

A PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2017

# Around<sup>THE</sup>Oval

THE  
*GREAT*  
OUTDOORS



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THE GREAT OUTDOORS

**Cover:** Colorado State University Warner College of Natural Resources students celebrate at the end of class near Mummy Pass above the CSU Mountain Campus.

**Top:** Colorado State University Warner College of Natural Resources students climb Fall Mountain above the CSU Mountain Campus on Alpine Day in the NR 220 Natural Resources Ecology and Measurements course.

**Bottom:** Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences faculty, staff, students and alumni watch a Pacific leatherback turtle release on a beach near Todos Santos, Baja California Sur, Mexico.

CSU PHOTOGRAPHY



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Greetings from your University!

As someone who was born and raised in Colorado, spending time in the great outdoors has been a way of life for my family and me. Whether it's skiing at our favorite spots, fishing at Red Feather Lakes, or just hiking around all of the special places that surround our beautiful community, including our beloved Horsetooth Reservoir, our time in the outdoors has created years of memories for my family and me and taught us valuable lessons along the way.

It's those lessons that helped shape our "The Great Outdoors" theme for this issue of *Around the Oval*. Inside, we are proud to share stories of gratitude, self-reflection, inspiration, strength and breaking barriers from alumni and Alumni Association members whose lives were forever changed by their great outdoors experiences.

You will also read about one of our most cherished and stalwart Rams, Brett Anderson ('87). In July, Brett is leaving his post as vice president of CSU's Advancement Division to work closely with President Tony Frank on programs that will continue to strengthen the future of our University. I am thrilled that his office will be near mine in the Iris & Michael Smith Alumni Center opening this fall.

Brett's unwavering commitment to the University has raised the bar on what it means to be a Ram and I look forward to fulfilling his vision of keeping Rams connected and engaged. I also am personally grateful for his mentorship and friendship.

Thank you for supporting CSU and your Alumni Association, and we hope you enjoy these stories.



Ram proud,  
*Kristi Bohlender*  
Kristi Bohlender, B.S., '93; M.B.A., '95, and Life Member

Your Membership Matters.

Your Alumni Association membership is an investment in the past, present, and future of Colorado State University. You make it possible for us to connect more than 215,000 alumni, to CSU in meaningful ways. *Thank you!*

CSU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERS LIKE YOU MAKE THIS PUBLICATION POSSIBLE.

Around <sup>THE</sup> Oval

SPRING 2017

Mission of *Around the Oval*: To build relationships and conduct conversations with members of the CSU Alumni Association.

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*Around the Oval* is published twice a year by the CSU Alumni Association as a benefit of membership.

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# INSPIRING RAMS TO NEW HEIGHTS

## IS BRETT ANDERSON'S ('87) LEGACY AT CSU

Colorado State University is so much a part of who Brett Anderson ('87) is, he can't remember when it wasn't.

"I've been around the campus since before I could walk," he says.

From his office overlooking the Oval, he reminisces about all of the times and all of the ways Fort Collins and CSU's campus community have permeated his experiences.

Anderson comes from a family of stalwart Rams. After her retirement in Trinidad, Colo., his grandmother, Pearl, moved to Fort Collins. She wanted to help out at CSU and started working in Housing & Dining as a cook.

His father, Tex ('57, '63), earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from CSU, and after leaving to teach and get his Ph.D. at The Ohio State University, Tex and Anderson's mother, Joyce, made their way back to Fort Collins to raise their young family. Tex's distinguished career at CSU would span more than 30 years. Anderson's older brother Tod is a Ram, as are both his nephews.

Clearly, Anderson's roots run deep – from playing in the knothole (the north-west corner of Hughes Stadium) reserved for kids when he was just 5 years old, to stoking his entrepreneurial spirit working on campus during summer breaks from Poudre High School.

"I remember I used to start at about 7 in the morning, buy a couple dozen donuts and coffee at a local shop on the way to campus," Anderson said. "I'd go to my dad's building to sell them to staff and students. I'd be done by 10:30, then head out to play golf. It was great!"

A 1987 Walter Scott, Jr. College of Engineering graduate, Anderson has served as the University's vice president for Advancement since 2009 – leading year over year of record-breaking fundraising, driving



JOYCE, TEX, BRETT AND DAWN ANDERSON AT THE 2016 PRESIDENT'S GALA. ANDERSON IS THE 2004 COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS, AND RECIPIENT OF THE COLORADO STATE PERSONAL SERVICE AWARD. HE IS A LIFE MEMBER OF THE COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, FRONTIER LEGACY SOCIETY (CELEBRATING THOSE WITH PLANNED GIFTS TO CSU), AND THE LORY SOCIETY (HONORING DONORS WHO HAVE GIVEN \$1 MILLION OR MORE). HE AND HIS WIFE DAWN, CAN BE FOUND IN AND AROUND DENVER AND FORT COLLINS AND ON THE SIDELINES AND COURTSIDE SUPPORTING CSU ATHLETICS AND EVENTS.

CSU's first comprehensive fundraising campaign to an early finish \$40 million over its \$500 million goal, and launching its current \$1 billion campaign. The facts and figures that point to Anderson's leadership success are staggering.

"Brett Anderson loves his alma mater and has improved it beyond measure – building the best advancement team in the country and leading us to a fourfold increase in annual fundraising and a near doubling of our active donors," said CSU's President Tony Frank.

Anderson, who says he "just wanted to make a difference," increased annual fundraising 250 percent from \$58 million to \$198 million, boosted the total number of annual donors from 24,000 to almost 40,000, and secured the two largest gifts in CSU's history (\$53.3 million from alumnus Walter Scott, Jr., and \$42.5 million from Leslie and John Malone). All of this happened in eight years.

