on earth?

Are there real life examples of prayer healing earth? Psychiatrist Scott Walker had a vision to explore this phenomenon. According to Dr. Walker, many of us have experienced miracles that are scientifically impossible, through prayer and ritual. In 2008, he founded **Thriving Earth Inc.** in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A branch of this organization, called **Eco-Prayer**, has been celebrated all over the world on every continent, including Antarctica.

Sometimes we feel a struggle between science and religion. Science is seen as godless, and religion as unscientific. Not so for **Thriving Earth Inc.** The DNA of **Thriving Earth Inc.** is all about bringing opposites together.

One early mentor who helped Dr. Walker achieve 501c3 status for **Thriving Earth Inc.**, came from a background of strict fundamentalist religion, and also holds a degree in biology. A deep love of nature, combined with an equally deep faith in the power of prayer, can lead to amazing action. In this case, despite many obstacles to 501c3 status, through careful and determined action, this team achieved not-for-profit status for **Thriving Earth Inc.**, on their first try.

**Eco-Prayer** in particular is about praying for a specific location on earth that one loves, and wishes to heal. Taking action is also essential! When asked about the balance of prayer and action, Dr. Walker paraphrases a quote from St. Augustine (b. 354 CE, d. 430 CE): "Pray like it's all up to God; act like it's all up to you."

If one must take action, then, some of us may ask, why bother with prayer? Why would a psychiatrist, steeped in science, create something like **Eco-Prayer**?

Surprisingly, science recognizing spirituality may be integral to healing addictions. Dr. Walker serves medicine through "Addiction Psychiatry," the branch of psychiatry that helps us heal from addiction. He has come to believe our consumer society has built an addicted society. Our society has become addicted to gathering more and more and more... we in the developed countries have accumulated more objects than we can use, and polluted our earth badly in the process.

The hunt to accumulate more things is a desire never satisfied. Never enough chocolate, never enough money, never enough... According to Dr. Walker, materialism doesn't actually satisfy the soul. When we constantly want or crave more, that is classic addiction behavior. If we cannot see the link between massive commercialism and consumerism, and toxic pollution and global warming, that is a sign of addiction also. The lack of accountability, and lack of ability to see the effects of our own actions, is a terrible sign of addiction.

When Dr. Walker first spoke of this to me, it was odd to hear that science might concede prayer works. And yet, the

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evidence is around us. Many of us find help through 12 Step programs, which invoke spirituality along with action, for healing. Dr. Walker reminds us that spirituality is very important, maybe even essential, to treating our addictions.

Even if one's profession suggests this might be good to do, it is not easy bringing apparent opposites like spirituality and science together. How and why did Dr. Walker start *Thriving Earth Inc.*, and *Eco-Prayer*? According to Dr. Walker: "I was working late and happened to be in my office, taking a break. I read a couple paragraphs written by the BBC about oceans, about plankton declining. This movement grew from my realization that plankton - microscopic plant and animals in the ocean - is the root of all life on our planet. Plankton produces 50% of our planet's oxygen, and is the very root of our food chain.... and Plankton is declining... an extinction event in process. No one was talking about this.

"I pondered and pondered, what can we do about this? ... and I realized... We need a miracle - and we need everybody - the entire planet - engaged in this miracle.

"During this time, about 12 years ago, I traveled internationally for training. While I was in India people understood praying to nature spirits, but not praying for them... In Nepal, the locals in Katmandu told me they saw the problem with environmental degradation, but believed the rest of the world was rich and didn't have this problem. Back in 2008, not as many people saw the risk to our planet, or the possibility this created of bringing us together."

Dr. Walker's work had also given him a keen appreciation of the struggles here in the United States. Today's opioid crisis is yet another example of the devastation of addiction, which is also linked to feelings of alienation. What would happen if instead of alienation, we restored a deep connection to divine? What if we connected with our fellow humans around the globe, and even found a loving connection with the earth itself?

According to Dr. Walker, "In every religion, in every time and place, in every culture, the power of prayer is a constant, universal presence. We human beings are a bridge between heaven and earth - some say we hold both heaven and earth within us. We need all humans involved in this. This is something we all can do, no matter our religion or where we live."

