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Photos from top: Festivities at the 2007. Andres Marin sticks it at the 2013 Mixed Competition. Josh Wharton on his way to first place in 2010.







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PHOTO XANDER BIANCHI

COVER ART BY MIXED MEDIA ARTIST KELLIE DAY

I have been co-conspiring on the Ouray Ice Park artwork for many years, with Clint Estes at first, and the last few years with Dan Chehayl. I started off with original mixed media paintings, beginning with "Skelly", the skeleton ice climber. Then the knock-off of Klimt's "Lovers", and finally the Clint Eastwood-esque cowboy with dancing girls, a poncho and a chihuahua. This year and last we've turned to the fun of digital art.

The one theme that runs through all of our artwork over the years is twisted humor and a passion for climbing ice. I was an ice climber for many years, and now I'm a painter and Art Mentor. My son Chente is now getting me back into climbing. I've been lucky enough to make art for some really fun projects like Trader Joe's greeting cards, The North Face t-shirts, and Alpinist Magazine. You can see more of my work at kelliedayart.com.

OURAY ICE FESTIVAL
1996 2020
25th ANNIVERSARY

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Welcome

Wow! Welcome to the 25th Annual Ouray Ice Festival. It's quite an accomplishment to enjoy such long term success as the premiere event for alpinists everywhere.

In 1996, the dynamic trio of Gary Wild, Bill Whitt, and Mike O'Donnell officially established what became the beginnings of The Ouray Ice Park. It didn't take long before the idea of a celebration was proposed to the founding members. Jeff Lowe, along with Teri Ebel suggested a gathering of a small group of elite climbers and the Ouray Ice Festival was born.

The sport and art of climbing ice has evolved so much in these last 25 years. We were climbing with heavy straight shafted tools, wrists tethered. Our feet shod in clunky, plastic, double boots having the times of our lives. The Ouray Ice Park, in those early days, only went as far south as the Schoolroom, the railings and walkway were wood and our water system had no means to turn off or else the pipes would freeze. We thawed the pipes in the hot springs pool.

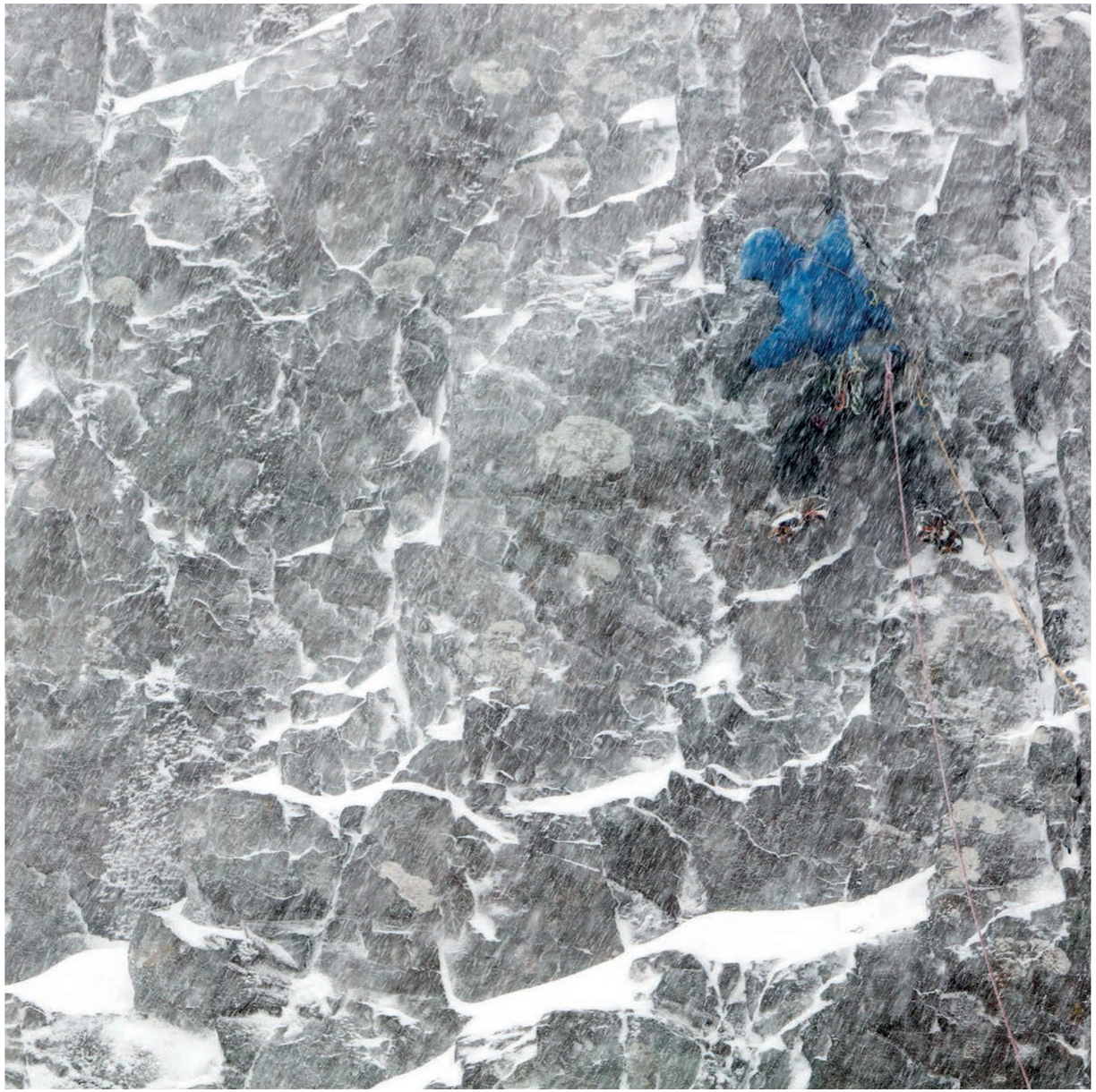
It was a rather crude system compared to the current one, but the goal remains the same. Create killer ice waterfalls. Most climbers of that era were accustomed to hiking miles into the backcountry for a few pitches of unpredictable ice, so the dream approach of getting out of your car and climbing in ten minutes was tantalizing. And now the Ouray Ice Park not only presents a training ground for experienced climbers but also provides an opportunity for new climbers to learn the sport in a safe and controlled environment.

Since its inception, the Ouray Ice Park has been free to the climbing public. Funding for the non-profit Ouray Ice Park, Inc. has been provided by our generous outdoor industry sponsors, our local business partnerships as well as with climbers who contribute annually by purchasing a membership. Looking toward the next 25 years, an ambassador program and capital improvement campaign to solve our water woes will create more funding challenges, but we are confident we are up to the task!

On behalf of the Ouray Ice Park, Inc. Board of Directors, our ice farmers and staff, we welcome you to the 25th Ouray Ice Festival! Special thanks go to the landowners, the City of Ouray and benefactor Eric Jacobson. The Park would not be possible without their support.

Over the years, when the Ouray Ice Park has enjoyed 100+ day seasons, the Ouray Ice Festival continues to be the highlight of the year. Where else could you demo out the latest gear from so many sponsors, attend amazing and inspiring presentations, learn new techniques in our clinics and watch the world renowned ice climbing competition? Please, as you enjoy the 25th Annual Ouray Ice Festival, take a moment to thank the dedicated staff and hard working volunteers that make it all possible, reflect on those that have gotten us to where we are now, and just plain marvel at the beauty of this place I'm lucky to call home.

Belay on,
Bill Leo
Board of Directors, Ouray Ice Park, Inc.



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PHOTO MIKE BORUTA

About the Ouray Ice Park

Now in its 26th year, the Ouray Ice Park is one of the most famous ice climbing venues and training grounds in the world. For three magical months each winter, it echoes with the sound of myriad languages and accents, and countless crampons kicking into ice.

Located within walking distance of downtown Ouray, Colo., the Ice Park offers more than three vertical miles of ice and mixed terrain in over 100 identified routes equipped with dozens of fixed anchors and access points, all concentrated within a one-mile span inside the Uncompahgre Gorge.

Shaded cliff faces, a municipal water supply, sub-zero overnight temperatures and a tenacious crew of ice farmers conspire to create the ribbons and curtains of steep blue ice that attract up to 13,500 adventurous souls each winter.

The Ice Park's innovative gravity-fed plumbing system has improved exponentially since its early days in the 1990s, when locals first cobbled together a system of hoses, valves, shower heads and sprayers along the rim of the Uncompahgre Gorge.

Today, using 7,500 linear feet of irrigation pipe and 250 spray nozzles, about 150,000 to 200,000 gallons of highly pressurized spring water are sprayed and dribbled on the canyon walls on a typical winter's night, creating an icy fantasy world that beckons to ice climbers of all abilities.

The Park relies on a variety of factors to operate at full capacity, including consistent cold weather and a constant water supply. Because of the inconsistency of these factors, the availability of areas and climbs open and the quality of ice can also vary. In prime time, everything is open, big fat, and blue! Sometimes, though, all the factors don't align as well, and we only have sections of the Park open while we work hard to get the rest up to par so that we can open that as well. Be sure to check the Park conditions on our website or social media before you come.

Amazingly, the Park still remains free and open for public use. It is jointly owned by the City of Ouray and a mix of other private and public landowners, and managed and operated by Ouray Ice Park, Inc. (OIPI), a non-profit organization that relies solely on memberships, sponsorships, concession fees and donations to maintain this unique world-class attraction.

There's no other place like the Ouray Ice Park in the world. So take a moment to chillax. Shake out your arms, kick in your crampons and begin your climb.



PHOTO RHYS ROBERTS

OURAY ICE FESTIVAL

ONE BIG, HAPPY FAMILY

The Ouray Ice Festival is the Ouray Ice Park's biggest event and most important fundraiser of the year. The eclectic gathering of alpinists, gear manufacturers and ice climbing enthusiasts convenes over a long weekend every January to climb, socialize, test out the latest equipment, and watch the pros power their way up the latest competition route, all the while generating more than half of the annual operating capital needed to run the Ouray Ice Park.

During daily vendor exhibitions, Festival attendees have the opportunity to demo the latest ice tools, apparel and gear from the outdoor industry's leading retailers. Hundreds of spectators line the top of the Uncompahgre Gorge to watch the world's best ice and mixed climbing talent battle for the prize. And, with over 100 interactive and educational climbing clinics to accommodate every skill level, Festival participants are sure to learn a thing or two, and have an experience to remember.

Nightly events include multimedia presentations by climbing greats, live music, food, raucous dance parties and hot tub trysts, and a live and silent auction overflowing with screaming deals on the latest outdoor gear.

Mark your calendars – the 25th Annual Ouray Ice Festival is scheduled for Jan. 23-26, 2020!



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Born from Ice

The History of the Ouray Ice Park

BY SAMANTHA TISDEL WRIGHT



PHOTO XANDER BIANCHI

When Bill Whitt moved to Ouray in 1989 at the age of 25, he was quite the oddity.

"I remember distinctly the day I moved here," he said. "It was May 1. My first house was directly across the street from the school. I had my moving van out there, and I remember at lunch time, there were all these kids out there, pinned to the fence."

Whitt was wearing a pair of pink Mossimo board shorts, and pulling his windsurfers out of the truck.

"And these kids, I could hear them saying 'He's got surfboards,'" Whitt laughed. "I turned to my wife and I'm like, 'They've got no idea these are windsurfers.' I'm like, 'Fuck. I'm doomed.'"

Soon, he'd traded all that stuff in for backcountry skis, ice tools and crampons.

As far as Whitt knows, he and fellow local Bill McTiernan were among the only guys climbing ice in Ouray back then. "We never ran into anybody – it was a full on ghost town," he said. "People knew the ice was here, but it wasn't a climbing hub."

Whitt and McTiernan had an unwritten rule back then. "We would wait 'til the day after Thanksgiving to start ice climbing, because the season lasted so long, we didn't want to get burnt out," he said.

In 1991, Whitt and attorney Gary Wild became partners in a local hotel called the Victorian Inn. Things were busy in the summer, but in the winter there was no point in even staying open.

"You could lay down on Main Street in the middle of January and not get run over," Whitt said. "It was so slow, people can't even comprehend what Ouray was like without ice climbing here. Yeah, it was dead."

So, the story goes, Whitt and Wild decided to create an ice park in Ouray to lure more visitors to town during the winter months.

For years, rogue climbers like Whitt and McTiernan had been poaching a handful of routes inside the nearby Uncompahgre Gorge where water spilled from a leaky pipeline and defunct reservoir (part of the City of Ouray's old municipal water system) and froze into climbable sheets and ribbons of ice.

"There was the main School Room slabby stuff, Tangled Up in Blue, and Stone Free way down by the Lower Bridge," Whitt recalled. "You are talking about a handful of routes that were there."

Whitt and Wild's brilliant idea was simply to divert more water to more places in the gorge, to make more ice to climb on.

"We thought if we could just get a handful of guys to come visit – anything's better than nothing – why not?" Whitt recalled. "It would help our business, and people would be spending money in the town."

But first, to get out from under the poaching dilemma, they had to solve the access issue. Much of the land skirting the Uncompahgre Gorge had recently ended up in the hands of a young hydroelectric plant operator named Eric Jacobson.

Jacobson acquired his interest in what is now the Ouray Ice Park in 1991, at the same time that Whitt and Wild were hatching their plan to start farming ice in the Uncompahgre Gorge. Jacobson was the sole pre-qualified bidder on the Ouray Hydroelectric Plant and its assets when former owner Colorado Ute went bankrupt.

For a $10 bid, Jacobson ended up not only with a century-old 830kW hydro plant on the banks of the Uncompahgre River in downtown Ouray, but also with 50 acres of land flanking the Uncompahgre Gorge, along with a 6,130-foot-long penstock (a pressure pipeline) and accompanying easement tracing the rim of the gorge, whose purpose was to deliver water from an upstream reservoir to the powerhouse's turbine-generating units.

As luck would have it, Jacobson's powerhouse in Ouray was right across the river from the Victorian Inn. And at first, when Jacobson bought the plant and got it up and running again, his cross-river neighbor Wild was none too pleased.

But soon after Jacobson had welded leaks on his penstock and kicked out the ice climbers who were flocking to the icefalls on his property, Wild showed up one day with a six-pack of beer and a friendly proposition to put the holes back in the pipe. More specifically, he proposed to install deliberate taps along its length, allowing water to drip down the steep north-facing walls of the gorge at regular intervals.

"They started drinking beers, and it was like, 'I love you, man,' and boom, it was solved. They worked it out," said Whitt. "Without that, there would never be an Ice Park."

The only problem was, the water in the penstock came straight out of the Uncompahgre River, and formed icicles that were piss orange, not sparkling blue. "They looked disgusting, so we gave that up almost immediately," Whitt said.

Instead, they looked back to the old city reservoir and its leaky pipe as a water source, cobbling together a rudimentary gravity-fed system of hoses, valves and sprinklers to deliver water to the rim of the gorge.

It was a grassroots effort personified. It was also a pain in the ass. The hoses would work great for half a night, then they'd get frozen solid. "So we'd strip the hoses, take them down to the Victorian Inn, put 'em in the hot tub, defrost them, then take them back up and hook them up again," Whitt recalled.

Jacobson remained a crucial partner in the new venture. He was by now sympathetic to ice climbers and their desire to climb on his property. His only condition was adequate liability insurance coverage provided for himself and his company. Together he and Wild helped pioneer the Colorado Recreational Users Statute which protects landowners like Jacobson from potential lawsuits from injured ice climbers and other adventures.

At first, many longtime Ouray locals looked at the icy new venture in the Uncompahgre Gorge as a boondoggle. "Everyone thought we were mental," Whit said. "They said it would never make any money and it was the stupidest thing ever. It was not well received; people thought we were off our rocker."

But Whitt, Wild and other early Ice Park pioneers plugged away at their crazy idea. Their hard work paid off. The Ouray Ice Park was officially born in 1995.

Back then, they couldn't even begin to dream of the high-tech plumbing system that exists today. It was a slow-moving evolution, from garden hose to plastic mine pipe, finally tapping into the city's water tank up the hill, which gave the system enough pressure to farm acres and acres of vertical ice.

That system has become much more sophisticated as the park has grown to span about a two-mile stretch of the gorge – the icy engine of Ouray's wintertime economy and a world-class ice climbing destination.

Through it all, Jacobson has remained a willing partner.

Today, under a unique land-use arrangement, the City of Ouray insures Jacobson and the Ouray Hydroelectric Plant under its insurance umbrella. Jacobson in turn leases recreational use of the land to the city for $1 per year. This is a foundational aspect of the Ouray Ice Park.

"There are still locals that wish we never started it," Whitt said. But he believes that the Ouray Ice Park has changed the town for the better. Not only because it revitalized the winter economy, allowing most of Ouray's hotels and businesses to stay open now year-round, but because it has brought new blood to town – young families and professionals and 20-somethings like Whitt used to be when he first came here, all attracted to the outdoor adventure lifestyle.

"It's brought a huge amount of diversity to this town," Whitt said.

Most of the kids growing up in Ouray still probably can't tell a windsurfer from a surfboard. But at least they know an ice tool from a crampon.

KEY HISTORICAL MOMENTS AT THE OURAY ICE PARK

1970s – Ouray is on the map as an ice climbing destination.

1991 – Informal development of the Ouray Ice Park begins when hoteliers Bill Whitt and Gary Wild string out an odd assortment of garden hoses and shower heads. Eric Jacobson, owner and operator of Ouray Hydroelectric, acquires the property in the Uncompahgre Gorge that comprises the southern portion of the current Ice Park as well as an easement on both sides of his penstock through the rest.

1992 – Ouray County insures Jacobson under its insurance umbrella and Jacobson in turn leases to the county the use of the land for recreational purposes for $1 per year.

1995 – The Ouray Ice Park is officially founded.

1996 – Ice climbing pioneer Jeff Lowe organizes the Arctic Wolf Ouray Ice Festival in appreciation for the expanding wealth of accessible terrain in the nascent Ouray Ice Park.

1997 – Ouray Ice Park, Inc. (OIPI) is formed to provide formal organization to what previously had been a loosely organized grassroots effort.

2001 – OIPI upgrades the Park's infrastructure and taps into overflow from the City of Ouray's water supply tank to significantly increase the ice farming effort. OIPI takes over the Ouray Ice Festival from Jeff Lowe.

2005 – Female competitor Ines Papert wins the Ice Festival's difficulty competition. The Ouray Ice Festival tops attendance records with more than 5,000 visitors and participants.

2007 – Nine new climbs, with names like Mad Dog Mack and A&W Whipper, greet visitors at the Ouray Ice Park's limited opening in December. The beginners climbs, collectively known as the Kids Wall, are named for the children of local families who have been a huge part of the development of Ice Park and Ice Festival.

2009 – OIPI signs an operating agreement with the City of Ouray, recognizing the City as the lead government agency at the Park.

2010 – Freakishly warm, wet weather in December creates hazardous climbing conditions, forcing a temporary closure of the park.

2011 – OIPI hosts the 16th Annual Ouray Ice Festival. Josh Wharton is the first competitor to win the Ouray Ice Festival competition three years in a row. Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) awards a $193,000 grant to help the City of Ouray purchase a key parcel of United States Forest Service land within the Ouray Ice Park.

2012 – The City of Ouray becomes the proud owner of 24 acres of former U.S. Forest Service land in the heart of the Ouray Ice Park. The deal, which had been 14 years in the making, gives the city greater control over the icy engine of its winter economy.

2013 – A brand-new climbing feature debuts at the 18th Annual Ouray Ice Festival. The 3.5 ton, 25-foot-tall steel climbing wall overhanging the Uncompahgre Gorge near the Lower Bridge enhances the complexity of the Elite Mixed Climbing Competition and makes it a lot more spectator friendly.

2015 – Hundreds of beetle-infested white fir trees are cut down in heavily forested portions of the Ouray Ice Park, and new engineered anchor systems are installed along the rim of the Uncompahgre Gorge.

2016 – The historic hydroelectric penstock that runs alongside the Uncompahgre Gorge suffers a spectacular blowout during the 2016 Ouray Ice Festival, spewing bright orange water down into the Uncompahgre Gorge as the Elite Mixed Climbing Competition is underway. No one is hurt.

2017 – The Ice Park shuts down six weeks early due to warm weather and water supply issues.

2017-2018 – The City of Ouray signs a new contract with OIPI to operate the Ice Park until 2023, giving OIPI full control of factors that were previously managed by other entities, and putting to rest the notion that Ice Park operations were a simple task that could fall under the umbrella of City staff.

2019 – A new via ferrata is installed inside the Uncompahgre Gorge.

2020 – OIPI plans to launch a $3 million "Our Water Our Future" capital campaign to put an end to its water woes by building the City of Ouray a new pipeline to bring more water to its tanks, creating more overflow for the Ice Park to tap into.