However, it is his passion for making sure alumni are recognized and heard, feel empowered and influential, and

ultimately, are deeply connected with CSU, that helped the University buck national trends by doubling the number of alumni participating in philanthropy.

"I've had the honor of working with Brett for nearly two decades, first when he was a donor in athletics and now in his current role, and his passion for CSU is endless, and contagious," Kristi Bohlender, executive director for CSU's Alumni Association, says with a smile. "He brings a genuine love for CSU to the office every day, and it guides every decision he makes. The unprecedented

### I'M A MEMBER BECAUSE



*I'm a member because once you're a Ram you are always a Ram. It's about pride! CSU has played an instrumental role in my life and the life of my family. I want to give back, stay involved and stay connected. Being a member of the Alumni Association allows me to do that and to let everyone know how proud I am to be part of the Ram family.*

- Brett Anderson ('87), Alumni Association Life Member

success of the advancement team in engaging our alumni and friends can, in large part, be attributed to his drive, focus, passion and love for his alma mater."

In July 2017, Anderson will step away from University Advancement to assume a new, full-time role as special assistant to CSU's president.

"We're taking advantage of his immense expertise," Frank said. "Brett will be taking a look at our systems, and operations, and focusing on ways to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in our operations. His persistence and critical eye will help make CSU even better. I am

This new role is yet another opportunity for Anderson to give back – an extension of a commitment he made to CSU decades ago.

"Giving back is something that my parents and grandparents instilled in me. It was always important to give back and do what you could to help others," says Anderson.

"My first gift to CSU was probably 20 bucks," says Anderson. "And, I probably only gave it because someone called and asked."

Today, Anderson's impact as a leader and donor are all over campus. The Anderson Academic Center, which provides academic and leadership development support for all CSU

## "CSU GAVE ME THE EDUCATION TO DO WHAT I NEEDED TO DO IN THE WORLD TO SUCCEED."

-BRETT ANDERSON

delighted that he will continue to play a leadership role at CSU."

Anderson's new role will find him conducting process and systems reviews across the breadth and depth of the University, and helping to advance the University's Re-Envision CSU 2020 Initiative. He'll also help negotiate and facilitate business deals to strengthen and benefit the University and the entire CSU System via a strategic partnerships process.

"I spent 22 years of my career at Accenture looking at processes end to end to figure out how to make things better. I'm looking forward to this next challenge," says Anderson.

Anderson's time with the world's leading global consulting company focused on projects such as helping Australia improve the country's communications network and systems. He racked up so many airline miles over the years he lost track – it was in the millions.

student-athletes, bears his name.

Anderson and his wife, Dawn, continue to be major supporters of CSU – providing student scholarships in several areas, supporting research focused on treating cancer, and investing in Rams Athletics in significant ways.

Anderson's motivation has always been simple. He believes the success of the University impacts each and every living alumnus and alumna, and all future students who become part of the Rams family.

"I met some of my best lifelong friends here. In the end, I owe much of where I'm at to CSU. CSU gave me the education to do what I needed to do in the world to succeed," says Anderson.

For Anderson, supporting and leading at CSU has been about pride. It's about the value of the degree. He believes CSU's impact and excellence endures.

By Whei Wong Howerton

### I'M A MEMBER BECAUSE



*"I am inspired every day by the people affiliated with CSU. Giving back through supporting the Alumni Association is a great way to stay connected and support the Ram family."*

- Kim Tobin ('18), Alumni Association Life Member



### KIM TOBIN TAPPED AS VP FOR CSU ADVANCEMENT

Effective July 1, Kim Tobin, a CSU Alumni Association life member and current associate vice president for CSU Advancement, will take over as the division's new vice president. Tobin has worked in a variety of development roles for CSU since joining the University in 2003, including serving as the director of development for the Warner College of Natural Resources and the College of Liberal Arts.

Tobin is proudly pursuing her Ph.D. from CSU, and hopes to complete her work, and become an official CSU alumna, in 2018.

# Thank You for Taking the Alumni Association Survey

Nearly **4,000 Colorado State University alumni** participated in our online survey last November. We'd like to share some initial insights with you:



Alumni care about the equity of their degree. They want to know that their degree is more valuable to them today than it was when they graduated.

CSU's alumni participation rate is at a record high of 10.71%, which improves the University's ranking in *U.S. News and World Report*.



Recent grads often feel connected to particular professors, mentors, their departments, and student organizations.

Through events like the Best Teacher Awards, the Alumni Association celebrates the impact the CSU community has on students.



You want to hear more from us!

Join us on Facebook and check out our website and *AlumLine* for the latest alumni and CSU news!

Thank you again for taking the time to help us learn more about how we can serve you, and we always welcome your feedback!

[alumni.colostate.edu](http://alumni.colostate.edu)

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## METRO DENVER SCHOLARSHIP MAKES COLLEGE DREAMS A REALITY

HUNTER STAFFORD WITH HIS FATHER ON THE COLORADO TRAIL

Colorado native and Colorado State University junior Hunter Stafford leads an active life snowboarding, hiking, and enjoying the outdoors.

"I've loved growing up in Colorado," Stafford said. "The people here are wonderful, and the outdoors offer so much."

What many people don't know about Stafford is that he also suffers from Cyclic Vomiting Syndrome, a chronic illness that leaves him dehydrated and plagued by migraines for days.

For years, his CVS was in remission, until Stafford turned 19. The recurrence proved to be an immense burden as he tried to balance his condition with schoolwork.

Unwilling to play the victim, Stafford chose to face the illness head-on. In the summer of 2015, Stafford and his father

hiked the 486-mile Colorado Trail to raise money for the CVS Association. They raised \$2,500, but he suffered another setback just one week after the hike.