As we approach midwinter, many of us feel a time of contemplation. Perhaps some of us hope for spiritual renewal. If you also are drawn to prayer to help heal our earth, as well as us people, consider visiting *Eco-Payer*. You will find inspiring stories and more ideas on ways to

help: Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/EcoPrayer/> Website: <https://www.eco-prayer.org/>

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Buffalo Field Campaign is the only buffalo protection group living and working in the Yellowstone Ecosystem full time. We are on patrol all day—every day—when buffalo are in danger. BFC patrols defend the buffalo on their critical, native Montana habitat and document every move made against them.

Will you please consider becoming a BFC volunteer? The future of America's last free-roaming herds depends on you! We provide a lot more information to help you determine if this experience is the right fit for you. Please read all of the documents and other information thoroughly before making your decision. This rewarding experience is also a great deal of work and responsibility. If you decide you would like to join our ranks, please go to the website to find the documents you need to fill out and return to us. **Also Go to our website to TAKE ACTION - it is just a click away.**

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# Desert Solitaire's Warnings Were Right

By Amy Irvine – High Country News

Mid-morning now, and hellishly hot, so I've donned a long-sleeved shirt and my grandfather's greasy, brow-beaten Resistol hat. He was the real deal, you know. Ran 500 head of cattle in the high desert country of southern Idaho. I mention this because you and I seem to share the acquaintance of stockmen and a fondness for moving through rough country on horseback. I don't know — perhaps rounding up herds of cows via equines gave us both the excuse to feel a greater sense of meaning and purpose out there, to deem our place in the desert as somehow more worthy than the tourists'. Neither of us ever wanted to just pass through.

Whatever the motives, I think that we both understand the "other side" of this public-lands debate — by which I mean the self-proclaimed old-timers, the rural folk. Which is, of course, not the other side at all — not even the likes of Cliven Bundy and the guys who took over the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. Most of today's environmental groups won't agree, but you might, when I say that sometimes I vote libertarian to help break up the country's two-party gridlock, but also because I love the idea of what those guys did; I love the active resistance, the sticking it to institutions too large and lethargic to be effective. After all, the folks who have defied federal authority believe as you believed, that we might need the wild woolliness of the West "as a refuge from authoritarian government," and "as bases for guerilla warfare against tyranny."

The anti-federalist, Mormon part of me agrees with your words, their actions. But, for Bundy's kind, the land's not the thing either. It's another kind of buzz that has to do with big guns, big hats and big boots. It's not the lawlessness that gets me as much as heartlessness — the way the cows go starving and the land perishes from too many large and foreign beasts on it. It's not a thing we can afford. For me, it's a matter of degrees. My grandfather, the other ranchers I've moved cows for — none of them sits on the extreme and hostile end of the spectrum. Besides, there are so few independent ranch outfits remaining they are hardly the main problem. But I'll tell you what is: I was invited to speak at a book club in Salt Lake City, my hometown. The hostess' directions took me up one of the city's seven canyons to a tall iron gate, which ran across the hillside for as far as I could see. On a keypad, I

entered a security code and the gate rolled open to a razed hilltop lathered in huge, shiny new homes built from whole forests of trees, steel, hewed stone, concrete, granite, and marble. The gathering was to be held in such a structure, and when I found the right one I squeezed my Subaru between the megafauna — Ford Explosions and Land Rovers — all of which sported stickers that claimed allegiance to The Nature Conservancy or Sierra Club.

I entered the host's home, which may as well have been a ski lodge, so vast and luxuriously rustic-chic it was. A table displaying imported wine, olives, cheese, grapes and shrimp beckoned — items that traveled from farmers and vintners and fishermen to warehouses and then to the distributors, and then to Salt Lake storefronts. After these items were purchased, they were driven home — from the heart of the city to the McMansion atop this canyon. They were laid out next to recyclable paper plates, napkins and cutlery. A blue recycling bin stood proudly at table's end to collect what could be used, in some other fashion, again.