PHOTO JOHN LAGUARDIA



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Memories of Fests Gone By

BY CAROLINA BROWN
AND SAMANTHA TISDEL WRIGHT

Unique stories with different perspectives from the early days to more modern times at the Ouray Ice Festival all share a theme of love for the Ouray Ice Park and the Fest, along with gratitude and appreciation so many have for all the people who have made it what it is today.



PHOTO BROOK HAYER

Black Diamond Heist

Ray Markee – when he is not out fishing – is often found at one of Ouray's local bars. Markee has a long history with the Ice Park, and recalls the earliest days. He sat at the bar of the Ouray Brewery and told his favorite story, which took place at another bar where Ouray Liquors now sits.

Back then, Markee said, Black Diamond ice axes were brand new on the market and extremely rare. He remembered a guy coming into the busy bar during peak ice climbing season with one of the coveted ice axes. The bartender told him the axe was a weapon, and he would have to keep it behind the bar.

"Everyone looked the same," in all their winter gear, Markee laughed. He recalled the owner of the axe's anger when he discovered that someone else came and collected the axe as their own from the busy bartender. As far as Markee knew, the axe was never recovered, but he pitied the thief if he was ever caught.

Got Stump?

Bill Leo, owner of Ouray Mountain Sports has also been there from the very beginning, and has many fond memories, as well. He shared his stories from the back of his store on Main Street.

"I have seen a lot of people come and go, working at the Ice Park over the years. A lot of them have gone on to some great stuff," Leo said.

"I remember the time Will Gadd was trying to set the record for how many times he could climb Tangled Up in Blue in 24 hours. I think he did 180 laps."

Leo also recalled the story of the original "Got Stump?" t-shirt. The emcee for the gear auction that year, Malcolm Daly, an amputee due to a climbing accident who went on to become one of the original founders of Paradox Sports, was wearing a t-shirt with "Got Stump?" written across the front.

When the auction was supposed to be over, an audience member asked Daly to sell his "stinky, sweaty shirt."

Leo said Chris Folsom, who was known as "Stumpy" because he had lost part of his thumb due to a construction accident, bought the shirt for $150 that first year.

The next year, Folsom brought it back to be auctioned again and announced that it remained unwashed.

"We bid on the shirt to give to Warren McDonald, double amputee. It went for 1,500 bucks or something, people chipped in together. Then the third year it went for like $8,000. We finally gave it up to Paradox Sports," Leo said.

The Great Pizza Fiasco

Erin Eddy, co-owner of the Ouray Brewery, ran the Ice Park and managed the Fest from around 2000 to 2010, overseeing a time of huge growth.

"I had a really good group of people working with me. A lot of neat stuff happened for the Park infrastructure-wise," Eddy said.

Eddy's funniest memory was "the great pizza fiasco."

"It wasn't so funny at the time, but now it is," Eddy said.

That winter, the local restaurants were way underprepared for the number of people that showed up for the Fest.

"We kind of ran out of food one year and had to order all this pizza from Domino's in Montrose," Eddy laughed.

He also recalled the original, filled-to-the-brim and wild Petzl Parties at the Elk's Lodge and the Community Center. "The floors were, like, vibrating, probably way over the fire code."

Switcharoo

Monte Montepare, now a comedian and part owner of an Alaskan guide service remembered a Fest event at the Wright Opera House around 2006. He got up from where he was sitting with his climbing partner, Chris, to go to the restroom and his buddy switched seats to make it easier for him to take a seat when he returned.

Raffle ticket numbers began to be called out for swag, including an Arc'teryx jacket – "This super new, fancy - we all wanted one of these - jackets."

The number for the seat Montepare was moved to was called out, and he won the jacket.

"To kind of rub it in his face, I wore that jacket for years afterward," Montepare laughed. "But this year, I gave him that coat for his birthday."

Blowout!

Logan Tyler, former ice farmer and owner of Basecamp Bouldering, described the adrenaline rush of his most memorable event at Fest.

On the busiest day of Ice Fest 2016, the penstock which carries water through the Ice Park to the Ouray Hydroelectric Plant ruptured 200 feet up the valley from where the competition took place.

"Park's bumping, full of people," Tyler recalled. "I'm working at Fest, trying to manage everything, and someone comes up to me: 'Oh, there's a leak in the penstock.' Typically there are leaks all over the penstock so I didn't think much of it."

He and OIPI Executive Director Dan Chehayl went to take a look just in case and found a mess.

"All the water came ripping through there; we are talking like 600 gallons per minute. Rocks and mud were falling down all over the place."

"We had to drive down to the hardware store. We ran in there, grabbed bolt cutters, didn't even pay for them, jumped back in the truck and drove back up there."

Tyler switched to a snowmobile and packed in with Chehayl and a worker from the hydro plant. They screamed for people to get out of the way as they made their way to the water shut off valve, which required about 300 rotations to completely turn off the flow.

There were several people climbing in the canyon below the rupture and they had no clear direction of where they should go to escape the water.

"It was kind of chaos; some people went down, some people went up," Tyler said. "Definitely the craziest thing that I witnessed during Ice Fest."

Remarkably, No One Was Hurt

The penstock blowout was pretty crazy. But Rock and Ice editor **Duane Raleigh** may have the granddaddy Ice Fest Catastrophe Story of them all. And it's given him a healthy appreciation for the fact that all of the Ice Fest festivities are now within walking distance of town.

As Raleigh recalls, the earliest festivals were very different from today. "In the early days, we'd often climb along the Camp Bird Road because the Ice Park only had a few routes," he said.

Getting up the icy hills to the routes on Camp Bird Road wasn't a problem – even with the highway tires on his wife Lisa's sports car. "I just gunned it, not considering that I'd later have to drive down," he said.

During one of those earliest fests, Raleigh and his friend Jeff Achey had been climbing along the Camp Bird Road all day. "Back then there were maybe 200 attendees doing the routes right off the road," he said. "It was a good day. Cold, with lots of ice."

Around dusk, Achey and Raleigh headed down. About two miles from the ice routes they saw a mitten, then a stocking cap, then a gaiter in the road. They stopped and gathered these up, wondering where they had come from. Later they learned that a pickup with a camper had hit ice right there and spun, forcing open the back hatch, and spraying the gear down the road.

"We got back in Lisa's hotrod, went about a quarter mile and spun out, doing 360s down the road, alternating between going off the drop on the left, and hitting the wall on the right," Raleigh recalled. After maybe three full circles the car nosed down in a drift on the right, and stuck.

"Jeff and I got out and tried to push the car loose, but it wouldn't budge," Raleigh recalls. "That problem was solved when a pickup rounded the curve, saw us, hit the brakes and spun out, hitting Lisa's car and knocking it loose."

The little sports car now headed down the road without a driver. "I ran up and grabbed the driver's door handle, but the car just dragged me and I couldn't get the door open," Raleigh said. "I had to let go and the last I saw, Lisa's sport car shot over the edge. I figured it was gone forever."

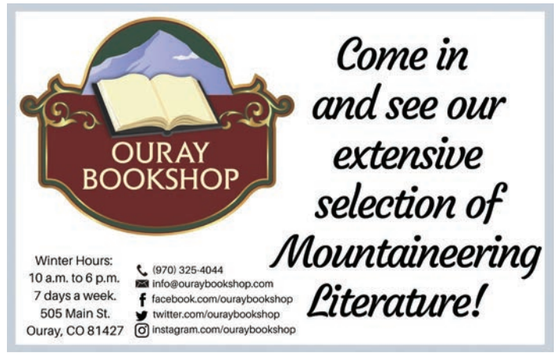
Shortly, the sheriff arrived to investigate the accident and parked in the road. "A mistake," Raleigh said. "By now it was snowing hard and while the deputy was filling out the report, another pickup full of ice climbers rounded the blind corner, saw the sheriff's car, hit the brakes and not only spun out, but flipped over onto its roof. That pickup scraped upside-down the road, sparks flying, and ground to a stop not 20 feet from where we all stood."

The driver and two passengers, upside down in their seats, kicked the doors open and, dazed, spilled out. Raleigh and Achey then heard a commotion in the back of the pickup, and watched as the hatch to the camper opened and several climbers fell out onto the road.

"They were crazy with fear," Raleigh recalled. "Being unable to see what was happening, they only knew that the truck had rolled them in it and expected death at any moment."

Remarkably, no one was hurt.

"The deputy finished his report and the next day, Jeff and I went back to investigate Lisa's car," Raleigh said. "Turned out it had dropped maybe 100 feet, but landed wheels-first in about 10 feet of snow. We shoveled it out, and shoveled out a driveway. After a bit of cranking, the car started right up, and we drove back home."







Landmarks of the Ouray Ice Park



Hydro Dam, Penstock & Trestle – Infrastructure associated with the historic Federal Energy Regulatory Commission-regulated hydroelectric facility that runs right through the middle of the Ouray Ice Park. The power plant itself is located in downtown Ouray but its infrastructure includes a dam at the south end of the Ice Park, and a 6,130-foot-long pressure pipeline, or penstock, with an accompanying easement that stretches right through the core of the Ice Park.

Upper Bridge and Lower Bridge – Two bridges spanning the Uncompahgre Gorge that provide key access and convenient viewing platforms for the central part of the Ouray Ice Park.

Uncompahgre River – The yellowish-brownish-orange-ish-greenish water of the Uncompahgre River trickles through the guts of the Ouray Ice Park throughout the winter. Although it freezes over in spots, plenty of ice tools have been lost to "the drink" over the years. In parts of the canyon where the river does not freeze, Ice Park employees set up ladders and boards to offer safe access to the bottoms of the climbs.



Dick's Chalet – Named for Dick Fowler, a longtime friend of the Ouray Ice Park who passed away in 2009, Dick's Chalet is a simple hut-like structure tucked into the woods overlooking the Uncompahgre Gorge near the Upper Bridge. Come in on weekends to buy Ice Park memberships and merchandise like hoodies and tees. "Mr. Dick" was an iconic Ouray character, spanning the old and the new as effortlessly as he spun tales from his stool of honor at the Buen Tiempo restaurant. A former operator of Ouray's historic hydro plant, Fowler helped build the very first catwalk at the Ice Park in the early 1990s.

Powder House – A quonset-hut-shaped rock structure near the Lower Bridge that once served as an explosives magazine and is now Ice Farmer headquarters.



Kids Wall – The Kids Wall, located near the Upper Bridge alongside the Camp Bird Road, features a dozen beginner-friendly climbs on a modest slope above the Uncompahgre Gorge. Anchors made of a combination of bolts, chain and trees can be accessed via a recently improved marked trail on the southwest side of the 30- to 40-foot climbs named for local kids whose families have been integrally involved in the development of the park.

Memorial Kiosk – Also near the Upper Bridge, on the very brink of the Uncompahgre Gorge, is the Memorial Kiosk, created by Ouray metal artist Jeff Skoloda. It features lattice work designed to look like wind-blown rope tangled around the structure, with engraved name plates memorializing fallen friends of the Ouray Ice Park. Two granite benches inside the kiosk overlook the Kids Wall, and a compass rose embedded in the floor displays mile markers for favorite climbing mountains around the world.

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OURAY ON A SNOWY NIGHT IN 2016. PHOTO BRYCE BRADFORD COURTESY OF THE OURAY CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION

About Ouray

Ouray – the self-declared "Most Majestic, Kick-Ax Place to Ice Climb on the Planet" – nestles like a sparkling jewel in the heart of the San Juan Mountains with outdoor adventures beckoning in all directions and natural hot springs to soothe your aching muscles when the day is done.

Ouray takes its name from the Ute leader Chief Ouray, whose people frequented the area's sacred healing waters for centuries before miners swarmed the region in the 1870s. Once a bustling mining camp, Ouray has since been transformed into an outdoor enthusiast's wonderland of delights, with a tempting menu of human-powered adventures including cross-country and backcountry skiing, hiking, canyoning, mountaineering, rock-climbing, mountain biking, and of course, scaling frozen waterfalls at the Ouray Ice Park.

As unpretentious as it is charming, the entire town is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, with architectural landmarks like the Wright Opera House and Beaumont Hotel, both dating back to the 1880s.

WHERE TO PLAY

Backcountry Ice Climbing – Beyond the Ice Park, the surrounding San Juan Mountains are home to one of the greatest concentrations of water ice climbs in North America. Steep relief and deep shady gorges provide a superb venue for backcountry ice climbing routes. One great place to give it a try is the Skylight area near the Camp Bird Mine up County Road 361, several miles past the Ice Park. The road is plowed throughout the winter, and open to the public (conditions permitting) as far as Senator Gulch, where there is a gate and a public parking area. The Skylight climbs are a short walk up the road from there. Be sure to check for avalanche conditions before you go. A shuttle service to Skylight is available through Western Slope Rides. gowsr.com

Hut Skiing – Five backcountry huts dot the northern flanks of the 14,000-ft. Sneffels range from Ouray to Ridgway to Telluride, offering access to a network of over 60 miles of backcountry and Nordic trails that together comprise the San Juan Hut System. Hit one hut at a time, or connect the dots in a tour that can cover between four and 11 miles per day. Other options to try include St. Paul Lodge, Opus Hut and the brand new Red Mountain Alpine Lodge near Red Mountain Pass.

Nordic Skiing – Seven miles south of Ouray along US 550/ Red Mountain Pass, Ironton Park offers a free, well-maintained Nordic trail system on relatively flat terrain that winds through a ghost town and old mining ruins. Closer to town, the 2.5 mile Ouray River Trail system is also groomed for Nordic skiers, conditions permitting. Top of the Pines, near Ridgway, has spectacular vistas of the Sneffels Range and five miles of winter trails groomed for Nordic skating and classic flat-track skiing when it snows (small user fee required). ouraynordic.org, topofthepines.org, ouraytrails.org

Alpine & Heli Skiing – About an hour's drive from Ouray, the highly acclaimed Telluride Ski Resort offers mountains of fun for skiers, snowboarders and backcountry enthusiasts, with over 2,000 acres of beginner, intermediate and advanced skiing terrain. Revelation Bowl offers lift-served backcountry skiing, while the Surge Air Garden is a snowboarder's playground of berms, banks, tabletops, pyramids and a competition-sized halfpipe. Telluride Helitrax and Silverton Mountain both provide Heli Skiing and Heli Boarding adventures in the San Juans. tellurideskiresort.com, helitrax.com, silvertonmountain.com

WHERE TO SOAK

Ouray Hot Springs Pool & Fitness Center – Ouray's historic outdoor hot springs pool has recently undergone extensive renovations, making the hot soaking section twice as nice after a day on the ice. $18/day for adults, $12/day for kids 12 & under. Open Monday-Friday (12 p.m.-9 p.m.) Saturday/Sunday (11 a.m.-9 p.m.) Fitness Center open from 12-9 p.m. seven days a week. Present a current Ouray Ice Park membership card and receive 20% off on daily admission prices while the Ice Park is open. (1220 Main St., Ouray; 970/325-7073; ourayhotsprings.com)

Orvis Hot Springs – This small, clothing-optional facility just south of Ridgway offers a variety of indoor and outdoor soaking areas, including a natural outdoor pond where geothermal spring water bubbles up out of a meadow in the shadow of 14,150 ft. Mt. Sneffels. Try the "lobster pot" if you're feeling brave. Open daily 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Overnight lodging and massage available onsite. Overnight guests have 24-hour access to the pools. (1585 County Road 3, Ridgway; 970/626-5324; orvishotsprings.com)

Wiesbaden Hot Springs Spa – The Historic Wiesbaden Hot Springs Spa, on a quiet side street in Ouray, sits directly over the emanation points of several natural hot springs. Enter the spa's underground vapor cave and soaking pool for a dark, steamy, otherworldly soaking experience. Outside, enjoy a small hot springs swimming pool with pure untreated water, and the "Lorelei," a secluded outdoor soaking pool available by reservation only. Overnight lodging and a full range of spa treatments are offered. (625 5th St, Ouray; 970/325-4347; wiesbadenhotsprings.com)

Winter Hiking – The Ouray Perimeter Trail loops around Ouray, taking in Ouray's greatest hits such as Cascade Falls, the Amphitheater, Ouray Ice Park and Box Canyon Falls, while providing beautiful vistas of the town and surrounding peaks. Much of the trail remains boot-packed or snow-free throughout the winter season. There are numerous access points along the trail, so the entire five-mile loop does not have to be completed all at once; pick and choose which segments you want to do. The Ouray Ice Park trail, typically accessed from Camp Bird Road (County Road 361) just uphill from the Upper Bridge at the Ice Park, has been incorporated into the Ouray Perimeter Trail system, and offers an insider's glimpse of the Ice Park – no crampons required. ouraytrails.org/city-ouray-trails/perimeter-trail

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PHOTO RHYS ROBERTS

The Ouray Ice Festival Turns 25

(My, how we've grown.)

BY SAMANTHA TISDEL WRIGHT

On Martin Luther King weekend in 1996, pioneer ice climber Jeff Lowe organized the Arctic Wolf Ouray Ice Festival in appreciation of the expanding wealth of accessible terrain in the nascent Ouray Ice Park.

Vince Anderson was there. As he remembers that first little festling, only half the people who showed up to climb were wearing helmets. Some wore baseball cap backwards as they scaled the ice with axes leashed to their wrists.

"And Jeff did this thing under the bridge that was like – whoa – we are watching a real person take real risks," Anderson recalled. "That was the real deal."

Elsewhere in the Park, Duncan Ferguson soloed Duncan's Delight with a rope that wasn't thick enough. And a guy from Salt Lake City decided to solo Le Pissoir, a steep climb under the bridge, and barely made it out alive.

That was then. This year – seemingly in a puff of smoke – the Ouray Ice Festival turns 25. And my, how it's grown from those humble (some would say sketchy) beginnings.

Over the past quarter-century, the Ouray Ice Festival has matured into the premier event of its kind, transforming the climbing industry and invigorating the City of Ouray's wintertime economy, while giving the climbing community an awesome annual excuse to gather.

The Ice Fest's longtime sponsors look on at these accomplishments with avuncular pride, and are stoked to take part in their favorite Ice Fest's 25th birthday bash.

After all, over the years, the sponsors have done a lot more for the Fest than just setting up booths, demoing jackets and boots, and bringing in athletes to teach the clinics each year. They have also played an integral role in nurturing the Ice Fest's unique culture and fostering its close-knit, yet far-flung international community.

Ouray Ice Festival title sponsors Rock and Ice magazine and Asolo have been there pretty much since the beginning, and have witnessed the Fest's dramatic transformation first-hand.

"The Festival has evolved, going from a few shaggy ice climbers in the 1990s to thousands of climbers – young and old, male and female, hardcore and recreational," said Rock and Ice editor Duane Raleigh, who has attended every Ice Fest except for one. (He nearly lost his life when his car hit a steep icy patch on the Camp Bird Road, one of those very first years.) "Back then, we couldn't imagine the scale of the park today, or the numbers of people who would attend. Back then, a hundred climbers was a big festival."

Like Raleigh, Asolo President Bruce Franks has also only missed one Fest in 25 years. (He had to sit that one out due to a broken foot.)

Franks, too, has been stunned and delighted at the success of the annual event.

"And the reason for that success is everyone who contributes to it," he said. "The town, the Ice Park board and Ice Fest committees that are so interconnected, the volunteers that help work and support the event, and the vendors that spend money and send staff and people to participate. Lastly, all the people that come for spectating and climbing and competing. It's a really good example of a community effort that is successful."

Both the gear industry and the climbing community are better off for this collective effort, Franks said – because the money generated through the Ice Fest is pushed right back into the Park.

"More routes are opened, more safety features are built, there is more enhancement of talent and gear, and more climbs and trails," Franks said. "The success of the fest over the years has made a higher quality Park with excellent standards. Is that helpful for the industry? Absolutely."

Raleigh agrees that the relationship between the Ice Fest and its sponsors is fundamentally symbiotic. In his case, "Rock and Ice spreads the word about the festival through its print magazine, website and social channels, and the Festival generously distributes free copies of the winter issue, letting us reach an important target user group," he said.

As the Ice Fest's Official Apparel Sponsor, Rab's relationship with the Ice Fest is essential to its business model.

"Climbing in general has become significantly more accessible to the average outdoor user over the past decade, but ice climbing has remained a bit more elusive due to equipment costs, lack of familiarity, and other issues," Rab's US Country Manager John Frederick noted. "The Ouray Ice Park and Fest have been the pioneers in changing this and have exposed thousands of new users to the sport, which makes for new ice climbers who are then looking to purchase gear and clothing."

The majority of Rab's product development is focused on technical apparel, "which aligns the brand more closely with the Ouray Ice Park and its mission," Frederick said. "We need the Ouray Ice Park and the Ouray Ice Festival to succeed and grow for our business model to be sustainable."

