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INSIDE
Singletree

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strollmag.com

Delivering Neighborhood Connections
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AREA DIRECTOR Holly Proctor | 303-859-3369
holly.proctor@n2co.com

PHOTOGRAPHER Jeff Hulse | 970-343-0997
jeff@jeffreyhulse.com

AD STRATEGIST Alysha Garner | 765-546-2548
strollsingletree@theadjunkies.com

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER Emily Challis | 970-343-2871
emily.challis@n2co.com

CONTRIBUTORS AT LARGE The Residents of Singletree

Note: When community events take place, photographers may be present to take photos for that event, and they may be used in the publication.

We're proud to showcase businesses that share our commitment to fostering local connections. When perusing our pages, keep an eye out for the "Local Sponsor" icon to identify articles highlighting these valuable partners. Please note that businesses profiled may have provided free products and / or services for the review.



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70 Hackamore Road | Duplex
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12 June Creek Road | Duplex
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11 Tack Road B | Duplex
4 bd | 4 ba | 2,517 sf | \$2,250,000

781 June Creek Road S | Duplex
3 bd | 4 ba | 2,507 sf | \$2,345,000

31 Appaloosa | Single Family
4 bd | 4 ba | 3,382 sf | \$2,500,000

1121 Berry Creek Road A1 | Duplex
3 bd | 4 ba | 3,438 sf | \$2,999,000

10 Prairie Circle | Single Family
4 bd | 5 ba | 4,604 sf | \$3,299,000

Under Contract

1121 Berry Creek Road B1 | Condo
3 bd | 3 ba | 1,908 sf | \$1,595,000

931 Singletree 28 | Townhome
3 bd | 3 ba | 1,693 sf | \$1,495,000

Sold

640 Charolais Circle | Single Family
5 bd | 5 ba | 4,209 sf | \$3,950,000

1121 Berry Creek Road C-6 | Condo
3 bd | 3 ba | 1,514 sf | \$1,360,000

110 Stetson A | Duplex
4 bd | 3 ba | 2,641 sf | \$1,875,000

751 Singletree Road 1 | Townhome
4 bd | 5 ba | 2,686 sf | \$2,405,000

1123 Berry Creek Road A | Duplex
3 bd | 4 ba | 3,273 sf | \$2,812,500

Source: VMLS 6.15.24 – 7.15.24



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Curious about the real estate market?
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Hello Singletree Residents!

Welcome to the 100th issue of *Stroll Singletree* (fka *Inside Singletree*)! This milestone would not be possible without the enthusiastic participation of our residents and the generous sponsorship of our partner businesses. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and commitment to making your magazine a beloved part of the community.

As September arrives, we welcome the beauty of fall and the always stunning transformation of our golden aspens... and Grandparents Day on September 8! We are thrilled to kick off our celebration by introducing the Churchill family. Molly and Perry have enjoyed living in the neighborhood where they raised their two sons, Mark and Paul, since 1995. Fast forward to today and they are thrilled to have Mark, with his wife, Jen, and their two grandchildren, Kayen and Maya, living right down the road! The celebration continues with photos and thoughts shared by many of our joyous grandparents in the neighborhood.

We also embark on an intriguing adventure to the beautiful Baltics and Finland with Debbie and Rohn Robbins. Their travel tale offers a glimpse into the rich history, unique cultures, beautiful countryside, and fabulous food in these far away scarcely populated regions.

We continue our series on Colorado Community College, this time featuring the remarkable dedication of Pat Hammon to this outstanding gem in our community. From her days as a student to her role as a professor and now a generous



scholarship donor, Pat's journey is a powerful example of giving back and making a lasting impact on future generations.

Cheers to 100 issues of celebrating community and connection!



Warm regards,

Holly Proctor

Holly Proctor
 Publisher and Area Director
 303-859-3369
 holly.proctor@n2co.com

SEPTEMBER CONTRIBUTORS

Your Stories. Our Pages.

Many many thanks to our contributing grandparents in honor of Grandparents Day on Sunday, September 8, 2024. Thank you for participating in this special neighborhood celebration!



Jeffrey Hulse
 Photographer

Deb Robbins
 Content Advisor

Tim Swift
 Resident Writer

Molly and Perry Churchill
 Meet Your Neighbors

Caroline Wagner
 Sponsor Spotlight

Pat Hammon
 Elevated Education

Rohn Robbins
 Travel Tales

Your support is essential to the existence of this publication. The continued success and growth of *Stroll Singletree* rely on the invaluable contributions from community members like you. Please share your ideas, stories, and photos with us at holly.proctor@n2co.com. We are excited to hear from you!

We invite you to join us!
Rocky Mountain Walk to End Alzheimer's
 Sat. Sept. 21st at Brush Creek Park & Pavilion in Eagle CO
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Switch was founded in 2019 by Vail locals, Jeff Brausch and Adam Baker, with the belief that getting new tires should be impossibly easy, fast, and affordable. After Jeff's untimely death in 2021 along with Adam's move to Boulder, today Kelli Brausch continues to make that belief a reality and now offers mobile brake services and oil changes as well.

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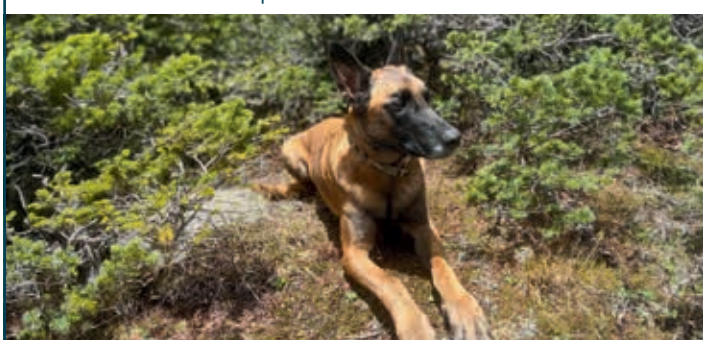
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Hey there, call me Zuko!

I am a Belgian Malinois hailing from Eagle, CO, and just turned 3. My days are packed with frisbee-fetching sessions, epic hikes with Dad, and my sworn duty to shield Mom from the evil vacuum cleaner! But let's not forget my top-notch skills in snoozing and snacking on ice cubes. Recently, I had to go through a biopsy because I struggled with gaining weight, but thanks to the awesome team at Mountain Animal Hospital, I now tip the scales at a solid 90lbs!