We filled our plates and glasses and gathered in a great room fit for kings and queens. We discussed my living in and writing about rural southern Utah, among people who hate that the Feds are in charge of lands they believe to be their backyards. At one point, a woman wrinkled her nose and said, "God, I hate all those backwoods rednecks down there. Their lifestyle is totally unsustainable." The other book club members nodded and murmured in agreement.

I leaned into the fire at my back, a fire that should have been making my skin bead with sweat but instead left me lukewarm because the hearth was so absurdly large. I took in the impeccable hygiene, the (Continued on next page.)



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## Highlander Conservation

curiously bright white teeth, the new hip clothes. I thought about my rural neighbors and my own ranching relatives. All of them lived in much, much smaller houses than this. They grew, raised or hunted nearly all their own food. Their cars and trucks were driven until there were 300,000 miles on the engines. They owned about two pairs of jeans and one pair of boots each, and they reused every piece of baling twine. Hardly ever did they use fuel to go on a “road trip,” let alone commute to work or to a book club or fly in airplanes to exotic places. And the cattle they trucked to sale? They were sold to the supermarkets and restaurants the rest of us frequent, to serve as the main course for the paleo diets to which the good liberals prescribe — diets that burn way too much carbon, but, hey, they burn fat too — especially if we drive across town after work for a CrossFit class before heading back out to the suburbs to pump more protein into our systems so we are lean and chiseled and ready to head to the desert come Friday afternoon, where we’ll camp, cook, poop and pump our bikes amid ancient grounds where the region’s Native Americans lived.

These good white liberals want monuments and wilderness to protect the places they recreate, to keep out companies that want to suck the fossil fuels out from under the sandstone. But the oil and gas will be burned by and large by them, to travel to Utah’s public lands. And it’s used by us — you in your big red Cadillac and me in my Toyota truck — although I’ve recently downgraded to a more fuel-efficient Subaru, the preferred method of transport that’s most often frosted with bike, ski and boat racks for outdoor enthusiasts across the nation.

The land and those who live off it know this arrangement breeds no symbiosis. We all want to get to, and get off on, a

body corralled and commodified. We are horses headed to the barn. Our orgasmic need for release and relief eclipses the fact that this is the living, breathing body of the Beloved — the naked desert that has been demarcated and delineated — ribbed, we believe, for our pleasure.

But you knew all this, even then — before Arches was paved and Moab became a monument to motors and muscles. You gave us warning. *Desert Solitaire* was another kind of red flag, waving wildly in the blinding, blasting wind through which we have failed to see our own tracks.

So now what? How has the land become beside the point, even as people go to such lengths there — to play on it, to make a living on it?

If we objectify, we can enjoy. To love any more deeply is to love in a way that devastates. As you said about the drowning of Glen Canyon, the most tragic of all Ophelias, “We dare not think about it for if we did we’d be eating our hearts, chewing our entrails, consuming ourselves in the fury of helpless rage. Of helpless outrage.”

We are they. The new adventure starts now. It takes place on hazardous, heartbreaking terrain, without the contagions of carbon.

No longer can we be voyeurs, catching from scenic pullouts mere glimpses of the wild, uneven territory of our collective unconscious. The hour at hand demands that we molt all that we want and believe we know. That we slither — belly to stone — into the dens and burrows of our souls.

*Excerpted from Amy Irvine’s most recent book, Desert Cabal: A New Season in the Wilderness (Torrey House Press, November 2018).*

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# What's Special About A Sunflower?

By Sawyer Hitchcock – High Country News

*I have always wanted to be as the flowers are so unhampered in their living and dying*

— D.H. Lawrence

It was four in the afternoon, and the two of us sat four barstools apart inside the Golden Spur Saloon. We were the only two people at the only bar in Magdalena, New Mexico. I'd just finished a ten-mile hike, and I was tired. "Now tell me," said the big man, "What exactly does it mean for a sunflower to be endangered? I like 'em fine, but we've got plenty of sunflowers. ... What's so special about this one? I mean, what's it good for?"