Stafford, an avid snowboarder and member of the CSU Snowrider Club, suffered a broken ankle, delaying his plans to study abroad.

"Let's just say it was an odd turn of events," Stafford said.

The CSU Alumni Association Metro Denver scholarship was one of the scholarships Stafford applied for while taking a semester off to recover.

Serving as a gateway to graduation, the Metro Denver Scholarship allows students from the Denver Metro area facing hardship in their final years at

CSU to complete their degrees.

Stafford is grateful he received the Metro Denver Scholarship because it has allowed him to get back on track and pursue his dream of receiving a college education. Stafford also hopes to one day teach English abroad or work in the outdoors.

What would he tell those donating to the scholarship?

"I would tell them thank you," he said. "Oftentimes, finances get in the way of people going to college, but going to college can completely change your perspective of how you see life. It's definitely helped change my perspective and the way I can impact people's lives in the future."

By CSU Student, Savannah Hoag ('19)



## INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THE METRO DENVER SCHOLARSHIP?

The Metro Denver Scholarship serves as a gateway to graduation for students from the Denver Metro area facing hardship in their final years at CSU. For more than 10 years, the Green & Gold Gala has served as the main fundraiser for the Metro Denver Scholarship. This year's Gala is planned for May 20, 2017.

10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**GREEN & GOLD  
GALA**

— [alumni.colostate.edu/greengoldgala](http://alumni.colostate.edu/greengoldgala)



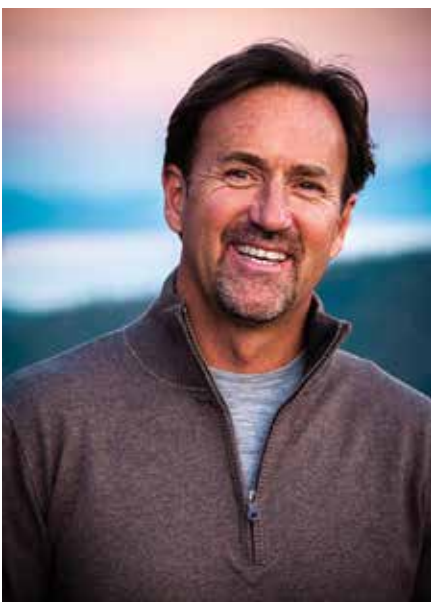
# Deep Current Gratitude:

How a near-fatal skydiving accident changed Andy Wirth’s (’88) life

If there is such a thing as ordinary in skydiving, that might be how Andy Wirth (’88) would describe the start of that fateful October 2013 weekend. Wirth, president and chief executive officer of Squaw Valley Ski Holdings, parent company of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows ski resorts, and his expert skydiving companions, including extreme athlete JT Holmes and professional BASE jumper Timy Dutton, had planned to spend Saturday and Sunday jumping. They hoped to squeeze in as many jumps as possible and execute some of the skydiving maneuvers Wirth had grown accustomed to, such as delta tracking where he would put his hands by his side and, shaped like a dart, fly through the air. Saturday went in the books as a perfect skydiving day.

But Sunday was different. That day, the wind was blowing and the crew was forced to go to a different drop location. They had completed a few successful jumps, but then the pilot carrying them flew too far past the drop zone. When it was Wirth’s turn to exit the plane, he was off course and contending with a head wind that was taking him farther away from the drop zone. A few other discrete things went wrong during the jump that left Wirth with no good landing options.

With power lines on both sides, he was forced to land in a vineyard. But as he descended, he struck a suspended,



high-tensile wire and a pole that tore off his right arm and stripped away all the tissue from his shoulder down to his mid-forearm.

His brachial artery was ruptured, and he was bleeding profusely. He knew he was very close to death. Finding strength from the high-angle rescue and trauma skills he developed years earlier as an emergency medical technician and backcountry ranger in Rocky Mountain National Park, he also found comfort from Pearl Jam’s “Just Breathe,” the song that came to Wirth’s mind as he assessed his situation.

“It was my death song,” he recounts. “The first line says, ‘Yes I understand every life must end. As we sit alone, I know someday we must go.’ I sang this death song as I reconciled and made peace with dying, but it also became my narrative for my living that afternoon.”

That focus allowed him to slow his breathing to prevent shock and stay conscious while he stuffed his left fist into his right armpit to slow the bleeding. After 15 minutes of treating himself, another jumping companion arrived on the scene, and Wirth instructed her to use his altimeter as a tourniquet on his arm until paramedics arrived. Three months and 24 surgeries later, his right arm was reattached and reconstructed, and the next chapter of Wirth’s adventurous life began.

Andy Wirth’s life and career have been synonymous with the great outdoors. Growing up in the high mountain deserts of New Mexico, Wirth developed his sense of adventure and deep love of the outdoors from his father, a fighter pilot, and his grandfather, Conrad Wirth, a U.S. National Park Service director during the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations.

“Land preservation and conservation were always big parts of my conversations with my grandfather,” Wirth fondly recalled during his 2014 commencement speech to Warner College of Natural Resources graduates,



WIRTH AND CHRIS BOYLES DELTA TRACKING OVER LODI, CALI.

“and after hearing the daily challenges that came with his position, he also taught me patience, humility, and perseverance and how to rise above, even in the face of extreme frustration.”

Wirth wanted to follow in his grandfather’s footsteps, and he knew that getting his degree from Colorado State University was the way to go.

“I changed studies a lot, but in my academic years at CSU, I was able to spend time working in the parks during summer, which I loved,” he said.

Wirth was a backcountry ranger at the North Fork of the Big Thompson River in Rocky Mountain National Park during school, and he also worked as a wilderness ranger in the San Pedro Parks Wilderness area in New Mexico. He even spent one summer on an initial fire attack crew, known as Hot Shots, in northern New Mexico to help pay for tuition.