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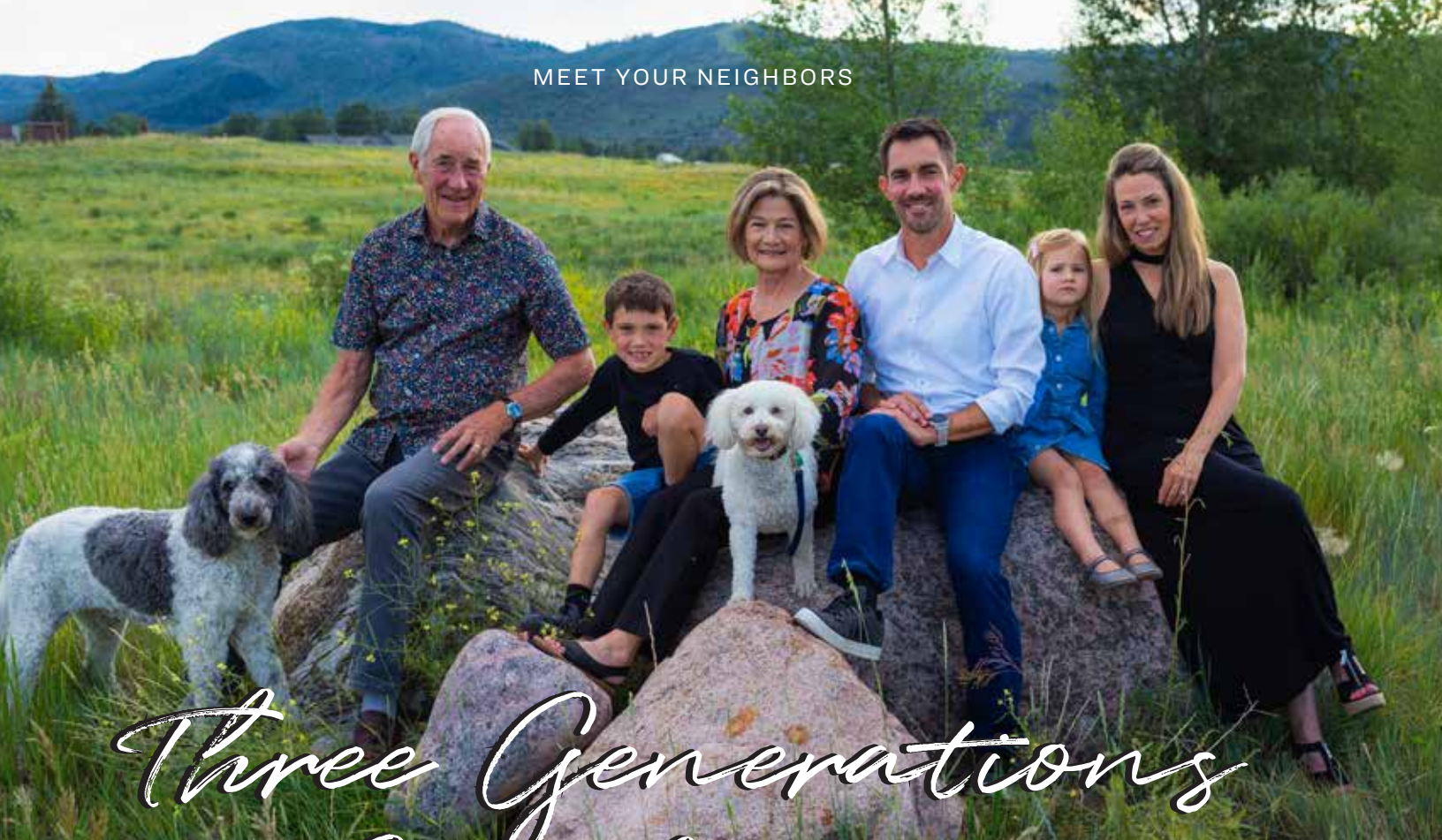
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Three Generations in Singletree.

Molly, Perry, Mark, Jen, Kylan, and Maya Churchill

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY MARK CHURCHILL, SINGLETREE RESIDENT

On a cold, frigid day in January 2024, Maya clipped into a pair of skis for the first time at just three years old at the Eagle's Nest Kids Zone on Vail Mountain. Encouraged by her big brother Kylan, seven years old, to "ski really fast and don't worry about turning", Maya inched her skis forward and screeched with delight at the first sensation of gliding over frozen ground. With their parents, Mark and Jen, and grandparents, Perry and Molly, also skiing alongside Kylan and Maya that bone chilling morning, it turned out to be a memorable day, one that we collectively remember with gratitude due to the fact all three generations of Churchills now live close together in Singletree, a scenario that was 28 years in the making...

It was January of 1995. The Village Market and the Riverwalk Theater in Edwards had just opened, and the rest of Riverwalk was barely an architectural sketch on a napkin. If Google is to be trusted, it was also when Coolio's "Gangsta's Paradise" topped the charts, the Macarena took



the world by storm, Michael Jordan returned to the NBA, and a small online bookstore sold its first book (hint: rhymes with Shomazon). It was also the time when the Churchill family packed up their belongings and relocated from Salt Lake City to the Vail Valley.

Perry Churchill was an outdoor enthusiast at heart, having grown up surfing in Santa Cruz, CA, and later attending the University of Utah, drawn to the extreme skiing lifestyle of the Wasatch Mountains. The rugged landscapes and adventurous community offered Perry what he was searching for, whether it was motorcycling the Slick Rock trail in Moab or backcountry skiing near Alta while surviving an avalanche (true stories – stop Perry around town and inquire about the details!). Sensing the need to settle down a bit, he took a job as a ski instructor at Snowbird Ski Resort, where he ended up working for 25 years and ultimately became Vice-President of Lodging & Food and Beverage.

Molly Churchill, nee Wicker, grew up in Lawton, Oklahoma, with a passion for dance and early childhood development. Her passions took her to the University of Utah where she studied dance. After graduating, she became a well-known dance teacher in the Salt Lake valley, inspiring young kids and adults alike to foster their creativity through movement and dance.

On a fateful night at the Dead Goat Bar in the heart of Salt Lake City, the ski bum from California met the dancing queen from Oklahoma and the rest they say, is history, after marrying in July of 1975. Four years later, they gave birth to Mark and soon after Paul, who both grew up in Salt Lake City in their parents' shadows skiing, hiking, dancing, and enjoying everything Utah had to offer.

Which brings us back to 1995 humming the tune of "Gangsta's Paradise" and embarrassingly trying to learn



the Macarena. Perry took a new job as hotel manager at Cordillera, which precipitated our family's move to the Vail Valley, where we first landed in the Lake Creek apartments as we built our new home on June Creek Road in Singletree.

Mark, in the prime of his physically and socially awkward years, began the second half of the school year as a freshman at Battle Mountain High School... which. was. not. easy. Thankfully, I persisted through the unwelcome voice cracks and questionable fashion choices to experience a wonderful four years at Battle Mountain participating in football, soccer, ski team, and track and field. After graduating in 1998, I left the valley to attend college at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA.

Paul, at a younger and more socially malleable phase of life, began school at Minturn Middle where he quickly met several friends and took to his new lifestyle like a fish to water. Paul also thrived living in the valley through high school, participating in many of the same sports while also playing in a band that went on to play world famous venues like the Roxy Theater in Los Angeles. After graduating in 2000, he went to Chapman University in Orange County, CA, and ultimately settled in Bozeman, MT, where he now lives with his wife, Nimia, and newborn baby, Rio.

Back in Edwards, Molly and Perry continued to establish their lives in Singletree and the greater mountain community. Molly became a dance teacher at Vail Valley Dance Academy while also volunteering at local schools to share her love and passion of creativity and movement. Perry worked at Cordillera



for a short time before deciding to take a different path in life and together, they purchased Eagle Valley Glass and Mirror, where they both ran the business for 18 years until 2016 when they sold the business and retired.

Meanwhile in the upper left corner of the United States, Mark was working in Seattle as a Marketing Director at Expedia when a young, vivacious Canadian walked into his life and changed things forever. Jennifer, nee Hanshar, born and raised in the Niagara region of Canada, had just relocated to Seattle following a six-year stint in Singapore to work for Amazon. They met at a speakeasy style bar in downtown Seattle and never looked back. They were married in Estes Park, CO, in 2016 and shortly after welcomed their firstborn son, Kylan, to the

world in 2017. To make things more interesting during the pandemic, their second child, Maya, arrived in October of 2020. For the next three years, our growing family took advantage of all the Pacific Northwest had to offer until...