The question hung in the air for a moment — then toppled over into laughter: eager, arrogant, throaty, human. I shifted over my stool. "You mean, other than the fact that it exists?"

There was something funny about the whole situation — me, a skinny young field intern from Indiana working for a small conservation nonprofit in Socorro called Save Our Bosque Task Force, and this large man of a man, a rancher and offshore-oil drilling consultant who had recently bought a ranch in Magdalena. Here we were, just the two of us and the bartender, sharing a vegetarian pizza, drinking Guinness and whiskey mixes, discussing a special sunflower.

My mind flashed images of the previous week. The cool awe of late August desert mornings, red sweep of sun easing awake over Los Pinos Mountains. The bright, stale heat that followed inevitably each afternoon. A momentary,

shared stare with a coyote in a field of saltgrass. A muddy sense through it all of the Rio Grande less than a mile to the east, slithering vaguely along, confined to one side of a long ditch and a levee.

And the seas of sunflowers, in bright yellow bloom. These great gold swaths of what are known as common sunflowers were not the species that brought dismissive laughter to the Golden Spur Saloon. My fellow intern, Shannon, and I had spent the past week walking in circles around Pecos sunflowers. Stands of Pecos can be just as large and dense (thousands of individuals) as summer-blooming common sunflowers, but they bloom later, in September and October. We were mapping the flower's prevalence at La Joya Wildfowl Management Area, where one of only seven distinct populations of it is currently known to exist. GPS units in hand, we marched along margins of invasive saltcedar and Russian olive, through fields of wetland grasses and common sunflowers, in search of stands with the narrower, thicker, brighter green leaves of these late-bloomers.

But why? What was it all good for? In the midst of all this circling, thoughts began to circle in my mind, in a loose but urgent orbit around this rare, desert wetland-loving sunflower. *Helianthus* (Continued on next page.)



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## Highlander Nature

paradoxus — puzzle or “paradox” sunflower, as Pecos sunflower is also commonly called, perhaps owing to its insistence on finding wet soils in otherwise arid environments. If the water dries up, Pecos sunflower disappears.

I arrived in New Mexico to start this job in the middle of July amid talk of the second-lowest snowpack on record. The Rio Grande dirt-dry, in some sections as early as March. All national forest land in the north closed by the threat of wildfire. The whole state of New Mexico in varying degrees of historic drought. A climate future that will deepen these extremes, mercilessly.

Wetlands and spring seeps, or ciénegas, the type of habitat in which all known Pecos sunflower populations live and die today, were once comparatively widespread in the Southwest. Most have been severely degraded or dried up entirely in the past few hundred years. The same old story of confused over-utilization — the draining of wetlands and extensive pumping of groundwater for agricultural and city use, overgrazing and its associated erosion, encroachment by introduced invasive species — made a dry land even drier.



How much of what is frightening and uncertain about the ongoing environmental history of this region can be encircled in the bright yellow of these rare blooms?

After six months working as a crewmember on a conservation corps throughout Arizona, and three months monitoring vegetation for restoration projects along the Rio Grande, I feel a great

dizziness that arises along with the sense that I am, waveringly, coming into my own in this dry and drying land, so far from most of my childhood — now, in this age of extinction. I don’t know what the future holds for me, or for the Pecos sunflower, or for the many other creatures, human and otherwise, living in the Southwest and beyond. I do know that as I write these words in late September, not far away, fields of Pecos sunflower are blooming bright yellow, unconcerned and alive — sunny, oblivious medallions of life.

Good for nothing?

*Photo: The pecos sunflower, Helianthus paradoxus, in New Mexico. Zoe Davidson/BLM New Mexico*

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# The Rescue That Rescued Me!

My current cat Lilly was a rescue and has become the love of my life. She was already two years old when I went and got her from a great facility. Her original owners had given her up to **Angels With Paws** Cat Rescue near I-70 and Youngfield because the husband had become allergic to her. I'm not sure that was accurate, but it is possible as she may have some Persian Cat in her genetic background which makes her hair a bit longer than an average cat. There were 90 cats at the rescue when I visited them, but usually there are many more wonderful felines needing homes in the Denver Metro and surrounding areas.

