

# Our River Our Valley



Beaver Pond Fall -- Dave Bernier

We hope you have enjoyed this 10th *Gunnison Valley Journal*.

Look and listen for other 2014 manifestations of this “*Our River Our Valley*” collaboration between the Gunnison Arts Center and the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District: The Gunnison Open Art Show *All About Water* (June 2014), ‘*Musical Haiku*’ on Valley Radio Stations (thanks to the Reeses at KEJJ-FM), a Waterwheel by Wyatt Phipps’ Gunnison High School Students, and other happenings still in process.

A final poem for those of you who had intended to write something for this Journal, and who are sure you will get something done for the next journal:

### Procrastination

*John Nelson*

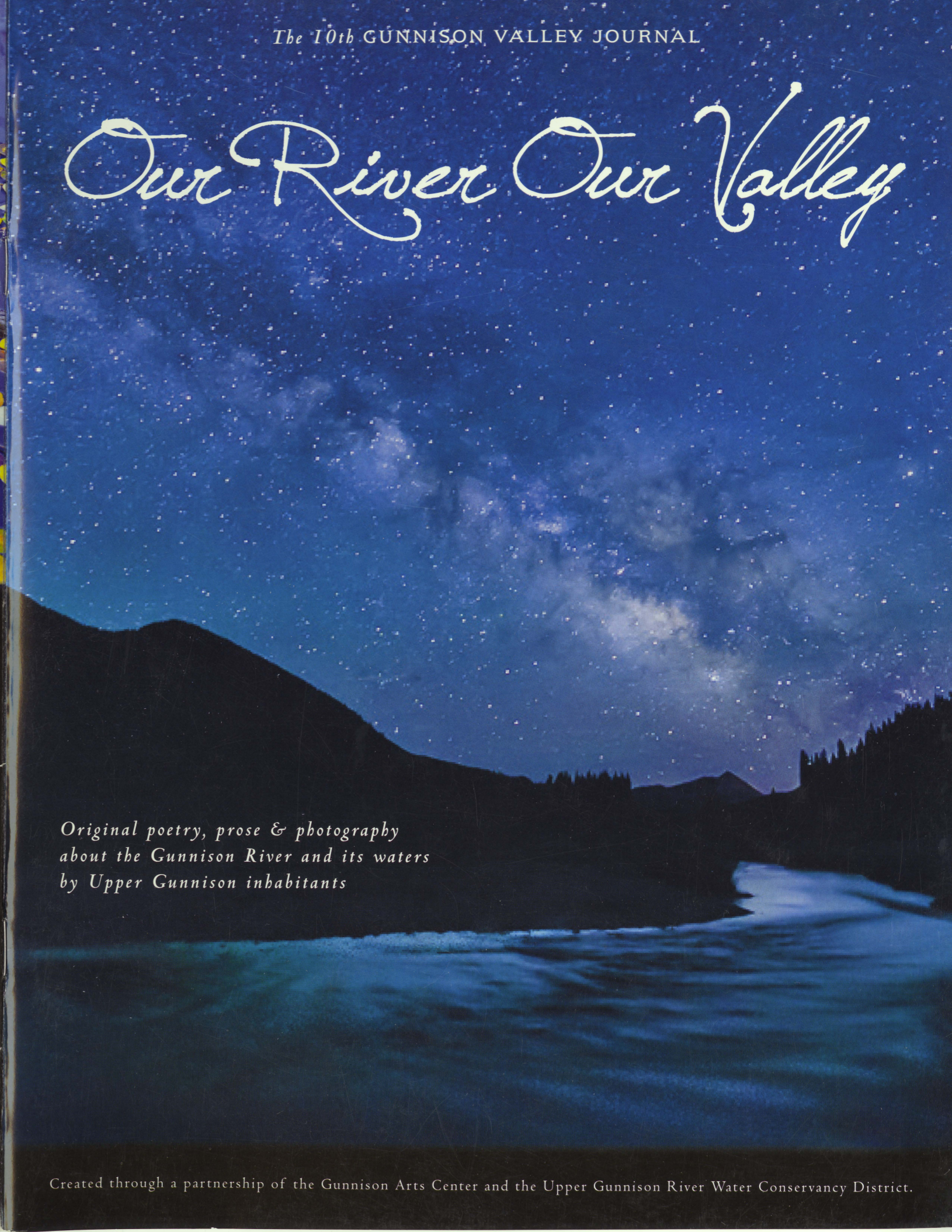
Some day I’m going to write a poem about procrastination

### Procrastination Revisited

*John Nelson*

Some day I’m going to write a poem about procrastination,  
a malady that seems to be so common in this nation.  
I’ll pen some verse quick and terse about this vice infernal,  
And promptly get it published in the Gunnison Valley Journal.  
I’ll take to task the slacker for bein’ so weak and meek,  
Damn! What a great idea! ... I’ll start on it next week.

*Original poetry, prose & photography  
about the Gunnison River and its waters  
by Upper Gunnison inhabitants*




*This Gunnison Valley Journal is a partnership between:*

# Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District

*An active leader in all issues affecting the water resources  
of the Upper Gunnison River Basin*

*with a Grant Program and new Educator's Minigrant Program  
for enhancing the utility, efficiency, beauty and public appreciation  
of the rivers and waters foundational to our lives here.*

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## *The 10th Gunnison Valley Journal -- Our River Our Valley*

This 10th edition of the Gunnison Valley Journal brings together two Upper Gunnison organizations that at first glance don't seem to have much in common: the Gunnison Arts Center and the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District.

But a closer look suggests that the two organizations complement each other in timely and interesting ways. The mission of the Upper Gunnison River District is "to be an active leader in all issues affecting the water resources of the Upper Gunnison River Basin." And the mission of the Gunnison Arts Center is "to serve as a hub for cultivating and promoting the arts in the community by unleashing creativity, connecting people, and enriching cultural horizons."

This is a time when leadership in "all issues affecting the water resources of the Upper Gunnison" requires "unleashing creativity and connecting people" because the State of Colorado is in a long-range water planning process, driven by relentless population growth in the context of a known, finite and already stressed water supply. A serious water supply gap is projected by mid-century -- an annual deficit that could be as much as half of a full Blue Mesa Reservoir. This challenge may be compounded by climate science projections of a generally declining water supply for Colorado and most of the Southwest.

So it is indeed a time to start thinking creatively about the water supply of the future. Governor John Hickenlooper has mandated that the water planning process to mid-century be "grassroots," involving Coloradans at the basin level. We need to be connecting ourselves with that which we too easily take for granted, the water without which there is no life at all, and unleashing our creativity in addressing some very challenging issues, water-wise. That is the rationale for this unusual partnership.

We hope this Journal will help unleash the creativity in our valley - reminding us what our streams and rivers mean to us, including but beyond just utility, what they do for us, and intimations of what they might need us to do for them. There will be other challenges down the road, applying our minds to more direct challenges of the "MEGO" variety ("my eyes glaze over"). But our analytical minds will be more inclined to buckle down to that if our passionate hearts are infused with a strong sense of what our rivers and their waters carry into our lives. As is said often in these pages, the river connects us all, runs through us all.

*- The 10th Journal Staff: Gail Sovick (GAC Staff), Toni Todd (GAC Board), Julie Luekenga (GAC Volunteer), George Sibley (UGRWCD Board & GAC Volunteer)*

*Cover Art: East River Milky Way -- Photography by John Holder*

*Short Bios of all Journal Contributors are on pp. 39-40.*

*Journal Logo by Sherrill Stenson*

## *The River Runs Through Us*

*Song by Chris Coady*

Everyone every son every daughter  
We can be like free flowing water  
Energy sustenance recreation  
All flowing peacefully pure inspiration

The river runs through us, I see it everywhere  
Such beauty given to us love it and treat it with care

These sacred ways could be protected  
After all we are all connected  
With open mind we can find the place  
All flowing peacefully so many ways

The river runs through us, I see it everywhere  
Such beauty given to us love it and treat it with care

We can be like free flowing water  
Look at me I am free flowing water  
The river runs through us, I see it everywhere  
Such beauty given to us love it and treat it with care

## *The Thousand Sparkles*

*Judy Cox*

You are the Thousand Sparkles  
Dancing in unison on the water.

You are joy and energy  
Singing with the sun.  
You burst forth at daybreak  
From behind the far hill  
In a moment of "Aha!  
I see, I understand."

You are the dawn,  
The light-bearer,  
The light-scatterer.  
You fling your rays  
Far and wide like seed  
Blowing in the wind  
And falling in every field.

## *Reflections in Taylor Canyon*

*Virginia Jones*

Water - you have a cutting edge!  
Long before you had this steady, smug,  
seductively soothing,  
silken sound,

Up the river, you were surging and swirling  
around bulbous boulders,  
rushing over rocky runs.

But eons ago, you were rowdy and raucous,  
riotously roaring, as you raced through ravines,  
ravenously ripping up the earth.

Yet...across the canyon...you left behind  
the beautiful burnished  
building blocks of stone

Thrusting toward a bright blue sky!



*Richard Guerrieri irrigating at the Bar Slash Bar Ranch -- Photos from Cara Guerrieri*

## *Convincing An Old Rancher To Stop Irrigating*

*Cara Guerrieri*

When he turned 80, Dad said, "I quit," and swore he wouldn't even take his hip waders off the horseshoe hooks in the garage that spring. There were plenty of hired hands to do the irrigating, my brother had taken over the ranch decades before, and there was no need for Dad to keep working. We all agreed.

The family should have been surprised when a month after his birthday the thaw began and he was the first one at the river turning on the head-gate, but we weren't. We'd been through this with my grandfather, who also irrigated until he was quite aged.

"Hey. I thought you were quitting?" I teased.

Mom answered for him. "Oh, he can't stand being inside the house this time of year. Irrigating gives him something to do."

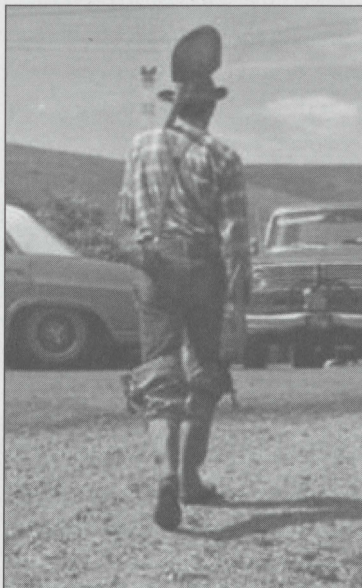
Meanwhile, he smiled, looked down at his feet like a schoolboy in the doghouse, and said, "The way I figure it, my irrigatin' boots are good for one more year. When they wear out, I'm done."

I laughed at his flimsy reasoning, thinking that he doesn't know how *not* to

irrigate. He's been growing grass on the same piece of land ever since he and Mom got married in 1950. That year, while other guys got drafted for the Korean War, he and an army of farmers and ranchers were required state-side to continue feeding the country. And so, every day from then on he's donned the only uniform he'll ever know. Broad-brimmed cowboy hat, silk neck-scarf, Levi jeans. And on his feet are usually cowboy boots, though they're switched for galoshes in winter and hip waders for spring irrigating.

Like his footwear, a rancher's life is dictated by the seasons, and the seasons are ruled by water. In the spring and early summer there's the push to get the ditches cleaned, the head-gates repaired, the water turned on. Then in late July ranchers coordinate turning off the water for haying, and by Murphy's Law of course, haying season is the rainiest time of the year. Getting the hay put up dry and fresh requires no small measure of luck. Winter and calving season starts the whole process over, the snowpack in the high mountains determining what kind of year lies ahead for the rancher.

*(continued on next page)*



*Richard Guerrieri calling it a day.*

## *Convincing an Old Rancher* - continued from previous page

Years when there's not enough snow the skiers lament, the business community worries, and ranchers start wondering, "Will there be enough grass for summer grazing?" and "How many cattle can I feed next winter if the hay crop is short?"

The summer of 1977 was one of those years. Dad and Mom also had a summer range on the Ohio Creek watershed and ranchers in that valley were struggling to irrigate. With the threat of a call on the water, the ranchers agreed to work out their own system for sharing the scant water. Dad was on a committee chosen to devise a plan and the kitchen table was filled with hand drawn charts and schedules. The phone rang incessantly and the talk of ditch rotation was nonstop. The ranchers got through the season without the water commissioner stepping in, but the hay crop was fifty to seventy-five percent short. The 'honor' of coordinating a bunch of cranky water-short ranchers was dubious at best. Dad was glad when it was over and haying season began.

He was glad for haying season again in his 80<sup>th</sup> year but for a different reason. His irrigating boots were completely worn out and he claimed he was as done in as they were.

The following spring, however, somehow a new pair of boots hung in the garage and Dad started his irrigation rounds. Twice a day, every day he changed the water so all the fields got wet.

"Irrigating this ranch is like having a damn milk cow, once in the morning, once in the evening," he said, lamenting as he does from time to time that his ranch is on a hillside and requires more tending than other spreads.

Nonetheless, when he turned eighty-one and again at age eighty-two, he chose to keep irrigating. In fact, if you've travelled down County Road 10, a favorite route for bikers and runners, you've looked at the green valley and seen his handiwork. Pictures show up regularly on

Facebook, taken looking across the ranch with its dramatic backdrop of Carbon Mountain and the Anthracites. When I see them I'm reminded that the irrigating finesse of Gunnison ranchers not only nourishes cattle, but feeds the imagination of artists and tourists alike.

Dad turns eighty-three this spring and we'll see if he picks up his shovel and pulls on his hip waders. He falls into ditches more often than he used to, which worries us. And this winter for the first time in his life he wanted to take swim lessons, so maybe he thinks his new skill might prove useful. Or perhaps he's planning to change his water sport and he'll be doing laps in the pool while someone else does the irrigating laps in the fields. I suspect, however, that he'll succumb to the lure of his waders, because the truth is he loves being outside, hearing the red-winged blackbirds, seeing hawks and meadowlark, and keeping the ditches full.

So this summer if you cruise past the Bar Slash Bar ranch and the hay meadows are tall and lush,

there's a decent chance you'll glimpse an old guy out there with his shovel thrown over his back, coaxing the water where it needs to be to grow the best grass, just as he has for decades.

In our family answering the question of how to get a guy in his 80's to stop irrigating and retire is easy. Don't even bother trying.

### *A Few Words on Water from Phoebe*

*Phoebe Cranor*

One of the mistakes I made when I was preparing to be a rancher's wife was to live in a country where everybody thought water wouldn't run uphill.... But I know better. I have watched what happens on the ranch.

You see a place where the water is coursing too enthusiastically across the meadow. You take a shovel full of sod, which must have grass in it and preferably a flower, and plop it down right in front of the water.

The water then runs uphill for awhile until it finds another spot to go down again. If you don't believe me, just go watch our son irrigate the family ranch.

I truly tried hard to master the art of irrigating, but I guess I didn't have the knack of digging up a piece of sod with grass in it or something. Anyhow, the best I ever did, really, was learn how to hold a shovel professionally on my shoulder. I can still do it, too.

The other mistake I made was living where it was warm. If the water faucets, sticking up three feet out of the ground, coughed up a tablespoonful of ice, it was COLD. Of course I knew in my head that when water gets cold, it freezes. Even music teachers know that. But actually taking an axe and chopping a foot of ice off the top of the stock tank isn't quite the same as reading about ice in a book.

After I chopped the ice out of the tank, it was sometimes my job to start the stock water. What you do is get down on hands and knees, uncover the pump, pour water, (saved under the covers since yesterday) into it until, when you plug it in, it runs.

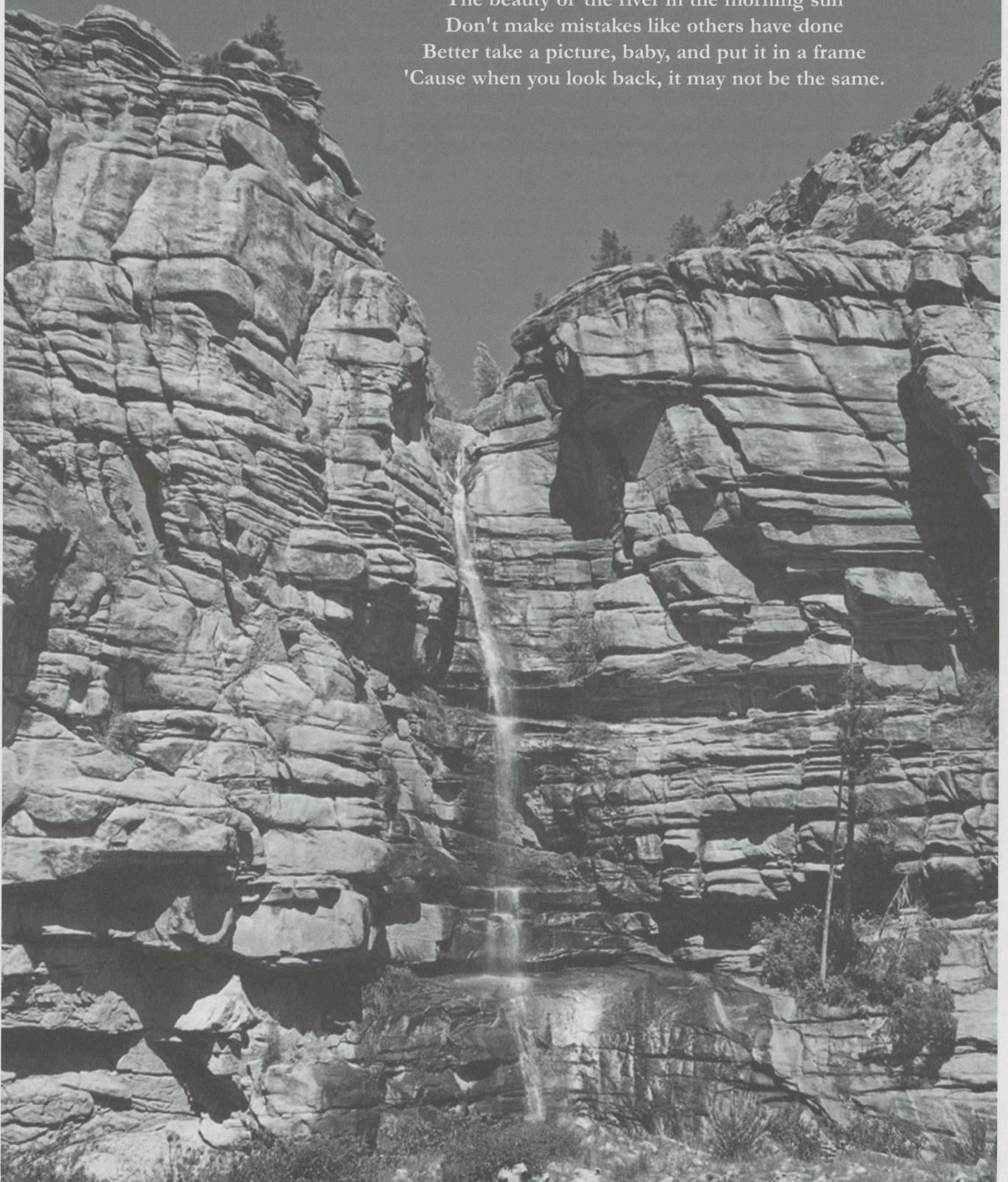
Simple? But I didn't always remember the priming water, and the pump didn't always start, and as I have said before, I was inadequately prepared with oaths purple enough to make it go like the men do.

