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PHOTO © ANGELA STERLING

Pacific Northwest Ballet's new production of *The Nutcracker*, pg. 15.

FEATURES

- 16 LEARNING TO SUCCEED**
College Success Foundation helps low-income students with school and life.
- 23 GREAT NORTHWEST**
Activities and adventures in spectacular Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and British Columbia.
- 56 ON THE MONEY**
Optimizing your financial well-being.



Start planning now for greater prosperity in the new year, pg. 56.

DEPARTMENTS

- 5 UP FRONT**
A message from Chief Executive Officer Brad Tilden.
- 7 THE REGION**
 - Scenic Winter Walk.
 - 50 Years of Fun.
 - 40th Anniversary.
 - News & Notes.
 - Memorable by Moonlight.
 - In Fine Voice.
 - Talked About.
 - New *Nutcracker*.
- 66 CROSSWORD**
- 69 WELCOME ABOARD**
Flight information, Mileage Plan frequent-flier program, vacation packages, route maps and more.
- 76 AIR TIME**
Tracking Santa.

GUSTAV DEJERT / GETTY IMAGES

Cover: Cross-country skiing in Washington's Methow Valley is among the Northwest's many outstanding recreation options. Photo by Stephen Matera.



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Brad Tilden, Chief Executive Officer

A World of Good

As we celebrate this season of giving, all of us at Alaska Airlines and Horizon Air are honored to feature Melinda Gates in the December issue of the *Alaska Airlines Edition of Alaska Beyond Magazine*, the sister publication of the magazine you're reading

on this flight (please see the story at alaskaairlinesmagazine.com, page 42).

Melinda and Bill Gates have been incredibly successful in their lives—success that is perhaps matched only by their incredible generosity. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has become the world's largest private philanthropic foundation. Their focus is on global health, global development, U.S. programs (primarily related to education) and global policy. Their work is based on the simple, but important, principle that all lives have equal value.

Started in 2000, the Foundation has had a profound impact on people around the world. I hope you enjoy reading about it, and also reading about Melinda's interest in helping women of all ages. Her philosophy of pushing "upstream" to find solutions to challenging global issues is proving as effective as it is inspirational.

While the scale may be different, this spirit of giving regularly comes to life at Alaska Airlines. We're doing more and more from a company perspective to give back to the communities we serve. But it's really the employees of Alaska and Horizon who are leading the way. From our sixth-annual Pack the Plane food drive this

month to thousands of hours volunteered with local charities, to innovative new approaches for helping those with physical challenges to more comfortably travel by air, our team is doing a lot of good. I am immensely proud to be part of a community here at Alaska Airlines that truly understands how to give back and serve others.

In their own words, the Gates Foundation is "focused

on the areas of greatest need, on the ways in which we can do the most good."

Theirs is generosity on a stunning scale, and their impact on the lives of people around the world is—and will continue to be—profound. Melinda, we are deeply honored to feature you and your work in the magazine, and we are grateful to you and everyone at the Gates Foundation for your amazing generosity.

To you, our customers, I hope you'll be as inspired as I was by Melinda. Thanks for flying with us, and our best to you and yours from all of us at Alaska and Horizon this holiday season.



COURTESY: BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

Melinda Gates of the Seattle-based Gates Foundation is a global role model for good.

Brad Tilden, Chief Executive Officer

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Dr. Dedomenico, renowned cardiovascular surgeon, utilizes his collective experience, expertise, and research in a vast number of fields to guide the expert care in the My Best 10 program.



I think women everywhere can probably relate to my story. I had reached a threshold in my life – the big 40th birthday, when many of us pause to reflect on where we've been and where we're going.

Where I'd been was a hard-working, multi-tasking mom who habitually put herself and her health last. I was sleeping poorly, eating poorly and constantly felt stressed. Sound familiar?

Like many of you who put family first, I had made my "self" my last priority. And I accepted it as just the way things are. Fortunately, I have a wonderful partner, who understood that it was finally time to put my "self" at the top of the list.