Quite by accident, he says, Wirth ended up putting his passion to work in the ski industry, thanks to an

internship he secured with Steamboat Ski Resort before he graduated.

“I intended to go to grad school and get my M.B.A.,” he said, “but I did my internship at Steamboat as I finished my degree, and I just never left this incredible industry.”

Wirth spent more than 25 years with the resort, working mostly in marketing positions. He was chief marketing officer and executive vice president of Steamboat’s parent company, Intrawest, when he left the company in 2010 to become president and chief executive officer of Squaw Valley Ski Holdings.

Wirth has tackled many challenges throughout his life and career and, in part, he credits CSU for his career preparation.

“You are talking to a fella who almost every day uses everything he learned at CSU,” he said. “I can’t remember a single professor who wasn’t outstanding and who didn’t inspire and compel me to do better. Patrick Tierney was one of the best for me. He was so hungry for all of us to

learn and was so engaged. I benefited a great deal from my professors.”

But it’s the lessons he learned from his grandfather and his skydiving accident that inspire his tireless perseverance and his “deep current gratitude,” which he describes as a thanks for today, where he is in his life, and for everything that has happened and is happening, that propel him through his new life chapter. Like a birthday, Wirth now marks his “alive date,” the day he started living after his accident.

“There are a handful of things that I may not be able to do, but a million and one things that I can do, and I am going to focus on the million things I can do,” he says.

Also integral to Wirth’s recovery were the relationships he built with a group of Navy SEALs he met shortly after leaving the hospital.

“These guys adopted me,” he said, “they didn’t have to, but that’s just who they are. They have such great

“I sang this death song as I reconciled and made peace with dying, but it also became my narrative for my living that afternoon.”





SPECIAL WARFARE WARRIOR IRONMAN TEAM: WIRTH WITH HIS CLOSE COLLEGE FRIEND DUANE BOLT ('86), AND A LT. COMMANDER IN NAVY SPECIAL WARFARE (SEALS) DEVELOPMENT GROUP.

character and being around them has helped strengthen mine," he says. "Whether they know it or not, they have been a big part of my recovery. From them, I've learned that courage is not when one has the strength to press on; courage is found when, in the absence of strength, one finds a way to advance ... to press on."

Expressing his gratitude, and accommodating his adventurous side, Wirth and the team he established – the Special Warfare Warrior team – competed in the 2015 Lake Tahoe

Ironman to raise money for the Navy SEAL Foundation. The 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and 26.2-mile run raised nearly \$100,000 in direct contributions to the SEAL Foundation, which benefits people serving in the military and their families. On the event's fundraising website, Wirth described the impact his Navy SEAL friends have had on his life.

"I recently learned from one of my good friends in the Special Warfare community that one of the reasons they took a special interest in me was that I,

"There are a handful of things that I may not be able to do, but a million and one things that I can do, and I am going to focus on the million things I can do."

very much by accident, demonstrated one of the key elements of their ethos: "I am never out of the fight." That windy day in October 2013, all I really was seeking to do was make it to the helicopter. It worked out well, and I remain loyal to them and deeply appreciative for their support and the support of the many people around me. There's so very much for which we can all be grateful – that's an immutable truth!"

—  
By Angie Dixon ('94)

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# SERENDIPITY ON THE TRAIL



WITH BECKY  
JENSEN ('93)

I was hiking alone on the Colorado Trail when I stopped at the boundary sign for Holy Cross Wilderness. A gray-bearded man walked up and greeted me with a warm hello as I filled out my backcountry permit at the registration box. His name was Richard.

Richard was wearing a beige rain poncho that draped slightly cattywampus over his ample frame. His eyes twinkled behind rain-speckled glasses, and he wore a sunhat with Legionnaire's neck flaps. Something clicked in my memory.

"Are you Pufferbelly?" I asked, tying the permit tag onto my pack. A woman had stopped me on a Forest Service road about 12 miles back to ask if I had seen her husband, and this guy fit the description to a T. "Did your wife find you? Did you get your supplies?"

"Yes, I AM ... and she DID ... and I DID!" he said slowly and deliberately, his broad grin showing obvious delight at the mention of his wife.

This kind of introduction was not unusual on the Colorado Trail, or "CT" – a 486-mile path between Denver and Durango that winds its way through six wilderness areas, eight mountain ranges, six national forests, and five

river systems, and climbs nearly 90,000 feet in elevation. Thru-hikers – people who hike long-distance trails end-to-end in one push – often forge a fast and lasting bond when they meet each other on the trail. They watch out for each other, relay messages, and treat one another like family.

Pufferbelly and I were CT thru-hikers and instantly became what I call Jerry Maguire friends (he had me at hello). We entered the wilderness together as storm clouds brewed overhead.

"How did you get your trail name?" I asked as we walked along.

I should explain that it's tradition for another hiker to choose your trail nickname, and the name should capture something special that is uniquely you, whether it's a funny moment or a deeper reflection of your spirit.

As it turns out, Richard earned his trail name during his first attempt of the CT. One day, as he slowly chugged uphill, a faster hiker was on his heels. With every labored step, Richard muttered, "I think I can, I think I can" like the Little Engine That Could. At the top of the climb, the hiker announced, "I've got a trail name for you, and it's train related." Richard was delighted,

anticipating a powerful name like Locomotive, The Zephyr, or Iron Horse. Instead, the hiker gave him the trail name Pufferbelly – an old-timey steam engine put out to pasture. Richard could have blown off the name, but he embraced it as a gift because it reminded him, "I think I can."

"Do you have a trail name?" Pufferbelly asked in return. "Not yet," I said, a little too quickly.