As Jon Muir is credited with saying, "The mountains are calling, and I must go." While mountains may act as a tractor beam for some, even Jon Muir couldn't have predicted the gravitational pull of a grandmother's longing to be closer to her grandchildren. In the early months of 2023, we decided it was time for our family's next adventure by relocating from Seattle to Edwards. Not only did we want our children to be closer to their grandparents and vice versa, they wanted to share the value of adventure and experiencing new lifestyles with our children that had shaped my and Jen's lives over so many years.

As Maya gracefully glided down the slope as only a new toddler skiing can on that blistery winter day back in January, it was an opportunity for us all to take it in. We were now living 1.5 miles apart and able to experience days like this as a family on a regular basis. The mountains called, we came, and now love living in such an incredible part of the country while watching our children thrive in their new surroundings. Watching our kids play in Molly and Perry's backyard, where Paul and I once played so long ago, brings life to a complete virtuous circle with happiness and sense of being that only the mountain fresh air can provide. And mercifully, now having a steady set of vocal cords and arguably better fashion choices has made this second transition into mountain life easier for me, too.

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Discovering the Caroline Wagner Team: A Legacy of Excellence, Passion, and Multicultural Expertise

Nestled in the picturesque Vail Valley, the Caroline Wagner Team stands out as a prominent force in the local real estate market. This dynamic mother-son duo, Caroline Wagner and Gregory Zen-Ruffinen, brings a remarkable blend of experience, passion, and a unique set of skills to their work, making them invaluable partners for anyone seeking their dream home in this beautiful region.

A RICH AND DIVERSE BACKGROUND

Caroline Wagner's journey into real estate is marked by a rich tapestry of experiences and accomplishments. Born and raised in Germany, Caroline grew up with a deep connection to the

world of sports. Her childhood was influenced by a family deeply rooted in athletics - her father was a German champion in rowing, instilling in her a sense of discipline and a love for physical challenges. Caroline spent her formative years skiing in Austria and Switzerland, with Zermatt holding a special place in her heart.

Her professional journey began with a strong academic foundation, including an MBA from the University of Frankfurt/Germany and training in interior design. In 1990, Caroline embarked on a new chapter in Costa Rica, where she spent 20 years owning and running a coffee farm and business. During this period, tennis played a

significant role in her life, and it was a sport that her sons, Lionel and Gregory, embraced with enthusiasm.

A FAMILY STORY

Caroline's sons, Lionel and Gregory, were born in Chicago and Zurich, Switzerland, respectively. Their early years were shaped by their father's role with a multinational coffee company, which brought the family to Costa Rica. Growing up, Lionel and Gregory excelled in tennis, becoming multiple-time Costa Rican champions. The discipline and passion they developed through the sport have been instrumental in shaping their careers and personal lives.

Today, Lionel resides in California, while Gregory joined Caroline in Vail, bringing his own set of talents to the team. Gregory is an avid snowboarder, reflecting his continued love for sports and adventure. His move to Vail not only strengthened the family's bond but also brought his expertise in marketing to the Caroline Wagner Team.

A CAREER OF NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Caroline's real estate career has been marked by several significant milestones. In 2009, she achieved a notable success by selling the most prestigious home in the "Beverly Hills" of San Jose, Costa Rica. This landmark sale not only established her reputation as a top-tier real estate professional but also highlighted her ability to handle high-profile transactions with finesse and expertise.

Her career continued to flourish as she transitioned to the Denver area, where she became a top producer with Sotheby's. In 2020, Caroline brought her

extensive experience to the Vail Valley with Coldwell Banker Global Luxury, where she continues to make a significant impact in the local real estate market.

A MARKETING SPECIALIST

Gregory Zen-Ruffinen complements Caroline's experience with his own strong background in marketing. Holding a degree in International Studies from the University of Colorado at Denver and a diverse upbringing across Latin America, Switzerland, and Colorado, Gregory brings a global perspective to his work. His two years as a coffee specialist in Colombia and Tanzania have further enriched his understanding of different markets and consumer preferences.

Gregory's marketing prowess is a key asset to the Caroline Wagner Team. His ability to develop and execute effective marketing strategies, combined with his innovative approach, ensures that every property is showcased to its fullest potential. His deep understanding of market trends and his strategic use of modern tools help clients achieve their real estate goals efficiently.

MULTILINGUAL EXPERTISE

One of the Caroline Wagner Team's standout features is their multilingual capability. Both Caroline and Gregory speak four languages, which significantly enhances their ability to connect with a diverse clientele. This linguistic skill allows them to communicate effectively with clients from various backgrounds, ensuring a

personalized and inclusive experience throughout the real estate process.

Their multilingual abilities are particularly valuable in the global real estate market, where understanding and addressing the needs of international clients is crucial. This capability not only broadens their reach but also enriches the client experience, making the process of buying or selling a home smooth and accessible.

EMBRACING THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF SINGLETREE

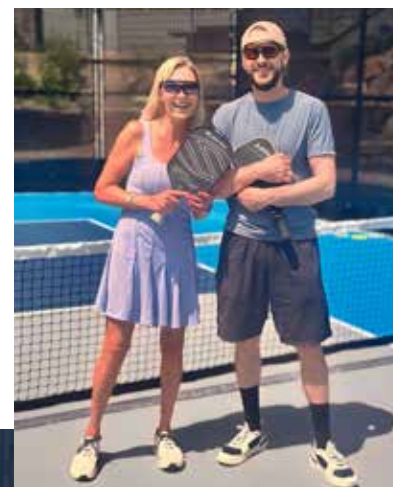
The landscape of Singletree has evolved significantly since its inception. In the 1980s, the neighborhood was characterized by homes featuring adobe architecture and exposed wood rustic beams. These elements reflected the architectural trends of the time and set the stage for what would become a vibrant and growing community.

Today, Singletree is undergoing a transformation as residents and architects collaborate to bring contemporary designs to existing residences. This evolution emphasizes a modern approach to living, integrating natural flow and functionality into the homes. With new designers infusing fresh perspectives into the neighborhood, Singletree continues to adapt and thrive, reflecting the changing needs and tastes of its residents.

INDUSTRY SHIFTS AND NEW REGULATIONS

The real estate industry is currently navigating significant changes following the recent settlement in the Sitzer-Burnett case. The dispute centered on whether buyers were unfairly required to pay high, non-negotiable commissions to real estate brokers. Although the National Association of Realtors faced potential liability of \$1.7 billion, the settlement of \$418 million was a strategic decision to avoid the financial burden of an appeal bond, which would have been \$1.5 billion.

Traditionally, commissions in real estate transactions have been negotiable and split between listing and buyer's brokers. However, this practice came under legal scrutiny, with allegations of price-fixing and



non-negotiable commissions leading to heightened awareness within the industry. Attorneys specializing in class-action lawsuits examined communications for evidence of collusion, leading to increased scrutiny and calls for transparency.

The settlement introduces new disclosure requirements, including upfront agency agreements that clearly outline duties and compensation. Brokers will now be required to articulate their professional standards and potential compensation arrangements from the outset, ensuring greater transparency and clarity for clients.

LOOKING AHEAD

As the Vail Valley and Singletree continue to evolve, and as the real estate industry adapts to new regulations and practices, the Caroline Wagner Team remains a leading force in the market. Their combination of local knowledge, multilingual skills, and marketing expertise makes them a valuable partner

for anyone navigating the dynamic and diverse real estate landscape.