> **"The Festival has evolved, going from a few shaggy ice climbers in the 1990s to thousands of climbers – young and old, male and female, hardcore and recreational."**
>
> *– Rock and Ice* editor Duane Raleigh

Setting up and staffing a booth in freezing, blustery weather on the rim of the Uncompahgre Gorge is hard work, but for the Ice Fest sponsors, attending the Fest is much more than just another day on the job.

"I look forward to catching up with friends from around the country and around the world," Frederick said. "I love being in Ouray as it is such a rad town, and I also love Ice Park laps. Ice climbing in the real world is such a committing and serious sport, it feels like cheating to run up a bunch of top-rope laps in the park, but I absolutely love it."

For Franks, the Fest is about community – something the world is sorely lacking in these days. "It's a reunion of climbers and volunteers, and in some ways a reunion of spectators," he said. "That community spirit is inherent to the Ice Fest, and is the most interesting thing to look forward to each year."

As the Ouray Ice Festival community continues to evolve and grow, Franks is especially excited about the very young crop of climbers that are coming up through the ranks in the competitions – tangible evidence of the future of the sport, the industry, and the Ice Park.

Longtime sponsors are also achingly aware of the Ice Park's vulnerabilities in the face of climate change and potential overuse.

"I think the Park will continue to get more popular, and I worry that global warming will shorten the season even to the point where some years there might not be ice at all," Raleigh said.

Frederick sees the partnership that the Ouray Ice Park is forming with the City of Ouray to formally share water resources as a critical step toward the sustainability of the Park and Fest. "Water is such an obvious challenge and once this is secured, I think it will give the OIP team some extra bandwidth to re-think some things and keep the event and venue fresh," he said.

Franks – perhaps the Ice Fest's staunchest supporter and biggest fan – has high hopes for the future of the Fest, as long as the community that birthed it all those years ago stays actively involved.

"It's gone on for 25 years, and can it be done for another 25 years? Sure it can," he said. "I am very optimistic about the future of both the Ice Park and the Ice Festival. And we are all a part of its success. And if it goes the other way, we are all going to be a part of that, too. It's up to us."

What's New at the Ouray Ice Park

The 2019/2020 season ushers in some exciting changes at the Ouray Ice Park, as we continue to work toward ensuring a sustainable future for the Park, while honoring our long-standing commitment to operate, fund and manage this invaluable resource.



ENGINEER CHRIS HAALAND WORKING OUT THE FINAL TYROLEAN PLACEMENT AT THE BI-POLAR SPIRE.

Introducing the Ouray Via Ferrata

Telluride has one. Jackson Hole has one. The Royal Gorge has one, and now, the Ouray Ice Park has one too!

The long-awaited Ouray Via Ferrata, located on the sunny side of the Uncompahgre Gorge across the creek from the Ouray Ice Park, is now 99 percent complete and slated to open to the public next summer.

Via ferrata (Italian for "iron way") were originally developed in the Italian Alps during World War I to facilitate troop movements through the mountains. Routes are equipped with anchored steel cables and iron rungs on sheer terrain that would otherwise be inaccessible to people without technical rock climbing experience.

"I like to say, it is kind of a gateway drug to climbing," said OVF cofounder Mark Iuppenlatz.

The Ouray Via Ferrata begins off the Ice Park Loop trail at the south end of New Funtier. The route crosses the Uncompahgre River via a cable suspension bridge (to be installed next spring), continues north (downstream) for about a kilometer along the sheer cliffs and crags of the Uncompahgre Gorge, and ends just past the Upper Bridge.

> The OVF ... does intersect with a few good sport climbs ... making it possible to do the Via to that point and then rock climb out.

The unique and varied one-way route was designed, implemented, and installed by local climbing professionals and engineers, including several ice farmers. It features sections of narrow rock ledge, rungs across blank rock sections, climbing and descending sections that go straight up or straight down, and cable traverses – all protected by 3,800 feet of continuous safety cable.

Traditional European-style via ferrata are all cable and rung, with artificial holds throughout their length. But Ouray's new route is more of a mixed course. "It was put in by climbers, so wherever there was a good natural-feature handhold or foothold, they would skip the rungs," Iuppenlatz said. "There are places where you feel like you are rock climbing between sections."

The course's grand finale occurs at a feature called the Bi-Polar Spire, an isolated spire deep in the Uncompahgre Gorge directly below the iconic winter ice climbs Duncan's Delight and Pic of the Vic near the Upper Bridge. The spire is reached via a Tyrolean traverse – a fixed line crossing the creek. Visitors climb up rungs and spiral around to the back side of spire then follow a cable suspension bridge back to the canyon wall, finishing just below the Upper Bridge at the viewing platform.

While the OVF shares some terrain and infrastructure with the Ouray Ice Park, it was purposely sited to avoid conflict with ice climbers and existing mixed climbing routes inside the gorge. It does intersect with a few good sport climbs, however, making it possible to do the Via to that point and then rock climb out.

Work on the OVF will wrap up next spring after the 2019-2020 Ouray Ice Park season, and it should be ready to open by May 1, 2020. The route will remain open from May through October, and will be free to the public, just like the Ouray Ice Park. Guiding outfitters who take clients there will pay a percentage of their guiding fee to the newly formed nonprofit Friends of the Ouray Via Ferrata to help with maintenance costs.

"This is a way to create sustainable human-powered activity that is great for the town and fun for people to do," said Iuppenlatz. "It's a way for us to keep our economy balanced. It provides a human-powered alternative to ATVs. We are excited about it and we think it will be really popular." Learn more at ourayviaferrata.org and follow the project on Instagram @ourayviaferrata.



THE "COLORADO'S KINGDOM OF ICE" DISPLAY AT DIA.

"I" is for Ice Climbing

If you happen to be traveling through Denver International Airport on your way to or from Ouray this season, be sure to check out the Ouray Ice Park's display booth, installed on Nov. 18 as part of a "Colorado Nonprofits A-Z" exhibit located on the way to the Frontier Terminal.

The Ouray Ice Park was chosen to represent the letter "I". Our story and stoke will be on full display through Jan. 2020 for the world to see – along with a pair of boots, some axes and crampons.

Yeti Love

While you're in Denver, look for a billboard featuring a big white Yeti cooler with 30 stickers on it. The middle sticker at the very top features the Ouray Ice Park. Yeti is one of the Ouray Ice Festival's newer official sponsors. What could be cooler?

Road to Ouray in 2021

Speaking of sponsors, look for the "Road to Ouray" promotion leading up to the 2021 Ouray Ice Fest next year. The national promotion headed up by Rab and other Ouray Ice Fest sponsors will go live in October and November 2020. The promotion will be advertised via print and digital media and will promote the Ouray Ice Park as well as the chance to win an all-expenses paid trip for two to the Ouray Ice Festival – including VIP all-access tickets, flights, lodging, clinics with sponsored athletes and a full kit of ice climbing gear.



VOLUNTEERS AT THE 2019 LOVE YOUR GORGE EVENT.

Love Your Gorge

Fifteen rugged and raucous volunteers joined organizers from the Ouray Ice Park and Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership on Sept. 29 to help restore the natural resources in the Uncompahgre Gorge, at the second annual Love Your Gorge event.

During the inaugural Love Your Gorge in 2018, volunteers began cleaning up historic mining, railroad and industrial debris scattered throughout the gorge. This year, we wrapped that project up, dug up some invasive weeds, and headed off some emerging erosion issues at a few anchor pads around the top of the gorge.

This awesome annual event is collaboratively led by Ouray Ice Park, Inc. and the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership. It is partially funded by the Frank L. Massard Trust, and affiliated with American Rivers National River Cleanup and Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Cleanup. Join us next year!

Ecological Assessment and Stewardship Plan

Over the past few years, OIPI has been working with Adkins Consulting, Inc., a Durango-based environmental consulting company, to develop an Ecosystem Assessment and Stewardship Plan for the entire west side of the Uncompahgre Gorge.

The plan will help us sustainably manage the forests, soils and waters in and around the Park, and was funded through the American Alpine Club's Cornerstone Conservation Grant program, powered by REI.

Adkins Consulting got the job because they were by far the most environmentally conscientious applicant of the bunch. Plus, our consultant Sarah McCloskey climbs at the Ice Park.

A few of McCloskey's takeaways: the Ice Park has small infestations of several different kinds of noxious weeds and invasive plant species, including burdock, bull thistle, cheatgrass and ox-eye daisy. Beetle kill, defoliation, disease, wildfire, prolonged drought and climate change have already altered – or have the potential to significantly alter – the nature of the forest landscape within and around the Park. The fir engraver beetle has been the most prevalent species contributing to an extensive die-off of drought-stressed white fir trees over the course of the last decade.

On the bright side, McCloskey identified hundreds of thriving native plant species and either observed or heard 22 different bird species in the Park, including one turkey vulture, seven warbling vireo and 12 rare black swifts.

OIPI Takes Over Commercial Guide Concession

Anyone who has been around the Ice Park for a while probably knows that in the past, the Park's commercial guiding concession was run by San Juan Mountain Guides.

This year, that long-standing tradition comes to an end, as Ouray Ice Park, Inc. takes full control of the commercial guiding concession program. (We also introduced a new concession last year to regulate and manage group use in the Park by tax-exempt organizations like schools and climbing clubs.)

For the 2019/2020 season, OIPI plans to manage the commercial concession much like the previous concessionaire San Juan Mountain Guides did in the past. Guiding Operators can request how many service days they want in the coming season. There are 600 total days allotted to the Guiding Operators, and 300 of those go to San Juan Mountain Guides. The remaining days are divided among nine other companies.

We feel this new arrangement is better for the Park overall, and we pushed hard to get it in our new five-year agreement with the City of Ouray. Has there been some pushback? Sure there was, at first, but most of our guides and group leaders have gotten to a point of acceptance that this is what we need to do to manage the incredible resource that is the Ouray Ice Park in a way that is as fair and enjoyable as possible – for all concerned.

IGE and commercial concession fees ($15 per person per day on weekends and holidays and $12 during the midweek) go directly toward funding OIPI's Ice Park Ambassador Program, now in its third year.

Ambassador Program Expands to 7 Days a Week

We have upped our Ice Park Ambassador program for the 2019-2020 climbing season to include four Ambassadors, working in teams of two: Pete Davis with Andrew Smsyer and Alma Sophie with Sarah Haubert, to allow for an Ambassador presence at the Ice Park every day, all week, all season long. Our Ambassador team from the 2018-2019 Season has split up, with Tres Barbatelli shifting to our ice farming crew and Andrew Humphreys heading to New Zealand for the winter to lead canyoning trips...good luck Andrew!

Ice Park Ambassadors interact with user groups in the park, talking about rules, sharing beta and collecting data. This is a huge challenge in a park that has no definitive point of entry, and where people are constantly moving around in conditions that are often windy or snowy.

"You have got to know when, where and how to do it, and we are still figuring that out," said OIPI Executive Director Dan Chehayl. "The data we have collected over the last two years is still a work in progress, but with our ambassadors out in the park every day this season, we are hoping to close out the 2019-20 season with a more complete data set to more effectively evaluate whether or not any management changes need to be considered for guided activities and allocations."

"We want this ambassador program to be successful," Chehayl added, "but retention has been a challenge over the past few years, so we have been brainstorming some new ways to structure the program to make it more sustainable."

Ideally, that might look like three or

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four staff ambassadors, working a Monday-Friday schedule, plus a pool of volunteer ambassadors on the weekends, managed by one staffer. This scenario would give the Ice Park's amazing volunteer community the opportunity to get more involved in operations at the Park. The program would be structured like volunteer ski patrols, with paid staffers and volunteers depending on each other to create a successful program.

In the meantime, "We're pretty excited about what we have settled with this year though – two awesome teams with Alma and Sarah and Pete and Andrew!" Chehayl said.

Our Water, Our Future

Farming ice requires three essential raw ingredients: steep terrain, freezing nights, and a plentiful, reliable source of water.

The Ouray Ice Park has always had the first ingredient in abundance, and we are generally blessed with enough cold nights to grow our winter crop. But the third ingredient – water – has recently been in short supply.

That's because the Park's primary water source – overflow from the City of Ouray's nearby municipal water storage tanks – has become less reliable in recent years, due in part to leaks in the aging pipeline that funnels water to the tanks from Weehawken Spring, a few miles further up Canyon Creek.

If we don't get enough water, we can't farm enough ice. And that's a really big problem for the Ice Park and all the people that depend on it.

Big problems require big solutions. So OIPI has hired Mike Neustedter, the former executive director at Paradox Sports and the Crested Butte Adaptive Sports Center, to head up a four-year, $3 million capital campaign to finance a joint venture between OIPI and the City of Ouray that will hopefully put the Ice Park's water woes to rest, once and for all.

The plan is to build and buy the City a new pipeline that taps into an existing but currently unused water right and deliver that new source of water right to the City's potable water intake, treatment and storage system. This will greatly increase the City's water supply – and in turn, OIPI's water supply, since we depend on the runoff.

Working closely with the City of Ouray, we will emerge from the project with an actual guarantee that OIPI will get one cubic foot per second of water (well over half-a-million gallons daily) from November through February.

We believe this will lead to bigger, thicker ice, a more complete Park opening, and more sustainable, longer-lasting, higher-quality ice throughout the season. And of course, more ice means less crowding. What's not to like about that?

Learn more about OIPI's Our Water Our Future Capital Campaign at a presentation at the Wright Opera House during the Ouray Ice Festival on Sunday, Jan. 26. and at ourayicepark.com/ourwaterourfuture. (See Pg. 56.)


PHOTO LIZZIE TILLES

LOGAN AND BECCA

Changing of the Guard

After five years of working at the Ouray Ice Park, our indispensable right-hand man Logan Tyler has moved on. Logan, a Ouray native, got his start at the Ice Park as an ice farmer and shovel slave and quickly worked his way up the chain of command to become the operations manager, a position he held for three years.

Logan was like a wizard with low water supplies, always figuring out ways to make lots of ice happen. He will stay on as a consultant this year, but his main focus will be running his new business venture, Basecamp Bouldering, a hybrid climbing gym, gear store, and favorite new locals hangout located next to the Wright Opera House in downtown Ouray. Besides his new business venture, Logan also got married last summer above the Kid's Wall at the Ice Park. Congrats, Logan and Becca!

Our excellent ice farming team is also in flux. All three of our full-time veteran ice farmers, Xander Bianchi, Lucas Carrion and Justin Hofmann, plan to move on to new adventures in early 2020, but will remain at the Park through the first half of this winter climbing season to help train their replacements, Tim Foulkes and Tres Barbatelli, (bios on Pg. 32-33), and to collaboratively write our first-ever operations manual.

This year we also said goodbye to OIPI Administrative Coordinator Mairi Humphreys – who played a vital role in implementing our new Institutional Group Event (IGE) concession last year – and hello to two new administrative staffers, Bayley Wood and Carolina Brown. Meet them on Pg. 32-33.







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Ice Park Etiquette

BY DAN CHEHAYL
OURAY ICE PARK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PHOTO BROOK HAYER

Just like on the ski slopes or your local biking and hiking trails, there are some basic steps you can take here at the Ouray Ice Park that will make your experience and that of everyone around you a better one and fair for all.

Following the Ouray Ice Park rules is the perfect place to start! The Park doesn't open until 8 a.m. on weekdays and 7:30 a.m. on weekends, and it always closes at 4 p.m. Always wear crampons and a helmet in climber-only areas and while in the gorge, and please remember that there are no dogs allowed in the Gorge.

There is no reserving of anchors and there are no unattended ropes allowed. Basically, if you are not climbing on a rope, or using an anchor, even for a couple of minutes, you should take it down so that others can enjoy that climb. Closed climbs and areas are closed for a reason, so please respect these closures at all times. Closed areas are clearly marked with bamboo, poly rope and signage.

Please set up only the number of routes you can efficiently use. For example, a party of two should only have one rope set up at a time. You are required to be moving onto a new route at least every three hours. If you are planning on leading a route, you should have the anchor at the top of that route occupied so other climbers know that you are below and climbing. If you see an anchor with no rope on it, there is a potential that someone is leading the route below it. Soloing is discouraged.

Kids have ultimate priority to routes on the Kid's Wall. If any arrive and wish to climb, you must yield your route to their climbing party, immediately.

For your own safety, it is a good idea to always be alert and aware of climbers near you. Keep your head up, and never turn your back to the ice. Belayers should always position themselves in an area where they are out of the line of fire from falling ice. While you are climbing, whenever you knock loose a piece of ice you should be yelling "ICE!" to alert all of those around you to the potential danger, and never throw the ice to one side or the other. Instead, let it drop below you.

Knocking ice down for the sake of knocking it down is frowned upon. The ice farmers are working hard to build that ice and get it to connect to the rest of the climb. Instead of knocking it down, try to climb around it, or try another climb. If something seems particularly hazardous, let the pros take care of it; alert an Ambassador in the Park, and they will let an ice farmer know.

Another thing to keep in mind is the proximity of yourself to other climbers. If someone is way up on a route and your rope is nearby, you should probably wait until they return to the ground until you start your ascent to minimize the potential of you getting hit by their ice chunks. This is also true when a climber is down low on a route and you are in the same proximity as them, where you will be lowering from the top; wait until they get back up to avoid knocking ice down on them. Often times climbing side by side is a convenient way to address the previous two situations.

For a safer, more fun experience, communication with those around you, even if you don't know them, is the key! Take a second to say hello, and share need-to-know plans with those who are climbing in your vicinity. The Ouray Ice Park welcomes climbers and people of all types, from all backgrounds, good vibes only please!

There are many different styles of climbing, belaying, and setting anchors – if someone is doing something different than you are used to, that doesn't mean it is wrong. If you are very concerned for their safety or yours, either contact the Ouray Ice Park staff or politely have a conversation with them.

Please use the outhouses and porta-potties to relieve yourself. If you do take a pee in the Park, kick some snow over it and do so away from the ice, anchors and any other Park infrastructure. Smokers, please be aware of and respect those around you.

Outside of Fest, parking is only allowed in town, at the turn on County Road 361 between the rescue barn and the upper bridge, or at the large parking area located inside the big turn on U.S. Highway 550 across from the Five Fingers area. Drop-offs in any area other than the two parking lots are not allowed; the ice farmers and staff need this clear access to the Park. The only exceptions to this are for handicap visitors to the park. During Fest, parking is only allowed in town. Use a shuttle or walk, please.

Remember you are in Ouray and we are all at the Park to enjoy and challenge ourselves. Be happy, say hello, and watch out for each other. Together we can make everyone's experience one to remember for a lifetime! #getyouraxeingear #itsallniceonice

Here's to winter!

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT

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TECH TALK

Bolting

BY XANDER BIANCHI







Bolts are always bomber, right? Clip it and forget it? Obviously, I'm teeing this one up here. The reality of bolts is that there are a lot of unknowns: Who placed it? When? What kind of bolt? What's the quality of the rock? Did the bolter plan on this anchor being used for more than 10 years? And so on. The bottom line is, bolts aren't always bombproof.

The use of construction anchors (i.e. expansion bolts) for recreational climbing really exploded in the late '80s and early '90s. Route developers usually ranged from the penniless dirtbag to, well, the dirtbag who could sometimes afford the Starkist tuna brand in pouches rather than cans. What I'm saying is, the climbers who were first exploring the use of bolts for protection weren't exactly splurging for the best equipment, let alone the materials appropriate for local geology and weather.

Oftentimes, developers would scrape together a mix-and-match kit from the local hardware store, the climbing shop, and Bob the welder's backyard fabrication shed. As the years have gone by, the level of knowledge and care in the hands of route developers has generally increased, but by no means is there any standard to which they all agree to adhere. It's still quite the free-for-all.

So, how can we determine if a bolt is in good standing? There are a few obvious things to look out for. One of the most common indicators is corrosion, which is visible in the form of rust when the iron in fixed steel hardware reacts with oxygen. This chemical process can be accelerated in a number of ways, including exposure to water, heat, and some less obvious ones: electric current, and crevices.

An often-made mistake in bolting practice is to mix different metals. For example, using a stainless steel bolt with a carbon steel hanger. This kind of mismatch can produce something called galvanic corrosion, where the two metals exchange electrons to resolve their unequal electrode potentials – with a little help from an electrolyte such as mineralized groundwater. Crevices are also an issue. If this same groundwater (carrying salts and chlorides) becomes trapped in concentrated areas around the hardware, the mineral content can greatly accelerate corrosion. Think threads and spaces between the wedge and sleeve of expansion bolts. Internal deterioration due to crevice corrosion is especially troublesome because we can't see what's going on in there.

We have a wide variety of bolts in the Ouray Ice Park, placed by many different volunteers and staff throughout the Park's two-decade-plus history. The ice farmers have begun a process of re-bolting the Park as the hardware ages and is continually exposed to wet/dry conditions. An area of recent concern is the School Room. The south reservoir, located directly above the School Room, overflows in the summer and seeps through the rock over the bolted anchors—providing plenty of mineralized moisture for corrosion-friendly conditions.