- From High Altitude Ranch Life

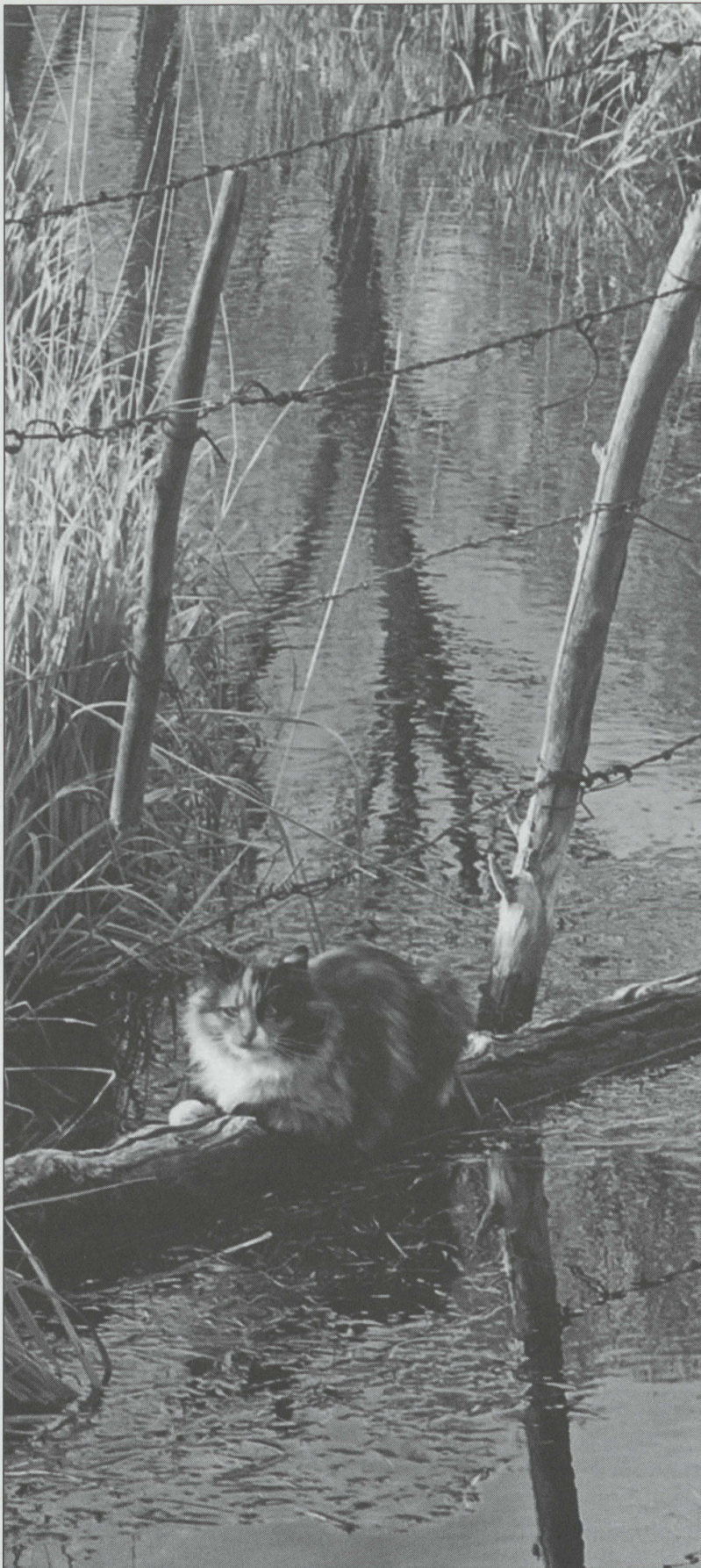
*'Our River Our Valley" Radio Song*

*Rob Wattles*

The beauty of the river in the morning sun  
Don't make mistakes like others have done  
Better take a picture, baby, and put it in a frame  
'Cause when you look back, it may not be the same.



*Chipeta Falls -- Photography by Carol Robinson*



*Calico Rest -- Photography by Kathy Norris*

## *The Sentinel*

*Judy Cox*

Sentinel on the pole top  
Black, red spirit paint  
Splashed on each wing,  
Yah she toe waa!

The high view  
Seeing out, down and up.  
Morning mountain mist  
Hovers over still pond water  
Beneath his perch.

Does he watch the far peak  
Or the trout beneath the surface?  
Does he know what's yet to be  
In the mist between the worlds?

## *Miracles*

*George Sibley*

My life is full of  
great miracles  
like this faucet  
turn the handle  
and clean water flows  
my cup runs over  
goodness and mercy  
that I take for granted  
except this faucet  
drips  
drips  
drips every day  
about the same amount  
that women in Africa  
haul home after walking  
ten miles every day  
to water not half so  
clean and pure as this drip  
I will fix this drip  
that overflows my cup  
someday soon I'll get to it





*Slate River Spring 1 -- Photography by John Holder*

## *Living the Dream*

*John Bocchino*

"How's it going?" I asked a friend.

"You know, living the dream. How are you doing?" he said.

"Living the same dream!" I replied.

I had this exchange with a friend a while back and think of it often, especially when I am out on the river. Sometimes when I am in the rhythm of casting a fly, I'll also flash to an old Bob Dylan tune, *Time Passes Slowly*:

*"Time passes slowly up here in the mountains  
We sit beside bridges and walk beside fountains  
Catch the wild fishes that float through the stream  
Time passes slowly when you're lost in a dream"*

I don't miss the rat race in the big cities I've lived in over the years. I can't imagine ever going back to that life. Everything really does slow down up here in the mountains. And this is a good thing. It allows us the time to truly appreciate what a special place the Gunnison Valley is and never take it for granted. So as I stand in the river, lost in a dream, with the current rushing against my legs and my boot soles digging into the river bottom, I am connected to this river, this valley, this town. It didn't take

long to realize that our rivers are the life blood of this valley. The rivers flow through the valley and the people, connecting us all - ranchers, river rafters, fly fishers, and townspeople.

The snowpack in our part of the Colorado Rockies, with peaks as high as 13,000 to 14,000 feet, is the source from which our rivers flow. The East River drains out of Emerald Lake, above Crested Butte, and winds down through the valley to Almont. The Taylor River flows from the peaks surrounding Taylor Park, near the Continental Divide, and drains into Taylor Reservoir. The tailwater section below the dam flows down through the Taylor Canyon to Almont. The East River and Taylor River merge in Almont to form the headwaters of the Gunnison River. The Gunnison widens as it flows down through the valley and into Blue Mesa Reservoir. And after a series of dams, the Gunnison River eventually flows into the Colorado River near Grand Junction.

The Gunnison River flows through mountains, valleys, and canyons. It is a journey through time as well as space. One must respect the history of the river while acknowledging its role in our current times - from commercial,

*(continued on next page)*

*Living the Dream.... continued from previous page*

**unbroken**

*Alan Wartes*

a lone elk  
crossed the river  
last night  
within sight  
of my window,  
a migration  
of one under a  
drawing moon

i read the news  
this morning  
in signs she left  
moving  
through snow  
and willows  
and bristling  
villages of  
wild rose stalks  
and, for a while,  
along the trail  
i have made over  
many days and nights  
on my own  
solitary  
migrations

the mirrored commas  
of her signature  
supersede  
the imprint of  
my boot heel,  
professing a  
prior claim

then straight away  
she crossed  
the river,  
though not with  
hopes held close  
like the fox  
or the deer  
who take the  
narrow chances  
held up by ice

over silver water  
her steps  
showed  
no sign  
of pausing  
on the edge  
of the future  
to tally the odds,  
or map the depths  
or sweep her eyes  
up and downstream  
in search of  
perfection

here  
now  
on  
and  
into  
the dark and  
surging current  
she went

the way of  
her life  
unbroken  
by doubt

agricultural, and recreational perspectives. The Gunnison River has shaped the culture and lives of the people living in the Gunnison Valley for hundreds of years. With so much interest and the many demands on the Gunnison River and its tributaries, it comes as no surprise that for a river to survive, it takes a collaborative effort from all stakeholders. The people of the Gunnison Valley continue to work hard to protect a critical resource and maintain a way of life here. And thanks to each doing their part, the river keeps flowing. And for me, I continue to experience some of the best fly fishing of my life.

We see the peak of tourism in the valley during the summer months. It's hard to imagine so many people coming here without our rivers. I came for the fishing, and I know I am not alone. The Gunnison Valley is a fly fisher's paradise and home to some of the best trout rivers in the country. This is why so many anglers return year after year - to be surrounded by majestic mountains and pristine rivers which offer abundant fly fishing opportunities.

I have been in the Gunnison Valley for several years now, and I am still in awe of the natural beauty which surrounds us. I came from the east where we learned the hard way about the need to protect our rivers. I've witnessed the results of neglect, ignorance, and the total lack of respect for rivers and watersheds. I am happy to see so many people here working together toward the common goal of protecting our rivers and our way of life. Fly fishers, river outfitters, and ranchers all rely on the river. The needs and demands vary, so cooperation among the different groups is essential. And this is not an easy task, especially during drought years when many are concerned about the amount of water available.

I make my living as a fly fishing guide here during the season. Naturally, I am very focused on river flows and the overall health of the watershed. Even during the dead of winter, when my arms are worn out from shoveling snow, I am reminded of how critical the snowpack is to our rivers. We cannot have one without the other. The high country snow becomes a river, which defines a valley. It influences what we do and how we do it, and so the river ultimately defines us. And we all share the same dream.

*AW*

## *The River in Winter*

*Betty Light*

Jewels edge the river,  
icy sparkles on the snow.  
This cold and brittle beauty  
highlights water's flow.

Shore trees cloaked in ermine  
show a dismal scene,  
'Til stooping boughs are cheered up  
by the river in-between.

We mustn't miss a second  
of winter's brilliant dream.  
We have to freeze the image  
or it will flow downstream.

*"Snow," Crested Butte's old timers said, "is the crop that never fails." The real "crop," of course, hiding in the snow, is the water. Here are a few pages dedicated to our water in that other, first form ....*

*Frozen River -- Photography by Dave Bernier*

# The Blessing of the Waters

Julie Stephens

What could possibly persuade 70 of us to gather up on Monarch Pass the cold morning of January 9?

While it is one of our most scenic mountain passes, it was uncomfortable that windy, snowy 10 degree morning, a morning most would think enjoyable by the fireside. But we had come together to witness the "Blessing of the Waters" ceremony preformed by Colorado clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Those gathered found the beautiful ceremony to be deeply moving, a spiritual and mystical tradition. Incense permeated the frozen air. Bells rang. An altar carved out of snow held candles and religious images.

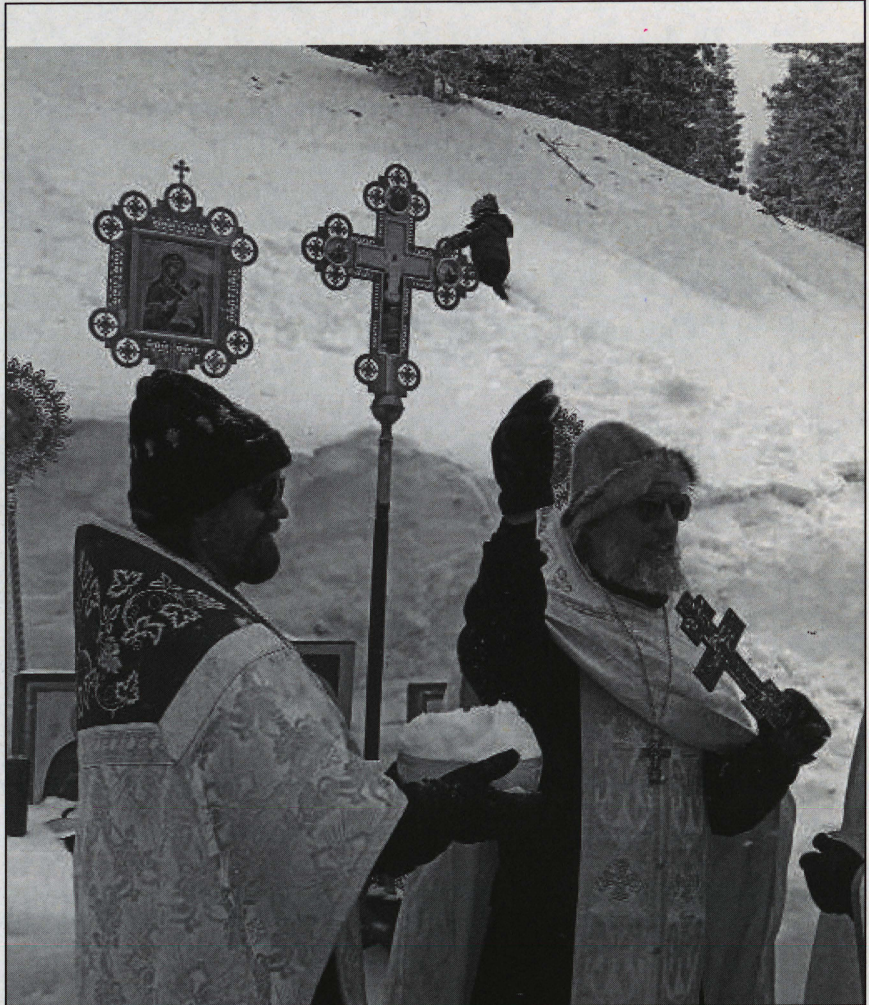
The Blessing of the Waters is associated with the Feast of Epiphany or Theophany which traditionally falls on the 6th of January. While the blessing is mainly associated with the commemoration of the Magi honoring Jesus, it is also a remembrance of the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist: all very fitting with the water motif, though the water on Monarch Pass was all in the form of snow that day.

Because Monarch Pass is located on the Continental Divide which separates the watersheds that drain into the Pacific Ocean and those that drain into the Atlantic Ocean, it is the perfect location for the Blessing of the Waters. All of the waters of the Southwest were blessed.

The priests performing the blessing came from Denver, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Calhan and Delta. Father Anthony Karbo, from Colorado Springs, led the service, which culminated when he tossed a cross into the snow to the left of the altar (East Slope), to the right of the altar (West Slope) and in the center, above the altar. The children present floundered through the snow at each point to retrieve the cross. At the end of the service Father Anthony welcomed the congregation to come forward for a blessing: a sprinkling of snow on each of us.

For me the adventure of life sometimes calls for being physically uncomfortable. It was cold on Haleakala as we gathered to watch the sunrise in Hawaii's national park. It was cold on Monarch Pass as we gathered to watch the Blessing of the Waters. Life is often most amazing when we venture out of our comfort zone.

GWJ



Blessing the waters on Monarch Pass -- Photo by Julie Stephens

## From a 2nd Century Blessing of the Waters

St. Hippolytus of Rome

*And what more requisite gift, again, is there than the element of water? For with water all things are washed and nourished, and cleansed and bedewed. Water bears the earth, water produces the dew, water exhilarates the vine; water matures the grain in the ear, water ripens the grapecluster, water softens the olive, water sweetens the palm-date, water reddens the rose and decks the violet, water makes the lily bloom with its brilliant cups. And why should I speak at length? Without the element of water, none of the present order of things can subsist.*

Father Anthony Karbo says that next winter's "Blessing of the Waters" will be held January 8, 2015, on Monarch Pass. For those tired of worrying about how much water we don't have, it's an opportunity to celebrate the water we do have....