For those seeking to experience the exceptional lifestyle that Singletree and the Vail Valley have to offer, the Caroline Wagner Team provides knowledgeable and dedicated support. Their commitment to client satisfaction and their genuine connection to the region ensure that every real estate journey is extraordinary.

In summary, the Caroline Wagner Team represents a harmonious

blend of experience, local insight, and dedication. Their approach is characterized by a deep appreciation for the Vail Valley and a commitment to serving their clients with care and professionalism. As they continue to guide and inspire, Caroline and Gregory exemplify what it means to excel in the heart of the Rocky Mountains.

To reach Caroline, please call **970.404.0220** or email caroline@caroline-wagner-team.com.



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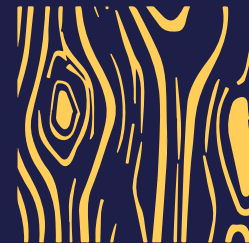


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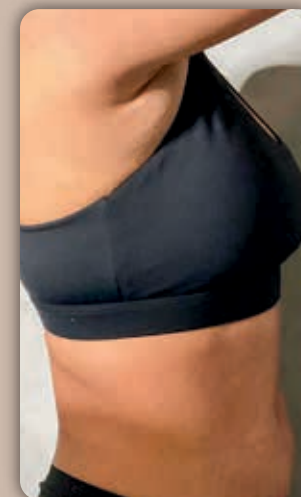
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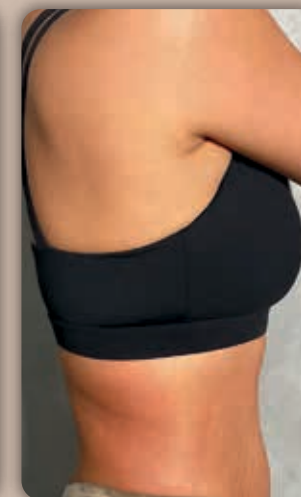
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CELEBRATING GRANDPARENTS DAY 2024!

On September 8, we celebrate the unparalleled joy and fulfillment that comes with being a grandparent. Here, our Singletree grandparents share their special moments and cherished memories that make this role so uniquely rewarding. Wishing you a joyous day with your grandchildren!

MELINDA AND TOM GLADITSCH

The best thing about being a grandparent is having the time to just focus on our little boy, Tuckerman Thomas Delaney (22 months old), without all the pressures of parenthood.

We can't name just one favorite memory. He is a bundle of joy and energy with new discoveries each day.



KIM AND BILL COX

The best thing about being grandparents is having a good relationship with your kids and grandkids and enjoying sharing in their lives, their adventures, and their accomplishments as well as being a sounding board when a problem might arise. We have been fortunate in having our widespread family visit often and being able to share in multiple activities like hiking, skiing, and most recently, family pickleball.

At this point in our lives there are a million precious memories from births through graduations. With six grandchildren, we still have age ranges from 14 to 24. They are all very different, each with their own special talents that we feel confident will be a positive contribution to our world. We have been blessed!



KAREN AND JACK RYAN

We are embracing our sweet times with our granddaughters, Fallon and Wren, as they grow up. Our BEST and MOST MEMORABLE TIMES are our travels with them. They love to travel to different places, like Washington DC this spring and NYC last year.

BUT our most favorite and memorable vacations have been to Grand Cayman both last year and again, this summer. We went with our entire family. They love all water sports, like snorkeling above us as we scuba dive, and swimming with the dolphins and the stingrays. This year, we added fishing to our activities.

At the end of the day, there is nothing better than the hugs we get from them. THAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A GRANDPARENT. We feel very BLESSED.



JAMI NIX RAHN

The best thing about being a grandparent is watching my grandchildren discover the wonder and excitement of exploring the world and participating in sharing family traditions as we create memories together.

My favorite memories so far are the times I have spent on the Eagle River learning to fly fish with each of my three grandsons.



BETH AND BILL O'NEILL

Going passive in the rule department. At MiMaw and Papa's house, there is only one rule and that is to have fun and enjoy!!!! That goes for us too.

PAUL LINTON

Of all the great joys of being a grandparent, I treasure Mellie's and Abby's boundless energy and excitement of experiencing new things through their eyes, ears, and play, while I seek to offer wise answers to the intriguing questions they then pose to their "Pop-Pop".

Of all the favorite memories we have enjoyed so far, I believe Mellie's and Abby's raucous play, singing, and dancing together, accompanied by bubbly laughter and incredible sister love for each other, is truly priceless.



MARGIE TOWLE

Gay Head Martha's Vineyard 2024: the best of times every summer so far! I love seeing the 7 of them growing up together since they were toddlers. All are best friends and supportive of each other... with me too with my aching bones!

LESLIE AND LARRY PETZING

The best thing about being a grandparent is spending time with our grandkids and watching our children become parents.

Our favorite memories so far are the birth of our granddaughter in 2020 and the birth of our two grandsons - one in February and one in May - both this year!



Leslie and Owen (1 month old)



Larry and Emilia (3 1/2 years old)



Larry and Harrison (3 months old)

KARI THORNE

My first grandchild, Colette Thorne, is just turning one on July 18, 2024 (this week). The best thing about this first year has been watching my son grow into his role as a father...from uncertainty to confidence.

As a retired children's librarian (who has been reading to other people's babies for 24 years), my favorite memory so far has been sharing favorite baby books with my very own granddaughter.



RENEE STRONG

The best thing about being a grandparent to Milo is the absolute joy he brings to my life!

My favorite memories are simple times, when we are playing sports, visiting museums, art shows, out to lunch, shopping, and enjoying great conversation.

CONNIE AND BILL WELCH

The best thing about being a grandparent is the unconditional love you receive from your grandchildren and the joy you experience watching your grandchildren as they grow and develop their unique personalities. It's so exciting and rewarding to witness how these inquisitive learning machines learn to think and acquire the ability to do things on their own. They are so proud when they do something new that they yell "Grandma, Grandpa watch me!" and we grandparents love to watch them.

Our favorite memory is a camping trip to Sylvan Lake State Park last summer when we had all five of our grandchildren with us sharing our joy of nature here in the Rockies. We enjoyed hiking, fishing, scavenger hunts, campfires and s'mores, sleeping in a tent, etc. and we could see how much they loved being in the beautiful outdoors with their extended family. It was very gratifying for us to see they loved this camping experience and we felt blessed to have been able to provide this experience for them.



MELANNA MARCELLOT

I am so madly in love with my two granddaughters! They give me such joy and love and a reason to live forever. I so enjoy playing and sharing games with them like I did with their father. I can't teach them enough things I know!



BOB ALLSTADT

The best thing about being a grandparent is the pure joy of being in their presence and embracing their enthusiasm through playfulness.

My favorite memory (so far) is the first time (at 3-years-old) skiing with them and listening to their laughter while gliding (ever-so-slowly); followed up with “let’s do that again!”

RHONDA AND BRAD SCHIFF

The best thing about being a grandparent is the hugs you get. We love spending time with our grandchildren as well as skiing with them.

Our favorite memories are having them together on Thanksgiving and taking them individually on week long trips. We took our oldest grandson to the US Open last summer. We went with our next oldest grandson to 5 MLB baseball games in the Northeast in different cities. And we are planning a cruise with our granddaughter, who’s next in line! Truly wonderful memories.