One solution to greatly reduce the potential of corrosion is stainless steel glue-in bolts. Epoxy seals the in-rock metal from moisture, and removes the majority of crevice issues normally present within expansion bolts. The photos here show an old School Room bolt that was recently replaced with a Petzl Bat'inox glue-in. You can see that the washer between the bolt head and the hanger is visibly rusted. It's probable that the washer was zinc-plated carbon steel, while the hanger and bolt were some type of stainless steel, therefore producing conditions for a galvanic corrosion event. Hard saying not knowing, but it's pretty clear that this bolt was due for replacement when you see how much corrosion was going on inside.

Be mindful of the bolts you clip, always build passive redundancy into your anchors (clip more than one), and consider donating to the Park this season to help fund our continued re-bolting efforts.







VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Jeff Skoloda

A Creative Force

BY SAMANTHA TISDEL WRIGHT



Jeff Skoloda is a master at taking rigid lengths of steel and "cold-bending" them into organic curvilinear creations that seethe with creative energy.

His knack for borrowing from the grace and energy found in nature is readily apparent in the work he does for clients near and far, designing and building unique handcrafted pieces of furniture and architectural metalwork such as stairs, gates, railings and decks.

In Ouray, his work can be seen up and down Main Street, from the ornamental gates guarding public access to the city's flume systems to the whimsical "bar swings" suspended by salvaged chair-lift cable at the Ouray Brewery – inspired by the beach bars of Mexico.

Skoloda's talent and artistic vision are also on full display at the Ouray Ice Park. Here, the lanky 40-something metal artist has built a soulful, wind-strewn memorial gazebo for fallen climbers, and a 3.5-ton, 30-foot-tall steel competition tower overhanging the Uncompahgre Gorge.

"We built some of the walkway and access to the schoolroom. We made signage, gates, and cable railings. We expanded some of the older viewing stands, and built a new viewing stand," Skoloda said. And the list goes on. Most recently, Skoloda and his crew manufactured some of the components for the new Ouray Via Ferrata in the Uncompahgre Gorge.

Skoloda also collaboratively creates the one-of-a-kind trophies for the Ouray Ice Festival's annual Elite Mixed Climbing Competition. (See Pg. 51.) So when Ice Park Executive Director Dan Chehayl decided he wanted to have an art installation at the 25th Annual Ouray Ice Festival, Skoloda was the guy he turned to.

Skoloda was totally on board.

"I've had an idea for something I wanted to do for a while, so I pitched that to Dan, and he loved it!" Skoloda said. His big idea: to build a 12-foot-diameter sphere made of steel rings (think Atlas Shrugged), with a smaller, four-to-six-foot-diameter sphere inside of it.

The installation will be on display at Après Climb, a second expo area at the Box Canyon Falls Visitor Center, Friday and Saturday from 3-4:30 p.m. on Ice Festival Weekend.

Skoloda plans to pack the smaller sphere with kindling, and wrap it up to keep it dry. Then, working with the Ice Farmers (who know a thing or two about the art of ice) Skoloda will spray down the outside of the structure with water for a few nights before the Ice Fest until it is dripping with ice.

During the height of the Ice Fest at 3:45 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, Skoloda will then remove the inner sphere's protective covering. "And we'll torch it," he grinned. If all goes according to plan, the inner sphere will ignite into a fireball that appears to be magically suspended within the outer sphere – part Eye of Sauron, part Olympic flame, part pyromaniacal performance art.

"It should melt off most of the ice, and there should be a lot of sizzling," Skoloda said. "It has that component of social commentary about where we are in terms of climate change and adapting to what's happening – and ignoring what's happening to some extent – because of the pleasures we get out of the things that make our lives go round."

Social commentary aside, "I am entirely enjoying doing something purely for the fun of it," he said.

Skoloda has been doing some pretty dang fun stuff on the work front, too. Lately, he and his crew have been fabricating a fleet of graceful, long-spanning cable suspension bridges for via ferrata, hiking and mountain biking trails throughout southwestern Colorado.

"It's something that anchors a space and provides access; that's what I like most about them," Skoloda said. "You get to watch people enjoy them."

That brings Skoloda full circle back to the Ouray Ice Park, and why he loves working there so much. "It's such a focal point for our community," he reflected. "And people really dig it. It's such a unique, interesting, crazy place. I'm pretty happy I can have a little part in building and maintaining it."

What's Skoloda's next Ice Park endeavor? "I would love to put in a pedestrian suspension bridge over the gorge – rim to rim," he said. In the meantime, he is pouring all of his molten creative energy into the upcoming Ice Fest installation.

"There is no better place (than Ouray) to do this kind of commentary, because the Ice Park is so vulnerable," Skoloda said. "It's right on the elevation line of where we are going to see the most dramatic climate change over the next 25 years. It's on everyone's minds. Let's talk about it."



PHOTO BROOK HAYER

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

ICE FEST RUNS ON VOLUNTEER POWER

The Ouray Ice Festival is quite the production. Just like an alpine expedition, it takes vision, passion, meticulous planning, lots of lead time, and a whole lot of teamwork to make it happen.

A core team of Ouray Ice Park board members and employees do a lot of work behind the scenes before the Fest gets underway. But the event itself could not succeed without the help of the nearly 200 or so volunteers who show up every year, without fail, often in awful weather, to make it happen.

The Ice Fest has lots of moving parts, and happens in lots of different places all at once, so volunteers are deployed throughout the Ice Park and Ouray.

Setting up the vendor area is especially time-and-labor- intensive. It involves putting up tents, tending to specific vendor booth needs, and shoveling tons of snow. Around the Ice Park, volunteers also belay at the Kids Wall, serve food in the concession area, drive shuttles back and forth from town, and patiently answer questions or process gear cards at the info booth.

Local volunteer climbers and guides rig all of the routes for the 100-plus clinics at the Ice Fest each year, and help the ice farmers make sure everything's ready to go.

Belaying the competitions is a particularly high-stakes volunteer job. These heroes are down in the pit of despair (i.e. the narrow, shady river bottom of the Uncompahgre Gorge), where it's cold all day, making sure the competitors are safe, dialed in, and ready to climb.

As night falls and the action shifts to town, the volunteers are at it again – working the door at the evening presentations, pouring beer, and checking IDs to make sure attendees are old enough to legally guzzle it.

For their efforts, Ice Fest volunteers get some swag, and the satisfaction of helping make the Ouray Ice Festival the best event of its kind on the planet. Plus, it's a lot of fun!



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The People Behind the Ice

The nonprofit Ouray Ice Park, Inc. formed in 1997 to provide formal organization to what previously had been a loose grassroots effort to maintain and promote the Ouray Ice Park. The organization is overseen by a hard-working volunteer Board of Directors and a dozen awesome employees who work hard to make your ice climbing experience one to remember.

MEET THE OURAY ICE PARK STAFF



Dan Chehayl, Executive Director

Ice Park Executive Director Dan Chehayl is no stranger to the Ouray Ice Park. This is his ninth season working here, beginning as an ice farmer and graduating to Park Manager and Director of Operations before assuming his current position. Chehayl first came to the Ouray Ice Park as a college sophomore with a group of friends from Sterling College in Vermont. He came back as often as he could over the next couple of years and eventually moved to Ouray in 2007. That first winter, he worked at Mouses Chocolates and ice climbed obsessively. Then, after a year in Telluride and a brief stint back east, he came back to Ouray for good, winning a job as an ice farmer with former Ice Park Manager Kevin Koprek. Chehayl wears many hats at the Park, from facilitating the annual Ouray Ice Festival and securing funding for OIPI's annual budget to hiring and overseeing the staff that help make the Park what it is today. One of Dan's favorite things about working for the Ouray Ice Park is watching the gorge transform as it becomes clad with ice each winter. "It's like the cliffs come to life; every day is magical out here in the Park!" he said.



Xander Bianchi, Ice Farmer

Born and raised in the corn fields of northwest Indiana, Xander first explored Ouray in 2010 on a road trip through Colorado. It was here in the shadow of the San Juans that the seed was planted for many more journeys westbound. After scraping together a mechanical engineering degree in 2012, he threw a sleeping bag in his car and set out for the mountains. His next few years were painted with a mosaic of nomadic brush strokes, until at last he shelved his engineering career and moved to Ouray in 2015. Since then, Xander has focused his energy on a different side of life – one full of white velvet mountains, rusty desert canyons and worn-out soles. This January, he's leaving the Ice Park to set out on a new adventure, mentoring Nepali guides at Conrad Anker's Khumbu Climbing Center in Nepal.



Lucas Carrion, Ice Farmer

Lucas moved to Ouray in August 2014 after finishing his fourth summer working for a non-profit pack outfit in the Sierra Nevada backcountry. It was there that he developed a love for mountain life and climbing. Lucas swung his first ice tools in New Hampshire, and further developed his climbing skills on rock and ice in Ouray and the deserts of southeastern Utah. His favorite ice climbs are La Ventana in the Ouray Ice Park's Five Fingers climbing area, and Whorehouse Hoses near Silverton. Lucas is joining us for his fourth year at the Park, and is leaving us in January to spend more time as a crew chief working on wind towers.



Justin Hofmann, Ice Farmer

(Learn more about Justin on Pg. 36.)



Tim Foulkes, Ice Farmer

Tim first learned how to ice climb in Ouray during a college class while attending Western State College in 1999. From then on, he was hooked. Since 2000, Tim has worked with youth and young adults through a variety of conversation corps programs. In 2014, Tim began working as a Trail Crew Leader with U.S. Forest Service based out of Durango, Colo. Tim only worked seasonally so he could spend his six months off living in his camper and ice climbing. Outside of winter, Tim is also an avid rock climber, mountain biker and distance runner. He is stoked to now have gainful employment in one of his favorite places on Earth.



Tres Barbatelli, Ice Farmer

Tres learned to climb ice in Ouray during a spring break in college. Since he first climbed in the Park years ago, he's developed a passion for ice climbing. In recent years, Tres has lived in many different places working a number of different jobs in the outdoor industry. His experiences range from leading backcountry trips with Chicago's inner-city youth, to working with traumatized adolescents at a wilderness therapy program, to leading extended backpacking expeditions in Alaska's Brooks Range, and most recently working as a guide in Zion National Park. When he's not working, he loves to climb, ski, travel, cook and explore. Since first visiting Ouray years ago, he's climbed ice all over the midwest and is thrilled to now call the San Juans his home. Tres is joining us for his second year at the Park, his first as an Ice Farmer!



Bayley Wood, Administrative Coordinator

Born in Texas and raised in Virginia, Bayley moved to Colorado in 2017 to pursue her love of the outdoors. After spending her first summer in the Front Range learning how to climb, Bayley took an internship with Paradox Sports, a non-profit providing climbing opportunities to people with disabilities. While working for Paradox, Bayley was introduced to the Ouray Ice Park and started to learn dry-tooling. This past April, Bayley took a job with the National Outdoor Leadership School and spent five months working at their branch in Palmer, Alaska. This will be Bayley's first season living and working in Ouray, and in her free time she plans to either be skiing or learning how to ice climb! She is also a rock painter, jewelry maker, photographer and Buffalo Bills fanatic.



Carolina Brown, Administrative Assistant

Carolina grew up in Arkansas and after enjoying family vacations to the Western Slope as a kid, vowed to find her way back. Now with three kids of her own, she has lived in Ridgway for the last six years. This season, Carolina joined the Ouray Ice Park as the Administrative Assistant, as well as the Lead Coordinator for all Institutional Group Events Permits. In addition to working behind the scenes at the office, Carolina writes and reports for the local paper, the Ouray County Plaindealer. When she is not behind a computer screen, you will find her outside somewhere in the glorious Colorado sunshine.



Pete Davis, Ambassador

Pete has called the San Juan Mountains home since 1997. He moved here for the vastly improved climbing opportunities (while the parents thought it was for college) over his childhood home of Baltimore, Maryland where vertical terrain is mostly of the concrete variety. Pete visited the Ice Park that first year in Colorado and while he would still rather be rock climbing any day of the week, he decided that ice was cool, too, and that the Ice Park was an incredible and unique resource created specifically for hopelessly obsessed climbers like himself! Noice! Finally, in 2010, Pete got his act together and moved to Ridgway to be a bit closer to the source and worked as an Ice Farmer at the park that season. After a 10 year hiatus, Pete is stoked to be returning to work this year as an Ice Park Ambassador (that's Ambassador Davis to you!)



Andrew Smyser, Ambassador

This is Andrew's first year on the Ice Park staff but he is no stranger to the area. Andrew spent a winter in Ouray in 2015 and anxious to get back to the San Juans, set up permanent residency in Ridgway in the spring of 2019. Andrew is an avid rock and ice climber. His climbing experience began 10 years ago on a trip to Patagonia. This pastime led to a passion exploring rock and ice climbs all over the world. He is excited to be a member of the team this winter, share his climbing passion, knowledge, and experiences with our guests.



Alma Sophie, Ambassador

Home grown down the road in Ridgway, Colo., Alma is a child of the San Juans. She began skiing and climbing before she could put sentences together. During a rather non-traditional college experience, Alma was inspired by massive rivers of ice. So she made her way to Alaska to lead glacier tours and ice climbing trips. She finished a degree in Recreation and Outdoor Education from WSCU, and after seasons swinging tools up north she hightailed it back to the homeland. Alma eats Snow Flakes for breakfast and slams champagne powder turns for dessert. Ever on the pursuit of living, working, and playing outside, she guides with the Alaska Mountaineering School and with San Juan Mountain Guides here in Colorado. This is her first season as part of OIPI, and she is psyched to be here.



Sarah Haubert, Ambassador

Sarah was raised as a competitive figure skater in the Midwest. She moved to Colorado after college for a brief detour playing roller derby, teaching yoga, and slinging tequila. Fortunately, her dad visited and dragged her up a big mountain, and she fell so in love with thin air, standing on top of things, and running up and down that she dropped everything to move to the mountains and play in them all the time, taking up climbing and skiing, and traveling all over the country to stand on top of different mountains. Sarah fell for Ouray and for climbing temporarily frozen waterfalls in a similarly haphazard and intensely enthusiastic fashion – Ouray on a running trip, and ice climbing after a casual invite to climb Lincoln Falls with borrowed equipment. After years of traveling to Ouray more and more, to run, climb ice, and attend the festival, Sarah is delighted to finally call it her home.

>>>

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MEET THE OURAY ICE PARK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The OIPI Board of Directors is comprised of seven volunteer members who devote well over a thousand hours throughout the year to fulfill OIPI's mission. Although the ice climbing season at the Ouray Ice Park runs from roughly mid-December to late March, OIPI is hard at work planning the next season shortly after the Park closes each spring.



Lora Slawitschka, President

Lora moved to Ouray when she was nine months old and her parents purchased the Ouray Chalet Inn on Main Street. She has lived here for most of her life (except for those erroneous years in Florida) and took over the family business when her parents retired in 2001. She loves Ouray with all her heart and could not imagine living and working anywhere else.



Ralph Tingey

Ralph joined the National Park Service in 1965 and worked as a climbing ranger at Jenny Lake until 1981 when he transferred to Denali National Park in Alaska. Over the course of his career, he worked in many of Alaska's parks, and served as Associate Regional Director from 1994 to 2006 prior to his retirement. Ralph has been an avid climber most of his life. He has served on the Board of Directors of the American Alpine Club, and as Chairman of the Alaska Section of the AAC. Ralph raced a dog team for many years, including three times on the 1000-mile long Yukon Quest from Fairbanks, Alaska to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada. Ralph now lives in Ridgway, Colo.



Bill Leo

Bill moved to Purgatory Ski Area in 1982 to pursue his love of skiing, climbing and kayaking. His company, Unordinary Adventures, put in one of the early backcountry ski huts in the San Juans. An avid telemark skier, he did several first descents of local plumb lines during those early years of backcountry skiing. He has also been a Class V commercial raft guide doing Upper Animas trips in those early days as well. Bill has lived in Ouray since 1996. He owns Ouray Mountain Sports and is a past president of OIPI who recently re-joined the board. He brings a wealth of knowledge of the history of the Ice Park and a passion for its continuing success. In his spare time, Bill gets out on a specialized snowmobile and grooms the Ouray Nordic Council's system of cross-country ski trails at Ironton Park on Red Mountain Pass.

PHOTO JOHN LAGUARDIA





Mike Gibbs

Mike began volunteering for the Ouray Ice Park in 1995 and was one of the seven original founding OIPI board members. He has served as both president and vice president of the board of directors. Mike is the owner/operator of Rigging for Rescue, a technical rope-work training organization.



Tom Kavanaugh

Tom developed his love for the outdoors as a professional rafting guide in Colorado. It was during this time that he was introduced to climbing and mountain biking. Over time, both sports turned from an activity to an obsession. The Ouray Ice Park brought him to southwestern Colorado and will forever anchor him to this community. With a new home and wife in hand, Ouray County is where he calls home. These days, you may be able to find him in a remote area of the state either suffering up an ice climb or barreling down the finest alpine singletrack.

Frank Robertson

Frank first came to the San Juans in 1981 on a mountaineering road trip and immediately knew where he and Jeanne would move once the kids were grown. He has been climbing for 40 years, 20 on ice, and first came to the Ice Park in the late '90s. Volunteering in the Park and at the Ice Fest, and working on the Ice Park Sustainability Committee, led to his joining the Board in 2018 and currently chairing the Ice Park Advisory Team. After working in the semiconductor industry for 42 years he retired from Intel Corporation in 2015, also joining the board of the dZi Foundation and volunteering with Paradox Sports but now getting to climb as much as he wants.



John Hulberd

John first discovered the San Juans in 1981 on a backcountry ski trip. He was a climber in Yosemite from 1975-1980, but longed for higher, more elusive mountains. After many years of skiing, sailing and climbing in the Northwest, he made the move to Ridgway in 2014. John is on the Ouray Trails Group Board, and is their Wilderness Trail Crew coordinator. He is also a "Colorado Riverwatcher" who does monthly sampling of water chemistry in the Uncompahgre River. John first volunteered for the Ice Festival in 2016 because of his love of ice climbing, and the pleasure of working with the Ice Farmers and staff.

BECOME AN ICE PARK MEMBER

The Ouray Ice Park is free to climb in, but it's not free to maintain. Every year, thousands of hours go into the preparation and operation of the Park well before it opens in mid-to-late December. As the season progresses, our dedicated staff and volunteers work both day and night to ensure that climbers from all walks of life have the experience of climbing in the Park. During a typical season we estimate that nearly 13,500 climbers visit the Park.

As a nonprofit organization, most of our funding comes through fundraising, donations and memberships.

Ouray Ice Park Members receive lots of benefits – discounts on clinics at the 2020 Ouray Ice Festival; a comped Gear Card for the 2020 Ouray Ice Festival; discounts with local Ouray businesses; and perhaps best of all, a tremendous amount of good climbing karma!

Membership comes in several different levels:

- **Basic membership** – Costs $50 and includes all of the benefits above.
- **My Psych is High** – Costs $85 and includes all of the benefits above AND a Ouray Ice Park T-Shirt.
- **Ice Ambassador** – Costs $160, includes all of the benefits listed above, plus a Ouray Ice Park zip-up hooded sweatshirt, and a bonus perk of 10% off guided programs with San Juan Mountain Guides ($100 limit per year)

Become a member or renew your membership today and support your ice climbing venue. Your support is critical – we depend on it!

For more information about how to become a Ouray Ice Park member please visit: ourayicepark.com/membership/







PHOTO XANDER BIANCHI

ICE FARMER PROFILE

Justin Hofmann

The Art of Ice

BY CAROLINA BROWN


PHOTO SAMANTHA TISDEL WRIGHT

Justin Hofmann has worked many jobs over the years to support his love for climbing – fire mitigation, dishwashing, working as a baker at upscale restaurants in Denver, and paving airport runways all over the West. Now, he spends his summers in construction, and his winters farming ice.

But for Hofmann, being an ice farmer is more than just a job to support his lifelong climbing habit. It's also a creative outlet that gives him the chance to embrace his artistic side.

"You can manufacture ice however you want," he said. "It's like art. It's hard work, but at the same time, you are creating something unique and special every time."

As a child growing up in Denver, Hofmann devoured books about climbing. In high school, he discovered the Freedom of the Hills – both in literary form, and in actuality – and started making weekend trips to local climbing crags with his friends. His passion was lit.

Stories of deeper canyons and higher summits lured him farther west, and places like "The Creek" and "The Winds" became seasonal homes as he has sought great climbs and worked wherever he could – mostly in restaurants – from California, Utah and Wyoming to West Virginia and Kentucky.

At the Lander Bar (a restaurant and bar in Lander, Wyoming where Hofmann worked on several of his many excursions to the Wind River Range), he says the locals know him just as well as they do in Ouray. And he's been to every "Creeksgiving" (that's Thanksgiving at the classic Indian Creek crag in southeastern Utah) for the last 10 years.