*Pasture and Cottonwoods -- Photography by Dave Bernier*

## *Skunked*

*The pleasures and perils of spring skiing*

*David J. Rothman*

My birthday comes in mid-May and every year for years I've celebrated it with a solo descent of an unnamed north-facing gully above town. It's only a 1,200-foot climb, but it's forty degrees most of the way, narrow, and choked with trees. Don't know why I always want to do this, but I don't think I need a reason.

I like this gully, but nobody else usually wants to ski it with me. I get out early, park at the edge of town, stroll across the approach and up into the woods on an old, overgrown mining road, punch straight up the line, enjoy the view, then get down and off to work by 10. Not a bad way to start the day and testify to another year on the planet.

That's how I found myself, last spring, all alone in a full-body grovel halfway up the ridge, hanging on to a rotten pine branch and laughing. We'd had a low year - the basin was at less than 50% of average snowpack for May - but I'd done my homework, and I was sure there was snow hiding in my little stash. And admittedly the night before the mercury had only dropped to about 30, but there was frost on the deck. So I figured, why not? When I told my wife where I was going she just shook her head.

She's used to it.

The approach was warm and dry. Too many flowers for this time of year, closed in the crisp morning air but ready to pop. I couldn't skin any of it. Still I forged on. The snow patches had the look and consistency of filthy snot, but so what, I thought, I'm in the pines and low. It's all good. It will be frozen higher up. It's my birthday and I'm going skiing.

I came the base of the line and started climbing fall-line, but the crust still wouldn't support my weight. No problem, I decided, I'll climb in the woods, and swam off to the side of the gully. This is where it started to get interesting. AT boots are great for kicking steps in snow or walking on moderately tilted dirt. I'm here to say that they're not the best for bushwhacking muddy forty-degree hillsides. For every couple of steps I took I slid or stumbled back or sideways, often narrowly avoiding punji impalement, and the snow patches made it that much worse, as I'd sink to the knees, or hips - wherever the ground was. The stuff was one of the nastiest snow conditions I've ever encountered, one for which we need a

*(continued on the next page)*

*Skunked.... continued from previous page*

new name, a word that evokes dirty, wet, rotten, unconsolidated, previously faceted snow. Flormp? Jizsprat? Klupft? Something like that.

That was how I wound up in the full-body uphill grovel in the mud, laughing. For in all my absurd striving, it was at that point, after thirty or so very slow minutes, that I realized what a beautiful day it was. Somehow that's what it took to get me there, to realize it. The sky was azure. The temperature was good (a little too warm, but what the heck). A gentle breeze ruffled the pines. I could hear the sounds of town distantly below. Birds were singing, a Downy Woodpecker was working his way up a tree not far from me. Here and there were piles of pinecone flakes under a tree, signs of some critter or another at home. None of these elements seemed to be struggling - none cared what I was doing - they were part of a harmony which I had obviously misunderstood. I seemed to be the only one striving and struggling in my muddy, misbegotten quest for the heights. I could add in the occasional squirrel who would go off somewhere up in the canopy about my intrusion and chatter at me until I moved out of his territory.

The great Swiss guide who lives in Canada, Reudi Beglinger, likes to say that there are only three kinds of snow: good snow, great snow...and a bad attitude. I slowed down, but I kept climbing.

At the top, over the lip of the ridge, I took off my boots and scraped out the dirt and snow that had packed in against the tongues. A few gulps of water and then into the bindings.

And then the miracle: the skiing worked. I only punched through and went over the bars three or four times, dangerous in that terrain but the chance of sliding was zero, as I'd just wind up in a soggy hole of flormp. Some turns were even good, just enough crust to hold the edge as I dodged saplings. It was my birthday and I was skiing.

I walked back out to the car through a field littered with purple, fuzzy blue pasque flowers, Pulsatilla Patens, opening in the spring sun, revealing their bright yellow bundles of stamens. All that fuzzy stuff keeps them warm, lets them bloom early. Went and had a coffee and a breakfast croissant at Al's.

What a great birthday present to myself -- another year on the planet, another trip down Birthday Gully, another lesson about the good news of the mountains. And I thought: that was great, that was great skiing, if only to me. If skunked is a state of mind, I wasn't. It brought me joy. And I promised myself, again, yes, as I have for probably a decade now: Same time, next year. *GVJ*

*"Skunked" is from David Rothman's new book, Living the Life: Tales from America's Mountains and Ski Towns.*



*Frozen Delight*

*Betty Light*

A snowflake,  
a frozen design,  
fragile as life  
melts as it touches  
my hand.

Millions float down,  
no two alike,  
and deposit themselves  
in a snowbank.

After a while  
the beauty  
is not noticed.  
I shovel the driveway.

*Mountain Days -- Photography by Suzette Gainous*

## *Arrested Motion*

*Alan Wartes*

I had come to watch silver minnows  
darting and defying winter  
in a backwater channel of the creek  
where ice never forms,

where algae is an evergreen too,  
living beyond its means  
on geothermal credit, just enough  
to keep its head above freezing  
and the minnows in business  
year round.

I was leaning and looking  
from the shore of an island rising  
between the ice capped creek  
to the north and this southward ribbon  
of unseasonal spring,

when a dissonant glint of chrome  
flashed from the opposite bank  
under a thatched roof of willow  
and snow,  
where only frozen mud should be.

After my eyes adjusted  
to shapes and lines foreign to  
the water-formed world  
I found it in the shadows --  
the vintage handle of a car door, no --  
the rusted door too,  
or, wait -- a whole car  
headed east in arrested motion  
underground, mostly.

I could almost see a skeleton's elbow  
resting out the window on a summer  
evening,  
his wrist bending outward to flick  
the ash  
from a glowing Marlboro. I could  
almost hear the AM radio dial  
spinning in his woman's fingers,  
searching for new stations  
in the far night,

out where thermal plumes  
of redemption are hot enough to  
unfreeze time.



*The River in Winter -- Photography by Matt Burt*

## How Much Water in the Snowpack on the Gunnison Middle School Football Field?

*Water managers everywhere in the Southwest and Lower Midwest are very interested in what is happening through the winter with the snowpack in our mountains: how much water is "stored" up there? Gunnison Middle School science teacher Chris Kruthaupt teaches his eighth-graders how to figure that out. Here's how.*

In Mr. Kruthaupt's 8th grade science class, we went out to find the snow water equivalent (SWE) of the snowpack on the GMS football field. Snow water equivalent is the amount of liquid water in the snow when it has melted. We could do this by following a certain procedure to calculate the SWE, and then model the SWE in gallons.

The first step in the procedure was to measure and outline a square of snow 30 cm by 30 cm. Then we measured the depth of snow in the square with a meter stick and recorded the data. Next, we shoveled the snow from within the square and placed it in a bucket. Once all the snow was in the bucket, we measured the mass of the snow in kilograms (kg) using a spring scale (subtracting the weight of the bucket) and recorded that data. Now with that data, we could calculate the SWE.

To find the volume of snow in the square, we multiplied the area, 900 cm<sup>2</sup>, by our measured depth, 41 cm, and got a volume of 36,900 cm<sup>3</sup>. We converted the 7 kg of mass into grams by multiplying the mass by 1,000 g/kg.

Now with the volume and mass converted we could find the density by dividing the mass by the volume - 0.189 g/cm<sup>3</sup> for our site. Then to find the SWE we multiplied the density by the depth: 41 cm x 0.189 = 7.7 cm of

SWE in the 41 cm of snow in our test block. The average SWE for all of the class test sites was 9.5 cm.

The final step was calculating the gallons of water on the field, using the 9.5 cm average SWE. First, the depth had to be converted into inches by dividing the average 9.5 cm by 2.54 cm/inch = 3.74 in. That was divided by 12 to convert it into feet, and this came to 0.311 ft. Next, we multiplied 0.311 ft. by 360'X150' (dimensions of a football field), and the answer was 16,830 cubic feet of water in the snowpack. Then we converted 16,830 cu.ft. to gallons by multiplying it by 7.48 gal/cu.ft.: there were 123,507 gallons of water in the snowpack on the football field.

This experiment was to find the Snow Water Equivalent of the snowpack on the football field and then model the amount of SWE. We could only do this by following a certain procedure, calculating the SWE, and modeling the gallons of the SWE. All in all, the SWE was 9.5cm and the gallons of SWE was 123,507 gal. *GWJ*

*Consolidated from reports by Josie Bifano, Kim Brown, Joey Jimenez and Van Lukassen. A little further information: a football field is a little larger than one acre; an acre-foot of water is ~326,000 gallons. Blue Mesa Reservoir holds ~830,000 acre-feet (270 billion gallons).*

### Remembering Mac....

*A longtime contributor to the Journal, and to any reading event in the valley, was L. R. "Mac" McGraw, who wrote a number of books collecting stories, lore and legends of the Gunnison Country. A true Old Westerner, he has "gone west" himself since the last Journal, and we miss him. Here is an excerpt from the Third Journal, in which he told stories about the fabled "bug hatches" in the stretch of the Gunnison now deep under Blue Mesa Reservoir....*

I was never one to be squeamish, but I remember one fishing trip I made upriver from Moncrief Lodge with an old man who had spent many of his earlier years there. He was old and decrepit and perhaps slightly unclean. He gained permission from the boss to come to his old haunts one last time before his maker called him. I expected to see a fishing artist, that day, when he and I toodled up the river road. In some ways, I did.

He used an old bamboo rod with three or four off-center bends and put an ancient casting reel on it. The rod was some seven or eight feet long and the reel had lost its level wind attachment. But he would gather several line loops in his left hand and cast with his right and could throw that sinker-rigged leader and hook about as far as some people can throw a baseball. So it seemed.

I caught us some helgramites with my wading net; I put my share in the bait box on my belt and his share in a plain old tin can. I didn't pay much attention for awhile to what he did with his bugs, but I noticed he kept twisting his face.

Finally he tossed the old rod down and pulled his false teeth out of his mouth, along with some bugs.

Then he put the teeth back in, and explained: "Well, I like to carry a few helgramites in my mouth so I can get to 'em easier, but one of them kept trying to crawl under my plate."

*Thanks for all the great stories, Mac.*

*GWJ*





*Mustering the Gunnison Navy, date unknown. Note the occasional necktie for a Sunday outing. A Gunnison Arts Center membership and Upper Gunnison River District water bottle to anyone who can name everyone in the picture -- and the bridge in the background.*

*- Photo courtesy of Dick Bratton*

## *The Gunnison Navy*

*Sandy Smidl Mark (Rear Admiral)*

Were they wild and crazy guys, living a second childhood? Well maybe, but that is not the point. They loved the wild Gunnison River. They loved the rainbow trout, which was the king, and they loved the camaraderie. That was the point!

They were a mixed group of avid fishermen, business men, civic leaders, professional men, descendents of pioneer families, sometimes related by marriage but unsure exactly how, most of them with some clout in the community, and all obsessed with the idea of starting a new organization and naming it the Gunnison Navy.

As frequently happens, not all Gunnisonites approved. The river belonged to all the citizens of the county. Why did they think that they had any more of a claim than the rest of the regular guys? Even in those years land owners did not approve of boating on the river, and some of them strung barbed wire across the river to discourage it.

You have to be aware of the dynamics of small town life in order to understand the resistance to the Navy. Being born here gave you points, relationship (via marriage or brothers, or cousins, uncles, old girl friends, school chums, etc.) gave you points, being a viable business owner gave you points, owning real estate gave you points.

My Dad did not actually fall into any of those categories, but he was asked to join the Navy. He was, outgoing, very civic minded, quite lacking in financial assets and a Colorado pedigree, but creative and full of ideas. He wrote the Navy criteria (see side bar). He printed all of their official accreditation (maybe too official a word for a thrown-together organization). They did see the need however for some official authentication, but those were years when there was no worry about liability or patents or law suits or copyrights. They probably paid dues though I never heard it mentioned. A primary responsibility of membership was to provide libations when your turn came around.

Most of the members built their own kayaks. The construction was not terribly complicated or sophisticated. It was a wood frame with canvas stretched over it. Whether planned or unplanned there was a uniformity of design among the boats. They all looked pretty much the same. You might notice when you see pictures of the Navy that the boats were not given special names. The words, "Gunnison Navy" were stenciled on the nose of the boat followed by a number. The color of the boat was determined by personal preference, usually after a discussion with one's wife.

*(continued on the next page)*

My dad partnered with Jack Clarke, our neighbor on South Taylor. Evening after evening my dad and Jack built their craft in our garage. They worked together or separately whenever they had time. Did they have a diagram or plan? I'm not sure, but it came out looking sea worthy and they were very proud of it.

Group trips, with Sapinero as their destination, were often topped off with a picnic and much talk of the "ones that got away." Navy wives provided shuttle service and food, but the men knew that many of their wives were as adept at fly fishing as they were, and as the summer wore on, women were more in evidence as part of the crew when the Navy floated the river.

Life vests were not a requirement, in fact were not even a consideration, and this was when our river was wilder and the little boats more fragile. The kayaks could flip over in the blink of an eye. One wrong shifting of weight or an improper push off a rock could dunk you quickly. My dad was a city kid from Chicago. He never learned to swim, but that didn't seem to worry him. It worried my mother, but not him - although he did get dunked once, and nearly drowned before Bob McDermott, a coworker in the newspaper business, managed to pull him out.

Unless you are as old as I am, you may not be able to understand or feel the shock and sadness of December 7, 1941. It was definitely comparable to what we experienced on 9/11. I was a child of ten. Our lives were changed. We weren't sure what lay ahead; we just loved our country. All of the horror in the Pacific made the Gunnison Navy seem slightly less important, and created an intense patriotism in all of us. Men and boys were leaving town to go into the service. My daddy, 31 years old with rather bad eyesight, married, with one child, joined the Army Air Corps. Our family moved. We were gone from Gunnison for four years.

After my dad had been commissioned and was sta-

tioned at Patterson Field in Ohio, he called home one afternoon and excitedly told Mother that we were going to the base theater that night; she must drive over in time for the film. He had a surprise.

His surprise was that he had heard that a professionally produced short film about the Gunnison Navy was being shown that night before the scheduled movie at the base theater. He and Mama whispered back and forth through most of it, calling out names of friends; I remember that it was very special to both of them to have that touch of home.

In 1945, when the war was over, we returned to Gunnison. My dad bought the Gunnison Courier and rejoined the Gunnison Navy. He had purchased a government surplus yellow rubber raft and floated the river in it a few times; but after one late afternoon trip with the Navy a debate among those present decided that the raft should be destroyed because it was against the code of the Gunnison Navy to allow a rubber boat in their fleet. They burned the yellow raft. Daddy took it like a gentleman, but my mother and I were not as forgiving; neither she nor I had been given the opportunity to have our maiden voyage in the raft.

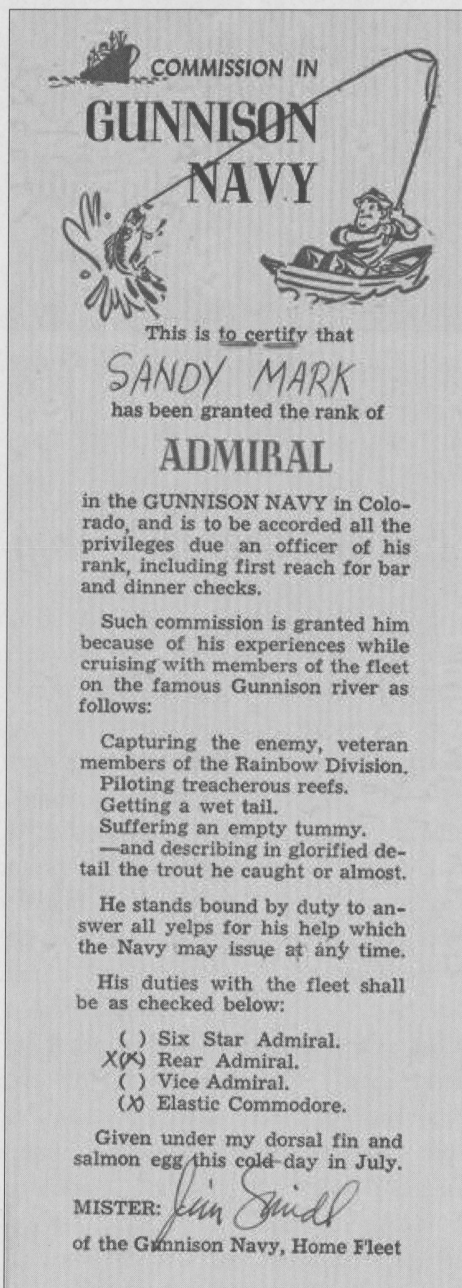
After the war, tales spread of the marvelous Gunnison River filled with rainbow trout eager to jump into your creel. Tourists came and so did many more rubber rafts; the exclusivity the Navy had enjoyed was diminished. My dad never built another kayak. He still fished, but mostly by himself. The magical old Gunnison River in which he had almost lost his life was his treasure to be respected and protected. He loved to quietly sit on a rock and watch it flow by.

Five years after his return to Gunnison my dad was recalled to the Air Force. He sold the newspaper to a partner and he and mother left for

Japan. There was another war to fight.

I have his old wallet in my hand as I write this, and the first card on top is his dog-eared membership card in the Gunnison Navy. Old dreams may fade, but they never die.

*GVJ*



## *River of Gunnison*

*Linda Wartes*

River of Gunnison flowing to the sea,  
I walk into your current,  
You wash my past away.  
I turn to pull it back,  
But no matter how I try,  
You have already carried it far from me.  
I am cleansed.

River of Gunnison flowing from around the bend,  
I walk into your current,  
You bring my future to me.  
With no effort on my part,  
You bring new life from the mountains of white.  
I am renewed.