SUZETTE NEWMAN

The best thing about being a Nana is watching my girls grow into wonderful young ladies. I love sharing my life experiences with them.

MARY LAMB LUCAS

The best thing about being a grandparent is that you can just enjoy them and not worry about so many little things! Unless you want to... of course.



KRIS AND JP SUNDERLAND

One of the best things about being a grandparent is watching your children parent and do such a good job.



DEBBIE AND DAVE IRWIN

The best thing about being a grandparent is being able to have more family time as we share special moments with Heidi as she grows up.

Our favorite memory so far is the first time we held her when she was two weeks old while visiting them in Montana.

INGRID AND CRAIG DAMPIER

We did a Disney cruise this year in June. I made us matching shirts that say, “Take Me To The Beach”. From left to right: grandson Justin, son Scott, Ingrid, son Paul, Craig I, beauty daughter in law, and grandson Jack. We started going on Disney cruises when the grandsons were in grade school and we still do them.



Jody, David, Quinn, and Jackso



With Kam at Brit Floyd concert

JODY AND DAVID LEACH

The best thing about being a grandparent for us is having all three of them right here in the valley and being able to see them often. The best memories so far are our annual glamping trips at Kebler Korner to Paonia Reservoir.

KIRK SMICK

My son and his family visited last President's Day weekend and we took them to Beaver Creek to see the eagle lady. It was a wonderful learning experience for the 6 and 8 year old boys (Everett and Grady Smick) visiting from San Francisco. Our photo shows 3 generations of the Smick family.



LORI AND BOB BROWN

The best thing about being a grandparent is watching them grow, learn, explore, and love us unconditionally. The connection and relationship that we have with our three granddaughters is a true blessing. We love our time together and sharing our life and love with them.

We have so many fun memories; some of my favorites are vacations, camping trips, belly laughs, and seeing the look in their eyes when they have accomplished something special or have witnessed something magical.



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NEVER SAY NEVER TO PAT HAMMON

Upon moving to Colorado, Pat Hammon fulfills her dream to be a forest ranger and goes on to make her mark on Colorado Mountain College as a student, a professor, and a scholarship founder

CONTRIBUTED BY PAT HAMMON, SINGLETREE RESIDENT
ARTICLE COMPILED BY LISA ISOM, CMC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

This is the third in a three-part series about Singletree residents who are Colorado Mountain College (CMC) alumni. The first article in our July issue chronicled Karen Kern's educational pathway to an associate degree in the 1980s. The August story featured Savannah Desportes, a local high school student who took part in CMC's concurrent enrollment program, and local teacher Cherie Rollins, who got her bachelor's degree in education at CMC. What follows is the story of Pat Hammon, a Singletree resident who has become an ambassador and scholarship donor at the college.

Singletree resident Pat Hammon and her late husband, Dr. Bill Hammon, purchased their first Colorado property in

Beaver Creek in 1981. The resort was brand new, opening its first ski runs just one year earlier, and Pat and Bill immediately fell in love with skiing and the mountains. Their primary residence was in Hawaii, so they traveled back and forth between their homes for 12 years before deciding to move to Colorado full-time in 1993. "We were ready to retire, and we had read a book about the importance of moving to a completely new environment in retirement in order to avoid getting stuck in a rut," says Pat with a chuckle. Colorado was about as different from Hawaii as it could be, so they sold their primary home and headed back to the mainland. But it turns out Pat had an ulterior motive: to fulfill a nearly lifelong dream of working for the US Forest Service.



When Pat was in the sixth grade, she took an aptitude test in school and did quite well on it. When the results were released, Pat's teacher stood up in front of the class and said, "Patty McClaskey wants to be a forest ranger, but we all know that's a man's job." So, although it took a few decades to come to fruition, as soon as Pat moved to Colorado, she took a job working at the Minturn Forest Service station at Dowd Junction. She eventually ended up leading summer hiking tours with the Beaver Creek Hiking Company. She also led snowshoe tours and taught cross country skiing in the winter at the Beaver Creek Nordic Center.

There was a lot of life lived between the sixth grade and the Nordic Center. When Pat did choose her first career, she says her choices, as a young woman in that era, were "nurse, teacher, or secretary" so she followed in her mom's footsteps and became a nurse. According to a Vail Daily article written about Pat in 2022, while in nursing school, a military recruiter showed up promising her and her fellow nursing students paid tuition, a salary, and a chance to see the world. So Pat, a pacifist who was working three jobs at the time, took the US military up on their offer and signed on. Over the next few years, Pat worked in emergency rooms during the race riots of the 1960's, rode a bus to work through anti-war protests in San Francisco, and eventually landed in Long Binh, Vietnam where she worked almost non-stop in a military hospital for just over one year.

Pat met her husband Bill, a war surgeon, in Vietnam and together they moved to Hawaii after the war. They lived and worked – and volunteered with the veteran's center – in Honolulu until their full-time move to Colorado. Although Pat did get the opportunity to fulfill her dream of working for the Forest Service, she eventually felt called to return to nursing, first as a hospice nurse and finally as an adjunct professor in the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program at Colorado Mountain College.



Pat was familiar with CMC from outdoor recreation classes she had attended when she first moved to Colorado. "I never finished that certification, but I sure loved those classes," Pat recalls. So, when the opportunity arose to teach college-level CNA courses at CMC, Pat immediately jumped on board and taught for several years, often driving all the way to Glenwood Springs to supervise her students' clinicals at health facilities all over town.

Pat got to know her students well during her time as an instructor. Anyone who knows Pat knows that she is an empathic caregiver and a woman of action. She is not one to stand and watch another person struggle without offering a hand. Ever since her time in Vietnam, Pat had volunteered with veterans who suffered from the physical and emotional trauma of war. She knew what depression and anxiety looked like and she understood from her own time in nursing school how hard it was to pay for school, work full-time, and, in the case of many of her students, raise a family. She could see the toll that stress took on her students when all they really wanted was to help other people. So Pat, in typical fashion, took it upon herself to offer a lifeline to her students in the form of a scholarship named after her mother, Mary Jane McClaskey.

Since 2017, the Mary Jane McClaskey Memorial Scholarship for Nurse Aids has helped CMC students with their tuition and fees, in many cases enabling them to graduate debt-free. When asked about her involvement at CMC over the years, Pat shared, "For me, CMC is a jewel in our community because it gives people of all ages the gift of an education here at home and degrees that actually lead to employment. CMC always has an ear to what the community needs – whether that's an EMT certification or a certificate in early childhood education." Pat continues, "CMC even started a kids' college on the Edwards campus so students could have free childcare on site while attending classes." In addition to the Mary Jane McClaskey Memorial Scholarship, Pat also helps facilitate scholarships through the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Western Eagle Valley Rotary Club.

When asked to share a favorite story about her time at CMC, Pat, who has become one of the college's greatest champions and ambassadors, got choked up recalling graduation 2021. "[The staff] put together this amazing ceremony – actually six ceremonies - that were COVID-safe at a time when so many other graduations were being cancelled. Students were assigned a time to meet in the parking lot and work their way safely into the building. The staff had lined the hallway with draperies and tables with lights – and then had a procession for every single student and their families!" Pat recalls. "The staff gave six graduation addresses; they did the entire ceremony [multiple] times in order to meet the social distancing requirements! CMC went to all the trouble to make this work for everyone even though there were so many rules. So much care was put into it to ensure that these students got to walk in their graduations that year."