For some women, that's hard to do, and I get it – there's guilt associated with making your "self" the focus. But when my husband and I learned about My Best 10 and the impact it has made on the lives of so many other women, he was the one who insisted on giving me the program as a birthday gift.

I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I was a bit worried about being restricted with food and being hungry all the time. But what a surprise! The program was so well structured that I lost weight naturally, without being hungry.

What I loved about the program was the holistic and scientific approach to every aspect

of my health and well-being. The personal training, the nutrition, the counseling, as well as the spa treatments – the entire experience was a wonderful package. And I didn't have to think about anything, I simply made use of all the resources available to me, like calling my dietitian or counselor anytime I had a question.

Everyone on my My Best 10 team was constantly accessible with everything I needed to stay on track. I just did what I was told and kept seeing results.

Those results came in various forms. By prioritizing myself, my health and fitness affected my entire family. We're all eating healthier as a result of the diet changes I adopted during the program.

I'm treating my "self" better than I have in years, and my state of mind shows it. As part of my 40th birthday makeover, I quit my old job to start my own company. ThinkFiend is a website and app that enables readers to go beyond the news and find thoughtful, in-depth articles on topics they care about.

Yes, I used to look admiringly at the My Best 10 stories, and now I'm one of them. But, My Best 10 not only changed me on the outside, it gave me a new "self" on the inside. Thanks to My Best 10, I feel an empowerment and confidence that will be with me for the rest of my life. What do you think? Isn't it time to rejuvenate your "self"?

mybest10.com

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WHISTLER, BC

50 years of fun



MIKE CRANE / TOURISM WHISTLER

The area now known as Whistler was one of the most popular fishing destinations in the West during the early 1920s. A group of Vancouver businessmen realized the potential for winter recreation, and in January 1966, Whistler—named for the local hoary marmot species that makes whistle-like sounds—was born. The original Whistler Mountain ski area featured four lifts and one of the biggest vertical drops in North America. In 1997, Whistler merged with neighboring Blackcomb (first opened in 1980), and in 2008 the 4.4-kilometer (2.73-mile) **Peak 2 Peak Gondola** began operating to connect the two mountains. In 2010, Whistler Blackcomb hosted 46 Winter Olympics events.

Today, as the resort celebrates its golden-anniversary winter season, visitors can enjoy **more than 200 trails**, 8,171 acres of terrain, 37 lifts, several terrain parks and a tube park. The **Whistler Sliding Centre**, built for the Olympics, gives visitors the opportunity to experience skeleton and bobsleigh (bobsled) runs, Dec. 4–March 27 this season. A wheeled version of bobsleighbing is open to the public during the summer (advance bookings required both seasons).

In addition, the 56,000-square-foot **Audain Art Museum**—featuring art such as Northwest Coast First Nations masks and works by Emily Carr—is expected to open early next year in Whistler Village (audainartmuseum.com).

Contact: 800-766-0449; whistlerblackcomb.com and whistler.com.

Whistler Village has more than 200 retail shops, 150-plus restaurants and/or bars, and outfitters that arrange adventures ranging from ziplining to dogsledding.

news & notes

The Seattle Men's Chorus presents its celebrated **Home for the Holidays** concert on select dates through Dec. 21 at Benaroya Hall; Alaska Airlines is a 2015–16 season sponsor (flyinghouse.org).

"In the Vault: Color-filled," on view at the **Holter Museum of Art** in Helena, MT, through Dec. 31, showcases intriguing permanent-



GEORGE COGAS

collection works by prominent artists from Montana (holtermuseum.org).

Grammy-nominated violinist James Buswell (above right) will be among the performers at the **Nevada Chamber Music Festival**, Dec.



STUART MURLAND

26–31. The festival is presented by the Reno Chamber Orchestra, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary (renochamberorchestra.org).

More than 70 comics from around the U.S. are expected to be in Boise, ID, Jan. 7–9 to participate in **Idaho Laugh Fest** at venues such as the historic Egyptian Theatre (idaholaughfest.com).