In 2014, while working in Denver as a pastry chef, Hofmann's life changed forever when he found a note attached to his sticker-plastered Subaru parked on South Broadway. The note said, "Based on your car and the stickers on your vehicle, I think we should be friends." Hofmann called the phone number on the note and met a girl named Jen, who took him to the Ouray Ice Festival for the first time.

He fell in love – with wintery Ouray, and with ice climbing. "Man, this place is incredible," he recalls thinking. "It's so cool here. There's such a solid community." Hofmann returned to the Ice Fest again and again over the next few years, developing friendships with local climbers and the ice farmers. He felt welcomed into the community and eventually decided to stay.

At first, Hofmann got by with odd jobs in Ouray like shoveling snow and volunteering at the Ice Fest. Then, the Ouray Ice Park's executive director Dan Chehayl offered him a job as an ice farmer. Hofmann was ecstatic. "When I first came here I was like: 'The ice farmers are so cool! What a sweet job!'" he reflected. Now, he was one of them.

Hofmann loves the creative challenges and problem solving that come with the job. He also enjoys the tranquility of getting into the Ice Park before the sun comes up, to turn the water off each morning.

"It's a nice slow start before your day gets crazy," he said. "Walking out there by yourself. It's quiet. No one is there at the Park yet. It's peaceful walking back toward South Park. The sun's just coming up. It's just starting to get light out."

That sense of peace gives way to excitement as the morning sun illuminates a fresh, dazzling crop of ice. But Hofmann has found much more than frozen water in this narrow box canyon – he's found his community, his family and his new home.





25 YEAR FESTIVAL POSTER RETROSPECTIVE









































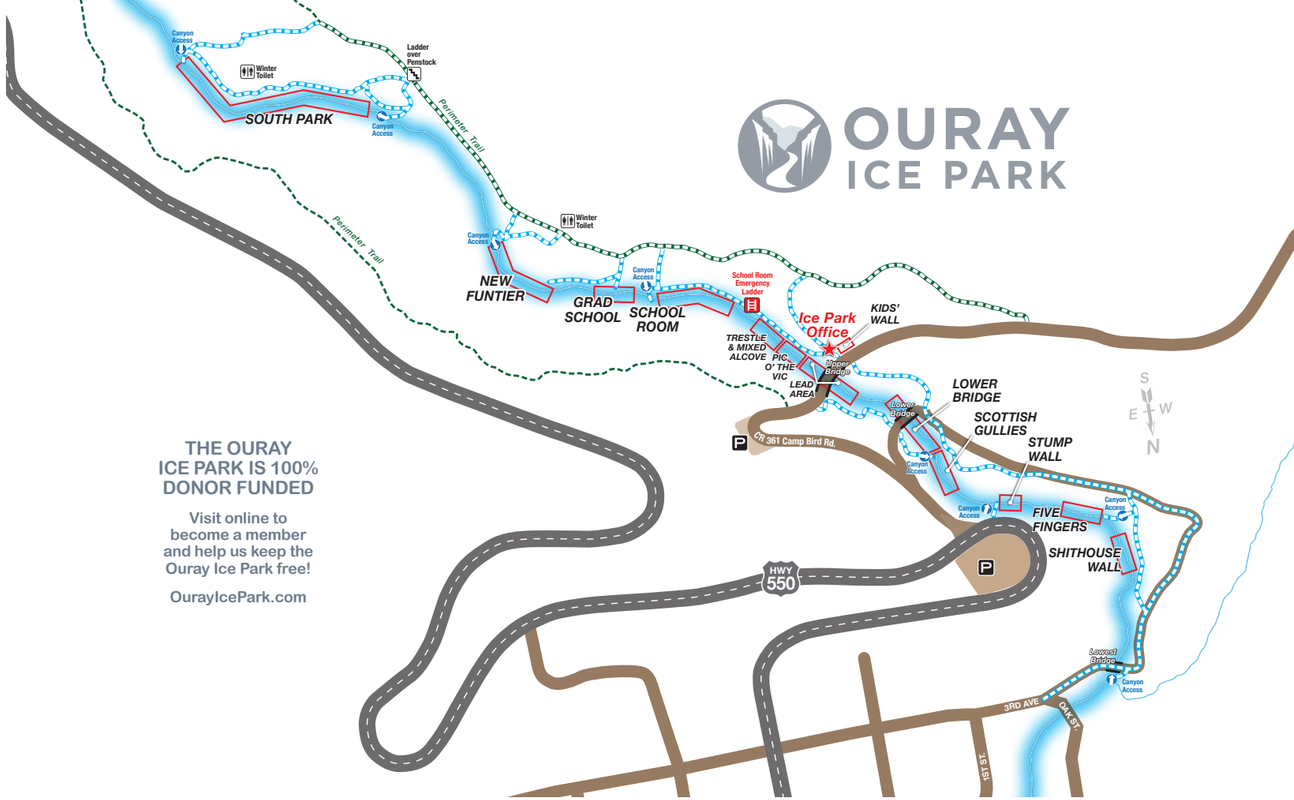


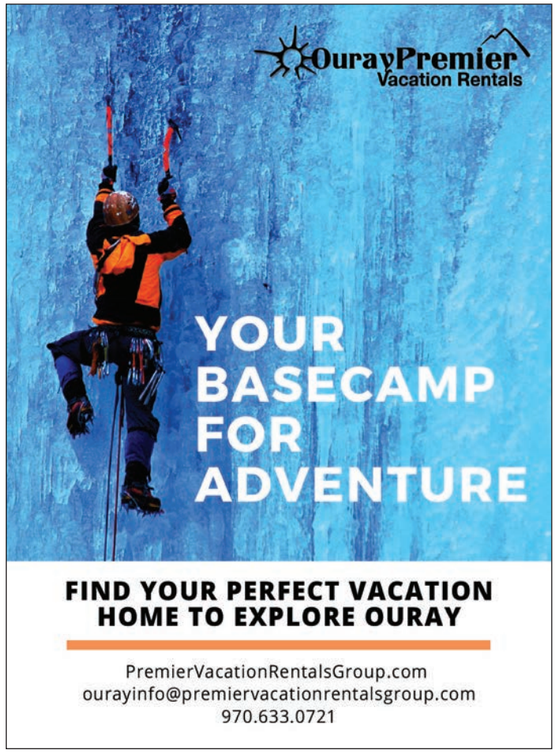


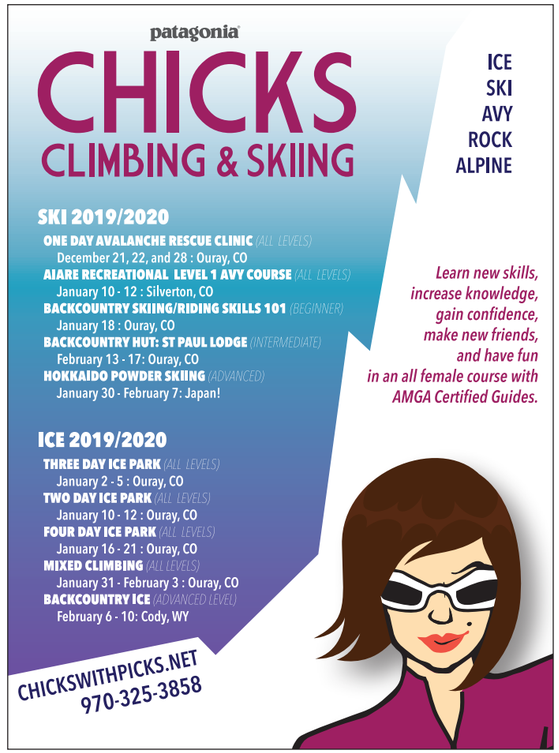












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Ouray Ice Festival 2020

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PHOTO BROOK HAYER

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how to ICE FEST

Welcome to the Ouray Ice Festival – the best place to be on the planet for people who are hooked on ice climbing, or want to learn more about it. The Ice Fest can be roughly divided into two categories:

By day, the action happens at the Ouray Ice Park and includes exciting climbing competitions, an Outdoor Gear Expo, Kids Climbing College and adult walk-up climbing, interactive climbing clinics and more.

In the evening, the action shifts to town. There's lots going on – multimedia presentations with big-name climbers, music, dance parties and a live and silent auction overflowing with screaming deals on the latest outdoor gear.

Here's all the beta you'll need to make the most of the 2020 Ouray Ice Festival.

New Stuff – Apres Climb At The Box Canyon Parking Lot

New this year, we have a second expo area at the end of the day on the walk back to town. As the main expo area at the Park closes at 3 p.m., we are excited to be opening an Apres Climb area with hot drinks and beer and a fire to warm your bones by. The Apres Climb features a giant centerpiece art installation by Ouray Ice Park volunteer, Local Business Partner, and artist Jeff Skoloda. The new area was conceived as a way to celebrate local art, fill underutilized time and space at the Festival, and to explore new ways to educate the public about the future of the Park. We are excitedly working with our sponsors to make this a creative and fun space for the Fest and are excited to share with everyone what we come up with! Be sure to check it out on Friday and Saturday from 3-4:30 p.m. with a special surprise for everyone on Saturday at 3:45 p.m. Don't miss it!

Parking

The parking lot across Highway 550 from the Ouray Ice Park entrance is reserved for sponsors and festival staff only during Ice Fest weekend. There is also no parking permitted along US Highway 550. Park there, and you will be towed. So unless you are getting dropped off, it's best to leave your car in town and walk, or take the Ice Fest shuttle, up to the Ice Park. Overnight parking is also prohibited on Main Street in Ouray throughout the winter to facilitate snow removal. People who leave their vehicles on Main Street overnight will receive a citation. Their cars may even get towed. Don't be like them.

Getting To The Ice Park

On Foot: Starting at the southern terminus of Main Street, turn right (west) on Third Avenue, and walk two blocks or so down the hill toward the Box Canyon Lodge and Victorian Inn. When you get to the bottom of the hill, veer left at the Box Canyon Falls exit, and follow the road up the hill for a few hundred meters. After a brief hike, you'll emerge on a path on the west side of the Uncompahgre Gorge that leads straight to the heart of the Ouray Ice Park and Festival Headquarters.

Alternatively, starting at the southern terminus of Main Street, you can simply walk up U.S. Highway 550 for about one-fourth mile until you get to the Ice Park entrance and turnoff for County Road 361, just after the first switch-back.

By Shuttle: Catch a ride up to the Ice Park on one of the free shuttles that will be running continuously along Main Street from 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday through Sunday during Ice Fest weekend. The shuttle route starts at the Ouray Visitors Center near the Hot Springs Pool, and ends at the Ice Park entrance, and includes a Third Avenue spur. Shuttles are marked with magnetic Ouray Ice Park logos. Designated pickup spots include the Ouray Visitors Center, Citizens State Bank at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Main Street, Basecamp Bouldering, and the bottom of Third Avenue (near the Victorian Inn and Box Canyon Lodge). Or, you can just flag the shuttle down as you see it coming, and it will probably stop for you.

Ride Hailing, Ouray Style

Ouray is still not quite up to speed with ride-hailing apps, but there is an awesome new(ish) shuttle service in the area! Call Western Slope Rides at 970-626-5121 or email info@gowsr.com to schedule your ride to the airport, late-night hot tub tryst or favorite backcountry adventuring spot.

Info Booth

Got questions? We've got answers. An info booth at the Outdoor Gear Expo area near the Lower Bridge is staffed with friendly and helpful volunteers throughout Ice Fest weekend. Here, you can pick up your gear card (if you didn't already order it online), maps, programs, schedules and comp order, buy Ouray Ice Festival memorabilia and ogle the custom-made trophies that will be awarded to comp winners at the Asolo Award Ceremony on Sunday. (See Pg. 51 to learn more about the trophies.)

Gear Cards

An integral part of the Ouray Ice Festival, the gear card allows clinic participants and other Festival attendees the opportunity to demo jackets, tools, boots, crampons, harnesses, gloves, etc. from Ice Festival sponsors throughout the weekend.

Purchase a gear card online for $5 in advance at ourayicepark.com/passes/ or stand in line at the Festival (at the Kickoff Party on Thursday night, or at the Info Booth at the Ice Park starting on Friday morning) and pay $10. Ouray Ice Park members and All Access Pass holders get a complimentary gear card with their membership.

The gear card works like a library card; provide your credit card number as collateral, then check out gear for free and return after your clinic or at the end of each day. Gear card holders will be charged retail value of item(s) demoed during Ice Fest weekend which are NOT returned to the specific vendor by 2 p.m. on Sunday. (For more information about how to demo, see Pg. 45.)

All-Access Pass Program

The $60 All-Access Pass gets you into all of our awesome evening events for one cool price. Pass holders receive the following benefits:

- Admission to evening events (please arrive early as passes do not guarantee entrance once venue capacity is reached);
- Access to a shorter admission line at evening events;
- Complimentary gear card.

Spectating And Photography

Two bridges (known simply as the Upper Bridge and the Lower Bridge) span the Uncompahgre Gorge in the central part of the Ouray Ice Park. Both bridges offer spectacular viewing and photography opportunities of the climbing action in the icy depths below. There are also several strategically placed spectator stands along the rim of the gorge. Direct sunlight into the gorge is limited to midday. If you are not equipped with proper climbing equipment (helmet, crampons, etc.), please stick to the roads, bridges, and viewing stands, as outcroppings over the gorge are slippery and perilous. Drones are not allowed in the Ouray Ice Park as they have the potential to be hazardous to climbers and spectators alike.

Recycling

Help us reduce our eco-footprint through recycling and other forms of waste reduction. We hope that all festival participants will join in our mission to responsibly recreate! Look for recycling stations located at the Ice Park and the Ouray Community Center. While at the Festival, please sort your waste stream and get it into the right container. Extra points if you bring your own water bottle.

Food & Drink

Food and drinks (both hot and cold) are available for purchase at vendor booths near the Ice Park entrance, featuring tasty fare from local restaurants and nonprofits. The food vendor area is a great place to take a break, perch at a picnic table, or warm your hands over a campfire. Please note that alcohol and marijuana are not allowed in the Ice Park.

Wifi, Cell Phone Reception

Cell phone reception is available for major cell phone carriers throughout most of the Ice Park. In town, free WiFi can be found at the Ouray Community Center, Ouray Public Library, and other select locations including Mouse's Chocolates. Insider's tip: keep your cell phone in an inner pocket; it might not work if it gets too cold!

Commemorative Yeti Mugs

For both Friday and Saturday nights at the Ouray Community Center, Ice Fest sponsor Yeti will provide commemorative engraved 25th Anniversary Ouray Ice Fest Yeti mugs. We have 250 each, black and white, with the 25th Anniversary logo engraved on them. Get there early so you don't miss out!

Final Beta

Check the whiteboard at the Outdoor Gear Expo, in the San Juan Mountain Guides tent, for up-to-the-minute information about which clinics still have openings (or visit mtnguide.net). Clinics are $79. Backcountry Full Day Seminars are $149. Ouray Ice Park Members receive $10 off each clinic or seminar. The Info Booth has extra lists of the final comp order for the Elite Mixed Climbing Comp and Hari Berger Speed Comp, as well as up-to-date information about who's winning.

Be Social

We'll be live-tweeting and posting updates on Facebook throughout the weekend. Hashtags we encourage people to use: #getyouraxingear #ourayicefestival #itsallniceonice @ourayicepark



PHOTO XANDER BIANCHI

OURAY ICE PARK RULES

The Ouray Ice Park, Inc. staff or any Ouray Ice Park, Inc. board member can enforce the following rules with support from the Ouray County Sheriff's Department and/or the Ouray Police Department if necessary.

GENERAL

- Crampons are required for all persons (climbers or otherwise) in the established and posted "climber only" areas. Crampons and a helmet are required for all persons while climbing or in the bottom of the gorge.
- All persons under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult in the Ouray Ice Park.
- Dogs must be leashed and not left unattended. No dogs are allowed below the top of the gorge.
- No anchoring to man-made structures including the penstock unless clearly labeled by yellow wand or tag.
- All climbing in the "Schoolroom" area must be on fixed anchors established and defined by the Ouray Ice Park.
- Ouray Ice Park hours are 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. on weekends and 8 a.m.-4 p.m. on weekdays.
- Only OIPI Ice Farmers shall adjust, turn off, or otherwise handle any part of the watering system – including pipes, valves, showerheads or any other apparatus.
- The maximum amount of time a group may occupy any one route is three hours.
- A lead anchor must be established at the top of the climb before leading any route.
- The Lead Only Area is for lead climbers and their followers only.
- No climbing on closed routes or in closed areas.
- Kids have ultimate priority to routes on the Kids Wall. If any kids arrive and wish to climb there, you must yield your route to their climbing party, immediately.

USEFUL CONTACT INFO

Ouray Ice Park: 970/325-4288; ourayicepark.com

San Juan Mountain Guides: 800/642-5389, mtnguide.net

Ouray Visitors Center: 970/325-4746, ouraycolorado.com

Avalanche info: avalanche.state.co.us/

Road Conditions: 877/315-7623, cotrip.org

Ice Conditions: mtnguide.net/resources/ouray-ice-conditions/

Western Slope Rides: 970/626-5121, info@gowsr.com

ACTIVITIES

OUTDOOR GEAR EXPO

Friday, Jan. 24, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 26, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Near the Lower Bridge at the Ouray Ice Park

It's the epicenter of the Ice Fest. The first thing that gets set up on Thursday morning, and the last thing that comes down on Sunday afternoon. The Outdoor Gear Expo is a hive of activity during Ice Festival weekend – a colorful tent village set up along a loop trail near the Lower Bridge on the rim of the Uncompahgre Gorge, with hundreds of ice climbers and onlookers strolling around, checking out gear and just hangin' out.

You'll find the OIPI-sponsored Info Booth in the upper sponsor area. That's where you get your gear cards to demo gear (if you haven't purchased a gear card on the website in advance), catch up with members of the Ice Park board of directors, buy your Ice Park memberships and pick up some official merch like commemorative 25th Anniversary shirts and hoodies. All proceeds go to the Ouray Ice Park.

Longtime Festival sponsors also set up their booths along the top tier of the expo, while the lower tier features newer sponsors. Nonprofit organizations have booths at the end of the loop. You get a different vibe in different places, so it's worth traveling around. Enthusiastic longtime festival goers on the upper mesa are more interested in taking pictures than demoing gear, while new sponsors down below are really excited to show their product to people who have never seen it before.

There is a lot of innovation on display in the expo area. This is the place where sponsors unveil their latest and greatest tools and gear. Petzl released its new axes at the Outdoor Gear Expo last season. This year, The North Face will be showcasing its new breathable lightweight fabric. All the volunteers will be wearing it as part of their official Ice Fest apparel. It's a huge deal. Hyperlite Mountain Gear and Osprey Packs both have some new models to demo as well!

Showing up in the early morning at the Outdoor Gear Expo and getting in line to demo gear is probably more important than getting coffee. Once you've got your gear – and your coffee – then it's off to the clinics. Things quiet down for a few hours at the Expo area until the next round of demos, when tides of ice climbers return to the area to warm up, grab a bite to eat and maybe swap out some gear. A lot of raffles go on at the end of the day, as the final demos are returned.

The Outdoor Gear Expo also offers Festival participants the opportunity to get that really cool swag. The North Face tent is the place to go for a commemorative Fest beanie, for a small fee. (Proceeds go to the Park.) There's lots of free coffee and energy chews. And the bacon-wrapped sausages in the Black Diamond Equipment tent are hard to miss! So go ahead. Feel the sponsors' love.

KIDS CLIMBING COLLEGE

Saturday, Jan. 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 26, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
At the Kids Wall near the Upper Bridge

Sponsored by San Juan Mountain Guides, the popular Kids Climbing College offers free ice climbing instruction to kids ages 7-17. The KCC is staged at the Kids Wall – a beginners climbing area located near the Upper Bridge and Memorial Kiosk, right off of County Road 361 (Camp Bird Road). Four to five ropes will be going full-time both days. Participants receive 15 minutes of instruction each, with a professional guide, on a first-come, first-served basis. It's easy to sign up your kids, and San Juan Mountain Guides provides all the technical gear they'll need.

FREE ADULT WALK-UP CLIMBING AT THE LA SPORTIVA ZONE

Friday, Jan. 24, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 26, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Want to try ice climbing without committing to a half-day or full-day clinic? La Sportiva's free adult walk-up mini-clinics are taught by high-level athletes, no registration required. All technical gear is provided. They will be set up right next to the Kids Climbing College at the Kids Wall, near the Upper Bridge and County Road 361.There's never been a better time to grab some tools and give ice climbing a try!

INTERACTIVE CLINICS

Friday, Jan. 24, 9 a.m. & 1 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25, 9 a.m. & 1 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 26, 9 a.m.