We started to hike at different paces, and I found myself alone again with my thoughts. Pufferbelly's question brought up a nagging worry that I didn't want to admit. I was afraid I would hike all the way to Durango, the end of my epic 500-mile journey, without earning a trail name. I wasn't scared of mountain lions or moose; I was scared of ending my thru-hike feeling unremarkable and unchanged.

My mind drifted back to why I hit the trail in the first place. In early 2016, I was sleepwalking my days away without a sense of purpose or gratitude. At night, I would curl up under my covers where the inner-bully in my head would wear me down until I eventually fell asleep. In need of a life-sized reset button, I decided to go

"I WAS AFRAID I WOULD HIKE ALL THE WAY TO DURANGO, THE END OF MY EPIC 500-MILE JOURNEY, WITHOUT EARNING A TRAIL NAME."

big and thru-hike the CT. I had no idea how I was going to pull off the five-week solo trip (familywise, workwise, or financially). The only thing I knew was if I didn't carve out this time for myself, I would spiral deeper into a dark place.

Loud thunder clapped and snapped my mind back to the trail as fat raindrops began hitting my backpack with decisive splats. I could see Pufferbelly coming up the singletrack as I pulled out my rain gear and scrambled under a tree canopy for cover.

The skies unloaded, and Pufferbelly rushed to where I was hunkered down. "Would you mind if I shared your sanctuary here?" he asked as small hailstones started to bounce off nearby rock slabs. His formal request was endearing, and I quickly waved him under the branches to join me.

Pufferbelly shook the rain off his poncho and told me how happy his wife would be to know he was safe, and in good company, during his first real thunderstorm on the CT. We stood smiling in silent companionship, dry and content in our little sacred space. "I have a trail name for you if you wish to accept it," he declared out of nowhere. I took a sharp intake of breath.

"I've found that the best things on this trail, as with life, happen in the smallest of moments ... like this one." He paused and looked me in the eyes. "So, my name for you is Serendipity."

I resisted the urge to look over my shoulder to see if he was talking to someone else. My eyes started to well up as I choked out a thank-you and gave him a hug.

Then, like a faucet, the rain abruptly turned off. The clouds parted and the sun kissed our faces as we stepped out from under our temporary cover. A rivulet of water rushed down the trail like a small stream, sweeping away all the hail and pine needles, washing the path clean.

When I camped that night, I crawled into my sleeping bag and rolled the name Serendipity over and over in my head. The soft patter of rain on my tent lulled me into a deep sleep, and I woke up the next morning feeling remarkable. I was grateful for the little things, like a hot cup of tea, a new friend, and the unexpected gift of finding and accepting serendipity on the trail.

—  
By Becky Jensen ('93)



CSU's Mountain Campus provides outdoor labs, field study, and course work for students in the Warner College of Natural Resources. In addition, hundreds of elementary school students visit the Mountain Campus each year during Eco Week, an immersive outdoor classroom experience. Becky Jensen has fond memories of Eco Week way back in 1981, including a hike to Mummy Pass at age 11. "That's when I was bitten by the natural wonder bug," says Jensen. "And I hope I never recover."

## I'M A MEMBER BECAUSE



*Being a Ram doesn't mean I went to CSU for four years (OK, five), and then that relationship ended at graduation. A big part of my identity is wrapped up in CSU – I can't ignore that, and I don't want to. I'm a Ram for life. My Alumni Association membership keeps me connected to a place, and the incredible people, that helped shape who I am today.*

- Becky Jensen ('93), Alumni Association Life Member



## Barbara Boardman ('72, '77): Building a Successful Future from the Ground Up

Almost 50 years ago, Barbara Hyde Boardman (B.S., '72; M.S., '77) broke barriers within the horticulture industry by becoming the first woman enrolled in Colorado State University's horticulture program. She was also the second female United States Extension agent within horticulture, and during those times, she recalls, "laughing with my other agent over the ways our male counterparts would put us down."

Today, at the age of 92, Boardman is still active in horticulture and serves as a role model to many of her past students and the CSU community.

Boardman was born in Palisade, Colo., and grew up in the fruit industry.

"I earned money for books and clothes by packing all of the fruits as they came into season," Boardman said. "I was always a gardener interested in flowers, such as perennials and roses. I was even interested in turf grass."

After graduating from high school, she enrolled at the University of Colorado with a scholarship leading to medical school, but after World War II, she said that her choices were limited.

"I was given the choice of either nursing or medical technology," Boardman said, "but I really wanted to be a doctor."

So she elected to end her college studies to follow her soon-to-be husband and Army pilot, Bill Hyde, as he trekked across the country teaching men how to fly and fight in the sky.

When the war ended, Boulder became their home as Hyde enrolled in law school. His law career also took them to Grand Junction, where Hyde practiced with James K. Groves until Hyde was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. His diagnosis led the couple to Fort Collins, where Boardman enrolled in CSU's horticulture program.

"I remember my classmates being the same age as our son," she laughed. She

also remembers how funny her fellow classmates were and how well they treated her.

"They would yank me over fences on field trips, and ask me embarrassing questions about how to ask a girl for a date," she said. "They were really great to be with."

At her commencement, which she says were "very solemn affairs in those days," she stood in line with others graduating with honors. When her turn came, President Morgan held out her diploma as her classmates directed the audience to cheer.

"I think I startled President Morgan because he dropped the diploma," Boardman said. "As we both reached down for it, he said, 'shall we start over?' The audience roared."

Boardman's first job, which she landed before graduation, was assistant to the chief horticulturist at the St. Louis Missouri Botanic Garden, the oldest garden in the country.