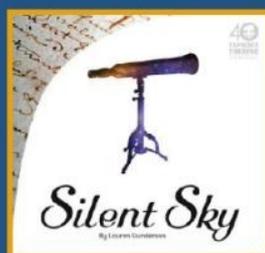
Whalefest Monterey, celebrating the **gray whale migration** through Monterey Bay, CA, will take place Jan. 23 and 24. Enjoy presentations, documentaries, music and whale-watching tours—weather permitting (montereywharf.com and seemonterey.com).

SEATTLE, WA

40th anniversary

In the early 1900s, astronomer Henrietta Leavitt made several important discoveries. Yet because Leavitt was female, her achievements—including significantly enhancing astronomers' ability to measure vast distances between objects in space—have mostly gone unheralded.

Seattle-based **Taproot Theatre Company** opens its 40th-anniversary season with **Silent Sky**, Jan. 27–Feb. 27, a



fascinating play about Leavitt's challenges and accomplishments as she changed the way scientists viewed space. The anniversary season also includes *Cotton Patch Gospel*, *The Realization of Emily Linder*, *Big Fish* and *Joyful Noise*.

In 1976, six friends (several with recently earned theater degrees) founded Taproot as a touring company. The nonprofit began presenting a Mainstage season in 1979 and added an **Acting Studio** instructional program in 1992. Contact: 206-781-9707; taproottheatre.org.

COURTESY TAPROOT THEATRE COMPANY

My brother found freedom from addiction

Based on a true story



The downward spiral came faster than I would have ever imagined. And given that it was my older brother, at the wheel of a life on a collision course with disaster, I was sure there wasn't much I could do. I was always reduced to the role of 'little brother.' He had been living with me for five days, but it felt like six months. I was having a hard time asking him to leave. He spent most of his time passed out on a leather chair in front of the television—not a pretty picture for a husband and a father.

So, I had to sit him down and explain to him what his alcoholism was costing him: his wife, his family and his friends. I told him he was no longer welcome in my home. This was not an easy thing for me to tell my childhood idol — he was someone I had looked up to my entire life.

A friend of mine suggested that I have him contact Schick Shadel Hospital. I knew about their reputation for helping people overcome addiction during 10 days of inpatient treatment.

Rather than depending on a patient's willpower alone, Schick Shadel's approach involves medical detox, counterconditioning, counseling, education and sober support.

Counterconditioning helps people break the cycle of addiction through behavior modification that changes how people think about their addictive substance. By treating the addiction on a psychological and physiological level, Schick Shadel gives their patients the ability to spend their time and energy on rebuilding their lives, medically conquering the physical dependency and allowing counseling to heal the emotional damage that assists the addiction.

Fortunately, he listened and checked in the day before Thanksgiving. As I spoke to him throughout his stay, I began to notice a change in his attitude and physical well-being.

Day four: *He sounds different.*

Day six: *He's making real progress. It's working! He is beginning to self-assess and reevaluate his life. He is eager to complete his treatment and fix his broken relationships.*

Day ten: *I picked up my brother today. His cravings are gone due to the unique and powerful medical model Schick Shadel uses. He was touched by the care and support he received during his stay. He described the highly skilled counselors who made a difference.*

He said the staff allowed him to see the world as a responsible, accountable sober adult.

Thank you Schick Shadel Hospital for your professionalism, compassion and kindness. My brother can now live alcohol-free.

I feel blessed to have had such a wonderful place to treat my brother. In 80 years, they have treated more than 65,000 men and women. I am proud to be able to count my brother among them.

— As told by the grateful brother of a former patient

About us

Schick Shadel Hospital is an inpatient hospital and medical detoxification facility founded 80 years ago by those that understand alcoholism is a medical problem that cannot be conquered by traditional methods alone. Our staff works to treat addiction on the level that it exists; as a life-threatening disease. We have a 65% success rate for treating alcoholism* during our 10-day program.