River of Gunnison flowing night and day,  
I stand in your current.  
One foot in the future,  
One foot in the past,  
You soak me in the present.  
Existing only here and now,  
I am awakened.

## *A Reflection of Ourselves*

*Barbara Haas*

*"The power of a place is the water that runs through it."*

*- Sandra Ingerman*

Rivers all around us:  
sustain our bodies, nourish our souls.  
Water coursing through us:  
heals our lives, shapes our goals.

Individual droplets  
Connecting and weaving  
Flowing relationships  
Creating, just being

Ancestors, descendants  
Influenced by streams.  
Shared stories of lives,  
Calming strength, the beauty of dreams.

## *Night Waters*

*Marcie Telander*

Aching in the half-light of dusk  
moths mounting my hair,  
to be a thing of night  
to slide into dark waters  
and be at home,  
uncoil from rock beds  
sink through silt  
watch my belly ripple  
as nightbird fishes,  
works the eddies along  
my bank.

To salute silent owl and  
sinister sounds of  
hunter and hunted.  
To thunder down from studded sky  
spearing fur and frantic  
flesh --  
talons closing  
my beak open.

To feel the furious heart  
falter, flicker,  
stop in my grasp --

To swell up into liquid sky  
spreading wings, splashing stars like  
haunted, hungry arabesques  
sinking into slipstreams of  
Mother Moon  
the brilliant one,  
who stripes nightlands with  
bars of light and loss  
illuminating the ballet of  
dark things that know  
dark thoughts  
that live more deeply and freely  
than the dwellers of the day.

*Photography by Dave Bernier -- Salmon Ring*

# Lake Therapy

Essay and Photo by Julie Luekenga

It's early morning and even though it's summer, the air is chilly. I hug my jacket tighter around me, glad for my long-sleeve shirt. There are no clouds in the sky. Perfect.

I hoist my kayak to the top of my old beat up Toyota. The ends hang over the front and back of the little car. I tie it down, giving it a tug to make sure it's secure and feel a sense of pride and accomplishment that I have learned to do this by myself.

Every time I drive through the canyon, I marvel that the river and lake are only twenty minutes from my house. I am reminded anew that this kind of water access so close within driving distance is a gift.

I love when the water is plentiful. I don't have to risk driving my small front-wheel drive vehicle into the soft sands of the shore. I don't have to carry my boat as far either. It's not so much a problem when I'm heading out and my strength is fresh, but after a couple hours out on the lake, my arms will feel like shaking noodles. Carrying the boat back up a great distance stretches my limited endurance after a long paddle.

I pull off by the river. The small lot is already almost filled with pick-ups and a few small campers. Stepping out of the car, I turn my face to the sky. The sun feels incredible, slicing through the coolness of the early morning air. Below me are groups of lawn chairs and beside them, tackle boxes and coolers. Folks sit, enjoying the perks of retirement and living out the old adage: "A bad day fishing is better than a good day working". A few hardy types stand on the river's edge, cloaked in waders and khaki colored vests with multiple pockets. They are twitching their lines, barely dimpling the water's surface, in a bug-like dance.

This is perfect. I can carry the boat down the short slope and just slide it in. I unload the car -- a bottle of water, snacks, my cell phone (just in case), and my camera -- and place them in a waterproof bag. Then I undo the ties holding my blue kayak. It's not a fancy or high-tech boat; it was what I could afford, doesn't require gas, and still lets me enjoy being on the water. I carry it all down.

An older man eyes me. "Need help with that?"

I smile, appreciating the chivalry and feel secretly smug in my ability. "No thanks. I got it." I imagine a look of admiration on his face, even though it probably isn't there.

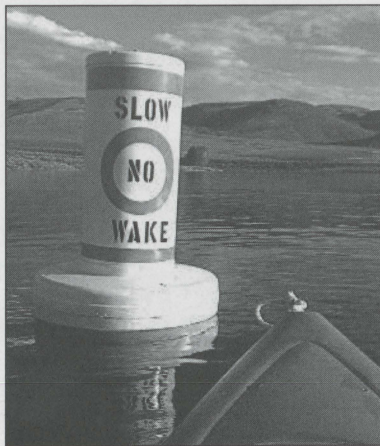
Once at the water's edge, I set the boat down, easing just the front in, while the back stays anchored in the grit-

ty sand and stones. I don my life vest and make sure I have my oar, load my bag into the boat, and step into the water. I try not to let the shocking cold show on my face, but I wince anyway. The lake filled with spring melt is frigid and biting.

Once settled, I dig the end of my oar into the soft sand of the shallow bottom and ease my boat gently forward. The shore finally releases the kayak, and I'm fully afloat. Freedom. My soul begins to float and release too. I find my grip on the oar and dip the end in, scooping the water.

I'm rusty. It's been a long winter. *Look like you know what you're doing*, I think- just sure my fishing friends are all watching me. Turning the boat towards the open water of the lake, I paddle against the current flowing underneath. As I pull farther away, I glance back at my comrades, lovers of the lake. A man raises his hand at me. I lift my oar up and smile, acknowledging his salute.

The water is restorative. Looking into its depth or at the thousands of sparkles that glint and catch off the surface is hypnotic. If there is any tension or stress in my body, my muscles work it out propelling the boat



forward. If there is worry or concern in my heart, the gentle lapping of water against my boat eases that too. During the early mornings, the lake is quiet and like glass. Clusters of boats, those with fish finders zeroed in on unsuspecting schools, idle in clumps, close together.

Out of the corner of my eye I see a fish jump. By the time I look over, only fading concentric circles remain. I let the boat float gently in silence. Another fish jumps. And another. I smile. I feel one with them.

Beneath the surface a silvery body glides by. "I won't tell them you are here," I whisper. We are co-conspirators in our silent stealth.

A heron swoops down and lands, cocking its head at me suspiciously. Smaller birds perform acrobatics, skimming the water, feasting on their morning breakfast.

Last summer, I rarely hauled my boat out. The lake was too low. The few times I did venture out, I was more exasperated by the muddy experience of getting to the water than exhilarated by being on it.

But this spring I am hopeful. Snow still sits like thick frosting on the mountains. Maybe the rivers will swell with the spring run-off and feed the lake's hunger so it can rise to be my therapy and peace, graciously inviting me to glide on its surface, once again.

GW



*Coal Creek Beaver Pond -- Photography by John Holder*

## *Boundary Waters*

*Mark Todd*

A moving skirmish line:  
thatched by branch tapestries  
that build a wicker work  
of twig-tangle and mesh,  
filling the gaped hollows  
in the creek, bank to bank,  
water-stopping all flow.

Nights, they harvest saplings  
to patch shut liquid seep,  
dappling mud paste on leaves  
as their pond home widens

and spreads bank boundaries  
to smear rough contoured ground  
with flat rooves that  
ripple.

Each day I breach new berms,  
patted by moistened mouths,  
marveling at their skill.  
No chances for a truce,  
so each night, I must sit,  
hold one reluctant breath,  
draw a bead, finger squeeze.

## The Coming Generation Looks at the River and Its Water

Camille Polster and Sue Wilson, fifth-grade teachers at the Crested Butte Community School, asked their students to think and write about the rivers in the headwaters of the Upper Gunnison. We only regret that space precludes using more of their wonderful poems.

### The Colorado River

From high in the Rocky Mountains  
It flows  
Like a snake Down  
Into deserts, canyons, forests and mountain  
For the past 6 million years.  
But then  
Dams, blockade and climate change  
Have stopped it  
From ever reaching  
The sea.  
  
Now  
After years of acrimony between the Americans and the Mexicans  
Finally  
A breakthrough, like a bursting dam, a torrent of agreement, has happened.  
It is  
Now  
Free.  
We all hope  
It lasts.

- Samuel Goddard

### Time is still

I gaze across the mesa  
Frozen in time.  
Distant water  
Ripples  
Breaking the spell.  
A glimmering fishtail  
Shoots up from the water.  
For a second  
I see the glistening fish  
Suspended in the air;  
Then it gracefully  
Dives back  
in to  
The  
Blue.

-Juliette Ralston

### River

The clear  
Wavy river  
Forms a sluggish  
Calming sound.  
Fish scales shimmer  
In the moonlight.  
The stones  
Form small waves  
That lap back down  
Onto the river.  
  
It all shatters  
When I drop the small hook  
And wait for a bite.

### Fragile

Water  
flows  
curves  
like  
a  
snake  
slithering  
through  
my  
lawn.  
Fish  
fly  
birds  
sing  
and  
bears  
fish  
for  
salmon.  
Nature starts in the mountains,  
Life starts in the mountains, in my backyard.

- Isaiah Zeikus

### Journey

My large body snakes through the banks.  
It slithers through like a dragon, slipping between rocks.  
Pacing myself, never resting, I reach a waterfall.  
I freefall, then explode into the wavy field.  
I go up and down like a roller coaster.  
When I go under, I see massive groups of molecules  
all making the same journey  
as me.

- Hayden Fairvre

### River

It flows through the town,  
Passing by every house and car,  
Sees the entire world,  
And keeps flowing.

- Alex Eldridge

### The River

The wild dancing water  
Bashes  
Crashes  
Pounds  
On the shore  
Down the  
Endless  
Rugged ride  
Slivering  
Shivering  
Sneaking  
Through the  
Valley floor  
Meandering  
Straight into  
The big blue Lake  
Where the water  
Starts to shimmer.

- Carson Hildebrandt

### Rivers

It's a snake,  
That slithers through the valley.  
It hisses and churns,  
On a rocky path.  
It shows colors of brilliant blues,  
Surrounded by a sea of green.  
The mouth is big and wide,  
Unable to measure.  
It swallows the entire valley whole.

- Molly Talbot

### Colors of Slate River

A sliver of slate  
floats downstream.  
Colors are swirling,  
and awakening from a dream.  
A twist of fate  
in this long going  
creek.  
So vibrant, so quick,  
so incredibly  
sleek.  
Deer will  
return here,  
chipmunks, too.  
Bluebirds will paint  
the sky blue.  
A brilliant  
green sprout  
will slowly  
pop out  
and you will know  
that soon  
it's coming.  
And when the sky  
blends with the hills,  
and there are  
no more chills,  
It's finally,  
finally,  
spring.

## *River Walker*

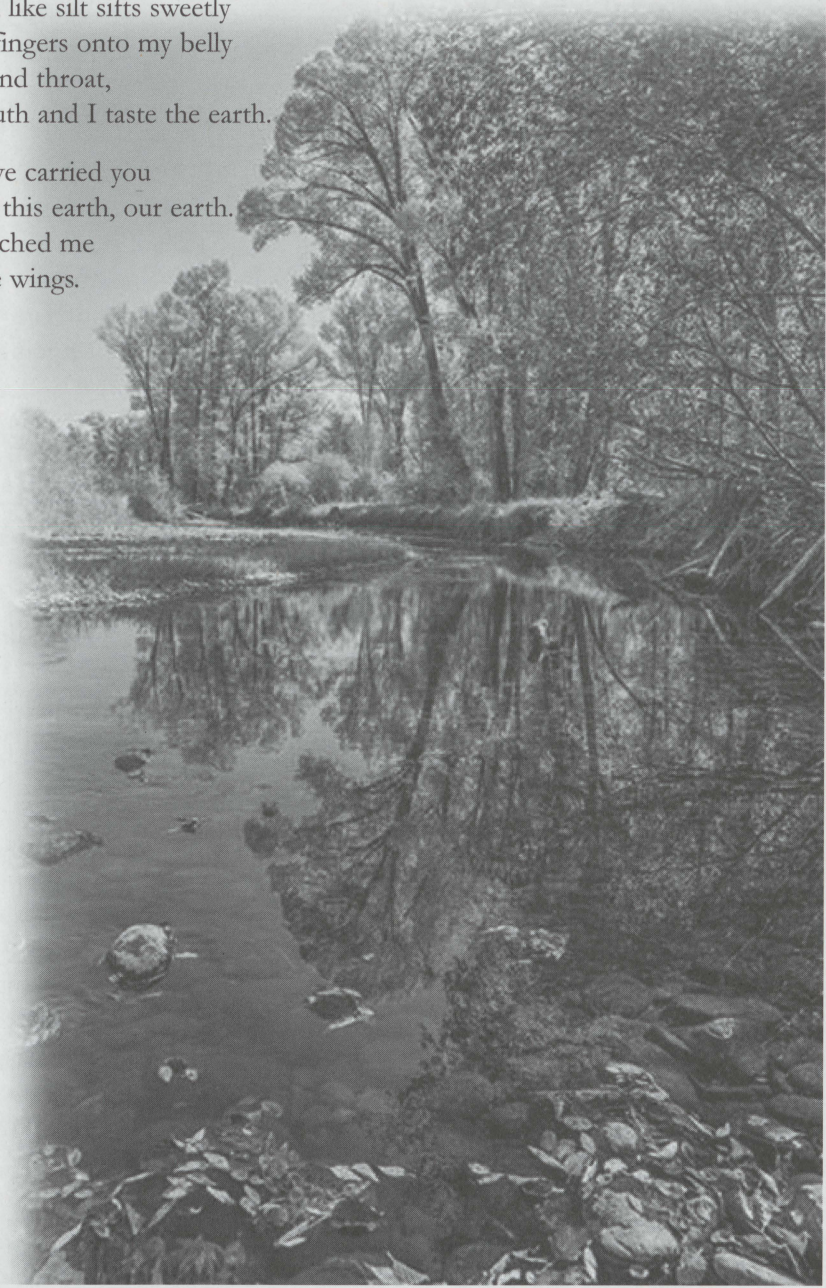
*Emily McLemore*

Your sweet body has made  
a river through me. It lives  
in my own body, this lovely  
river. In love you have loosened

yourself like river water, casting yourself  
over smooth stones, hands like perfect  
fish. I cannot put you into my hands  
and keep you there. Your body becomes

this river and like silt sifts sweetly  
through my fingers onto my belly  
and breasts and throat,  
onto my mouth and I taste the earth.

Your feet have carried you  
to me across this earth, our earth.  
You have reached me  
and given me wings.



## *River House*

*Marcie Telander*

I take off my shoes,  
enter this sacred place  
where spikes  
of water tap-tap on  
softly curling leaves.  
Caught and claimed,  
the black arch of  
limbs folds, furred,  
encompassing.

There is a walled world  
shaped by roots, rain and  
river bend that lives in  
rushing river sound.  
Slithering, fleeting  
like tangled twigs,  
like water voices  
running through  
the moss and bark.

The river talk is  
quiet, the silence inside the  
tree-cave trembles:  
busy roads for tiny  
things are humming.

*Gunnison River 2 --  
Photography by  
Matt Burt*



*Gunnison River Festival, Whitewater Park -- Photography by Gregg Morin*

## *Into the River*

*Joseph Van Nurdén*

Into the river, on the river, drinking from the river - the water makes our life here possible; without it, life would not exist. Our river brings beauty, life, money, food, showers, Therma-rests, canteens, paddles, coolers, Garlic Mike's Frisbees, loaded throw-rope bags and, most importantly- the water to cook spaghetti. Sometimes there are new flies tangled in the willows- maybe bizarre new patterns, something to spark the imagination, something that could possibly get me to tie some of my own flies. I can always feel good about myself by walking down to the river and picking up any cans or discarded fishing packaging I find and placing them in a designated trash receptacle. My family utilizes, or exploits - depending on your point of view - the river system in the Gunnison valley for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, brisk swims and the occasional snorkeling adventure, rock and driftwood searches, and just plain old looking at.

When I ask myself why I live in Gunnison in mid-February, I need to look no further than the freezing river. I test my waders in a warm filled bathtub in the late winter / early spring before getting out in the river- the holes are much easier to find that way and I decide if I should patch them again- adding another layer to the topography or finally get a new pair. If I forget this process before I get to the river, I still gear up and do some wading; water-filled waders are a good way to test the circulation in my feet and legs.

I do not really need to bring a rod out into the water with me; being in the river is a cathartic, worthy endeavor on its own. But a rod does increase my chances of catching a fish, whether watching chunks of ice or bugs and birds, weasels and snakes, or overturned rafts, or rescuing some dry bags for the people sure to follow. When I am on the river, I am an adult actively seeking insects; my five year old son is often along with his bug-catching explorer gear and he can help me to scientifically determine if a hatch is on. Searching out bugs breaks each section of river into a world of its own. When in the river, each rock must be paid attention to, each small branch, every piece of debris that comes down the stream; it is not fun slipping on the teetering algae covered rocks, breaking through a submerged branch, accepting the peculiar sensation of underwater debris bouncing off or wrapping around your legs, or getting snagged in the bushes on the bank, or even worse, snagging a log rapidly making its way downstream. On top of all that is the current. The water temperature is an important factor as well and I often feel very in tune with the river because of all of this. Being essentially confined to town from January 1st to March 15th for wintering ungulate destressification, one of the most accessible places is the river, and sometimes small portions of Blue Mesa until early February. Breaking ice in a kayak is fun, but not always very rewarding - though it is a good work out.