But at the same time, the nationwide enthusiasm for "all things gardening" was booming and began to overwhelm agriculture extension agents across the country, who at the time, knew very little about horticulture. In Colorado, this boom resulted in the Colorado Legislature voting to create a new extension position. Homesick for Colorado, Boardman interviewed for the position, which was in the Boulder County Extension, and she and her husband made their way back to Colorado.

Because of the deluge of horticulture questions coming in from the public, Boardman helped create the Master Gardener program, which included seven Colorado counties.

"We asked volunteers who were good gardeners and needed minimal training from us agents to contribute a few hours per week," she said. They



BARBARA BOARDMAN SPEAKING AT THE 2009 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS.

became our best friends and colleagues in new garden clubs."

After 17 years with Boulder County Extension, Boardman retired but continued to write her weekly newspaper column on gardening, "Now Is the Time," for many years.

"I was said to have interrupted many Saturday morning golf games because of that article," she chuckled.

Boardman has written four books during her retirement, *Gardening the Mountain West* (volumes I and II) and *Now Is the Time*. Her newest book, *Gardening for Children and their Grandparents*, is available at Tattered Cover.

At 92, Boardman is still an avid gardener on a balcony of her retirement community. Birding is her second passion.

In 2009, Boardman was honored with the Distinguished Alumni Extension Award for her impact and awareness of CSU Extension as a source of information. She extended CSU in the fullest sense.

By Angie Dixon ('94)



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## LEN ZANNI ('92) AND HIS CAREER IN FULL GEAR

ZANNI WITH HIS WIFE, JEANNE MACKOWSKI, AND THEIR KIDS, GRACE AND CURTIS, AT ARCHES NATIONAL PARK.

According to Outdoor Magazine, Len Zanni ('92) is co-owner of one of the best places to work in the United States, and Zanni is quick to agree.

The 46-year-old skier, occasional trail runner, and singletrack mountain bike fanatic is partner and chief marketing officer of Big Agnes, a multimillion-dollar outdoor gear maker based in Steamboat Springs, Colo. Zanni also co-owns and manages marketing for sister company Honey Stinger, which produces a full line of energy foods made with honey.

Founded by Bill Gamber and a former partner in 2001, Big Agnes has been tapped not once, but twice as a top place to work in the nation's \$646 billion outdoor recreation industry. It's easy to see why. Employees are reimbursed for ski passes and gym memberships, and the Big Agnes "powder clause" allows staff to play hooky (within reason) to ski fresh powder. Depending on the season, long lunch breaks are often spent trail running, mountain and road biking, skiing, or fly-fishing on the nearby Yampa River.

"Our companies were born and raised in Steamboat, where we work hard and play hard," says Zanni, who correlates ample outdoor playtime with business innovation and success.

Big Agnes – best known for its award-winning tents, sleeping bags, and sleeping pads – hosts company campouts and hut trips where employees from different departments come together to share ideas. "Like all good outdoor parties, it usually ends up around the campfire," says Zanni, who values an open company culture where everyone is part of a collaborative process. "A lot of good ideas come out of our time together away from the office."

The company's investment in a healthy corporate culture pays off in more than just happy employees. Big Agnes has increased revenues by more than 120 percent since 2011, and both it and Honey Stinger enjoy a growing cult-like following among outdoor enthusiasts, elite endurance athletes, and health-conscious consumers alike.

Zanni and the combined staff of nearly 100 employees at Big Agnes and

Honey Stinger moved into their new corporate office on Steamboat's Mount Werner Road in August 2016. Big Agnes also opened a new distribution center in Salt Lake City in January of this year.

When asked about the career path that led him to where he is today, Zanni says with a modest shrug, "I took one



ZANNI MOUNTAIN BIKE RACING.

trail and followed it, and that trail led to the next."

Zanni hit that trail at age 18, and his first step was to leave the suburbs of Morristown, N.J., for unfamiliar territory in the Wind River Range of Wyoming. He credits the National Outdoor Leadership School as the seminal experience that "set me on the path toward my future without even knowing it."

After completing the NOLS course, he enrolled at Colorado State University where he lived on the "Ski Floor" of Ingersoll Hall his freshman year, and the Outdoor Adventure Floor of Edwards Hall the next. With the mountains only a stone's throw away, he spent every spare minute skiing, mountain biking Horsetooth, rock climbing, hiking 14ers, and trail running up to the "A," before trail running was

a thing. An amazing semester abroad in New Zealand took his appreciation for the outdoors to a new level.

After graduation, he worked on ski patrol at Vail and then for the American Alpine Club in Golden. Zanni eventually landed a marketing gig at Backbone Media in Carbondale, where he first met Gamber and began managing the Big Agnes account from day one. Zanni eventually left Backbone Media to become Gamber's business partner in 2003.

Zanni is stoked every time he hears about other Rams working in the outdoor industry, especially successful friends and fellow classmates from the 1990s, including:

Tim Baldwin ('93), Zanni's friend from high school and former Colorado Outward Bound instructor, current EMS instructor at Colorado Mountain College, flight paramedic at Flight for Life Colorado, and member of Steamboat Ski Patrol.

Jonathan Thesenga ('94), former editor-in-chief at Climbing Magazine and former global sports marketing manager at Black Diamond Equipment in Salt Lake City. Zanni and Thesenga met while living at Edwards Hall.

Chris Kalous ('93), producer and host of the popular podcast Enormocast: A Slice of the Climbing Life. Zanni and Kalous met during their semester abroad in New Zealand.

John Race ('92), president of Northwest Mountain School in the Seattle area, expedition leader to some of the world's most famous 8,000-meter peaks, and former vice president of the American Mountain

### I'M A MEMBER BECAUSE



"You get to a certain point in your life where you reflect on the people and places that have impacted you over the years. CSU was certainly one of those places. For me, it's the right thing to do."