The Ouray Ice Park is pleased to partner again with San Juan Mountain Guides to provide interactive climbing clinics and seminars during the 2020 Ouray Ice Festival.

Throughout the weekend, dozens of unique, informative, cutting-edge ice and mixed climbing clinics and seminars will be offered. Each clinic offers a unique opportunity to pair vendors and their sponsored athlete instructors with a passionate audience of amateur climbers.

Interactive clinics are the opportunity of a lifetime for any ice climber to learn new skills, up the skills you already have, climb with mentors and people you've always looked up to, and to really practice all the different skill sets there are for any level of climbing.

Whether you're beginning, intermediate, or advanced, you can find the clinic that is just right for you. And the instructors are just as stoked as you are to be there. Athlete instructors and their sponsors reach out months in advance to make sure they can return and teach the clinics they are excited about. Many of them come back year after year after year.

Clinic previews go live on the San Juan Mountain Guides website (mtnguide.net) each year in November. The Ouray Ice Park shares the beta on its Facebook and Instagram feeds, as well as on its website. That is the time to have a look at the different clinics and instructors and decide which ones to sign up for when registration goes live in early December.

Clinics with popular, well-known instructors fill up quickly so it's a good idea to sign up as soon as you can, but there are usually opportunities to slip in at the end.

During Ice Fest weekend, when the day of your clinic or seminar finally arrives, make sure you have all your gear together at least 15 minutes before the start time (see "How to Demo") then go to the appropriate clinic sponsor tent. For example, if you registered for "Clinic #3 Intermediate Ice. La Sportiva. Will Mayo. FRI 0900," head to the La Sportiva tent at 8:45 a.m. on Friday morning with your gear, ready to sign a release form and head out into the Park with your fellow clinic participants and awesome instructor.

You'll all walk together to the area of the park where the clinic happens. When you get there, you'll use a canyon access point to get into the gorge, where ropes have already been set up. Your instructor takes you to the bottom of the climbs, and will start the clinic there.

Clinics at the Ouray Ice Festival have a maximum of 10 participants, and clinic instructors all have an assistant, so you can be assured of getting hands-on instruction and top-notch safety checks. Down in the canyon, you'll see different clinics taking place nearby. All the clinic instructors know each other, and everyone is having a blast!

These days, there is a lot of mentoring of the next generation of elite climbers going on at the Ice Fest clinics as well. That kid climbing next to you might be the next World Cup champ.

If you get a chance to take more than one clinic at Ice Fest, it's a good idea to switch up instructors throughout the weekend, to see different people's styles. Check the white board near the San Juan Mountain Guides booth at the Outdoor Gear Expo for last-minute openings, or visit mtnguide.net/ouray-ice-climbing/ouray-ice-festival-clinics/.

Clinics are 2.5 hours long, and are offered twice a day on Friday and Saturday as well as Sunday morning in the Schoolroom, Trestle, Kids Wall, Stump Wall, Fingers, and Scottish Gullies areas with offerings for beginner, intermediate and advanced ice climbers. Seminars are 5.5 hours long, and are offered in the South Park climbing area.

All of these areas will be closed to the public for clinic use all day Friday and Saturday, and until 12 p.m. on Sunday. A great lineup of all-day backcountry ice climbing seminars are also available.

Half-day clinics cost $79 per person, and full-day seminars cost $149 per person. Ice Park members enjoy a $10 discount when they register. $20 of your clinic registration fee is donated to the Ouray Ice Park Inc. and directly supports Ice Park operations and initiatives.

Sign up for clinics online at mtnguide.net/ouray-ice-climbing/ouray-ice-festival-clinics/.

Questions? Call 800-642-5389 or 970-946-3973, or email icefestclinics@mtnguide.net.

Required participant equipment list (for climbing, anchor, and other on-rope clinics):

- UIAA Certified Climbing Helmet
- UIAA Certified Climbing Harness
- 2 Ice Tools
- Crampons
- Ice Climbing Boots
- Belay Device and Locking Carabiner

APRÈS CLIMB

Friday, Jan. 24, 3-4:30 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25, 3-4:30 p.m.
Box Canyon Parking Lot

After a full day's worth of fun at the Ice Park on Friday and Saturday, we'll gather at the Box Canyon Falls Visitor Center parking lot (right along the pedestrian trail that connects Ouray to the Ice Park) to rehash the day's adventures, enjoy libations by the fire, and admire an incredible art installation by sculptor Jeff Skoloda, specially commissioned for the 25th Annual Ouray Ice Festival. Be sure to check it out on Friday and Saturday from 3-4:30 p.m. with a special surprise for everyone on Saturday at 3:45 p.m. Don't miss it!


PHOTO BROOK HAYER

HOW TO DEMO

Are you gear-curious? Stuck in a rut? Still using the same stinky boots you bought when you started ice climbing 15 years ago? Or just starting out, with no gear at all?

The Ouray Ice Fest is a great place to try out gear you have never used before, see what the next step up is to what you could have in your quiver, and try everything new in the industry from hard equipment to soft apparel. You've still gotta bring your own socks and undies, but everything else is there, waiting for you to try it on and try it out.

Find out if TNF's new Futurelight shell pants can hold their own against a rogue crampon. Or test-drive a pair of gloves from Rab to see if they pass the "keeps your fingers from turning into ice cubes" test.

Demo-ing at the Ice Fest is fun and easy. First, get a Festival gear card to demo gear from sponsors. Go to the Festival Information Booth with your driver's license and credit card – or better yet, order yours ahead of time at ourayicepark.com/passes/. Once you have your gear card, go around to the different sponsors to demo all of the required gear for the clinic you've signed up for. (Bring your own gear as well if you have it – especially harness, helmet and crampons.)

Here are a few insider's tips for a successful demo-ing experience:

- Show up early in the day to get the best selection;

- Get all demos back to the sponsor booths as soon as you get out of the gorge – the sponsors need to inspect the tools and equipment, sharpen all the points, clean and dry the apparel and boots and get them ready for the next day;

- Plan ahead – check in with sponsors at their booths on Friday or Saturday about the gear you want to try out during that clinic you signed up for on Sunday.

- A lot of times, if you like the gear you demoed, you can bid on it at the silent and live auctions on Friday and Saturday night (a great way to get the gear you covet while directly supporting the Ice Park's bottom line). Sponsors will often give you discounts on demo gear, as well. They want to help you break out of your gear rut.


PHOTO XANDER BIANCHI

the COMPETITIONS

ELITE MIXED CLIMBING COMP

Saturday, Jan. 25, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Ouray Ice Park, Lower Bridge/
Outdoor Gear Expo area

For many fans, the Elite Mixed Climbing Competition is the highlight of the whole Ice Fest weekend.

The competition showcases the finest alpinists and sport climbers in the world exhibiting jaw-dropping, head-scratching feats of strength and agility as they pit themselves against a uniquely challenging route in the heart of the Ouray Ice Park.

Men and women climb the same mixed route that blends natural and artificial features including vertical rock and ice inside the Uncompahgre Gorge, and a steel climbing tower overhanging the gorge. The tower made its debut in 2013, with the aim of spicing up the competition and making it more spectator friendly.

Longtime routesetter Vince Anderson collaborates with Colombian powerhouse Andres Marin (a former competitor) again this year to design a route that will both challenge the best climbers in the world while also delighting and entertaining the crowds of onlookers.

Spectators can take in the action from the lower bridge, viewing platforms and bleachers along the rim of the Uncompahgre Gorge.

Competitors will have to complete their climb within a specific time limit that was yet to be determined at press time. Place is determined based upon the highest controlled point reached. If more than one climber sends, the one with the fastest time wins.

The names of competitors are made available to the public by early January. Check OIPI's website and social media to get an up-to-date list of who's climbing. As they ascend the cold, hard ice, climbers compete for cold, hard cash; $9,000 will be divvied among the top three male and female competitors in the Elite Mixed Climbing Competition this year.

2019 RECAP

Athletes made like Cirque de Soleil performers as they attacked a vertical ice start, a bare midriff of rock, and an artificial wall with itsy-bitsy artificial holds, then swung their way like monkeys from the comp tower to a suspended cube-shaped volume and trapeze above the Uncompahgre Gorge.

Sam Elias, a 36-year-old climber from Detroit, teased and titillated the crowd the entire way up the route, earning cheers and applause as he snagged first place with a time of 9 minutes 19 seconds. Perennial favorite Will Gadd finished in 9 minutes 34 seconds, just shy of Elias' time, earning second place, while Dennis Van Hoek of the Netherlands came in third, with a time of 10 minutes 44 seconds.

Dutch climber Marianne van der Steen, wearing bright-orange leggings and a sports bra, moved with power, speed and grace to win first place among the women. She made it to within just two holds of the finish before timing out, but kept on climbing anyway and finished the route in spectacular style. 2018 UIAA North American Ice Climbing female champ Rebecca Lewis and Corey Buhay earned second and third place, respectively, falling off the route before they could send it.

HARI BERGER SPEED COMP, SPONSORED BY LOWA

Sunday, Jan. 26, starting at 9 a.m.
Ouray Ice Park, Lower Bridge/
Outdoor Gear Expo area

For the eighth year running, LOWA sponsors the Hari Berger Speed Climbing Competition at the Ouray Ice Festival to honor the legendary fallen athlete who won three Ice Climbing World Championships while wearing LOWA boots.

Berger used to be a regular at the Ouray Ice Festival, known for his expansive smile and virtually effortless ascents of difficult comp routes. He died in 2006 at age 34 while ice climbing near his hometown of Salzburg, Austria. His girlfriend Kristen Buchman gave birth to their daughter, Zoe, the day after he died.

Berger's legacy lives on each year at the Ouray Ice Festival, when competitors race up topropes in head-to-head match-ups on twin pillars of ice in the depths of the Uncompahgre Gorge adjacent to the mixed finals route. After each race, athletes swap lines and race again, to ensure fairness among route grades.

Speed climbing is hugely popular on the World Cup scene in Europe and has become a hit here, too! The competition is fast and furious – an all-out vertical sprint using ice axes and crampons – with $5,000 in prize money up for grabs. Unlike the Elite Mixed Climbing Competition, this is an open comp; anyone can sign up to compete. The event attracts a nice mix of big names and local heroes pitted against each other.

2019 RECAP: SPEED

Dutch phenom Marianne van der Steen earned her second victory of the weekend, winning women's speed. 2018 North American Ice Climbing speed champion Catalina Shirley took home second, and Lindsay Hastings, a 2019 World Cup competitor from Denver, came in third.

Liam Foster defended his title, taking home first place for the men, followed by Keenan Griscom and Dennis Van Hoek.

Comp Route Preview

Bridge to Heaven (or Bridge to Hell)

BY SAMANTHA TISDEL WRIGHT

On a humid, warm afternoon in early December at the Ouray Ice Park, the Ice Farmers are spraying down the cliffs in the Uncompahgre Gorge in the hopes of encouraging a thin veneer of ice to continue growing, while Vince Anderson and Andres Marin sit under dim electric lights inside the old Powder House, discussing their ideas for the upcoming comp route they plan to create for the 25th Annual Ouray Ice Festival.

Back in Ouray's mining heyday, Anderson explains to Marin (who has just gotten back from climbing the Ames Ice Hose with Steve House), "They had to keep explosives in buildings like this, outside of town."

More recently – but still in the dark ages in terms of Ouray Ice Park history – Anderson used to dry tool around the outside of the Powder House for fun.

Today, the historic little arched stone building by the Ice Park's Lower Bridge serves as Ice Farming headquarters. It's full of weird joints of pipe, orphaned spray heads, old Fest posters signed by climbing greats, and buckets of extra holds for the comp tower.

Anderson is suffering from a broken foot, so he probably won't be involved in the physical work of setting this year's route.

"But I have got some ideas I put forth to Andres," he says, wiggling a scabby toe that peeks out of his cast (a painful reminder of a slight mistake he made three weeks ago).

Like last year's comp route, which was dubbed "Leap of Faith," this year's route will unfold in three distinct chapters: a "warmup" down inside the gorge along an established mixed route below the comp tower called Mighty Aphrodite ("and if that's not a warmup, then they are in the wrong place," Anderson said), followed by a dry tooling boulder problem on the lower half


PHOTO BAYLEY WOOD

of the comp tower, followed by some "very acrobatic, gymnastic, more physical climbing" on volumes and other elements dangling from a cable stretched across the gorge.

"It will be a perfect climb: warmup, a little technical section, and by then the fatigue sets in, and we'll see who really did their pull-ups ahead of time," Anderson says.

"Pull-ups. Chin-ups. Yeah. Totally," agrees Marin, with his trademark Cheshire Cat grin.

The route setters don't really want to give out too much more advance beta than that.

Except that the one section on the comp wall – the boulder problem? "We want to call that the Death Spiral," Anderson says. "You have to make it through the Death Spiral."

"And then, it's on to the Bridge to Hell, or the Bridge to Heaven," Marin says. "Depending which way you want to look at it."

"Isn't, like, the Ninth Circle of Hell made of ice?" Anderson asks Marin. "Did you ever read Dante's Inferno? The Ninth Circle is the lowest level for the people that did the worst things. The worst possible sins. For the ninth level, you were encased in ice."

"You would think you would be burned alive," Marin says.

"You would think," Anderson agrees. "But that was actually level eight or something. In one level, you're in a pool of excrement. But that's not the worst. In the lowest level, you get frozen. I think Satan is down there, and he's stuck in the ice."

One thing that Anderson and Marin know, for sure, is that they are trying to keep the spirit of mixed climbing alive in the comps at the Ouray Ice Festival, in spite of the fact that on the World Cup scene, the sport and its equipment have evolved into almost a new sport unto itself – completely different than ice and/or mixed climbing in a natural setting.

Things have gotten so weird, Anderson says, that one of last year's competitors complained about having to climb the icy lead section of the comp route down inside the gorge, protesting that "My picks aren't made for ice climbing."

"It's ironic and funny," Anderson says, without smiling. His long-standing Rule #1 for athletes at the Ouray Ice Festival's Elite Mixed Climbing Comp is "Don't be a dick."

"Because people want to come and watch this show," Marin explains. "It's more for the people than the competitors."

"At the end of the day, we want it to be a really good exhibition," Anderson agrees. "We want to see it bring out the best in people that have put a lot of effort into being good climbers, and we want people to enjoy watching it, and we want it to be a successful route."

And if that means competitors still have to get down there in the gorge with Satan and the sinners in the Ninth Circle of Hell where there is still real honest-to-god ice, so be it.

ATHLETE PROFILE

Liam Foster

Out of the Youth Leagues and Into the Sky

BY SAMANTHA TISDEL WRIGHT


PHOTO MATTEO PHILON

Liam Foster talks as fast as he climbs.

And if you've seen him compete at the Hari Berger Speed Competition in Ouray, you'll know that's blazing fast.

The Durango native who is currently studying physics at CU Boulder has topped the speed comp podium at the Ouray Ice Festival for the past two years. This year, his goal is to double-podium in both speed and the Elite Mixed Climbing Competition.

That might sound a bit ambitious for a 19-year old competing against the best and most experienced mixed climbers in the world. But Foster is already an accomplished ice, mixed, and drytooling athlete, and he has always been goal-driven.

"You are going to go farther if you have goals," he explained. "Because then you can track the progress. When you are ready to give up and you really need to push to get that extra 10 percent that is still in the tank, it helps to have that goal in the back of your mind – 'This is what I am training for. Hang on a bit longer. Push a bit harder.'"

Foster is part of an elite class of sport climbers, mentored by Durango climbing coach Marcus Garcia, that is now crushing it on the world stage. He placed 4th in difficulty at the Youth World Ice Climbing Championships in 2019, second in difficulty and speed at the North American Championships in 2018, and is the youngest American to climb some of the hardest grades in drytooling.

He is most at home pushing his limits in places like Hall of Justice near Ouray and Tomorrow's World, an overhanging crag at Malga Ciapela in the Italian Dolomites that boasts some of the hardest drytooling test pieces in the world.

"Climbing there is actually disorienting because you are in this massive upside down ocean of rock," Foster said. "It's one of the coolest places on the planet for sure."

The first time Foster competed in the Speed Comp at the Ouray Ice Festival, it was on a whim. He was 14 or so, and he and his dad had headed over to Ouray from Durango to see his dad's college buddy Will Gadd compete in the Elite Mixed Climbing Comp. Foster spent most of the day running laps on the Kid's Wall. That night, it started snowing like crazy.

"And Will is like, 'Yo! Looks like a bunch of people dropped out of the Speed Comp. Do you want to do it?'"

The next morning, Foster smashed and bashed his way up the route, fueled by adrenaline and shouts from the enthusiastic crowd. "I wasn't fast at all, but I was so stoked the entire time," he said. "Everyone was like, this kid gets the 'most stoked' award."

The climbing was a blast, but what he remembers most about that day is that feeling that he got when he was down inside the Uncompahgre Gorge for the very first time.

"The bottom of the canyon is so beautiful," he said. "I just remember the way the light was coming through the ice, it made it look like it was glowing. It was one of the most beautiful things ever. I was like, 'This has been two hours from where I live, this whole time?' I just wanted to do more of it."

The next year, on another whim, Foster submitted an application to compete in the Elite Mixed Climbing Comp. He was maybe 15 years old, and didn't have much mixed climbing cred yet, so he was amazed when he got in.

Foster fell off the route before making it too far. "I was totally pumped out of my mind, at the limit, but it was super, super fun – one of the most fun experiences ever," he said. "From then on, I was like, let's do this thing for real."

The next year, his goal was to get to the base of the comp structure. And he made it. "It was mind-blowing," he said. He also started crushing it at the speed comps, going head to head against Garcia and winning the top spot on the podium.

When it comes to speed climbing, one of Foster's secrets to success is a strength training workout he does for a month or so before the comp.

"But the amount of preparation I put in for the lead climbing is a bit different," he said. "You are never really not training for them. It is always in the back of your mind. Speed is super fun and I love it, but it's pretty much the dumbest thing ever. It's an objectively silly thing to do. I'm really way more passionate toward the lead and difficulty portions of the competition."

As Foster trains obsessively – often late at night after his physics homework is done – to double podium at the 25th Annual Ouray Ice Festival, he's got one thing on his mind.

"This is what I am training for. Hang on a bit longer. Push a bit harder."

In the comps, he said, "Stress is a big thing, because if your heart rate is higher, it makes your endurance lower." So, he's trying to climb with less stress.

Beyond that, Foster's got a few more goals in mind.

"First and foremost is doing well in school," he said. "Also, continuing to train hard and not get injured. Injury prevention is always a priority."

He wants to send his current project at the Hall, and he plans to compete at UIAA Ice Climbing World Cup events in Moscow, Seoul and Changchun City, China in early 2020.

" I want to do well at World Cups – but I'm not sure what that means yet," Foster said. "I just want to go and have a lot of fun. Try hard. Climb well."



about the AWARDS

THE JEFF LOWE AWARD

Artist. Climber extraordinaire. Influential and beloved mountaineer. Friend. Jeff Lowe was many things to many people. Around Ouray, he was simply known as the godfather of the Ouray Ice Festival.

In those early years when Lowe ran the show, it was called the Arctic Wolf Ouray Ice Festival after Lowe's company of the time. Lowe's well-publicized climbing feats and rock star good looks had made him a living legend by then, and the festival he started rapidly evolved into one of the most successful climbing rendezvous in the world.

Lowe bequeathed the Ouray Ice Festival to the nonprofit Ouray Ice Park, Inc. in 2002 – about the time that his health had started to deteriorate from a mysterious motor neuron disease that was never adequately diagnosed. Lowe returned to the Ice Fest as often as he could throughout his long illness, even after he became wheelchair-bound and had to communicate (and crack jokes) with the aid of a talking iPad.

It was during that time, in 2013, when the Jeff Lowe Award made its debut. The award was Jim Donini's idea – a trophy of sorts – to be given annually at the Ouray Ice Festival to someone whose volunteerism has been foundational to the Ouray Ice Park, someone who has gone above and beyond, both as a way of both honoring that person and the award's namesake.

Ouray metal artist Jeff Skoloda (see Pg. 30 and Pg. 51) fashioned the first trophy out of an old-school crampon, embellished with a billowing ribbon of steel engraved with Lowe's name. It was presented to the Ice Park's co-founder, Bill Whitt. Lowe was there for the presentation. His electric wheelchair gave him a boost to help him stand upright as he joined Whitt and Donini in front of a cheering crowd at the Ouray Community Center.



Lowe returned to Ouray a few more times before the slow-creeping degenerative disease he suffered from finally claimed his life in August 2018. Over that time, the Jeff Lowe Award has been given to several other essential members of the Ice Park family – Gary Wild, Bruce Franks, Eric Jacobson, Mike Gibbs and others.