*(continued on next page)*



## *Into the River.... continued from previous page*

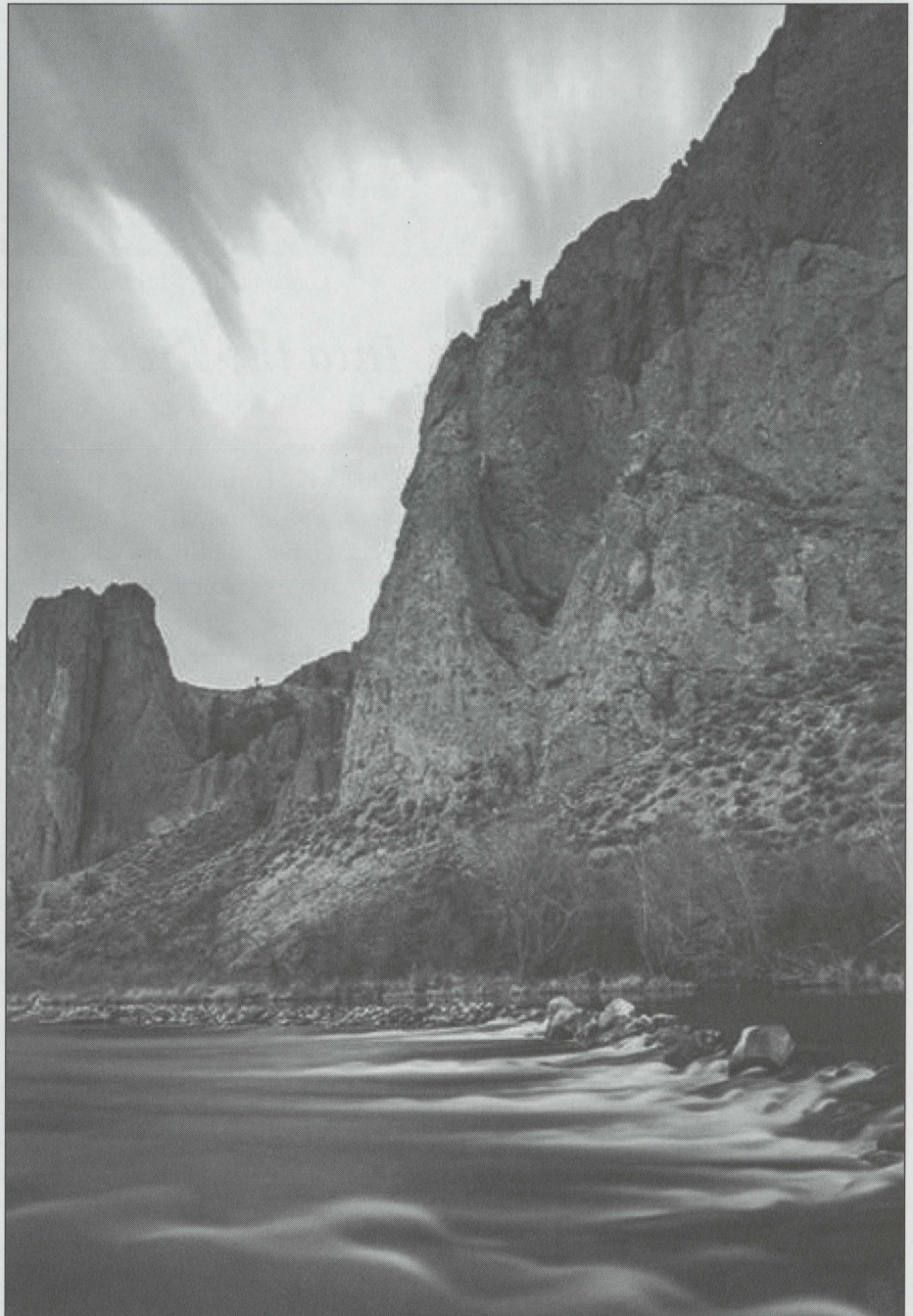
When the eagles are spending more time in the trees along the river, I know I have competition, both from them and the coming groups of fair-weather anglers. Though eagles are much better at catching fish than I am, I know for a fact that even the most talented eagle cannot properly handle a fly rod, and that gives me a boost in self-confidence.

Working my way upstream leads to more rivers, creeks and seasonal flows. When watching bighorn sheep and elk, I find myself forgetting that I am supposed to be fishing, sometimes spending more time with my camera than rod while in the water. Then I remind myself that if I feel like I am 'supposed' to be fishing then it is more like a job and less like living, so I continue to take pictures, sight-see, and pray that I don't drop another camera in the river. Through the river I have become something of an ornithologist, geologist and biologist. I sometimes wonder if there are any big cats hiding nearby when I find tracks in the mud. All of the playful birds, bugs, and beavers along the streams and rivers make for interesting companions as well and I can always get out of the water for a while to do some antlering - "shed hunting" has never seemed like a proper term to me - or searching out the skeletons of the animals that did not last the winter. I began a collection of mini-buck skulls a few years back - a group of small deer skulls with tiny nubs where their typically wall-displayed brethren have enormous racks, and anytime I can add to it, I do.

Raising a son who loves camping and being near the water allows the rediscovery of what makes the river, streams, and lakes so special, from making his own boats and fishing poles to finding special rocks both for skipping and building cairns ("robots" he calls them) and fortresses. It is all a great experience.

When it rains, the valley turns a more vibrant green. The water ends up in one way or another as part of the river. The puddles soak my trail running shoes and the mud cements seeds to them for the spread of wildflowers and plants. Some of the mud invariably ends up in our yard and in this way all of these already interconnected places in the valley intermingle at my feet. I would like to think that some of the spirit is carried home in physical form through the sand, mud, leaves, and twigs that get carried along in pant cuffs, socks and in shoes. Each piece of ground mingles with the others, as do our lives and the river; we are the river.

*GW*



*Pinnacles and River -- Photography by Matt Burt*

# Where Land becomes a Landscape

Kelsey L. Bennett

In the introduction to his fine edited volume of poetry, *Geography of Hope* (2000), David Rothman meditates on what Wallace Stegner might mean when he says things like, "in the West, what we have instead of place is space." Stegner's answer to the incoherent, indefinable, elusive presence of space-is poetry. A poet gives a place its identity. Rothman's volume collects many such voices whose presences give words to a place that is also defined, in part, by a particular watershed. Since then, many more artists, poets, writers, and musicians have appeared in the area who have found the place, at least for a season, habitable and with surroundings that support a new creativity. Yet if we face the fact, and face it we must, that many places in Colorado share characteristics both geological and orchestrated that make them sometimes hard to distinguish one from another, thoughts turn to questions of essentials. What is the land made of, here in these spaces? Rock and water, timber, and the people who move through them. They always leave open a question -- how best to experience the land as a landscape? How does the place foster a new creativity?

It's not new -- not really. Walt Whitman, for one, provided the beginnings of an answer over a century ago when he made a railroad trip out West and stopped to think on Kenosha summit. As he looked across South Park and into the peaks rimming it, he wrote, "I have found the law of my own poems." It was "the unspoken but more-and-more decided feeling that came to me as I pass'd, hour after hour, amid all this grim yet joyous elemental abandon -- this plenitude of material, entire absence of art, untrammel'd play of primitive Nature."

Whitman describes many suggestive impressions of the area, including his coming upon "a canvas office where you could send a message by electricity anywhere around the world!" Like the landscape taken as a whole, the mountains, or what he calls those "non-utilitarian piles," emanate a powerful effect that exceeds any work of art. What strikes me about these observations made so close to us is that absence in itself seems to be the most important attribute to the land: material free from art, from the pressures of being useful, turns out to be a primary catalyst for its genesis. And the streams. In a section Whitman calls "Art Features," he writes the following about the area's mountain streams:

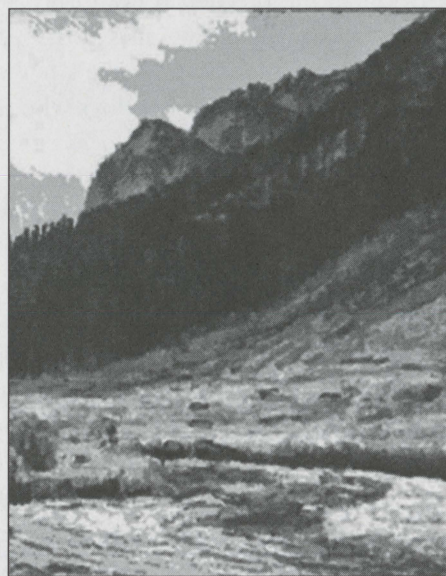
*The spiritual contrast and etheriality of the whole region consist largely to me in its never-absent peculiar streams-the snows of inaccessible upper areas melting and running down through the gorges continually. Nothing like the water of pastoral plains, or*

*creeks with wooded banks and turf, or anything of the kind elsewhere. The shapes that element takes in the shows of the globe cannot be fully understood by an artist until he has studied these unique rivulets.*

Everything Whitman saw there from the summit had some unquantifiable, creative purpose: he did not look out into the expanses of South Park and speculate about beef futures. He didn't see gold or silver or coal in the mountains. He most certainly did not foresee the ways in which the very waters themselves would be fettered, measured and partitioned, subject to innumerable laws. He instead saw -- a landscape, a place where an artist might encounter a certain absence with tremendous generative qualities in itself. It was an absence to be engaged, not necessarily to be filled. It presented something akin to what Thoreau called "higher laws." What does such a place look like?

We see it in the landscapes of Gunnison artist David Klingsmith, such as "Gothic Summer" (*better viewed at the*

*Gunnison Arts Center Show this summer*).



Here we find ourselves amidst a summer's day, the sound of water over rock, just at the moment when a cloud moves, for an interval, across the sun, and shadows the timber beyond the wild meadow pelt.

The dust and the melting snow combine into a potent fragrance. The waters reflect their origins, and as they move into widening arcs, the landscape responds to them.

The poetry in this painting by David Klingsmith is everywhere apparent. It takes a certain type of artist, I suspect, to make poetry here, away from places in which it is impossible to avoid the useful. Its use here, through image and word, is more purely about seeing; through the experience, the viewer witnesses the land become a landscape. It is a way that one might generate one's presence in a place with an infinitely light yet indelible mark. *GVW*

- Excerpted from *David Klingsmith: Painter of Life*

## The Dog Who Wouldn't Go Near the Water

Pat Sterling

Katie, our semi-rescue dog, came into our lives as a two-year old. Katie is a Portuguese water dog. Note that second word, "water." "Porties" are supposed to be enthralled with bodies of water no matter the size: puddles, ponds, or even the Pacific. In fact, the "bible" on the breed, The Complete Portuguese Water Dog, shows on its front cover a dog romping rapturously in the waves. On the Internet one can easily find photos of Porties taking spectacular flying leaps off docks into the ocean below.

Not Katie. I discovered her fear of water shortly after her arrival. We had just finished a hot, dusty hike through the V Notch at Hartman Rocks. My other Porty, Noche, knows what reward comes next: a trip to the Water Park on the Gunnison River. When we got there, Noche hurtled himself out of the car, making a beeline for the water. I expected Katie to do the same. She didn't. Instead she planted her little nutmeg and cream-colored behind right next to the car. "C'mon, Katie," I urged her, but she wasn't interested. I attached her leash and tried to lead her into the water, only to meet with fifty pounds of solid resistance. Katie wasn't going anywhere except back into the car and home.

Perplexed, I called Linda, the breeder in California, to ask about Katie's bewildering behavior. Linda lives a few miles above Angel's Camp in the Sierra Nevada foothills. When I picked up Noche a few years earlier, I visited the beautiful ranch on which she raises her dogs who have acres and acres where they can run freely.

"So what's with Katie," I asked. "She won't go near the water." Linda explained that there was no open water on her ranch, and Katie had never seen any. So that was it. Katie thought that water only came in bowls, set out at convenient intervals for her drinking pleasure. She was a disgrace to her breed.

Not to be defeated by that old bromide, "You can lead a dog to water, but you can't make her drink," I donned Texas for my next trip to the water park. After much cajoling and a little dragging, I succeeded in getting Katie to the edge of the water. I picked up one of her front paws and plunked it down in the water. I did the same with her second paw. Then I walked out into the water and urged her to follow. Timidly, very timidly, she did, advancing just a few inches. I praised her lavishly, telling her that Bo and Sunny, Obama's famous Porties, would be proud of her. Meanwhile, Noche was noisily lapping up water. Noche has always been a dog who likes his drinks straight up and off the rocks.

I am happy to report that Katie's learning curve hasn't been too steep. Why, in a matter of just a few months, she would wade in up to her knees, at least six inches deep. (Dogs do have knees, don't they?) Now, more than a year later, she, too, cannonballs out of the car and splashes into the river.

But I don't expect either of my dogs to be launching themselves from docks any time soon. Neither Noche nor Katie ventures into any body of water without first making sure that they can touch the bottom...unless, that is, they are chasing ducks. But that is another story. *GW*

## Fallen

Alan Wartes

I know a man who thinks  
Life is Hard.

It is a hook he  
swallowed in school  
and now he can't remember  
what the still water  
tastes like  
under roots  
near the lazy bank.

All day and all night  
he faces into  
the swiftest current  
and feels sharp rocks  
on his belly,

afraid to move,  
afraid to turn,  
afraid to look

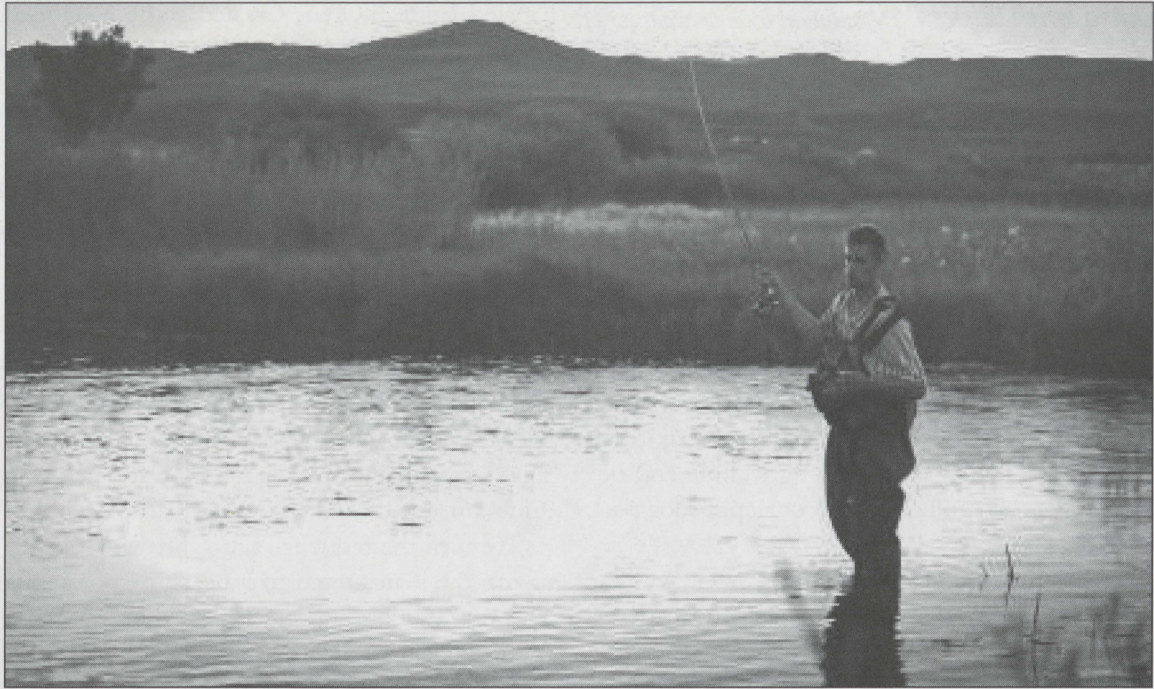
into the  
black mouth  
behind him.

Life is hard,  
he thinks,  
a prison of  
solitude and lack,  
all fallen,  
man and earth.

Nearby, a fawn steps  
with reed legs  
into the singing river,  
lowers her head  
and drinks.



*Puppy Love - Taylor Ahearn*



*Midcast -- Photography by Taylor Ahearn*

## *Intertwined with Rivers*

*John Norton*

Last August, pointed toward Craig in the red truck, daughters ages 26 and 28 began laughing from the back seat. What's so funny? The jokes are often about something stupid I've done. We want to know when we're going to get a life, they say. Since we've been little we've been in the backseat of a red truck. Going on some long road trip to a river. Looking at the back of your head. And when we get close you pop a beer. And here we are again.

And here we are again. With a 16' HySides raft, five kayaks, safety gear, coolers and camp suspended from the rack and lying in the truck bed. We've checked twice since leaving Cement Creek at dawn to see if we've lost anything. Not yet.

Oceans are lovely but rivers have a hold on me. I grew up in Pittsburgh, which was filthy when I was growing up; so were its rivers, the Monongahela, Allegheny and Ohio, but we couldn't see the filth. There was a magic to not seeing garbage and soot and cigarette butts and only seeing the brown water lazing by and the coal barges moving faster than someone would think they were, pushing on the water.

J.J. Jakielo and I would fish off the Monongahela Wharf on Saturdays. We would take a street car down. We would bait treble hooks or double hooks with worms, bread, or Velveeta if we were flush before the trip. A lead weight would put the bait on the mucky bottom. We'd wait for the pulls. We could sell the catfish three for a dime.

Carp for a nickel. Once we caught a bass; we were so awestruck at catching a true game fish that we put it back. That's before anyone ever heard of catch and release. Anyway, we could usually sell enough fish to pay the car fare both ways.

I married an ocean woman. Friends presented us with a 16' Mad River Explorer as a wedding gift and off we went to spend two weeks canoeing on the boundary waters between Maine and Canada. We were among the first people to take a dory down the Penobscott River Gorge. In Atlanta we got acquainted with the great southern rivers. That was during what we called the Deliverance Upsurgence, a temporary spike in whitewater popularity caused by Burt Reynolds and banjo music. Nearly drowning on the Ocoee got me a spot on TV's "That's Incredible" and some pages in the Red Cross Water Safety Manual.