- Len Zanni ('92), Alumni Association Annual Member



Guides Association board of directors. Zanni and Race met at CSU.

Derek Temple ('92), buyer for REI. "I run into Derek at almost every trade show," Zanni remarks about the friend he met during his sophomore year at Edwards Hall. "He's kind of a big deal."

Zanni is kind of a big deal in his own right, but he would never admit it. In addition to his role at Big Agnes and Honey Stinger, Zanni is a local mountain biking legend of sorts who once placed fifth in the grueling Leadville Trail 100 MTB race, and who lost an Aspen Cycling Club series race to Lance Armstrong by a mere 14 seconds.

He shies away from praise, whether it's business or personal, and swings the spotlight to shine on his loyal support crew, made up of business partner and mentor Gamber, the hardworking folks at Big Agnes and Honey Stinger, and his amazing wife, Jeanne, and kids, Grace and Curtis. He credits this extended

outdoor tribe with getting him to where he is today.

He also claims that his B.A. in anthropology continues to serve him well. "In my line of work, you have to understand your customer's culture and lifestyle. You have to know who you're marketing to." He adds, "It might not have made sense or seemed very practical at the time to study cultural anthropology at CSU, but that knowledge really helps me now."

When he reflects on his decision to head west for college nearly 30 years ago, he says, "If I had gone to an East Coast school, like many of my high school friends, I probably would have been working in the financial sector and consuming outdoor products." But Zanni, who took the road less traveled, says, "Because I went to CSU, I'm making them." And that has made all the difference.

By Becky Jensen ('93)



### FOR SUCCESS

CSU Key Communities is a select, application-based residential learning program that brings together diverse freshman and sophomore students who share a mutual interest. Co-enrollment in classes, and shared dorm assignments, study sessions, and campus activities, help new students transition into college life, form a close-knit support network, and forge friendships that often last a lifetime. Key Communities' interest areas include: academics, service learning, leadership, human and animal health care, career exploration, sports, and cultural diversity.



ZANNI AND SON, CURTIS, SKIING.



A MUDDY ZANNI AT THEN END OF A MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE.

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NATHAN PERRAULT ('16) EXPERIENCES

## A NEW START

PERRAULT CLIMBING DENALI,  
THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN  
PEAK IN NORTH AMERICA.

CHRIS KASSAR

Sad, frustrating thoughts are not foreign to Nathan Perrault ('16). A few weeks ago, one of the men from his Marine unit committed suicide. He's had friends die in combat and from murder, accidents, and suicide. It's easy for him to retreat into his mind and recall the horrible things that he's seen, especially those from his time in Afghanistan. Fortunately, Perrault, a former Marine corporal, found an outlet that helped him during his transition from the military to civilian life: being active outdoors any way he can.

Perrault, who recently graduated with a degree in natural resources recreation and tourism, has been very involved with Veterans Expeditions, a nonprofit that helps veterans connect with the

outdoors through a variety of hikes, climbs, trips, and events. After his first ice-climbing trip with them, he realized that getting into the wilderness helped put his mind more at ease. An internship with the organization gave him a peek into the inner workings of a nonprofit, and he even planned a monthlong road trip where a group of veterans climbed Mounts Rainier, Hood, and Shasta.

The highlight of being involved with this group, so far, was a 2015 trip to climb Denali, the highest peak in North America. The first nine days of the climb went according to plan with hopes to summit right on schedule, but a freak storm brought high winds and a snowstorm that kept the group at the 14,000-foot camp for not one day, or even

two, but 16 days. On day 25 of their trip, the storm cleared. With perfectly crystal clear skies, no wind, and the top of the mountain to themselves, the group, which included seven veterans, summited Denali.

"In the Marines, I was infantry, so I did a lot of foot patrols, got shot at a lot, and needed my friends to cover me. On Denali, we had two rope teams of four, so you're back into that fire team situation (like in the Marines). You are counting on each other to help you get through that day, that patrol. Same thing on the mountain; you're relying on each other. You're relying on them for your lives; climbing can be dangerous," said Perrault.

During his time at Colorado

State University, Perrault received similar support from on-campus organizations as he navigated the new college experience.

"Before I even moved out to Colorado, I was on the phone with [the veterans' office] multiple times, asking them questions about the GI Bill, how it works, options for living and health care. They were really awesome," he said, noting how grateful he was for this help, especially during a rough first semester.

He met fellow veterans through this office and connected with New Start for Student Veterans, a program in the occupational therapy department at CSU that was established to help student veterans succeed in college and beyond. Erica Schelly Billingsley, a New Start coordinator, recruited Perrault to organize an outdoors program for fellow veterans.

"I saw how passionate Nathan was about outdoor recreation, and I also saw how good he was at connecting with all different types of people," Billingsley said. "His energy and love of the outdoors is contagious."

Perrault coordinated twice-weekly workouts and encouraged the students to get involved in the Veterans Expeditions trips. He knew how these excursions helped him, and he wanted to offer that to other veterans who might otherwise turn to drugs or alcohol as an outlet.

"I want to facilitate that for other vets as they make their transition, help them with their struggles, at least introduce them to something that might help," said Perrault. "Veterans Expeditions is creating this community where you have similar interests, and you could call someone up and say, 'Hey man, I'm having a bad day, let's go ice climbing.'"

According to Billingsley, the transition from military to civilian life and a college campus can be challenging, particularly for student Veterans who have sustained a service-connected injury while serving our country. New Start offers support

to those student Veterans who are struggling due to the challenges of their injuries by providing guidance and instruction on study strategies, organizational skills, self-advocacy, mindfulness, and other compensatory approaches to facilitate their academic and life success.