If you walk the halls of the CMC Vail Valley at Edwards campus, you are sure to run into Pat Hammon. Whether she's facilitating yoga classes for vets, helping to organize the VFW's annual Christmas party, meeting her scholars at the Donor/Scholar Luncheon, or attending mini classes at CMC's annual "Student for a Day" event (hosted by CMC's Women in Philanthropy and Pat is, of course, a member), Pat is a million miles away from that sixth grade classroom where she was once told so long ago that her dream of becoming a forest ranger would never come true.



Mother and daughter in the old days

Since 2017, the Mary Jane McClaskey Memorial Scholarship for Nurse Aids has helped CMC students with their tuition and fees, in many cases enabling them to graduate debt-free.



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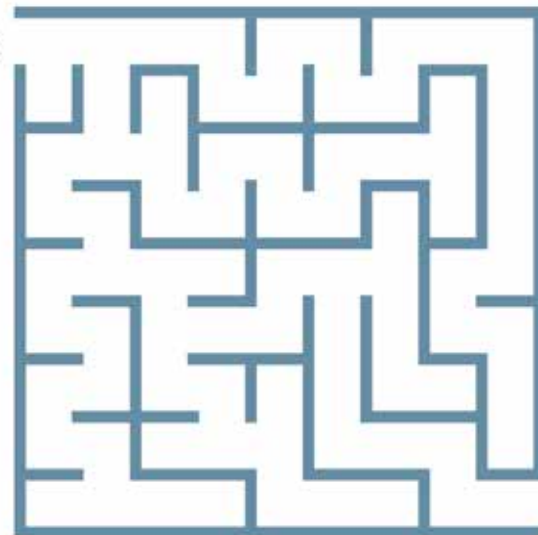
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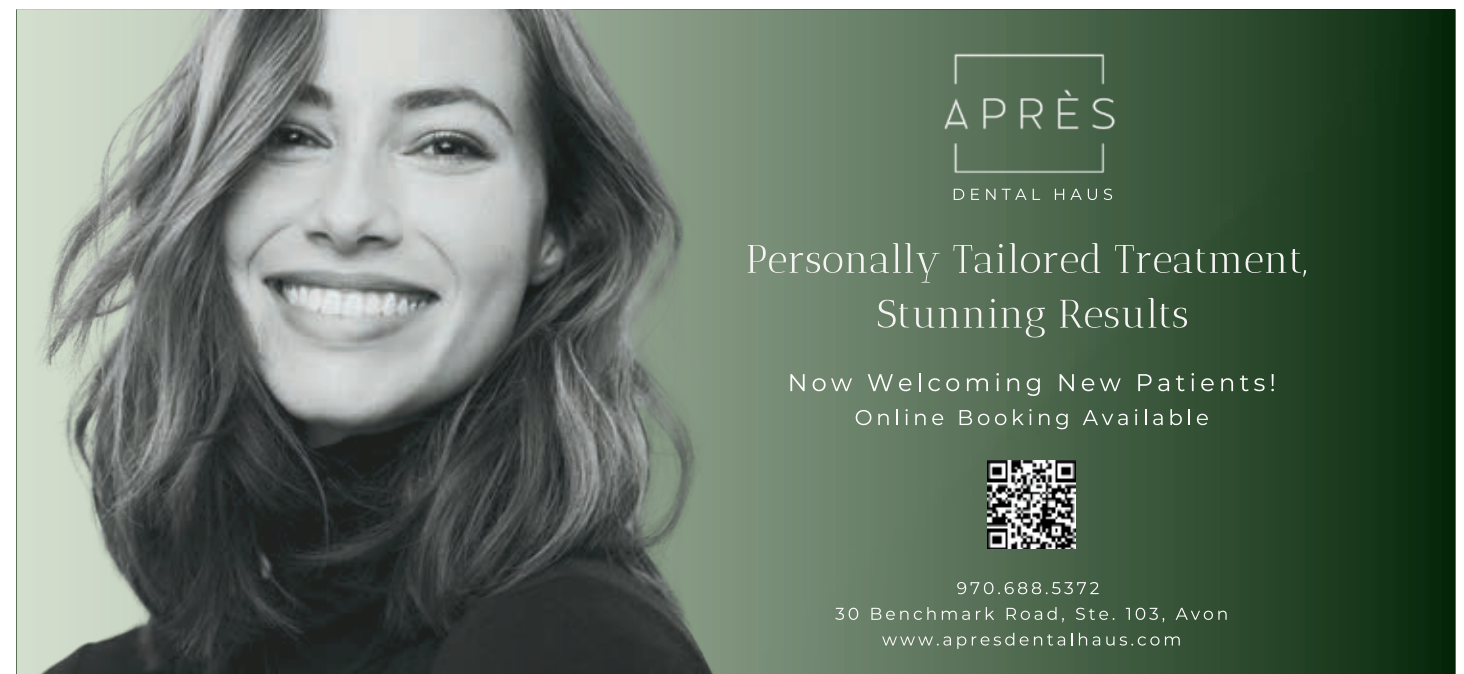
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The Beautiful Baltics (and Finland)

The further north you go, the fewer folks there are.

CONTRIBUTED BY ROHN K. ROBBINS,
SINGLETREE RESIDENT

Lithuania, whose biggest city is Vilnius contains a population of approximately 2.8 million. Latvia's population numbers about a million less, and Estonia's is just a skosh over 1.3 hearty northern souls. Finland, which is not part of the Baltics but which lies just north across the Gulf of Finland, boasts 5.6 million industrious inhabitants. Taken together, the population of the Baltics numbers about the same as Colorado's, and when added to Finland, doubles it. By another metric, all four together number less than the population of metro Los Angeles.

What they all share, besides their eastern flanks being hard against the western Russian border and a history of invasion and dominance by their Scandinavian neighbors, Russia, and in the case of the Baltic states, the Germans during the Second World War, is the midnight sun, the near lack of sunlight in the winter, proud cultures, complicated languages, and forests, a further word about which is in order.

When I claim the forests, which cover approximately 40% of the Baltic states and nearly all of Finland, are *transparent*, you may think that I have lost my mind. How, you may rightfully ask, can the dense and overwhelming pine forests be transparent? The answer lies in the understory or, in the case of these northern boreal holds, the lack thereof.

Unlike our Rocky Mountain forests, those in the Baltics and Finland, while replete with what we call lodgepole pines that stretch high into the sky, the undergrowth is so low that standing at the edge of a forest, one can see between the trees seemingly forever. Other than the magnificent trees, little is taller than knee height and, as if the trees refuse to topple, there



The old Jewish quarter of Vilnius



Deb, Ascher, and Abby on a typical street in Old Town Vilnius



Traikiai Castle



Ascher and Abby reflected in the Constitution panels



The folk festival



Rohn and Deb before the Dome Church

is startlingly little deadfall. Whereas here, your eyes might probe fifty or sixty meters into the thickness, there, to borrow from The Who, one can see for miles and miles.

What undergrowth is there is delicious. Blueberries, wild asparagus,

and mushrooms of every conceivable permutation are free, in the right season, for the pickin'.