There were more places and more rivers and then we landed here in the Gunnison Valley. More fishing than whitewater. Then the Roaring Fork Valley. More whitewater than fishing. We destroyed and sank two Mad Rivers at runoff and that put us squarely in the kayak camp. We were ready for the switch anyway. Our knees couldn't take the ice water sloshing in the bottom of our open boats, us kneeling in wool pants. In big water it was helpful to have feeling in our legs.

We took big multi-day trips down the Colorado and

*(continued on next page)*

Crested Butte NOAA, Crested Butte Mountain, Crested Butte Avalanche, Wild Snow, Snorel, Open Snow, Surface Water Colorado, Surface Water Utah, Surface Water Grand Canyon. After those come the *Wall St. Journal, New York Times* and Megan McArdle.

Our lives here are so intertwined with water. We ski it. Then we float on it. And we fish it. We can even drink it. There's a reason we're living in the headwaters. We don't have the Monongahela, Allegheny and Ohio to contend with. We have the Slate, East, Taylor and Gunnison. Drink up. Not from an eddy but from the moving water. Someone may scold you. A number have scolded me. Tell the scold that our water is clean, cold, beautiful and tasty. That just as babies put dirt in their mouths so we should drink our water. And enjoy every drop of it.

We turn the red truck onto the dirt road that will take us off the plateau and to a beach on some mighty river. The girls are right. I pop a beer without thinking. Nothing ever tasted so good as this cold beer in the hot desert dry air. Getting ready to put in for a week on a river. I married an ocean woman. She grew quickly into a river woman.

gwy

*Intertwined with Rivers* (continued from previous page)  
 Green Rivers, the river gear collection growing. Clothes and equipment are so good today. We've been snowed on and stayed comfortable.

And now back in the Gunnison Valley, I'm writing this at the end of February. The runoff on our rivers in 2012 and 2013 was not so hot, but this May and June ought to be different. We're skiing all the storms as snow people, but as river people we're also looking over the horizon to May, to a big runoff. The Upper Taylor may push Class 4. The Gunnison may be unfishable for ten weeks. Blue Mesa may begin to refill. The Colorado River may reach Mexico. No, probably not. Southwest agriculture and our thirsty desert cities are going to gulp our epic snowpack once it melts.

Our lives here are so intertwined with water. We pray for a huge frozen reservoir to accumulate in our mountains each winter. And then we watch it tip when the weather turns. Our lives here are so intertwined with water. At the top of my "Favorites" bar is Flying Cracker, Crackly Finger,

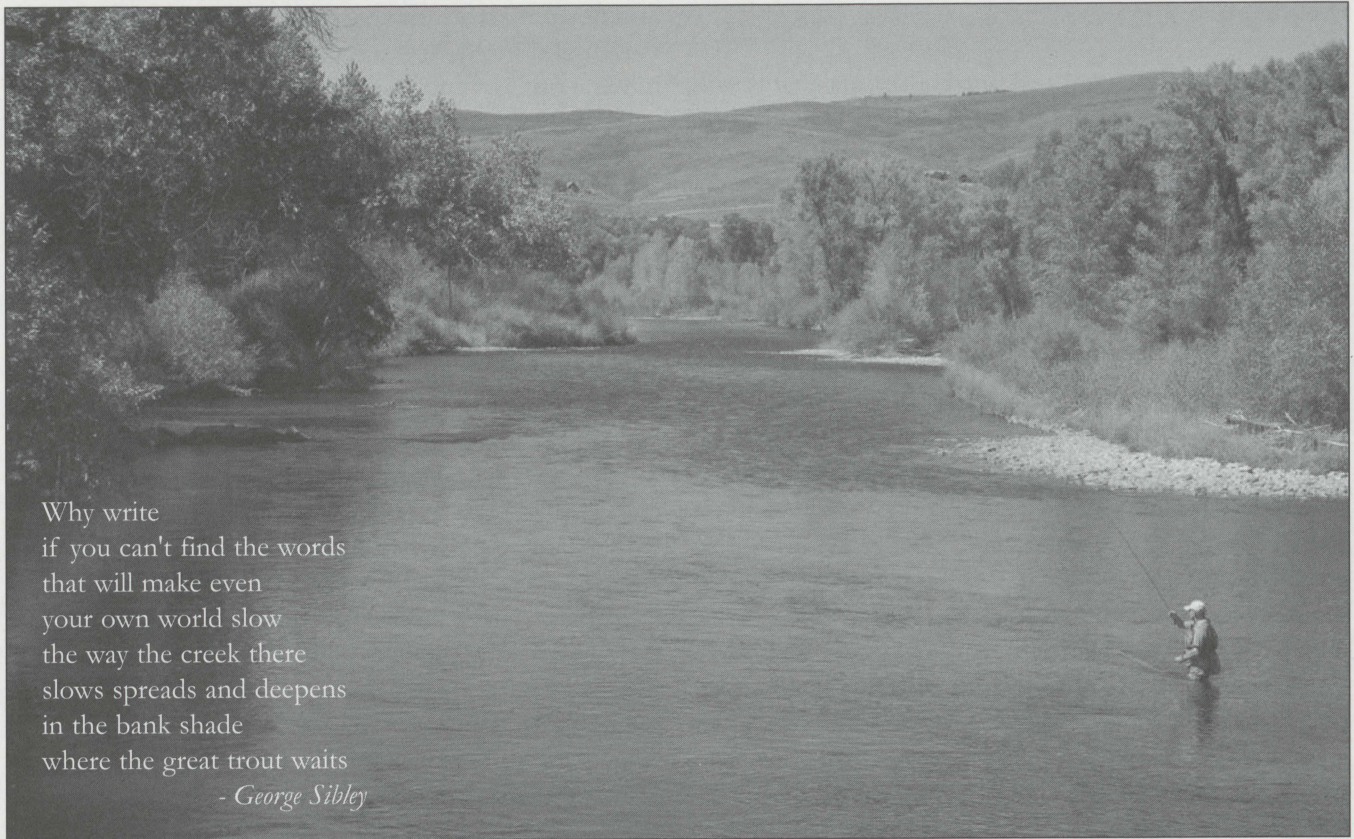
Water Falling -- Photography by Judy Cox



## Raging River

Kim Eastman

The river is a free flowing force  
 Flowing along a ready-made course  
 The river is a powerful brute  
 It is never called "cute"  
 The river has no fear  
 Flowing along beds steep and sheer  
 The river has no feelings of shame  
 Free flowing and a ready source for game  
 The river is a flowing power  
 ready and willing to devour  
 The river knows no feelings of pain  
 so it flows with or against the grain  
 The river knows nothing of taking lives  
 So on and on it strives  
 It knows nothing of doing harm  
 though it may have just destroyed an entire farm  
 It knows nothing of causing despair  
 So, it flows along.  
 Fair is after all fair.



Why write  
if you can't find the words  
that will make even  
your own world slow  
the way the creek there  
slows spreads and deepens  
in the bank shade  
where the great trout waits  
- George Sibley

*Fall Fisherman on the Gunnison River -- Photography by Gregg Morin*

## *Tomorrow's Upstream*

*Dave Pinkerton*

I'm slow. You'll see what I mean after reading Gill's story. But you'll forgive me since most of the time, in life, it's about what you learn that counts, not when you learn it.

A beleaguered Jeep skidded to a stop in front of the fly shop, a puff of Almont gravel dust carrying past the ranch-worn transportation. Our half day walk wade trip would start a bit late. No problem. Trout don't punch a time clock. They work on "mountain time".

Out stepped an older, yet wiry western welter weight dressed in bulging cargo shorts, a long sleeve cowboy shirt, and a sweat-stained cap. His cap logo was a cattle brand I didn't recognize. It matched the ones on both doors of the jeep. After our matter-of-fact introductions, we collected at the tailgate to look over his gear.

"My son got these for me," Gill said, pointing at the wading boots and waders still in the box. "This trip, too. Said it would help." Gill's voice skipped on the word help. I wondered why an old guy this fit needed help. But Gill must have sensed my question because he just kept going.

"Lost my wife last Fall." He lifted his chin and looked at me with expecting eyes. "Forty-six good years, except for the last five. By the way, I've never fly-fished before."

In five minutes, I knew more about this man than I did

about most of my clients. It was clear that learning how to catch wild trout on a fly was going to count for lots more than just another outdoor experience. But what? What could a mountain river do for a man who had his life crushed by the impersonal cruelty of a relentless disease?

Gill and I rigged up and walked the ten or so minutes to that real nice hole at the bottom of the Roaring Judy stretch of the East. Warm July sun sparkled on the water making it look like a wet jewelry store. A curved willow branch danced in the riffle. The white noise of free-flowing water hummed soothing background music.

We waded out calf deep and practiced with his new fly rod. It took a while for Gill to adapt to the subtleties of an effective cast. We lost a few flies to the willows and to the whip-crack of strong hands more used to barb wired and lariats than to fluorocarbon tippet. But his coordination and determination won out. It wasn't long before his strike indicator drifted downstream past our position, where it twitched with the nervous indication of a deceived trout. Fish on!

But not for long. Gill yanked back like the fish was a maverick yearling. A sharp "snap" sound preceded the moving tangle of line accelerating back toward us. It

*(continued on next page)*

*Tomorrow's Upstream.... continued from previous page*

wound around Gill's rod and our bodies, turning us into living knots. I paused. This wasn't exactly what helpful looked like, was it? Gill removed a droop of floating line from his lips. "I guess might don't always make right." He gave me a self-deprecating smirk. I tamped down a big laugh and led us back to shore to re-rig. As I did my work, Gill told me about four children, two ranches, and one lasting love. He had just finished her dream house when the doctor told them. Every moment until the end was spent with her. Now he was alone. How do you get past that?

Shortly, we were back out there. Gill had a good memory because he made the same cast, setting up the downstream lift that flies make at the end of a drift. Sure enough, the indicator stalled and Gill set the hook-this time with the right amount of pressure. He played this one with a deft combination of rod motion and just-in-time reeling. The fat little brown was a good first catch, which was followed by a frenzied series of cohorts, all caught on the downstream lift.

Soon, Gill's zone time played out. I began looking around for our next move. As I inspected the flat inside curl of our riffle just upstream from where we stood, I notice a swirl at the surface-the unmistakable sign of a rising trout. And years of experience told me this was a nice one.

"What about all them fish downstream?" Gill asked, nodding in the direction of the last one he'd hooked and missed, eyes lingering.

"Got a pretty big one spotted upstream," I said. "Want to try?" I knew he had to be the one to make the call. After all, it was his trip. Gill nodded yes, so we changed to a single dry fly and focused our energy upstream.

It wasn't long before Gill could lay out his dry fly just

far enough to reach the big trout. When we had the distance right, I told him to make his cast. I saw a flash on the first drift, but no take. Not so, on the next one. The strike was as bold and showy as any I've seen.

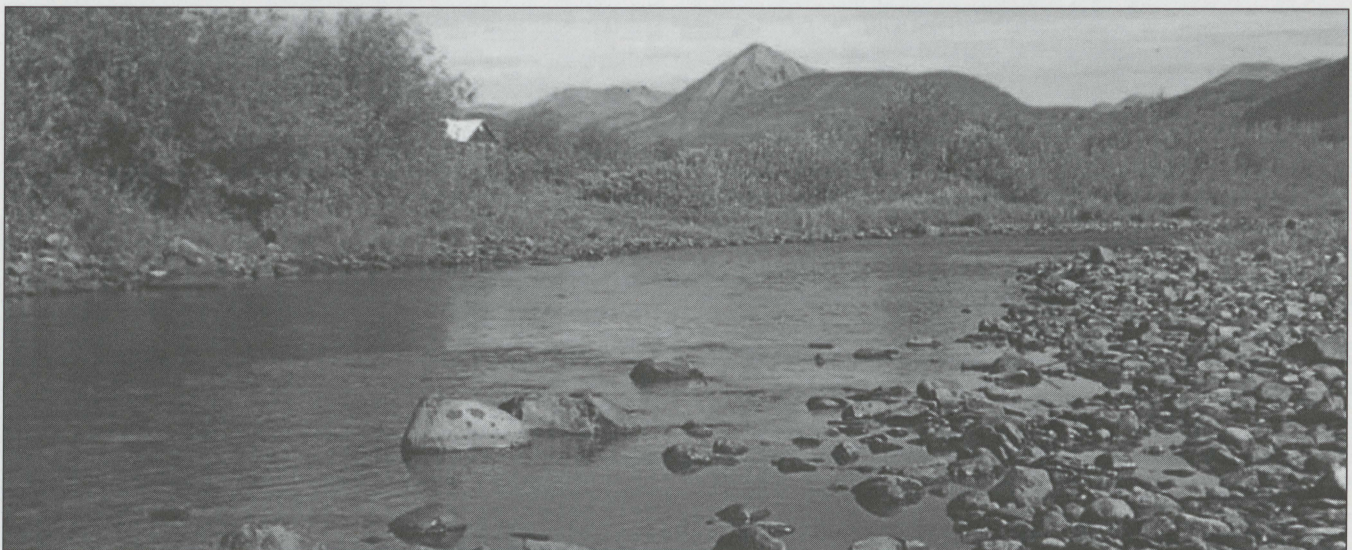
Instinctively, Gill knew what to do. Despite three surging, head-shaking runs and a full body aerial summersault, Gill corralled the beefy rainbow toward my net. We backed up to shallow water and took pictures. The red stripe nearly stretched from shoulder to shoulder. Gill lowered his fish into the water gently and watched it swim away. His eyes followed it back upstream to where it was feeding a few minutes ago. He took in a big gulp of air and let it out deliberately.

We rode back to the shop in silence, the kind that reverence and reflection brings. I parked behind his jeep and we stood by the driver's door. He reached out to shake hands.

"That helped," he said, his right hand locked to mine, eyes intense and glossy. The corner of his mouth twitched ever so slightly. "Cast upstream. That's where tomorrow is." With that, he clambered behind the wheel, started the engine, and lurched forward, gravel spitting behind the tires.

It took me a while to figure out what he meant. Like I told you, I'm slow. I think it's this-rivers are like life-they always move forward. Simple, right? Yes, we can look downstream to what has happened-to the past. But as good as the past may have been, it's all water that has already gone by. If you want to see what's coming, look upstream. Cast your mind and hearts to tomorrow as much as yesterday. Of course there's no guarantee, but like a river, life is a balance of downstream and upstream. That's what Gill taught me. That's what our rivers have taught me, even if it took a while.

*GVJ*



*River Walking -- Photography by Suzette Gainous*

# Water and the Lake Family

*John Lake*

Growing up in a family concerned with water issues has meant a lot to me. It has not consumed my daily life but has given me an outlook on its importance in daily lives of people around the world. All we have to do is look around and see that there is a critical fresh water shortage not only in the Gunnison Valley, but everywhere on the planet.

My grandfather, Henry F. Lake Jr., was a newspaperman, editor and publisher of the Gunnison *News-Champion* for many years in the first half of the 20th century. He had grown up in Gunnison, and loved the river and its valley and the ditches that watered the valley and the town.

Because of my Grandfather we were able to enjoy the lilac and peony blossoms at the house on North Taylor Street. The water in the ditches provided for those plants. The crab apples in front of the house were nourished by the ditch water.

My grandfather could also get really passionate about the valley's water. As newspaper editor, he led the charge in the late 1930s against a proposed transmountain diversion from the Upper Gunnison River to the Arkansas River Basin.

"The lifeblood of the Gunnison Country is water," he said in an editorial. "Its beauty, its industry, its future depend upon the marvelous river flowing past our city.

"Yet we are asked to even consider the loss of that beautiful stream and all it means, to acquiesce in a survey to determine whether it may be diverted to enrich a far off land and leave us high and dry...."

"This is the turning point in Gunnison's history. This is the time which will show whether we are intelligent men and women or just an easy lot of folks who can be hypnotized with words...."

That threatened diversion never happened, in some part, according to historian George Sibley in *Water Wranglers*, because of my grandfather's leadership in organizing the Gunnison Basin's opposition to it.

My father, Rial Lake, was also deeply involved in water issues. He served many years on the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District board, and also on the

Colorado River Water Conservation District board serving most of the West Slope. He played a role in the negotiations with the Bureau of Reclamation that enabled the Taylor River to again be a river rather than an irrigation project canal.

I look back at all the trips, meetings, and writings as his small legacy to the whole issue of keeping the water for the community, valley, western slope, and the downstream water users. I was fortunate to take a few local inspection tours with him on dams and power generation facilities.

But we also had time to enjoy the water. My father was a very good ice skater. Every winter as I was growing up we would go to the city skating rink on the North 300 block of Colorado to skate. I marveled how he could do all the figures and smooth moves on the ice. There was a man who used to be at the rink every day brushing the snow away and keeping it smooth. He also kept the fire in the potbellied stove in the small warming cabin at the rink. Gunnison is very lucky to still have excellent winter recreation facilities.

Growing up I learned about the small streams we had near the family's cabin at Camp Cascadilla, on Cement Creek. I learned to carry

water from Cement Creek. It was a very healthy walk one bucket at a time. Over time the path and dipping place were well worn in.

Dad taught me about fishing for small brook trout. I graduated to using hip boots and waders in the East, Taylor, and Gunnison rivers. Plus how to extract myself from the deep holes and filled boots dragging me down the stream. More water knowledge that you appreciate years later.