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Memorable by moonlight

Admire snow-draped lodgepole pines and red firs during **Full Moon Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoe Tours** offered by Mammoth Mountain's Tamarack Cross Country Ski Center.

Snowshoe tours are available Nov. 23-25, Dec. 23-25, Jan. 21-23 and Feb. 20-22. Cross-country skiing tours are offered Nov. 24, Dec. 24, Jan. 22 and Feb. 21.

The snowshoe tour will guide visitors (no experience necessary) on a 1.5-mile trek of the **Panorama Dome Trail**. Once the top is reached, the town of Mammoth can be seen by moonlight. Cross-country skiers (experience recommended) are led on a 4.3-mile excursion that goes around **Lake Mary in the Lakes Basin**.

Both tours require advance reservations. The tour fee



COURTESY MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN SKI AREA (2)



includes the necessary snowshoeing and cross-country skiing equipment.

After either tour, guests can relax with dessert and a hot drink by the fireplace at the historic 1924 **Tamarack Lodge**. Contact: 760-934-2442, ext. 8; tamaracklodge.com. —Olivia Moon

VANCOUVER, BC

British Columbian **Connor Stefanison** has won the **Rising Star Portfolio Award**, for ages 18 to 25, in the international **Wildlife Photographer of the Year** competition for 2015. His images—such as a black bear foraging at night and a raven strutting in a snowy landscape—will be on display at the **Royal BC Museum** in Victoria, Dec. 4-April 4 (royalbcmuseum.bc.ca).



RIGHT (RAVEN): CONNOR STEFANISON / WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2015; CENTER: COURTESY HEALDSBURG MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUN VALLEY/KETCHUM, ID

The innovative central Idaho-based **Scottevest** apparel company is celebrating its 15th anniversary (scottevest.com).

PORTLAND, OR

The **Far West Classic Invitational**, Dec. 18 & 19, returns after a two-decade hiatus, with the 2015 classic featuring five men's college basketball teams, one each from the Pac-12, West Coast, Big Sky, Big West and American Athletic conferences. Oregon State University and the University of Portland are hosting the tournament (rosequarter.com).

talked about

HEALDSBURG, CA

Antique and miniature toys are on display through Jan. 3 in the exhibit **"Small World: Tiny Toys and All Things Miniature"** at the Healdsburg Museum in Sonoma County (healdsburgmuseum.org).



BOISE, ID

In fine voice

Idaho native **Cecilia Violetta López** (below)—who was hired by The Metropolitan Opera in New York for a production this year, and was also named one of opera's 25 rising stars by *Opera News*—returns to **Opera Idaho** in January to perform the lead



COURTESY VP PHOTOGRAPHY

soprano role of Violetta in *La traviata*, Jan. 29 and 31.

The opera, by Verdi, is considered to have some of the most demanding music in the soprano repertoire, says Opera Idaho General Director Mark Junkert.

The 2015-16 season also includes *The Pirates of Penzance* (below) by Gilbert and Sullivan, being performed April 1 by the famed New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players troupe.

Contact: 208-345-3531; operaidaho.org.

—Francesca Steele



COURTESY NYCASP



WESTERN EXPLORES THE RED PLANET

Western Washington University's Melissa Rice is part of the NASA Science Team working with the six-wheeled Curiosity rover on Mars, sending it new instructions and plotting its course through the harsh Martian terrain. The team tells Curiosity when to gather samples and drill cores, when to take photos and conduct experiments in its on-board lab.

Rice is also able to bring her work with NASA into the classroom, where she is working with her Geology and Physics students on researching potential landing sites for the next rover mission, set for 2020.

"Solving problems and working our way around the challenges that inevitably arise as we set about to explore another planet is why I got into science in the first place," she said.

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SEATTLE, WA

New Nutcracker



A nearly 200-year-old German tale that became one of the world's most popular ballets is being reimagined this year by Pacific Northwest Ballet.

New set design and costumes by children's author/illustrator Ian Falconer will be featured in the Seattle ballet company's *The Nutcracker*, complementing Tchaikovsky's beloved score and choreography by George Balanchine. Falconer is known for his *Olivia* book series, which was inspired by his desire to create a gift for his niece.