Lowe won't be gracing us with his physical presence at the festival he founded anymore, but his spirit endures in the camaraderie and volunteerism that keep the Ouray Ice Park going, and in the award that bears his name. We are still dizzy with his vision.

THE SAVOYE AWARD

Technical ninja and old-school climbing wizard Rob Savoye has filled a lot of roles at the Ouray Ice Festival over the years. Radio tech. Route setter. Comp rigger. Belay slave. These days, he runs the timer for the climbing competitions, unspools countless extension cords to ensure power gets to where it needs to be on the Fest grounds, and stands by to help his climber friends get their laptops dialed in for their slideshows at the evening presentations.

A few years ago, Savoye tried to retire from the Ice Fest, but the Ice Park board wouldn't let him. Instead, they decided to create an Ice Festival Volunteer of the Year award, and named it after him. Savoye was its first recipient.

In 2018, the Savoye Award went to Marta Miles, the volunteer coordinator at the Kids Climbing College base camp – and her lovable, friendly, pink-tutu-clad St. Bernard named Sherpa, who keeps small humans company at the KCC as they get outfitted with boots and crampons and wait for their turn to climb.

Last year, it went to Hannah Hollenbeck, the former coordinator for the Ice Fest's annual silent and live auctions, whose artistic flair, knack for doing things on the fly, and insane organizational skills came in handy as she kept track of hundreds of donated auction items each year, and shepherded them toward their happy new owners.

The one thing Savoye has learned after all his years of helping out at the Ice Fest is that everything is important – "even the stuff that no one is paying attention to and doing. That stuff is what makes the Ice Fest successful," he said. "The Ice Fest is pretty dialed in. It's the most 'together' fest of its kind."

Largely thanks to its extraordinary volunteers.

— STW



Ice Fest Trophies

Forged in Friendship and Fire

The creative process that goes into making the first-place trophies for the Elite Mixed Climbing Competition is kind of like a well-seasoned friendship. It requires time, and space. It can take some heat. There is expansion. Contraction. And sometimes, an unexpected shattering.

But more often than not, when the time is right, things come together in just the right way to form something unexpectedly beautiful that is much greater than the sum of its parts.

Glass blower Annie Quathamer and metal artist Jeff Skoloda have enjoyed such a friendship for the past ten years.

The first time they hung out was on a group climbing outing at the Pool Wall in Ouray. It was the beginning of a beautiful friendship. They're both on the Ouray Mountain Rescue Team, and have shared deep thoughts on many a rescue mission in the mountains. Quathamer and her Spanish-speaking dog Paco teach Spanish to Skoloda's wife and kids once a week.

For the past three years, Skoloda and Quathamer have also collaborated in the creation of the Ice Fest trophies for the top male and female finisher in the Elite Mixed Climbing Comp.

Skoloda has been making Ice Fest trophies for 20 years. His first, and longtime, creative collaborator was Ouray glass artist Sam Rushing, with whom he made many one-of-a-kind trophies. When Rushing sold his glass blowing business to Quathamer three years ago, she inherited the annual task of conspiring with Skoloda to create the trophies.

Each trophy starts with the germ of an idea that may come to the two of them at the OMRT Fourth of July pancake breakfast, or perhaps on a shared walk or hike. Then, toward the end of the year, as the Ice Fest draws near, the rising heat of a looming deadline ignites their creative process, and Quathamer gets to work in her glassblowing studio.

"It always starts with Annie," Skoloda said. "You have to make the glass first." That's because the glass needs time to anneal, or cure, before it can intermingle with the metal.

While Quathamer is working with the glass in its molten phase, she is thinking about how the steel will eventually connect to it, creating a few little divots or holes here and there to facilitate those connections as she gathers a blob of liquid glass and quickly transforms it into the centerpiece of a trophy.

"It's what people who like sitting around a campfire do for a living," Skoloda joked.

"Professional marshmallow spinner," Quathamer agreed.

Once the glass has annealed and is ready to go, Skoloda takes it from there, firing up his torch and focusing its dragon-breath into a hot blue tongue to quickly, deftly, loosely embellish the glass with red-hot steel.

"That's the fun part of the collaboration," Skoloda said. "Getting two materials to work together."

The first year of their collaboration, Quathamer made drippy blue icicles that Skoloda adorned with cool metal sculptural elements. Last year, they made huge scepters with orange fireballs of glass and crazy flame-like metalwork for the victors to hoist triumphantly.

The Ice Fest athletes always love their trophies, even when they're hard to fit into their carryon luggage and spirit through customs. "It's a piece of art for them to display in their home and feel proud about," Quathamer said. "Glass and steel look awesome together."

— STW

special EVENTS



PHOTO SHREDDED ELEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY

KICK OFF PARTY

Thursday, Jan. 23 | 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Doors open at 7 p.m.

Wright Opera House
472 Main St., Ouray

$10

Join us at the Ouray Community Center for the Ouray Ice Festival Kick-off Party sponsored by the American Alpine Club and Rab. There will be beer from Upslope Brewing Company, finger food and prizes, and opportunities to hang with local and visiting climbing royalty and the ice farmers. Plus, live music by Rapidgrass, the high-energy five-piece Colorado bluegrass band that won the 2015 Rockygrass band competition. This party brings in a "Who's Who" from the climbing world, highlighting the Ouray Ice Park's unique, ongoing partnership with the AAC. This is a great, grassroots gathering that tends to attract a huge turnout. It's the first opportunity we all get to see each other and catch up on the past year's adventures. Let's kick this party off right, with some hugs, high fives, a few beers and some great live music! Plus, beat the rush and pick up your gear demo card.

SILENT AUCTION + ARI NOVAK + NIKKI SMITH

Friday, Jan. 24, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Doors open at 7 p.m.

Ouray Community Center, 340 6th Ave.

$25

After you've had dinner in town, head up to the Ouray Community Center to bid on silent auction items donated by the Ice Fest's corporate sponsors – everything from coffee to crampons. This year, in honor of the 25th Anniversary, we are mixing up the auction with some new stuff to bid on, too, like a weekend at the new Red Mountain Alpine Lodge and ski passes at Telluride. Whatever you end up bidding on, chances are you are probably going to get a really good deal. We are stoked about that. And the sponsors are too. Because all auction proceeds directly support the Ouray Ice Park, keeping it free and open for all of our enjoyment. So bid often and bid high! Plus, don't miss a fantastic lineup of multimedia presentations by Ari Novak and Nikki Smith. (See Pg. 54 for more info.) The $25 cover charge includes a commemorative 25th Anniversary Ice Fest Yeti Mug and beer from Upslope Brewing Company.

LIVE AUCTION + JEFF LOWE AWARD & SAVOYE AWARD + TOM LIVINGSTONE + JESSE HUEY

Saturday, Jan. 25, 6:30-9 p.m.
Doors open at 6 p.m.

Ouray Community Center, 340 6th Ave.

$25

On Saturday night, dinner is on the town again. Ouray's restaurants are poised to feed the masses and turn over tables quickly, so you can hustle back to the Ouray Community Center by 6:30 p.m. for the presentation of the 8th annual Jeff Lowe Award and the 4th annual Savoye Award (see Pg. 50 for more info) and multimedia presentations by Jesse Huey and friends, and British ball of energy Tom Livingstone (see Pg. 54-55 for more info). The $25 cover charge includes a commemorative 25th Anniversary Ice Fest Yeti Mug, beer from Upslope Brewing Company and a fantastic live auction. Bid on Kellie Day's one-of-a-kind commemorative artwork featured on this year's Ice Fest poster, lead ice farmer Xander Bianchi's photos of athletes muscling their way through last year's comp route problems, and other goodies ranging from Asolo boots to signed photographs and antique ice axes once wielded by climbing legends.

PETZL PARTY – "SPACE"

Saturday, Jan. 25, 10 p.m.-1 a.m.
Ouray Community Center, 340 6th Ave.

$20

We have never known the Petzl Party not to be wild and crazy. Part rave, part costume party, it's an Ice Fest tradition that pulls in Ice Fest regulars and Petzl Party groupies from throughout the region. Back in the day, Petzl provided their own DJ from France. This year DJ John Walker will rock the house. The Petzl Party always has a theme. This year it's "Space" so dig out your Princess Leia slave bikini or take some inspiration from Kellie Day's awesome 2020 Ice Fest poster design and just go with basic (men in) black. The partier with the best costume gets to go home with a pair of Petzl tools. We'll leave the rest to your imagination. $20 cover charge includes beer. The old floor tiles at the Ouray Community Center curled up and died after a Petzl Party a few years back, so try to keep it in your Yeti mug. Other than that, anything goes. And keeps on going at the after-party – location TBA and yours to figure out!

ASOLO AWARD CEREMONY

Sunday, Jan. 26, 1 p.m.

Lower Bridge/Outdoor Gear Expo area at the Ice Park

The Asolo Award Ceremony is like something right out of the Olympics as the winning athletes from the Elite Mixed Climbing Comp and Hari Berger Speed Comp take their places on a unique podium created by Ouray High School students, to receive custom trophies made by Ouray glass artist Annie Quathamer and metal artist Jeff Skoloda. (Read about their artistic collaboration on Pg. 51.) Before you point your camera toward the podium, take a look around you – there's likely to be a "Who's Who" of climbing royalty in the crowd.

MEMORIAL GATHERING

Sunday, Jan. 26, 2 p.m.
Memorial Kiosk, Upper Bridge

We'll gather together at the Memorial Kiosk by the upper bridge in the Ice Park on Sunday afternoon to share memories and shed tears for beloved friends from the climbing community who have recently departed this material plane.



PHOTO XANDER BIANCHI

MONTE MONTEPARE COMEDY SKIT + PANEL DISCUSSION

Sunday, Jan. 26, 5:30-8 p.m.

Wright Opera House
472 Main St., Ouray

$20

Before heading home, head to the Wright Opera House one last time for a provocative panel discussion about social responsibility, climate change, voting, and how that all plays into the Ice Park, ice climbing and winter as we know it in Ouray. We will also be introducing OIPI's "Our Water, Our Future" capital campaign, officially launching in 2020. Our host for the night will be comedian Monte Montepare, who will open with a comedy skit and keep the flow going during the panel discussion. The evening is sponsored by Protect Our Winters and The North Face. (Learn more on Pg. 56.)

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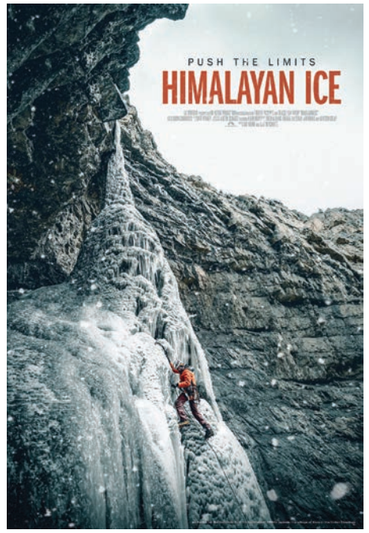
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PRESENTATIONS



Ari Novak and Karsten Delap Present: Himalayan Ice

Multimedia Presentation
Friday, Jan. 24, 6:30 p.m.
Ouray Community Center

Ari Novak leads a double-life. In the winter, he's an ice climber and mountaineer based out of Bozeman, Montana. In the summer, he works in the film business in L.A. (His specialty is kids' movies; he has directed five or six movies about talking dogs.)

Last year, Novak's two selves came together in one excellent ice climbing adventure that resulted in the documentary film "Himalayan Ice: Adventures in India's Most Remote Valley".

The film recounts Novak's expedition with alpinist Karsten Delap and a couple other climbing friends in December 2018 and January 2019 to explore a hidden treasure trove of unclimbed Himalayan ice deep in the remote and cryptic Spiti Valley, and their efforts to help Indian ice climber Karn Kowshik launch India's first ice climbing festival there.

The whole excursion had an Indiana Jones kind of feel to it, Novak said. They received a blessing from a monk at a Buddhist monastery before going into the mountains. They were so high up that their truck engines froze. The village they were staying in had no electricity or running water, and they could barely get enough calories from the meager meals their hosts provided to sustain them through the day.

"It was a mental, emotional and spiritual journey," Novak said. "Which is really how I always looked at climbing."

The teaching crag for the ice festival was at an old, leaky (but still functioning) hydroelectric plant. "It looks kind of like the Ouray Ice Park, but like, if it was hit by scud missiles," Novak said.

Novak is proud of the first ascents he and his team made with Bhushan, and of the impact their teaching experience had at India's first-ever ice fest – christened the Piti-Dharr International Ice Climbing Festival. Novak sees the event as having the potential to transform the wintertime economy of its host community, much like the Ouray Ice Festival and Ouray Ice Park have done for Ouray.

Deep in the wilds of the Spiti Valley, they left behind a few hundred lines unclimbed. "I'm definitely planning to go back," Novak said.

"Himalayan Ice" is 48 minutes long, and is presented by La Sportiva, Petzl and Trango. The film premiered in Boulder in early December. Ouray will be its second festival showing. Both Novak and Delap will be in attendance. — *STW*

Liberty Mountain Presents: Being Nikki Smith

Multimedia Presentation
Friday, Jan. 24, 6:30 p.m.
Ouray Community Center

In the spring of 2017, Nikki Smith was in a dark place in her life.

She had created a successful career in climbing. "I guided. I wrote guidebooks. I made first ascents. I took photos and wrote for climbing magazines," she said.

But she struggled with her projections about how she imagined people would react if they found out that the person they were looking at, who appeared to be a man, felt like a woman inside.

The world got smaller and smaller. She began withdrawing from climbing and friends and family. "I felt suicidal," Smith said. Then, by chance, she came across a friend's Facebook post that turned everything around. It was a quote from author Brené Brown that concluded with the words:

Courage and daring are coursing through your veins. You were made to live and love with your whole heart. It's time to show up and be seen.

PHOTO SAVANNAH CUMMINS



"I finally knew who I was and what I had to do to survive, and I fought for that," Smith said. "Slowly I began to accept who I am. It wasn't an easy path."

Today, the world sees Smith as the woman that she's always been inside. But through her choice to stop hiding who she really is, she has also entered a whole new world of danger from which she was previously immune.

"Trans women have been beaten to death. Harassed. Threatened. Groped. In town, on hiking trails, in climbing gyms," Smith said. Because of her transgender identity, she says, her access to climbing is now limited. That's why she recently joined the board of the Access Fund.

Smith is also on a mission to help the climbing community understand how to become more inclusive and welcoming to the trans and LGBQ+ community. At her keynote presentation on Friday night at the Ouray Ice Festival, she'll touch on these topics. She's also teaching two Novice Ice clinics for Grivel earlier that day.

Oftentimes, Smith said, "People are so afraid to have a conversation about these things that they avoid it. To move forward, we have to start having discussions, knowing that we are all going to make mistakes. And when you do, own those mistakes, make it right, and keep moving forward." — *STW*

Mountain Equipment Presents: Tom Livingstone - "The Great Game"

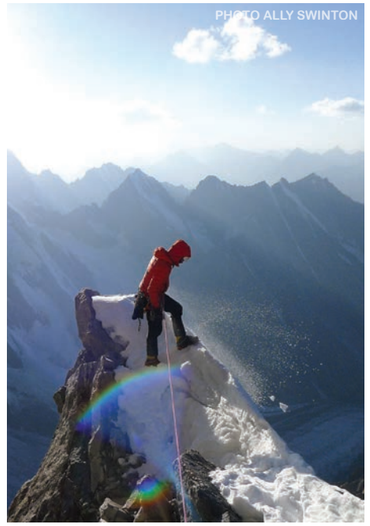
Multimedia Presentation
Saturday, Jan. 25, 6:30 p.m.
Ouray Community Center

Tom Livingstone, a 28-year-old climber and writer based in North Wales, U.K., has a penchant for trad, winter and alpine climbing – the bigger and harder, the better.

That's how he ended up, skinny, blonde and sunburned, on the hallowed summit of Latok I in the Karakoram with Slovenians Aleš Česen and Luka Stražar in August 2018.

The trio managed to climb two-thirds of the way up the peak's north ridge – the objective of the legendary 1978 American expedition comprised of Jeff Lowe, Jim Donini, Michael Kennedy and George Lowe that turned back just 150 meters below the summit when Jeff Lowe became extremely ill – before traversing to the south.

PHOTO ALLY SWINTON



In reaching the summit, Livingstone, Česen and Stražar achieved the second ever confirmed ascent of Latok I, and the first ever confirmed ascent attempted almost entirely from the north. It was a pretty big deal in the mountaineering world – big enough to win the three of them the Piolet d'Or. (Livingstone pulled a Bob Dylan, skipping the award ceremony, but he's quite chuffed at the prospect of meeting Donini and Kennedy at the Ouray Ice Festival.)

In October 2019, Livingstone was back in the headlines again, after an expedition in northern Pakistan that didn't go quite as planned.

Maybe it's the British in him; Livingstone has a habit of understatement. Thus, he described that trip – just a month or so after the fact – as "quite good fun. Quite memorable. It was pretty intense for a few days."

Here's what actually happened: Livingstone saved his Scottish climbing partner Ally Swinton's life when he fell into a crevasse after they put in a new route on 22,500-foot Koyo Zum, a long, hairy mountain with steep icy slopes in northern Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Livingstone and Swinton spent a harrowing, frigid, blood-soaked night on the mountain before the Pakistani army dispatched a helicopter to rescue them. You'll hear the full story on Saturday.

Livingstone also plans to discuss his journey as a climber leading up to Latok I and his recent trip to Pakistan.

"And I'll certainly be talking about this new route we just climbed in Pakistan," he added. "The Great Game. That's what we called it. I was trying to talk to Ally all the time throughout that night, and I asked him what he'd like to call our new route, and he said 'The Great Game'. So, we stuck with that." — *STW*

Arc'teryx Presents: Jesse Huey & Friends "Gambling in the Winds: The Hayden Kennedy Memorial Line on Mt. Hooker"

Multimedia Presentation
Saturday, Jan. 25, 6:30 p.m.
Ouray Community Center

Hayden Kennedy was always drawn to wild places. When he chose to end his life in 2017 at the age of 27, three of his closest friends returned to one of the wild places Hayden loved the most, the Wind River Range in Wyoming, to finish a challenging new route Hayden had started on the towering, blank 2,000-foot granite north face of Mt. Hooker.

Just getting to the base of Mt. Hooker is a fully committing adventure; it requires 20 miles of hiking, carrying all your kit. In August 2018, Whit Magro, Jesse Huey and Maury Birdwell headed into the Winds. It was a dark time, and the weather seemed to amplify and mirror their collective grief and anger over the way their friend had died.

The trip was mercifully aborted when a full-on snow storm hit the Wind River Range in the middle of August. "But we got a lot of work done, cleaned bad rock out, aided crux pitches," Huey recalled.

The next summer, in August 2019, Huey and Birdwell went into the Winds again to finish their friend's unfinished line. Magro and his family had gone in ahead of time and set up camp for them. This time, the weather gods smiled. The mountain lay placidly in waiting. Huey and Birdwell took a deep breath. "And we went in and we did it," Huey said.

As they ascended the sheer north face, they carried their friend up the mountain with them. They used his gear. They put

PHOTO AUSTIN SAIDAK



pinches of his ashes in their chalk bags. They cast his ashes all over the route. Then they threw what was left off the summit, into the Winds. They even spent a night in porta-ledges on the face of the mountain.

"This route was kind of the battle ground for me with my grief," reflected Huey. "It really is where I faced it the most. I have lost a lot of friends to the mountains. But the pure sadness around Hayden's death is unimaginable. I went there to be with my buddy. You know?"

Huey will be sharing the stage in Ouray with Birdwell and Magro. Michael and Julie Kennedy will also provide an update on the Hayden Fund, set up in the days following their son's death. The fund's mission is to preserve, protect and advocate for public lands.

"They are all really psyched about sharing this story," Huey said. "It is not my story. It is our story. And the route itself – I can't claim it. It's just a fucking rock climb. But the story, and why we did it, are the story." — *STW*

Monte Montepare

Comedy Skit & Panel Moderator
Sunday, Jan. 26, 5:30 p.m.
Wright Opera House (472 Main Street)

Why did the ice climber cross the road?

Find out when L.A.-based comedian Monte Montepare opens Sunday evening's gathering at the Wright Opera House with some much-needed comedy before moderating a panel discussion about the future of the Ouray Ice Park in the face of climate change.

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Montepare's wit will be welcome, as always.

A three-time Moth StorySLAM winner and a Moth GrandSLAM champion, Montepare studied acting at Emerson College in Boston for a year and a half before heading to McCarthy, Alaska, where he focused his life around climbing and guiding.

A stint at Western State College in Gunnison led him to discover the San Juan Mountains. He even spent a winter as an ice farmer between chapters in Alaska, where he has lived and guided now at Wrangell Saint Elias National Park for over 15 summers – five of those years year-round.

Montepare honed his storytelling ability and sense of humor during this time in the great white north, where near-death experiences with grizzly bears and unexpected tumbles into crevasses gave him plenty of material.