A further word about the midnight sun and its wintery inverse. We visited in the last weeks of May and the first week of June, not quite, but near the

peak of the stretched out summer days. Sunrise was before 4:00 AM. In theory, sunset was about 11:00 PM. In reality though, the skies were light except for about two hours in the wee of bars-just-out early morning. One night, when we were driving back to our Helsinki

hotel, past the beach at Hetaranta, an active volleyball game was underway. Under natural light. It was past 10:30. When the workday ends, the offices pour out onto the public lawns and squares where the winter vitamin D challenged soak up the sun, knowing that when the workday ends at 5:00, they've got another nearly 8 hours to enjoy it.

In the winter, though, it is another story. A friend in Espoo, Finland, shared with us that when she goes to work at 7:00 AM, the sun has not yet nosed up and when she heads home at 3:00 PM, it is already settled in for the night. In the thick of winter, the sun doesn't visit even for the briefest cameo.

Voyaging from south to north, Lithuania was first on our itinerary. Of the Baltic capitals - Vilnius, Riga, and Tallinn - only Vilnius is landlocked. Like all the Baltic capitals, it consists of the well-preserved old and sparkling new, each set off in their own districts. The Vilnius old city, a hub of Jewish scholarship and culture for centuries before the Nazis, is abuzz with life. Restaurants, boutiques, artisans, narrow cobbled streets, and ancient buildings are admixed among the impressive cathedrals, university, and presidential palace which, to our sensibilities seemed strange as one could freely enter the courtyard of the palace and the only guard in sight was a slender young woman with a walkie talkie and a pair of handcuffs snuggled in her duty belt.

What else Vilnius boasts, hard beside the scenic Vilnia River, is the Republic of Užupis, a Haight Ashburyesque hippy-dippy tongue-in-cheek free state located in the old town with its own ethic, flag, unofficial currency, president, cabinet of ministers, constitution, anthem, and an army (since disbanded) of 11 men. The residents of the self-declared republic celebrate its independence annually on Užupis Day, which falls on April 1. Artistic endeavors are the main preoccupation of the Republic; the President of the Republic of Užupis,

Romas Lileikis, is himself a poet, a musician, and a film director.

The Constitution, posted on reflective panels in 23 languages, can be found affixed to a wall in Paupio Street. Some of its articles would be unremarkable in a constitution; for instance, Article 5 simply reads *"Man has the right to individuality"*. Others are more idiosyncratic. A few typical examples can be found in Article 1 - *"People have the right to live by the River Vilnelė, while the River Vilnelė has the right to flow past people"*, 12 - *"A dog has the right to be a dog"*, and 37 - *"People have the right to have no rights"*.

The food was marvelous. Throughout the Baltics, every dinner was a feast. While I have been a non-red meat eater for decades, what could be regularly found on the menu were boar, bear, reindeer, elk, and moose. The fish and veggie offerings were delicious!

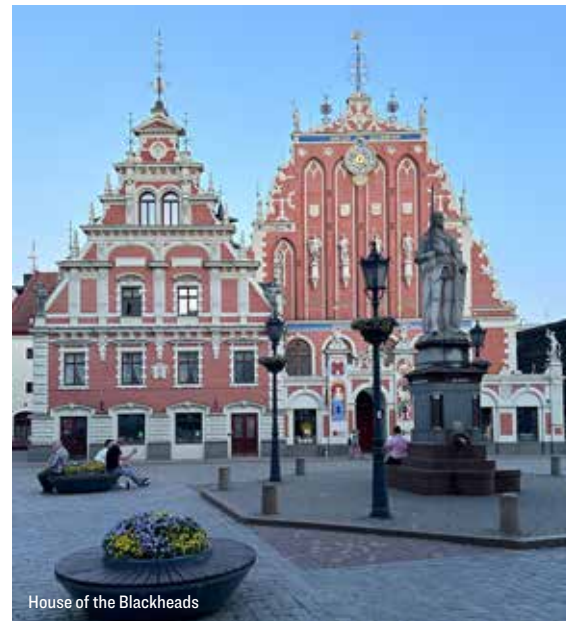
From Vilnius to Trakai and the Trakai Island Castle which, as the name suggests is a largely restored 14th century castle surrounded on all sides by Lake Galve on the shores of which are a lovely lakefront and the quaint town of Varnikai. After visiting the castle and a boat ride on the lake, we sampled *kibinai*, a traditional empanada-like baked pastry for which the region is renowned.

Back in Vilnius, we happened into an annual folk festival in which hundreds, if not thousands, participated, flooding most areas of the old town with traditional song, costume, and dance. And, oh yeah, the Vilnius half marathon with all the swag and hoopla was going on as well.

Our next day's travels took us to Riga, on the way to which we stopped at the Paneriai Memorial, a beautiful, forested area on the Vilnius outskirts which pay homage to the 100,000 Lithuanian Jews murdered by the Nazis in its killing fields. We stopped too for lunch and beer tasting in the small town of Birza, rightly famous for its beer-making tradition, and Anykscia Park