Water was and is always recycled from the ranch meadows, through the ditches that Gunnison is so fortunate to have, and downstream for other people to use as they see fit, then recycled again for others to use all the way to the ocean.

We must take better care of our natural resources, be they the forests, wildlife or water resources. If we do not use them in the best manner, we will only have ourselves to blame when the drought tasking us now gets worse. *GW*



*Henry F. Lake Jr. -- Lake Family Photo*



# Niese, the Mermaid of Blue Lake

Scott LeFevre

Once upon a time, way up in the West Elk Mountains above a village called Crested Butte in Colorado there lived a mermaid named Niese. She lived in a small Lake tucked into a high mountain cirque called Blue Lake. Legend has it that she was the only fresh water mermaid in the whole world. Blue Lake was not only beautiful, it was known far and wide as a very happy place. As a matter of fact the drainage that leads to the lake is called O' Be Joyful.

For the most part, Niese was content in her little Lake. She had lots of friends. There were many fish in the lake and they all loved Niese because she was so kind to them. She knew each one by name and she was always bringing them presents. She would swim to shore and greet hikers that visited the lake. Often times they would leave something behind and she would wrap them up in leaves and present them to her fish friends. She would tell them that the gifts came from far away places like Utah, Arizona and California.

Secretly, Niese longed to go to those places. She spent long hours contemplating how to free herself from the tiny lake that she called home. Finally, one day she had a revelation. She had heard of flying fish from one of the hikers and thought to herself, if fish can fly...so can I. She began to exercise her fin in ways she had never used it before. She practiced and practiced. She would stand on her hands and flip her fin as hard as she could and make believe she was flying high above the lake.

Then one day while she was practicing, she lost her balance, flipped upright and, before she knew it, she was rocketing toward the surface flipping her fin harder and faster than she ever had before. The next thing she knew she could no longer feel the water surrounding her and air encapsulated her body instead. She thought to herself...this feels just like what I am visualizing...then, she opened her eyes and screamed at what she saw! Blue Lake was far below her, mountains surrounded her to the north, east and west. But to the south was what astonished her the most. She could see a big beautiful green lush valley with a river flowing as far as she could see.

In that moment she knew what she must do. But first, her momentum had run out, and no matter how hard she flipped her fin she could not stay aloft. She opened her arms, bent down and fell into a perfect swan dive back

into the Lake where her fish friends eagerly awaited to hear what she had seen.

Niese could not sleep that night. She ran over and over in her head how she would circle the lake three times, achieve her top speed, then swim to the top and pop out of the water facing due south and continue to flip her fin as hard as she could until she could free fall into the Slate river below. At first light she visited her friends to say goodbye. They all cleared the circular path and gave Niese the high sign that all systems were go.

Then off Niese went...round once, then twice, then a third time and she headed for the surface. She popped out and within seconds she could see the Slate River. She flipped her fin as hard as she could as she continued toward her destination.

Suddenly a flock of blue jays flew in next to her and thought to themselves, "That's one crazy mermaid."

As they zoomed in next to her she said to them, "I have to make it to the river."

The jays immediately grabbed her arms and flew with her until she was over the river. They let go and Niese once again spread her arms into a perfect swan dive and descended down and down until, splash, she was in the river.

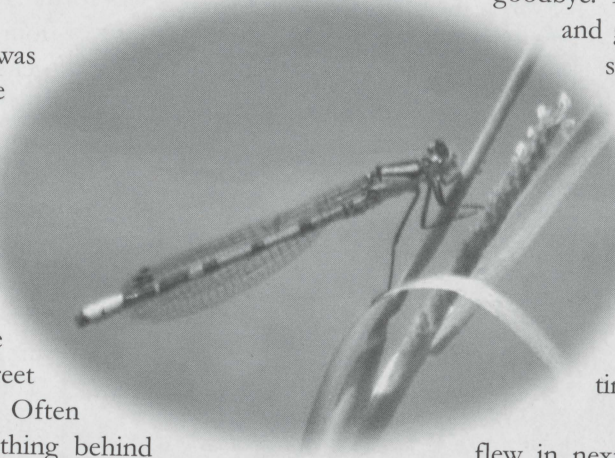
Niese was so happy that she had made it she could hardly stand it. She yelled up to the jays, "Thank you for your help, I will never forget you".

The jays responded, "You are one crazy mermaid!" and they all laughed.

After her exuberance subsided, Niese realized, now the real journey would begin. Her journey would take her down the Slate River to the East River, then to the Gunnison River and finally into the mighty Colorado River, which would take her through Utah, Arizona, Nevada, California, Mexico and on into the Gulf of California. Oh what a wonderful journey lay ahead. But for now, Niese was content to enjoy the moment and what she had just accomplished. At this moment she felt like she could achieve anything she put her mind to. The first thing she decided to put her mind to was a well deserved nap.

*The End (to be continued...)*

*Dragonfly Dances -- Photography by Suzette Gainous*



## The Quiet that came with the River

by Rhiannon Parent

"Race you!" That was a challenge I couldn't pass up. I gained speed and the wind licked my cheeks, daring me to go even faster.

The uneven breaks in the dirt path caught on my tires, throwing me off-balance, threatening to send me careening into the slender trees. Their bright colors wavered back and forth in the slight wind. Ahead of us, the water beckoned, colors that were never and always there reflecting into existence. Small fish broke the surface joyfully.

Lying side by side on our special spot by the water, as the mud on our bodies dried and became brittle and cracked, I realized how much I loved this boy. Always the

perfect gentleman, holding open doors for me, hanging out with my friends and me.

He would always come up to me during the slow songs at dances, bowing his head and shyly glancing up through his gorgeous lashes. "May I have this dance?"

I would smile at him, and put my arms around his shoulders in reply. I would feel the slight pressure of his hands resting just above my hips cautiously. Easily in the dark he could have explored and touched me in all the right places-- and sometimes I think I wouldn't've objected. I loved him that much.

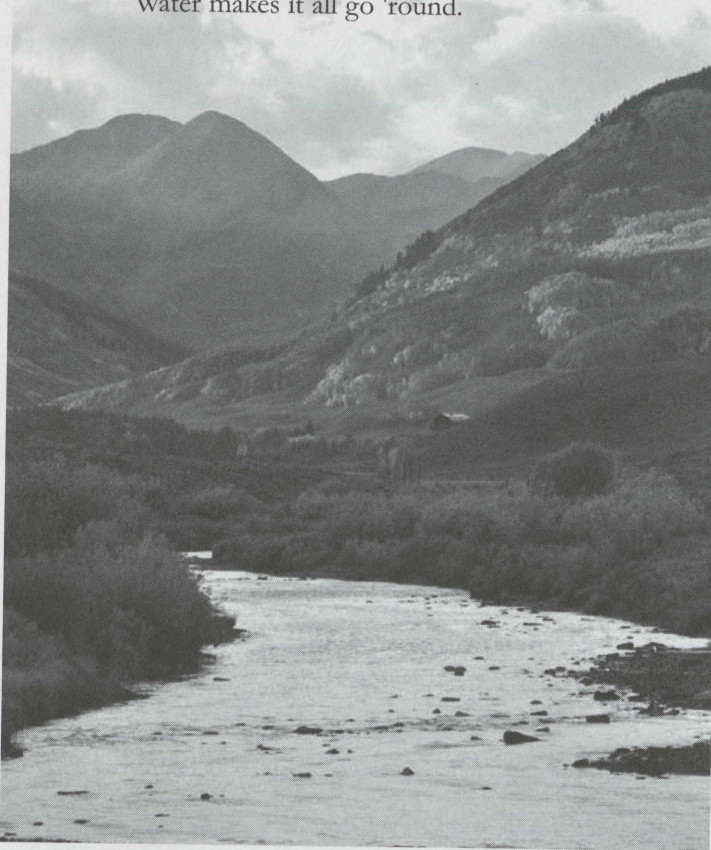
I shifted my position on the rocks and I felt Grey's

*(continued on next page)*

### 'Our River Our Valley' Radio Song

*Pelletier Family: Mike, Perri, Ivy & Annelise*

Oh we float a little, swim a little,  
Drink up the water water,  
Grow a little hay and  
Bale up the water water,  
Rev up the power from fallin' down water.  
Water makes it all go 'round.



*Running from Paradise -- Photography by Patrick Abbaddo*

### When She Calls (River Song)

*Chris Coady*

The coin was tossed and all was lost  
Now I can't help myself but count the cost  
I'm looking back I've been keeping track  
Through this desert of what I lack

But there's a place where I can go  
Let the water flow into my soul  
With current strong all my troubles are gone  
And I sing along to the river song

The full moon light dances with the shadows  
on the ancient canyon walls  
And the river, she knows my name, I answer  
when she calls

I answer when she calls  
I answer when she calls

The songbirds sing their symphony  
They're singing for you and they're singing  
for me

I strum these strings on this wooden box  
While she flows over logs and rocks

The melody wide clear and deep  
To my lips tastes so sweet  
Yes I am here among the living  
While this river, she keeps on giving

The full moon light dances with the shadows  
on the ancient canyon walls  
And the river, she knows my name, I answer  
when she calls

I answer when she calls  
I answer when she calls

## *The Quiet that came.... continued from previous page*

hand beneath my back, protecting me from the rocks. I allowed myself to doze off and once again I fell in love with the people we used to be as the remembering began.

\*\*\*

The day started fine, with us heading to school on our bikes. It was a balmy sort of day, where the butterflies were just beginning to sort of lazily appear and the cotton flew about in great clumps, infesting the whole school with the dreaded sniffles.

A bump came up in the road, one that I had guided my bike along many times before. I confidently steered towards the mass, perhaps too confidently, because I dug my front tire in and flew over the handlebars, landing in a thorny bush on the other side of the road.

I shook as I stood up and tried to grab my bike, but the hot tears escaped my angry eyes as a cut on my thigh opened and began to bleed. I clenched my teeth together to keep from crying out, not wanting to attract attention.

The strangled noise that I swore came from my heart must have been audible, because Grey turned around immediately, and we limped our way down the street. The first thing our teacher said when we finally made it in the classroom door, late, me scratched, bleeding, and dirty, twigs in Grey's hair: "And where have you two been?"

\*\*\*

Grey's voice brought me back from the past. "I love you."

"I know."

\*\*\*

After school one particular day Grey guided me down

the bustling hallway and we were swept out the doors with the rest of the students. Small talk permeated the air around us; conversations swirled with cars, movies and the weather as Grey all but got down on one knee and asked me the question. "Will you be my girlfriend?"

I had felt the heat rise to my cheeks and turned to the rows of cars anxiously waiting to gobble up children. He prodded still, asking for my yes. My reasonable self, with all of my 8 years of expertise on this earth, chose to come out at that moment... Why, I suppose I shall never know. "NO! I mean, I'm sorry. I'm too young." Just say no. Just say no. I repeated to myself within my head. Dating, sex, drugs, and alcohol, those were bad, right? That's what I learned in DARE. Just say know.

"Will you wait for me?" I asked, suddenly fearful.

"Of course," he answered. "I will always wait for you."

\*\*\*

I looked Grey in the eyes. "I love you, too." Grey sneezed beside me, bringing me down to earth from my romantic reverie.

"My brother was asking me for romantic advice this morning." He laughed, looking at me. "He's older than me, but he's wondering how he could get a girlfriend as nice as you." He paused thoughtfully. "I told him to make friends with her first."

The quiet that came with this sentence flowed gently with the river downstream. It was a peaceful sort of quiet, the quiet you get when you know you've done all you can and you can stop trying. A completely comfortable silence.

Like when you know someone so completely and fully that there are always more questions to be asked. *GMJ*

## *Art in Earth and Water*

*Gunnison's street ditches are integral to the valley's aesthetics -- just see the growing number of gardens they bring to life. City Water Superintendent Joe Doherty cranks the wheel for another summer of "ditch art."*



*Photo by Sarah Dore, for the Gunnison Country Times*

## *Sonnet for The Ditch*

*Maryo Gard Ewell*

The place we live was built in '45  
And I'd recite the changes we have made  
If memory would serve. But, We derive  
A pleasure from the tweaks to house; and spade  
The lawns for beans and peas to grow  
And make garage a transient's abode.  
And what was here before? I do not know -  
Except our ditch. The water and its flow.

And similarly - who lives up the street?  
There's little chance that we would be aware  
Of one another... likely never meet.  
And yet - the ditch holds water that we share -

Creates a bond for us who've lived this place  
And eases the unknowns of time and space.

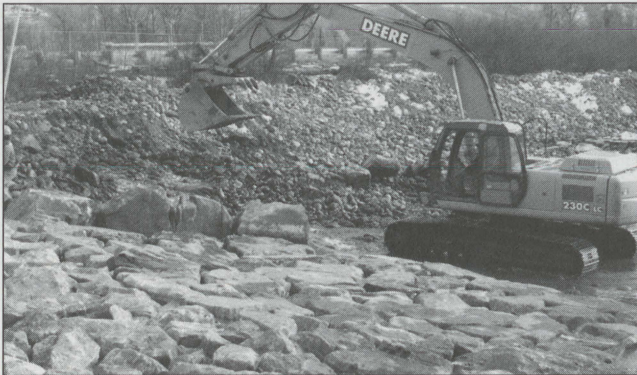
## Art in Earth and Water

*We don't usually think of "engineering" as an art form, but many things that engineers do add elements of beauty and unity to the utility, efficiency or effectiveness that may be their more conscious goal. These next few pages show some Upper Gunnison examples of engineering art in features of our local "waterscapes."*

### *The Old and New West - the 75 Ditch Headgate and the Whitewater Park*

The oldest water right in the entire Gunnison Basin belongs to the "75 Ditch," an 1875 decree for the ditch Alonzo Hartman and friends put in just south of the US 50 bridge west of Gunnison, to irrigate lands south and west of the airport. The Gunnison River's relentless push of river gravel downstream made it necessary every year or so to put a backhoe or bulldozer in the river to raise the river bed back up to where the decreed water could get into the ditch's headgate.

Meanwhile, the Upper Gunnison River District, the City of Gunnison and the County collaborated to obtain a "recreational in-channel diversion" water right for the stretch of the River just below the 75 Ditch headgate. This new type of water decree permitted public entities to acquire a water right for "diverting" water



*"Rocking the River" near the 75 Ditch takeout*



*75 Ditch takeout in foreground, RICD drop in background*

around arrangements of rocks right in the river to create obstacles and wild rides for rafters and kayakers.

Since the "features" of the Gunnison Whitewater Park also required raising the water level to create white-water drops, it made perfect sense to put the first feature for the Park right where the river bed needed to be raised for the 75 Ditch headgate.

The river was temporarily diverted around portions of the riverbed, which were then "paved" with large rocks that it would take the river a long time to erode and push on downriver. The result stabilizes the river's most senior headgate takeout while also creating a challenging feature for boaters in one of the river's most junior water decrees. Sometimes the Old West and the New West work together.

### *A Pond for the Community School*

The Upper Gunnison River District collaborated with Gunnison Community School science teacher Chris Kruthaupt and RE1-J Superintendent Doug Tredway to create a pond near the school, fed by City ditch water. The pond (not yet filled in the picture) was dedicated in the spring of 2013, and has already provided a diversity of education benefits, with classes designing and building the bridge and benches at the pond; others will be doing plantings around the site. And according to Kruthaupt, hundreds of students have already used this collaborative creation for water quality studies and sampling of the insect and plant life that finds its way to bodies of water when they are created.

*Photos on this page by Upper Gunnison District manager Frank Kugel.*



*Upper Gunnison River District board members and Community School students dedicate the pond in 2013.*

## The McCabe's Lane Wetland - Manmade but 'Natural'

Lynn Cudlip

It is best to start right in the middle of the McCabe's Lane Wetlands, where the signage and the ponds are, just as you would start with the water cycle, in the middle. The ponds, where goldeneyes and teal, widgeons, mallards and maybe a few geese gather, are located right on the edge of the wastewater treatment plant west of Gunnison.

It's a lovely setting, bordered by the Gunnison River, the Riverway Picnic Area, and Hartman Rocks. The wastewater treatment plant is also nearby; even though the ponds receive no treated water from the plant, its operators have for years watched over the ponds and their wildlife. The McCabe's Lane Wetland appears very "natural," but the ponds are man-made, and were built as mitigation for expansion of the Gunnison County Airport in 1985 and 1988. To expand the runway and ensure safety of aircraft and passengers, wetlands were filled. Federal law requires, in most cases, that the loss of wetlands must be mitigated. The McCabe Lane site was the logical location for mitigation; it was owned by the city and the county and had a source of water.

John Scott, formerly of the Natural Resource Conservation Service, oversaw construction of two wetlands in 1985, and Dr. Hugo Ferchau, a biology professor at Western State from 1962-1996, spearheaded the design and construction of five more ponds in 1988, including landscaping the ponds. Students from Western State participated in measuring, seeding, monitoring, and adding signage to the site.

At that time the Army Corps of Engineers, which regulates what happens on all "United States waters," allowed construction of ponds for wetland mitigation. Since then, the Corps has favored creation of wet meadows similar to those eliminated at the airport, but the waterfowl are grateful for the Corps' allowance of ponds early on. During the spring and fall, waterfowl gather to feed in ponds that vary in depth from inches to several feet. It's the variations of depth that attract different aquatic plants and insects, and it's the chaotic assemblages of plants, tangled and amassed in different heights around the ponds, that attract birds and mammals for food and cover.