Eventually he realized he had to re-engage in the creative side of his soul. He moved to Denver for the winter of 2017 and did a bunch of standup, then made the leap to the bigger leagues of LA.

At first, it was brutal. "There are no shortcuts in the standup



comedy world," he said.

But over the past few years, Montepare has found his stride, touring the country with The Moth Radio Hour, and doing weekly improv shows at the Upright Citizens Brigade in LA, "so swing through when you get rained out at JTree," he said.

When Montepare's not onstage, he still spends his (increasingly sweltering) summers in Alaska.

This will be Montepare's third year performing, announcing and emceeing at the Ouray Ice Festival.

It's a rare treat for Montepare to have an audience that actually gets his mountaineering jokes. He's been working on new material for a while now, and the juices have been flowing. For starters, "There is definitely humor in trying to explain to anyone in the world that you farm ice." — *STW*



The Future of the Ouray Ice Park

Presentation & Panel Discussion
Sunday, Jan. 26, 5:30 p.m.
Wright Opera House (472 Main Street)

Monte Montepare moderates a provocative and inspiring panel discussion sponsored by The North Face and Protect Our Winters, featuring POW ambassadors Grant Zimmerman and Angela Hawse, and Ouray Ice Park Executive Director Dan Chehayl, with a possible guest appearance by climber Tommy Caldwell. We'll be discussing the history and future of the Ouray Ice Park, the Ouray Ice Festival and the sport of climbing, and the effects of climate change on all of it.

That may sound like a lot to take in, but there is plenty to be optimistic about regarding the future of the Ouray Ice Park, with a capital campaign soon launching to get more water flowing into the Park, enabling ice farmers to cultivate a thicker crop of ice each winter that can withstand projected rising temperatures.

Numerous projections from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concur that the Intermountain West will warm between 2 °F and 6.5 °F by 2050, but Chehayl has hope.

"There's still an opportunity for us to counteract some of the effects of climate change. If we can make some changes in our lifestyles in the next 25 years, maybe we can only have a 2° change, and then we can still have an Ice Park," Chehayl said. "That includes encouraging our big power companies to reduce their carbon footprint, but it also requires each one of us as an individual to do it."

The future of the Ouray Ice Park also hinges upon its water supply. The Park currently uses the overflow water from the City of Ouray's water tanks. The water comes from the Weehawken Spring up County Road 361. One pipeline brings water to two 500,000 gallon tanks, which are ideally always full to overflowing.

The Park needs at least 300 gallons per minute of overflow to farm enough ice, which has been rare in the last five-plus years. This year, thanks to abundant snowfall last winter, the spring is producing so well that there is 600 gallons per minute flowing off the top of the city's municipal water tanks for use by the Ice Park.

The doubling of target water flows this season "could be a one-time thing, and we are going to make the best of it," Chehayl said. "I am really grateful it is on our 25th anniversary. Being able to start with 600 gallons a minute, we are going to have a great season."

The City of Ouray once had an adequate water supply, which according to Chehayl, "dwindled drastically over the course of six years." This problem most recently came to a head when the City of Ouray asked tourists to limit their water use in the spring of 2019, before the snow had the chance to melt.

"If we don't have another record snow year, or even a good snow year we will be back into that drought stage in like one or two years." Chehayl said.

Hope is on the horizon for a more reliable, constant flow of water with the launch of OIPI's "Our Water Our Future" Capital Campaign in 2020. The campaign, centered around an ambitious effort to raise $3 million to fund a new water source for the City of Ouray that the Ice Park and the City as a whole will mutually benefit from, launches softly on Sunday night.

Chehayl feels confident that the capital campaign will be successful. OIPI has already received two grants toward the campaign, as well as three pledges totalling over $200,000. Chehayl hopes to have $1 million in the bank by the time the campaign is formally announced next June in Denver at the Outdoor Retailer Show.

— *Carolina Brown*

meet the MUSICIANS

Rapidgrass

Kickoff Party – Thursday, Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m.
Wright Opera House (472 Main Street)



Homegrown Colorado bluegrass band Rapidgrass crafts songs and lyrics in celebration of mountains and whitewater rapids. The band mixes French gypsy swing influences with folk and bluegrass, pop and swing, classical and world rhythms, writing songs that wax poetic about mountain beauty, how much it sucks to get stuck in Interstate 70 traffic, and the sweetness of going on a trail run and ending up at the ruins of an 1800s-era mine.

Band members are active in the Colorado outdoor lifestyle – trail running, skiing and fly fishing.

They typically play the summer festival circuit, as well as venues situated at the base of ski resorts or nestled among small mountain towns – locations that make balancing professional music careers with outdoor passions totally feasible.

The lineup includes Mark Morris (guitar, lead vocals); Coleman Smith (violin); Carl Minorkey (upright bass); Alex Johnstone (mandolin, vocals); and Billy Cardine (dobro, recording producer).

Rapidgrass recently finished its fourth studio album, "Gypsy Cattle Drive", and first live album, both recorded in Chamonix, France in 2018. The band has performed throughout Colorado, Alaska, the lower 48, Ireland, Hungary, Scotland, Poland and the European Alps. Since 2016, Rapidgrass has been a favorite at the Ouray Ice Festival, too, helping to kick things off right at the Kickoff Party sponsored by Rab and the American Alpine Club on Friday night. Happy Trails!



BEYOND the ICE FEST

KIDS CLIMBING COLLEGE

Held at the Ouray Ice Park several times throughout the winter season, the Kids Climbing College (KCC) is a super fun, free way for children ages 7-17 to give ice climbing a try, stoking the next generation of ice climbers.

As always, KCC will be set up during the 2020 Ouray Ice Festival on Jan. 25 and 26, with additional dates on first Saturdays in January, February and March (Jan. 4, Feb. 1 and March 7) from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The action happens at the Kids Wall, a specially developed 40-foot high, 140-foot wide slab of ice located along the road near the Ice Park's upper bridge, with easy walk-up access. It features a dozen different routes named after the kids of some of the Ice Park's founders, with various levels of difficulty for beginners to more experienced climbers.

The KCC is free, on a first-come, first-served basis. San Juan Mountain Guides provides all of the technical gear, including harnesses, helmets, boots, crampons and ice tools. Participants should bring: an adult to sign paperwork, warm clothes, gloves, winter boots and a warm hat. (Ski clothes work great.) Participants and their families should park in the designated Ice Park parking areas and walk up the road to the Kids Wall.

For more information please visit San Juan Mountain Guides at mtnguide.net.



PHOTO RHYS ROBERTS

NO MAN'S LAND FILM FESTIVAL

Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020
Showtime 7 p.m., Doors 6 p.m.
Ouray Community Center, 320 6th Avenue, Ouray
General Admission $10
Hosted by Chicks Climbing & Skiing and the Ouray Ice Park

No Man's Land Film Festival, an all-women adventure film festival based out of Carbondale, Colo., makes its Ouray debut on Jan. 4, 2020. Now in its fourth year, NMLFF has reached audiences in nearly every U.S. state and has breached international borders with events ranging from Canada to Australia.

Through human collaboration, No Man's Land strives to implement and inspire change in the outdoor, sport and film industries, while cultivating a deep interest in exploring the vastness of the planet from a woman's point of view. The NMLFF mission transcends the films presented, acting as a platform for powerful and progressive movement in the outdoor industry.

NMLFF champions women with grit, hustle, determination and boundless passion, investing them with the respect, support, and media recognition they deserve. Their manifesto says it all:

"We are women and we are allies. We are sunsets and alpenglow, dangerous riptides and endless singletrack. We are coffee-fueled optimists who may dance all night into an alpine start and laugh too loudly at jokes that no one else understands. But we are more than that. We are the vastness to the mountains, we are the horizon to the sea. We are global and there is no end to our possibility. We are rugged and determined. We are forged from a fire of passion and grit; we are nurtured by adventure. We will not be denied. We celebrate our voices and our bodies: their strength, their power, their ability to move mountains or, at the very least, to climb them. We aren't just women and we will stand up for our sisters whether or not society recognizes them as such. We are unique. We are individual. We are human. And we don't draw lines, because everyone defines their own."

With the help of theatres, nonprofits, climbing gyms and other hosts and venues across the globe, NMLFF is sharing its mission of un-defining feminine and what it means to be a woman in adventure, sport and film. While the name may sound exclusive, No Man's Land encourages all genders to attend.

Beyond the No Man's Land's mission, the films are a strong curation and representation of true outdoor adventure film – and they just happen to only feature women.



Visit us during the 25th Anniversary Ouray Ice Festival, and score a t-shirt with your $35 membership donation.

Ouray, Colorado, ancestral lands of the Pueblo and Núu-agha-tɨɤvɨɬ-pɨɬ (Ute).

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Mountaineer and YETI Ambassador Conrad Anker in Hyalite Canyon.

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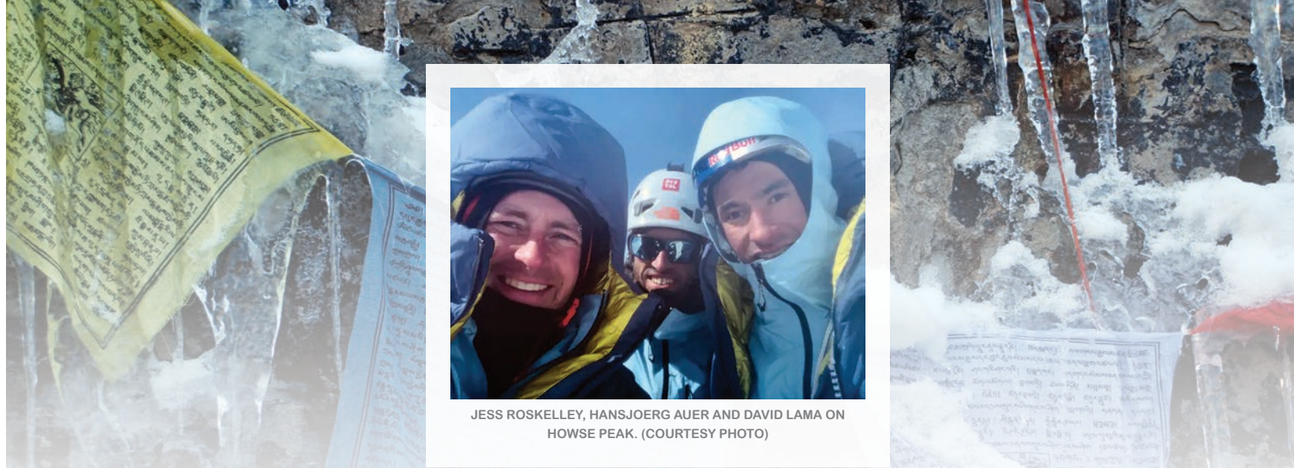
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JESS ROSKELLEY, HANSJOERG AUER AND DAVID LAMA ON HOWSE PEAK. (COURTESY PHOTO)

In Memoriam
Jess Roskelley and David Lama

Last April, an avalanche on the craggy east face of Howse Peak in the Canadian Rockies swept away some of the world's best young alpinists.

Jess Roskelley, the son of legendary American mountaineer John Roskelley and a climbing legend in his own right, was 36. David Lama, a climbing prodigy who was the son of a Nepali father and Austrian mother, was 28. Both were beloved members of the Ouray Ice Park community. Their climbing partner Hansjörg Auer, Austria's best free soloist, was 35. All three were professional climbers sponsored by outdoor gear brand The North Face.

Roskelley grew up having dinner with the likes of Ouray Ice Festival founder Jeff Lowe and other climbing royalty such as Reinhold Messner, Royal Robbins and Sir Edmund Hillary. He came of age in his father's long shadow, and at first, was not so interested in becoming a climber himself. But inevitably he heeded the mountains' calling and soon came into his own as one of the best mountaineers of his generation. At the age of 20 in 2003, he climbed Everest — the youngest alpinist at the time to do so.

An equal opportunist on ice, big walls and multi day expeditions, Roskelley supported himself as a welder until he and his friend Clint Helander established the nearly-impossible southern route up Mount Huntington in Alaska in 2017. That headline-grabbing feat earned him a place as a sponsored athlete for The North Face.

Climbing partners, friends and family remember Roskelley just as much for his zest for life, passion for big trucks, and zany sense of humor as his climbing. A tribute in the Spokane-Review described how he once danced on the back of a boat wearing nothing but an emerald green thong while floating down the Spokane River.

Roskelley's love for the mountains was surpassed only by his love for his wife, Allison, with whom he climbed Bridal Veil Falls in Telluride, Colo. in January 2019, just a few months before he died. "Anytime I can share something with my wife and she gets a better idea of what I do, it's a good day," he said that day.

David Lama grew up as a bi-racial kid in Austria and cut his climbing teeth in the mountains surrounding his home of Innsbruck, under the tutelage of the great Himalayan mountaineer Peter Habeler. His prodigious skills and passion for the sport of climbing led him to win prestigious competitions at a tender age, but he was always more at home climbing up (and skiing down) taller mountains.

His free ascent of the Compressor Route on Cerro Torre in 2012 – right after Jason Kruk and Hayden Kennedy infamously cleaned the route of its bolts – was documented in the feature-length Redbull film "A Snowball's Chance in Hell". This climb also earned Lama recognition as a National Geographic Adventurer of the Year.

But it was the mountains of his father's homeland in Nepal that truly shaped Lama as an alpinist as he tenaciously sought the summit of Lunag Ri's 22,660-foot granite scimitar. He finally achieved this objective in 2018 after three previous attempts.

Longtime Ouray Ice Fest family member Conrad Anker got to know Lama on a profoundly deep level in 2016 during one of these attempts. Anker suffered a heart attack at a height of 20,000 feet, and Lama helped him to rappel down the mountain, then called for an emergency helicopter rescue at base camp.

"David was humble, shy, quiet, and introverted," Anker recalled in a remembrance of his friend. "He found his power in climbing. He kept to himself. He had a book of crossword puzzles that he brought to base camp. We played chess, but everyone at base camp got so tired of getting beaten at chess by David, we had to stop playing."

In another remembrance, fellow climber Jad Khoury recalled something that Lama once said: "If you travel roads that have been already discovered, you're basically always just following. But if you go somewhere where no one has ever been, you're on the lead and that is one thing that I really like."

Roskelley, Lama and Auer traveled the undiscovered roads. Their joyful summit selfie on Howse Peak indelibly memorialized their final climb. A little over an hour later, another climber across the valley snapped a shot of a cornice avalanche sweeping Howse's east face, leaving us in the spindrift of their lives cut short.

SCHEDULE of events

THURSDAY, JAN. 23

Kickoff Party at the Wright Opera House

7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Doors open at 7 p.m.

Sponsored by Rab, AAC, and Rapidgrass

Music by Rapidgrass with beer provided by Upslope Brewing Company

Food and prizes

Ticket Price: $10

FRIDAY, JAN. 24

DAYTIME EVENTS AT THE ICE PARK

Outdoor Gear Expo

Lower Bridge | 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Free Adult Walk-up Climbing

La Sportiva Zone | 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Interactive Clinics

Inside Ice Park | 9:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.

Après Climb | Box Canyon

Parking Lot | 3 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

EVENING EVENTS AT THE OURAY COMMUNITY CENTER

7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Doors open at 7 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS:

Ari Novak and Karsten Delap Present: Himalayan Ice

Liberty Mountain Presents: Being Nikki Smith

Silent Auction with beer provided by Upslope Brewing Company

Ticket Price: $25

SATURDAY, JAN. 25

DAYTIME EVENTS AT THE ICE PARK

Outdoor Gear Expo

Lower Bridge | 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Free Adult Walk-up Climbing

La Sportiva Zone | 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Kids Climbing College

Kids Wall, Upper Bridge
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Interactive Clinics

Inside Ice Park
9:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.

Après Climb | Box Canyon

Parking Lot | 3 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

EVENING EVENTS AT THE OURAY COMMUNITY CENTER

6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Doors open at 6 p.m.

Jeff Lowe Award and Savoye Award

PRESENTATIONS:

Mountain Equipment Presents: Tom Livingstone

Arc'teryx Presents: Jesse Huey

Live Auction | Beer from Upslope Brewing Company

Ticket Price: $25

Petzl Party

10 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Ouray Community Center

Live Music TBD followed by DJ John Walker

Beer from Upslope Brewing Company

Ticket Price: $20

SUNDAY, JAN. 26

DAYTIME EVENTS AT THE ICE PARK

Outdoor Gear Expo

Lower Bridge| 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Free Adult Walk-up Climbing

La Sportiva Zone | 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Kids Climbing College

Kids Wall, Upper Bridge
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Interactive Clinics

Inside Ice Park
9:30 a.m.

EVENING EVENTS AT THE WRIGHT OPERA HOUSE

5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. | Doors open at 5 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS:

Comedy Skit by Monte Montepare

The Future of the Ouray Ice Park

Ticket Price: $20

Sponsored by Protect Our Winters and The North Face. All proceeds go to the "Our Water Our Future" capital campaign for the Ouray Ice Park, launching in 2020.

Enjoy All Of Our Nightly Events

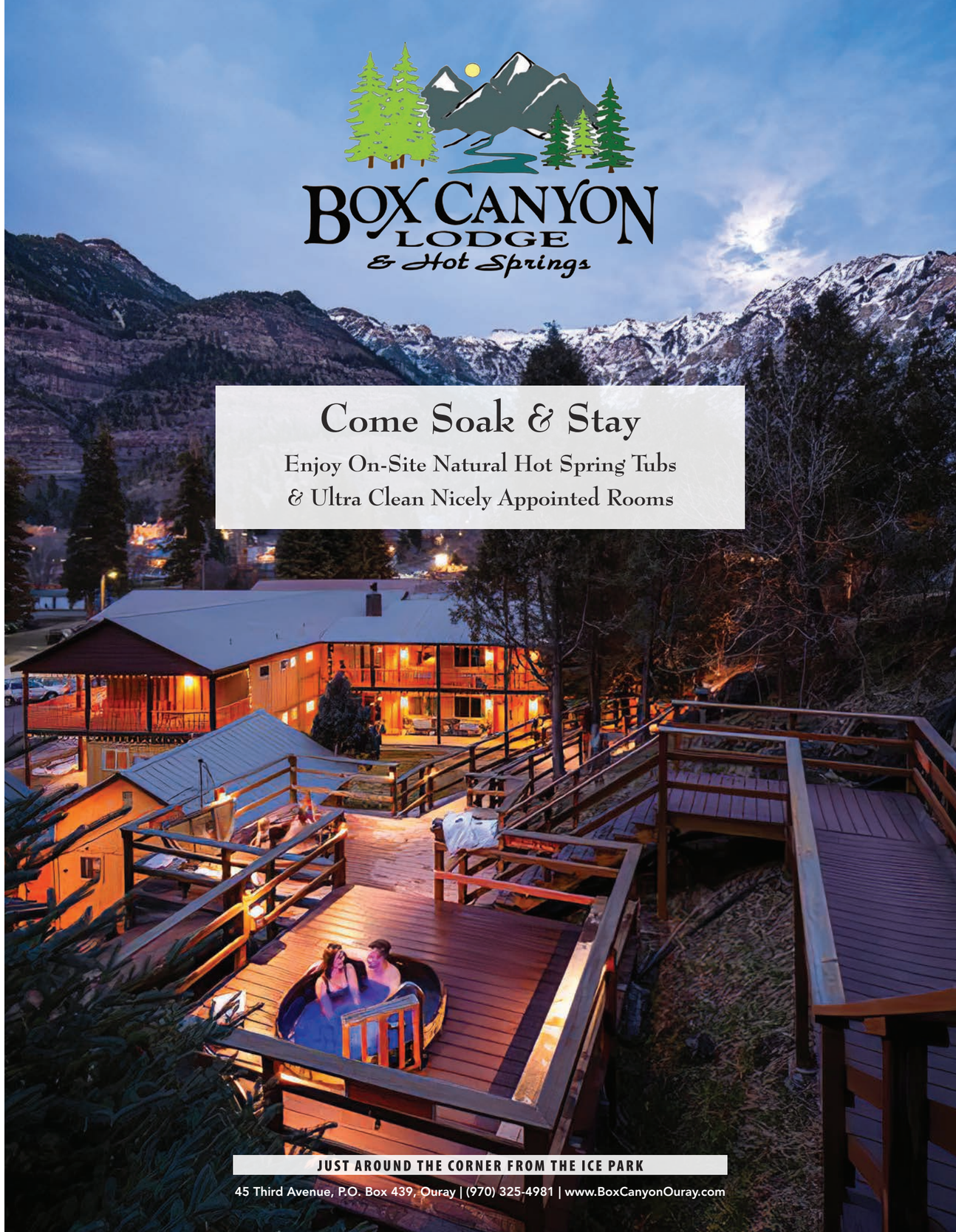
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