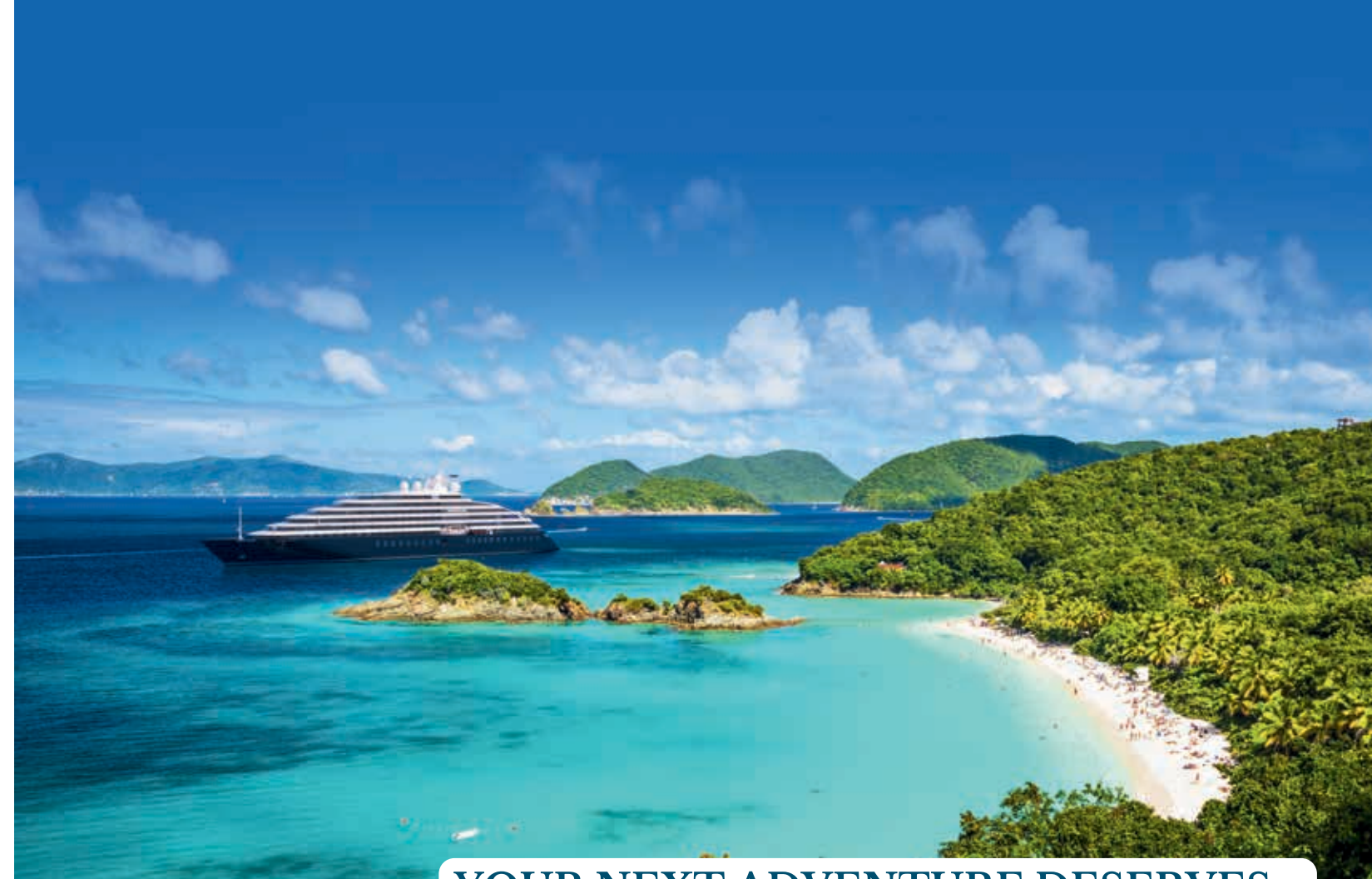
The Laju Takas Walkway



House of the Blackheads



The view from St. Peter's in Riga



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where the main attraction is a stroll along the Laju Takas, a breathtaking treetop walkway.

Riga on the Daugava River, where our first night we celebrated our older son Ascher's birthday, is a grand cobbledstoned capital. The Dome Cathedral where we listened to an organ recital played on the second largest church organ in Europe, Riga Castle, the picturesque House of the Black Heads, the old town walls, and the soaring be-glittered Byzantine Russian Orthodox Church afforded contrast to what lay in the newer part of town, the spectacular Art Nouveau district, often referred to as the Paris of the North. We explored the bustling and expansive Central City Market, then, from the towering spire of St. Peter's Church, took in the sensational far-reaching view.

We decided on an excursion to Jurmala, a beach town on the Baltic where the sun was hot, the waves were nonexistent, the beach was wide, the water cold, and the crowds were essentially non-existent. What, I suppose, would one expect in a country so unpopulous with a coast so long? After beach time, we wandered the long esplanade through town, then back to

Riga for a medieval feast at Rozengrals, an underground, dungeon-like space that has served as a public establishment or one kind or another since 1293. Yum!

Off the next day to an eco-farm in Parnu, then the Kaetase Ciderhouse for a tasting, and at last to Tallinn in Estonia, the Old Town of which is a World Heritage site and one of the finest and most well-preserved medieval towns in Europe. Spectacular understates it. Soaring spires, fortresses built into and upon the rocky cliffs, the impressive Kadriorg Palace founded by Russian Tsar Peter I, well-preserved town walls in which one could - and in which we did - explore, and the Byzantine Russian Orthodox Aleksander Nevsky Cathedral, with its golden onion domes, Zakomara, and Kokoshnik.

We took a day to visit the pastoral manor homes at Plamse outside the city, then Lahemaa National Park, followed by a beautiful forested coastal walk to the rocky Baltic shore at Altja, and the impressive waterfalls at Jägala.

The next day, we boarded the Tallink ferry - the size of a standard cruise ship - for the comfortable two-hour, 80 mile ride to Helsinki. With its magnificent harbor, Helsinki begins at the sea, beside which is the

bustling outdoor market. Narrow medieval streets bend from the harbor to Cathedral Square, one end of which is occupied by the Helsinki cathedral and which remains the beating heart of town. Although much was destroyed during the Second Great War, there remain the ancient cobbles, slender streets with breast-held secrets, enormous squares, abundant parks where the sun-worshipping Finns gather in abundance, and lively shopping districts. The central Helsinki library, a flowing modern masterpiece imprinted with the soul of Scandinavian design is not to be missed. Contained within it are restaurants, a coffee shop, an indoor playground, and - oh yeah - books, and one may check out basketballs and soccer balls for use on the adjacent playing fields. The Russian influence exerts itself again in the imposing Orthodox Cathedral which looks down from its high perch on the city.

We took a harbor cruise on a beautiful sunny day which took us to, among other destinations, the old fort which, for centuries, guarded the mouth of the harbor. Ringing the harbor, which is circumscribed with rock instead of sand, Finns



Aleksander Nevsky Cathedral

were nestled in the stone, sparsely outfitted for a day at the "beach". We toured with an old friend, a Finn who lives in nearby Espoo, and were welcomed into her home where we had dinner, Finnish style, and caught up into the night. The next day took us by train to Turku, about 100 miles to the west, where we reconnected with another Finnish friend who calls Turku home.

The beautiful River Aura runs through the heart of the city and out to the *archipelago* - reminiscent of the Thousand Islands in upstate New York and, ultimately to the Gulf of Bothnia. We boarded the Rudolphina for a lunch cruise to the archipelago. That night, we again dined with old friends in their home before a late train back to Helsinki where we spent a last day taking in what we had missed: the Stone Church, the Esplanade, a bit of shopping, exploration of the indoor market at the harbor, and a "last supper" at the greenhouse-like glass pavilion Kapelli restaurant.

What is strange and challenging about the Baltics are the languages, which are so different from one another that Lithuanians speak to Latvians who speak to Estonians in either English or Russian. English is understood and spoken in all three countries and Finland, especially among the young. What is nearly universal about them is their hatred for the Russians and for Putin in particular. Before the Russian embassies in all three Baltic countries are protests over Ukraine, blue and gold Ukrainian flags, unflattering comments and caricatures of Putin, photos of Navalny, and casts of pseudo blood. In Riga, the Latvians have gone so far as to rename the street upon which the embassy resides as Ukrainian Freedom Street so all postage mailed to the embassy must bear that address. The Baltics and Finland are modern where they should be modern, ancient where they should be, clean, free of crime, and despite Russia knocking next door, safe - at least for now. The countryside is beautiful, the pace unhurried, and have I mentioned? The food is great!



The main square of Tallinn



Old town walls



Cathedral Square



Finns at the "beach" in Helsinki



An island in the archipelago from the Rudolphina



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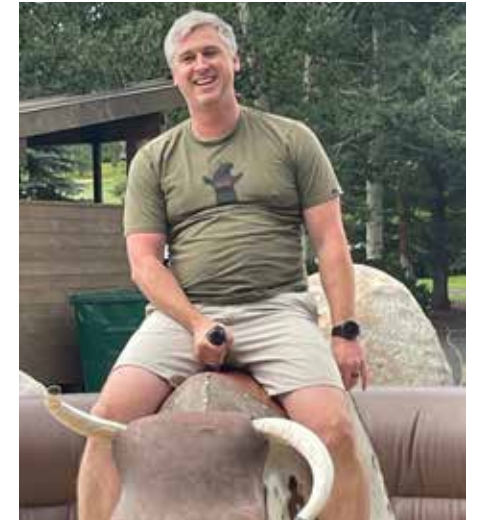
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Bull Riding Bonanza

The Bull Riding Bonanza was a fantastic success this year, with families and kids of all ages enjoying a sunny afternoon filled with energy and excitement. Riding the mechanical bull was certainly the highlight and the bouncy house saw plenty of activity filled with young children. It was a fun-filled afternoon for all and a great time to see old freinds and make new ones. Thank you, SPOA and *Stroll Singletree*, for providing the opportunity to embrace and enjoy neighborhood camaraderie!





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