I had always gotten kittens over the years from friends whose cats had litters and were trying to find homes for them. I never got to have a cat while growing up except for the occasional cat that would follow me home (actually ones I had identified as being homeless) that I used my lawn mowing money to get them spayed or neutered and find forever homes for with friends, relatives or neighbors. It wasn't until I moved away from home that I received a Siamese kitten from my cousin, she was my first real cat companion.

When I got Lilly I had just lost the only purebred cat I had ever purchased and she was a Bengal. Being only ten years old when she left this world I was devastated and vowed to not have another cat for at least a year. The very night she left I had a vivid dream about her: she came to me as a golden woman with long flowing golden hair and she adamantly said I should stop the pity party and just go get another kitty as so many were needing homes. So the next morning I went online and searched for that kitty needing a home.


At the **Angels With Paws** website I saw Lilly's profile and became interested enough to call them and tell them I wanted to come down that day and meet her. So with cat carrier in hand and a still heavy heart I went to town to meet a two-year-old tabby cat. Her paperwork at the rescue facility said she didn't like other cats and had issues with most dogs and most people. I wondered what her story had been and why she had such trust issues. They put her into a tiny viewing room that had one other cat in it and a big dog kennel on the floor. When I opened the door to the room Lilly was hiding in the corner of the dog kennel with her face to the corner. I asked a volunteer to come and remove the other cat so Lilly would come out to see me.

The door hadn't even totally shut when this little pot bellied tabby started rubbing up against my legs. I sat on the floor and she put on a show that might have won an Oscar. Purring and play biting me, rolling over on her back and lightly kicking out with her back feet – she let me play fight with her and pet her for almost an hour. I thought yep, this is the one – she needs me and I certainly need her to help me get over my grief at losing my lovely Bengal. So I paid her fees and put her in my cat carrier and we drove back home to my mountain cabin.

The minute I took her in the house and let her out of the carrier – she disappeared for nearly three months. I knew I was in it for the long haul so decided to be patient and made sure she was eating, drinking water and learned how to use the catio for her litter box. It was a struggle for both of us: me fishing her out from behind the bed to push her through the little doggy door to the catio and to show her where her food and water bowls *(Continued on next page.)*

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## Highlander Animals

were and putting her up on the windowsills so she could look outside at the birds eating from the feeders, only to have her disappear back to behind the bed upstairs.

The only departure from her months of hiding out was when I took the dog with me to go ride the horse for an hour or more. Then when we would open the door to come back into the house Lilly would be doing a 'Halloween Cat' thing in the doorway to the mudroom. Back arched up, hair standing out, yowling as if someone were standing on her tail, spitting and hissing at both the dog and me.

If it hadn't been so silly and comical it would have been sad. She was actually trying to take over the cabin as her own and telling us we could just leave again and leave her alone. *(photo here is her doing the Velcro Kitty thing)*

Finally she started coming out on the landing at the top of the stairs to the bedroom to watch us, as she had to come downstairs anyway to eat and use her catio (only she usually did that at night). While she watched I talked to her and just acted like she was one of the family, using her name and being patient by not trying to touch her or pick her up. The end game took a while but it was worth it because once she let her guard down she became one of the most loving and 'Velcro-like' kitties I've ever had. Now I can't sit down in the house most days without her trying to



sit on me and she always sleeps with me, snuggling down under the covers after she's been outside in her catio and her toes are cold. She talks to me and I never have to wonder what she's thinking as she is verbal and not shy anymore.

She lost her potbelly pretty quickly with quality cat food and her body shape changed to a healthy lean cat because she can eat as little or as much as she wants with no competition for her food. It took quite a while to teach her to take handouts of fresh chicken, fish, or bison that I

was eating – probably because she hadn't had that exposure as a kitten. She learned quickly how to walk on a leash in a harness and discover the mountain property with me in tow. It is difficult to walk a cat on a leash with an agenda as they see the world through smells and need time to sniff all the wild scents they don't get access to when indoors.