Standing in the middle of the site, students learn the importance of wetlands. In the arid west, wetlands and riparian areas along streams and rivers support about 80% of wildlife during some portion of their lifetime. Wetlands store water much like a reservoir, releasing it slowly downstream. Wetlands also purify water; witness any area adjacent to one of the rivers, and you will see a buildup of sediment over time; wetlands slow flows down and allow sediment to settle.

McCabe Lane Wetland is a participatory place. Study projects at the wetlands put students on their hands and knees, in the muck, collecting insects and plants and soil samples. All the students visiting the site for courses are

asked to find the beginning of the wetland; they learn that the wetlands start in the middle -- of the Gunnison River. A diversion, opened during spring runoff, allows water from the river to move slowly through the pond system. Slowly is the operative word; when the wetlands opened in 1988, the rancher downstream opened his headgate, expecting his share of water immediately. But true to their nature, the wetlands slowed the water. A fix involving heavy equipment

resolved the problem for both rancher and ponds.

Water is the key to any wetland. If flows in the Gunnison River diminish, as they have with our recent drought, the amount of water diverted to the wetland decreases; one pond reveals its bottom more regularly now. Its shallow nature provides a mud flat habitat, suitable for birds who like to pick things over. Surrounding these ponds and utilizing more water than probably intended is a seeded grass, reed canarygrass, not native to the area; this grass outcompetes other wetland vegetation, especially when drier conditions prevail.

It's interesting that most constructed wetlands take five to ten years to function similar to a natural wetland; this site supported waterfowl immediately due to the open water, but vegetation including growth of willows took a long time - 20 years - and even now the willows are short; the deer find them tasty. Slow to grow, slow to release water, even in times of drought, it's a good place to be in the middle of, and wet and taking time.

GVV



Lynn Cudlip's Wetland Crew

## *Morrow Point Dam - Reclamation's Crown Jewel*

Building Big Things is what the 20<sup>th</sup> century may be remembered for, and nowhere was this more true than in the rivers of America, where some of the biggest things we've ever built as a nation were dams.

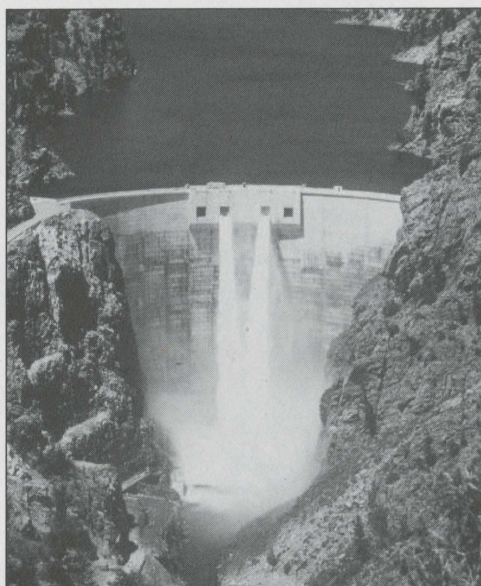
Many people today regard all of the dam-building as a big mistake, and mistakes were certainly made in that era. But for the century prior to World War II, western settlers watched the water needed to develop the irrigable lands rush off to the sea unused, unusable, in a two-month early summer flood. "Conservation" for that period was synonymous with "reclamation": reclaiming the water from the "waste" of the annual flood was conserving it. For two-thirds of the 20th century the whole nation bought into that concept (more or less), and the federal Bureau of Reclamation was the West's conservation agency.

Most of the dams that the Bureau of Reclamation built in the reclamation era were "gravity dams" - big masses of either concrete or dirt, clay and rock, piled in the path of a river to store its waters for later uses. Dams tend to be overbuilt for obvious good reasons. Hoover and Glen Canyon Dams farther downstream on the Colorado River - each of which can store more than 8 trillion gallons - both have huge built-in safety factors.

But the dam the Bureau began building 50 years ago in the canyons of the Gunnison River, just above its confluence with the Cimarron, was, by comparison, going to be like wedging an eggshell in the canyon to hold back the water. It would be the elegant crown jewel of the huge Colorado River Storage Project.

The Morrow Point Dam is the Bureau's first, and probably most beautiful, "thin-arch double-curvature dam." The theory of the concrete arch dam resides in its upstream curve: the horizontal push of the weight of water behind the dam exerts a compressing force on that curve that actually strengthens the structure, and translates the water's force into the canyon walls, where the dam is securely wedged in keyways.

A "thin-arch" dam is one in which the crest thickness of the dam is less than one-fifth of the dam's height; the 468-foot Morrow Point Dam has a 12-foot crest width -- one-fortieth the height, about as thin as a thin arch gets.



*Bureau of Reclamation Photo*

And the "double-curvature" reflects the fact that not only is the dam curved upstream in its horizontal cross-section; it is also slightly curved upstream in its vertical cross-section, increasing the compression effect and directing pressure down into the dam's bedrock foundation.

A dam this thin was feasible because it would only be backing up some 38 billion gallons, due to the narrowness of the canyon above the dam. Power generation, not storage, was the purpose of this dam; its "storage battery" would be the larger Blue Mesa Reservoir 12 miles upstream.

Even there, the Bureau tried something new with this project: the entire 120-megawatt power plant is underground in a vast manmade James-Bondish cavern, 230 feet by 60 feet and up to 130 feet high. And yet a third feature was new for the Bureau: rather than a safety spillway tunneled into the rock walls, the spillway is four gates high in the face of the dam, creating, when opened, a "water-fall" twice as high as Niagara Falls.

Travelers on US 50 between Montrose and Gunnison can make a five-minute detour from the highway down the narrow Cimarron Canyon to the viewing area for Morrow Point Dam (a side trip that also has interesting railroad exhibits). One has to thoroughly hate even the idea of dams to not be taken by the beauty of this one -- the engineer's smooth white curves integrated into the rough red-brown of the canyon.

But an even better place from which to view Morrow Point Dam is from up on the Black Mesa Highway (Colorado 92). From there, the dam looks unbelievably fragile, with the ephemeral poignancy of most beautiful things: dams don't last forever, nor do canyons under the persistence of water and weather. But for now, it is an eggshell, a lens wedged into the canyon making the water stand in and push rather than cut and run. It is the reclamation idea made concrete - but the concrete does not obscure the idea or the art of it.

*Most of this "Art in Earth and Stone" section was prepared by Upper Gunnison River District board member George Sibley, to remind readers to look for human art everywhere in the valley....*

## *Water Cycle*

*Gailann Case Davidson*

As water has a life cycle  
rain to stream to ocean to clouds to rain  
my life too has a water cycle.

cradling me in my mother's womb;  
anointing my forehead to welcome me to the world;  
washing the gravel from skinned knees;  
soothing away the tears of first love;  
falling gently as rain as I walk with my true love;

freshening bridal day roses;  
easing my babies fevered brows;  
sustaining our home cleaning, cooking, flushing, scrubbing, bathing;

falling gently on my gardens;  
soothing my body's aches and pains;  
washing down life-prolonging pills and meds;  
anointing my forehead to pass from this world; and finally  
cradling my ashes in the current on my way to the sea.

## *Final Words*

### *The Gunnison:*

#### *A Prayer for the Gift and the Giving (An Excerpt)*

*Marlene Wright Zanetell*

In the wedding of the waters  
The rivers unite in abundance. They join us and the land  
Together, for all the days of our lives.  
They carve their place - and this place --  
In our hearts.  
We need not ask and yet we freely receive.  
Lord have mercy:  
Give us hearts large enough to contain this goodness,  
To shepherd it for and from ourselves.

Oh so vast, so grand this land --  
So varied its creatures, large and small,  
So great its bounty. We are sustained.  
We shall not want beside its still and running waters,  
For we are comforted.  
Christ have mercy:  
Give us spirits large enough to prepare a place  
For those who will follow and dwell in our valley.

Make our mercy large enough to match the mountains  
And their miraculous waters.  
Let us learn to give, so that the gift may be given  
Forever more. Amen.

*Whitewater Wave -- Photography by Gregg Morin*

## Gunnison Valley Journal Contributors

**Patrick Addabbo** moved to the Gunnison Valley in 2010 and as John Denver put it, "came home to a place he'd never been before." Working full-time for the Adaptive Sports Center in Crested Butte, Patrick explores the valley in his free-time on skis and bikes, usually with his camera.

**Taylor Ahearn** has lived in the Gunnison Valley for three years. He is an avid fly fisher and spends a lot of time on and around the Gunnison river. Taylor is a graphic designer and photographer who attends Western State.

**Kelsey L. Bennett** is a Gunnison writer published in national and international journals. "Where Land Becomes a Landscape" is excerpted in part from her monograph on the painter David Klingsmith. Bennett teaches literature at Western State.

**Dave Bernier** moved here from Montrose just over a year ago. He has worked in photography and prepress for over 25 years. Most of his work is in landscape and nature, although he has also worked as a photo journalist.

**John Bocchino** arrived in Gunnison in 2006. He is a professional fly fishing guide and owner of Riffle and Rise Outfitters. He is also an active member of the Gunnison chapter of Trout Unlimited. John can be contacted at [www.RiffleandRise.com](http://www.RiffleandRise.com).

**Matt Burt** arrived in Gunnison in the fall of 1989 to attend Western State College. By graduation in 1994 he was in love with this valley as well as his future wife Mary. He has been here enjoying the beauty and adventure of Gunnison County and making images ever since.

**Chris Coady**, singer-songwriter, is inspired by relationships with family, friends, community, and the natural environment of the Gunnison Country. In addition to live performances, Chris has released several CD's and is working on two new projects.

**Judy Cox** has lived here for 23 years, fulfilling a childhood dream of living in a cabin by a stream in the mountains. She is author of three books, including "Sending Forth the Seed".

**Phoebe Cranor**, ranch wife, writer, poet, preacher, gardener, mentor and disciple of God, left us in 2010, but left behind a rich collection of poetry and prose about life in the Upper Gunnison, in two poetry chapbooks and two collections of newspaper columns about "High Altitude Ranch Life."

**Lynn Cudlip** wants to be outside, and is grateful for the "wetlands" she has been able to study and play in locally. She taught at Western for several years, had her own consulting business, and now throws pots -- another creative way to play in the mud.

**Gailann Davidson** is a Colorado native, WSC geology graduate and a long-time Gunnison resident. Also long-time married with two grown kids, she is a very private person.

**Sarah Dore**, a Leadville native, graduated from Western State in the spring of 2014 and is working as an intern for the *Gunnison Country Times*.

**Kim Eastman** is a Gunnison native, of a family that has been in the valley since 1880; Gunnison is truly her home, and she loves living in the home her grandparents built on the banks of the Gunnison River.

**Suzette Gainous** came to the Upper Gunnison Valley in 1978 to ski and help her mother run the CBMR photography concession at the resort. She has now make this mountain "paradise" home while enjoying the never ending photographic opportunities this beautiful place offers.

**Maryo Gard Ewell** has been active at the state level in the field of community arts for the past four decades; locally she has served on the boards of the Gunnison Arts Center and the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley; the rest of her time is spent in the garden (with help from the ditch).

**Cara Guerrieri** is a writer who was born and raised on the Guerrieri family ranch in the Upper Gunnison.

**Barb Haas** nestled into the Gunnison Valley in 1979, half a lifetime ago. She's taught Jazzercise, 5th grade, and shamanism, and enjoys African, aerial dance and playing marimba. She ponders life and word wranglin' while hiking, speed skating, skiing, and mountain biking.

**John Holder** is a Physician Assistant who loves to explore the local outdoor hiking, biking, skiing, and camping. He has developed a passion for photography in the past several years as a way to share his view of the Gunnison Valley and the rest of the world with others.

**Allan Ivy**, photographer with a global reputation, is not directly represented in the *Journal*, but he allowed the *Journal* partners to use some of his work in publicizing "Our River Our Valley."

**Virginia Jones** has been active in the life in the valley for more than 45 years, as a longtime teacher, volunteer for many organizations (including the *Journal*), and a poet celebrating the valley.

**John Lake** lives in Alabama, but was born and grew up in Gunnison, son of Rial Lake and grandson of Henry Lake Jr., both of whom were heavily involved in protecting the valley's water.

**Betty Light** has been capturing the Upper Gunnison in poetry since 1942; she is living in Arizona for health reasons, but her heart remains in the valley. Her poetry is collected in a book, *Light Reflections*.

**Julie Luekenga** is a writer published in numerous regional and national magazines, *Chicken Soup For The Soul*, and a contributor to the international writing site *She Writes*. She authors two blogs, *Julie Luek* and *A Thought Grows*. She also participated in the proofreading of the *Journal*.

**Scott LeFevre** is a fifth-generation Upper Gunnison native on both sides of his families. As a boy he worked for his parents at their Elk Creek and Lake Fork marinas. He lives in CB South and is an accountant for the Crested Butte Music Festival.



## *Gunnison Valley Journal Contributors - continued from previous page*

**Sandy Mark** spent much of her youth in Gunnison, and graduated from Western State College with a major in English and emphasis in writing. An Air Force wife, she returned to Gunnison in 1981 after a 31-year absence when her husband retired. She has served since with many valley organizations.

**Emily McLemore** is majoring in English at Western State; she is also president of WordHorde, the University's spoken word and performance poetry group. Originally from California, she has spent most of her life in Colorado.

**Gregg Morin** graduated from WSC in 1983 and has been in Gunnison since then. He enjoys many outdoor activities and always takes the camera along. His photography is available at the Gunnison Gallery.

**John Nelson** has been a wilderness guide, outfitter, horse packer and campfire poet in the Gunnison Country since Fossil Ridge was a seashore.

**Kathy Norris** arrived in the Gunnison Valley over twenty-two years ago to learn of the people and the magic of the place. The water, the mountains, the community continue to shape her participation in this area's unfolding.

**John Norton** and his wife Robin are long-time whitewater enthusiasts and fishermen, as are their girls. For most of the past 29 years John has been involved in the ski business, in Crested Butte and Aspen, and now consulting.

**Rhiannon Parent** is a freshman at Gunnison High School. She has loved writing since she was a little girl, but this year that love has grown immensely with the help of Dave White, the ninth-grade English teacher, and the GHS creative writing class.

**The Pelletier Family** -- guitarist and County GIS specialist Mike, violinist Perri, and singing daughters Ivy and Annalise -- wrote and produced a radio PSA with KEJJ's Harv Reese for the "One River One Valley" partnership.

**Dave Pinkerton** likes variety in life: he is a fly-fishing guide for Willowfly Anglers, teaches statistics at WSCU, and owns a consulting firm specializing in science curriculum. He is active in Trout Unlimited and leads a weekly sing-along at The Willows.

**Carol Robinson**, originally from Baltimore, received her BFA in Photography at the Maryland Institute College of Art. Carol has lived in Lake City for almost a decade. She is a co-founder of The Artists' Collective and gallery at 219 Silver Street there.

**David Rothman** is a writer and educator who teaches at both the University of Colorado and Western, where he is also head of the Poetry program in Western's MFA program. He has a new book: *Living the Life: Tales from America's Mountains and Ski Towns*.

**George Sibley** is a writer who is currently immersed in water issues, with both the Upper Gunnison River District and the Gunnison Basin Roundtable. He has been involved with all of the *Gunnison Valley Journals* to some extent.

**Sherrill Stenson** is a poet and the artist who did the "Journal logo" on page 1; she teaches yoga and meditation in the Upper Gunnison.

**Julie Stephens** and her husband Bruce live in Lake City; she writes a monthly column for the Lake City Silver World, teaches art for ORSCH, and has taught at WSCU. Her books and photographs sell on-line and in Texas and Colorado shops. She and Bruce love nature and hiking.

**Pat Sterling** is a writer who was a professor of English at Western for many of her 30-some years in the valley. She and husband Don (and dogs) have retired just east of Gunnison.

**Marcie Telander** is a longtime valley resident, psychotherapist and celebration artist (Vinotok). She lives on a secret island between the East River, Cement Creek and an unnamed trout stream. She writes to protect, and to continue living under the protection of, the Red Lady.

**Mark Todd** is a poet, novelist, and longtime faculty member at WSCU, where he helped create the new MFA program in writing and publishing. He has published two books of poetry; he and his wife Kym O'Connell Todd have written three novels in the "Silverville" series.

**Toni Todd** is a writer and journalist now teaching same at Western State, and is also writing for the *Crested Butte News*. She was unable to get anything written for the *Journal*, but did perform the thankless task of proofreading.

**Joseph Van Nurden** and family have called Gunnison home for four years. He explores with his expanding family, writes, fights fires with the Gunnison Volunteer Fire Department and wildland fire crews, and works various jobs to make ends meet.

**Alan Wartes** is a writer, poet, songwriter, musician and filmmaker who has returned to the Gunnison Valley after a decade on the Front Range. When not walking the banks of the Tomichi near his Parlin home, he writes for the *Gunnison Country Times* and bakes pies for The Local Market.

**Linda Wartes** moved to Gunnison 22 years ago. She found her soul's home here after living in many places. She worked 16 winter seasons with United Express at the Gunnison Airport; now she plans to begin using her master's degree in Communications in a different profession and perhaps writing a bit more.

**Rob Wattles** and his wife Danni run the Rocky River Resort north of Gunnison; he is also a musician around whom bands coalesce. His short bluesy poem was a radio PSA he made with KEJJ's Harv Reese for the "One River One Valley" partnership.


**Marlene Wright Zanetell** taught at GHS, served as a Gunnison County Commissioner (1993-2001), and called citizens together to form POWER (People Opposing Water Export Raids) to help stop the Union Park Project. She continues to work with others to defend the valley's water future.

Gratitude to these sponsors from the community:



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of the GUNNISON VALLEY

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