Perrault will continue to do some work with Veterans Expeditions through a six-month fellowship. He completed his Emergency Medical Technician certification and hopes to get a part-time job on an ambulance until his time at Veterans Expeditions is up. His



PERRAULT PICTURED WITH A FELLOW MARINE.

ultimate dream job is to work for Colorado Parks and Wildlife as law enforcement and plans apply to the police academy. Perrault's dreams are about as big as the mountains he climbs, and he lives by an adage he heard Nick Watson, the co-founder of Veterans Expeditions, remind the veterans he interacts with.

"Nick harps on the fact that the military doesn't have to be the peak of your life. I got out when I was 21. That doesn't mean that I peaked in life. I still have a lot to live for and contribute back to society. So, a lot of my mountaineering accomplishments are just as important to me as the military service and giving back to the veteran community."

By Anica Wong ('08)

SUPPORTING  
MILITARY VETERANS

In 2016, Military Times ranked CSU No. 4 in the nation among public universities in its annual "Best for Vets: Colleges 2017" rankings because of its New Start for Student Veterans program. As part of its commitment to service to those who have served, the New Start program helps student-veterans with physical and mental trauma achieve college and career success. New Start was initially funded by alumnus Dennis Repp ('60), a veteran himself, who received an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, from CSU in 2014.

Student-veterans can get support through New Start in addressing memory, concentration, and/or physical challenges, stress management, peer mentoring, and connection to campus and community resources, among other assistance. Initiatives such as the Women Veteran Yoga Project and sleep research through the Restoring Effective Sleep Tranquility program, partly funded by the Wounded Warrior Project, are just a few examples of services provided to student-veterans.

## I'M A MEMBER BECAUSE



"CSU was a great time in my life and I really appreciated the education I received, and the professors in the natural resource college were really great individuals. I just want to stay connected and involved and maybe attend grad school there some day."

- Nathan Perrault ('16), Alumni Association Annual Member



## JACK WELCH ('68) AND SUSAN BUTCHER ARE TRAILBLAZERS

Jack Welch, '68, has ridden his snowmobile in some of the most barren and beautiful places in North America and has fought for the right to do so; to call him a trailblazer would be apt. His résumé is a long list of influential positions within state and national snowmobiling associations and ambassadorships to organizations that advocate for more motorized access to public lands.

For Welch, a lifetime member of Colorado State University's Alumni Association, fighting for a responsible level of snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park is important because it allows more people to experience the amazing park. "I tell people, first of all, snowmobiling in Yellowstone is transportation. It is not like when you go out in the national forests where you can climb hills. You cannot experience Yellowstone on a more personal level any other time of the year than the winter," said Welch. He should know – he often visited his father, who retired to Jackson, Wyo. – during the summers, and then he and his wife lived in the same resort town for 20 years before moving back to Denver.

After a decision by the Department of the Interior in 2000 to ban all snowmobiling from Yellowstone, Welch and the Blue Ribbon Coalition, of which Welch is the national snowmobile ambassador, worked for 15 years to get snowmobiles back into the park with what he believes are fair rules and regulations on their use. Now, a certain number of snowmobiles and riders are allowed every day to go throughout the park. While this may be one of Welch's proudest accomplishments, he points to his snowmobile trip along the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race route as an unsurpassed experience.

In 1994, Welch and 15 other riders (and their snowmobiles) rode from Nome,

Alaska to Anchorage, a total of more than 1,000 miles. "It took eight days. The warmest it got was 17 above, the coldest it got was 54 below zero. And people say, 'Wasn't it fun?' and I say, 'No, it was incredible,'" Welch said. The group made the trip to discuss safety with the local village children, because there was little to no effort in these remote places to educate them about the basic rules of wearing helmets when riding snow machines. The group pulled into tiny villages at night with the hope that their local contact remembered they were coming to stay in the school gym, usually the only building in the village that had heat and running water.

"That whole thing was an incredible experience. You had a real appreciation for the vastness. We covered 1,100 miles and, at one point, we were 200 miles from anything. It was at night, it was 40 below zero, we were looking for a cabin we were supposed to stay in, and we were almost out of gas. We decided to stop to look up at the Northern Lights," Welch remembered.

Snowmobilers are often the ones who create and mark the trail that the Iditarod dog sled racers, such as Susan Butcher, use. Butcher died in 2006 from leukemia and was a trailblazer in a sport that was male-dominated for many years. In 1986, Butcher became the second woman to win the race; she



SUSAN BUTCHER COMPETING IN THE IDITAROD DOG SLED RACE.



WELCH AT THE END OF THE IDITAROD SLED RACE IN 1994.

became the second four-time winner in 1990; and she was the first to win four out of five sequential years.

Butcher studied veterinary medicine at CSU and used that education to raise and train her own dogs at Trail Breaker Kennel, which she started with her husband. Besides her domination in the race itself, Butcher was especially known for the bond she created with her huskies. She had worked as a veterinary technician after CSU, and she often treated her own dogs because the closest veterinarian was three hours away. She also researched, created and employed her own training techniques in order to set herself and her dogs up for race success.

Butcher's legacy continues in Fairbanks, where her family still runs Trail Breaker Kennel. In the state of Alaska, thanks to House Bill 37, the first Saturday of March, the traditional start date of the Iditarod, is commemorated as Susan Butcher Day. This special day is "to honor Susan Butcher, a loving mother, devoted wife, world-class athlete, determined competitor, true Alaskan, and four-time Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race champion."

By Anica Wong ('08)

### I'M A MEMBER BECAUSE



"When I was a young alum and on the board of directors, I wanted to set an example for other young alums; that's why I took out a lifetime membership early on. I felt it was appropriate. I planned to be involved with the University for my whole life, and I have been."

- Jack Welch ('68) Alumni Association Life Member

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