I would recommend anyone adopt a rescue cat: take a little time to do your research and spend time with them at the rescue – but most importantly let them adapt to your space at their pace. It will pay off for both of you and you'll be saving a life that will show you great gratitude for a long time, never long enough – but you can be grateful for however long you both get to be together.

*(dog watches and wishes to be a lapcat)* **By A.M. Wilks**

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# The Dark Night Of The Soul

By Frosty Wooldridge

In today's world, you face enormous challenges of time, work, family and friends. You face many toils along with trials that rise up in front of you like a blazing attack of dragons.

While you endured cliques, politics and different kinds of instability during your high school years, nothing prepared you for "life" in the adult world.

While high school and/or college provided you with intellectual tools and expertise for a job in the real world—your education failed to provide you with spiritual and emotional tools to deal with living in a community. Everybody must make a living. Every society expects citizens to contribute to the good of the neighborhood. Along the way, you discovered cold, hard bosses that cared little for your feelings. "Buck up or suck it up," they warned.

You found yourself embroiled with co-workers who played irritating games. They didn't like you because you showed a happy face. They envied your good looks or hated you for your fashion sense. You endured friends who undermined you. In a nutshell, you discovered an emotional and physical "boot camp" as the tour de force in your twenties. As you know, in the military, they make boot camp as difficult as possible to prepare you for battle.

You cried out, "Yes, but I am trying to live my life in peace and happiness. I didn't sign up for combat."

In time, life beats many people down physically, mentally and spiritually. Big cities promote a kind of emotional stress heretofore unknown in the natural world. That

tension plays out in numerous ways on our bodies and minds. Notice endless sales of painkillers, Prozac, Ritalin and dozens of other chemical solutions to our growing ailments.

Millions of people come to the "Dark night of the soul" when life piles up on them. If that occurs to you or someone you know, take heart. You might follow these five steps to bring light to the darkness.

Let go of the "why" of your circumstances. You might ask, "Why is this (whatever it may be) happening to me?" That sets up "victimization" in your mind. You can't go ten rounds with the problem. You can either wallow like a pig in the mud or you can accept your situation—and make plans to step out of the mud.

Like a buffalo in the spring, you may shed your shaggy hair that warmed you in the winter, but now, it causes great discomfort. You may choose to step out of your old ways. While your childhood ways once provided safety, shed them and move into the "new" (Continued on next page.)



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## Highlander Inner View

you with a new fresh coat of skin. Lean into life, turn frustration into fascination, if you fall, choose to fall forward.

Look for unexpected opportunities. During your walk, gallop or charge through life, depending on your personality—you may choose to slay a few dragons or go back to your cave to contemplate your options. Please realize that your greatest challenges allow you your greatest triumphs. Being fired from a job allows you an opening opportunity for a new vocation or even, you create work that fulfills you.

If you camp in the wilderness around the campfire, you sport a miner's lamp that lights the food in front of you or lights the path down to the lake. Lighten your life with "lighter" moments of a happy movie, a comedy show or participating in an event that brings you joy.

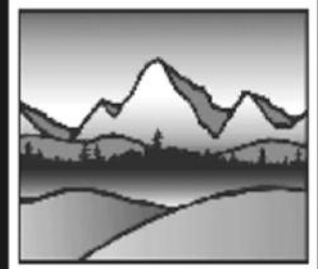
Finally, surround yourself with loved ones. If you lack a community, seek it in a "meet-up" or any of hundreds of clubs. When you face the "Dark night of the soul," it seems thicker than you can penetrate. It feels like it owns your spirit and dominates your mind. It drags your body into the



*(We each face different mountains to climb during our life journey. Frosty with friends on a hiking journey.)*

muck. By employing the aforementioned points, you will move through that dark hour. You will move into the light, the joy and the fellowship of life. Choose to make your life a blessing to you and all who surround you with love.

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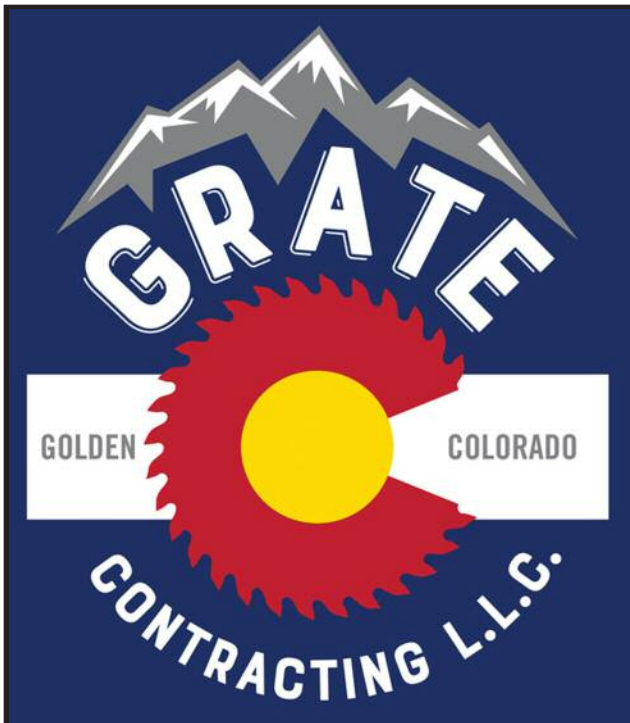
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## Take the Chill out of Winter Bills

Between holiday house guests and shorter colder days, electric bills tend to climb in the winter. Reducing household energy doesn't mean doing without or walking around your house wearing extra sweaters and earmuffs in the dead of winter. Below are some ways to save energy when the temperature drops.

### **Lower your thermostat to 68° (or lower).**

If you decrease the temperature by just one degree, you can save up to 5 percent on heating costs. Consider a Nest Learning Thermostat, which allows you to lower the temperature when away from home and increase before you come back.

**Adjust the blinds and curtains.** Keep them open to let in sunlight during the day and close them at night to keep heat inside and protect from drafts.

**Reduce hot water temperatures.** Heating water accounts for 12 percent of the average home's energy use. Set your water heater's thermostat to 120°, which is usually sufficient for a household's hot water needs.

**Seal and insulate.** This is the best way to keep heat in and cold air out. Areas that may need sealing include corners, cracks, door frames and windows.

### **Remember to close your fireplace damper (unless a fire is burning).**

Keeping the damper open is like leaving a window wide open during the winter, allowing warm air to escape through the chimney.

**Space heaters can do the trick.** If you only want to heat or supplement heating in one room, small space heaters can be less expensive to use than larger heating systems. But space heater costs can add up, so only run them in rooms that are occupied. Remember to follow safety instructions when using space heaters.



## Prepare a Winter Survival Kit

In November, United Power addressed the potential for outages due to severe winter weather. These storms often bring heavy accumulation of ice and snow, which can lead to downed power lines and extended outages. Rest assured United Power crews will work hard to restore power as quickly as possible, but having a winter survival kit on hand is a smart idea. Here are a few essentials to consider for your survival kit:

- **Food:** Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruits. Keep a large supply of water on hand. Ready.gov recommends five gallons per person.
- **Medication:** Be sure to refill all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.
- **Identification:** Keep all forms of identification hand, such as driver's licenses, photo ID cards and social security cards. Bank account information and insurance policies are also good to have on hand.
- **Other items:** First Aid Kit, blankets, warm clothing for every family member, flashlight, battery powered radio and extra batteries or battery banks.



## Summer Youth Trips

Each year, United Power offers students in its service territory the opportunity to build leadership skills through youth trips. Applications for summer youth trips are now being accepted. Learn more at [www.unitepower.com](http://www.unitepower.com).

### **2019 Youth Tour | June 13-20, 2019**

Explore Washington D.C. with students from across the country, and learn about American history and the cooperative business model while developing leadership skills.

### **2019 Youth Camp | July 13-19, 2019**

Students spend a week near Steamboat Springs learning the value of cooperative principles and developing leadership skills to model in their schools and communities back home.

**Applications Postmarked By:  
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