The new set design will include a 40-foot-tall tree with 450 lights, which took more than 400 hours to build.

The new costumes are vibrant, and often intricate, including 300 jewels that were sewn by hand onto the Arabian peacock headpieces, and the 16 handcrafted tiaras for the snow scene (above). Each snow-scene costume also comprises 12 different fabrics.

There are 150 roles in the production, which presents the magical story of a little girl named

Clara, her Nutcracker/handsome prince, the fearsome Mouse King and the Sugar Plum Fairy. **Soloist Elizabeth Murphy** (below) will be one of the 12 dancers alternating in the role of the fairy, who welcomes Clara and her prince to the Land of Sweets.

The Nutcracker will be staged through Dec. 28. Alaska Airlines is the title sponsor.

Pacific Northwest Ballet's 2015-16 season will also include *Roméo et Juliette*, Feb. 5-14; **Director's Choice** (three contemporary works), March 18-27; *Le Corsaire: A Pirate's Tale*, March 20-26; *Coppélia*, April 15-24; and *American Stories*, June 3-12. (Check the website for the specific performance nights during each production's run.) Contact: 206-441-2424; pnb.org.



Famous Puget Sound-area artist **Dale Chihuly's** 11x9x2-foot **glass chandelier, Winter Star**, is part of the ballet's iconic snow scene (top).

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PHOTO © ANGELA STERLING; DALE CHIHULY, WINTER STAR, 1999-2005; PHOTO © LINDSAY THOMAS





Learning to Succeed

College Success Foundation helps low-income students with school and life

Starting at age 15, Zuri Cambron spent her summers doing low-wage jobs similar to her parents' regular jobs, such as heat-pressing numbers onto garments at a warehouse and working in fast food. As her parents had taught her, she worked hard, but she felt discouraged when she realized it was the kind of employment she might have to accept her whole life. "My parents didn't want me to have that as my future," she says, but they didn't know what to do.

Then, as a high school junior, she learned about the College Success Foundation (CSF), a Seattle area-based nonprofit that provides a pipeline of support services and scholarships to low-income and underserved students. CSF's goal is to inspire students to finish high school, graduate from college and succeed in life, says CSF President and CEO Yolanda Watson Spiva, who has a Ph.D. in higher education.

"I had no idea college was even possible for me until I heard about CSF in 11th grade," Cambron says.

CSF College Prep Advisor Randy Nuñez gave a presentation about the foundation at an event Cambron attended, and afterward, Nuñez, who was with CSF from 2003 to 2010, encouraged Cambron to apply for one of CSF's programs. The student was

**By Scott
Driscoll**



matched with a mentor who encouraged her in her high school studies, and helped her and her parents with the college-application process, from the personal essay to applying for financial aid, to applying for scholarships administered by CSF and others.

"I see college as a key to unlock the American dream," says Cambron, who received a scholarship administered by CSF, and in 2011 graduated from Eastern Washington University with a bachelor's degree in communications. With networking and resume-writing assistance from CSF, she eventually landed a job with an online travel company, focusing on Latin American markets.

"Nobody would have given me this opportunity without the college degree," she says. "And college wouldn't have happened without help from the College Success Foundation."

Most of the students CSF assists are from families below the federal poverty level, says Riley Haggard, CSF senior alumni relations officer. These students share a common disadvantage, he says. "Typically, no one is telling them to sign up to take the SAT [or other college-entrance exams] by a certain date. No one is saying,



Zuri Cambron.

COURTESY COLLEGE SUCCESS FOUNDATION

'Start visiting colleges; start the application process.' The stuff their more privileged friends can take for granted, they never hear, at least not in most of their homes."

Founded in 2000 in Issaquah, a Puget Sound-area community east of Seattle, the College Success Foundation is dedicated to erasing the opportunity gap, says CEO Spiva. She notes that society as a whole also benefits. "**First-generation college grads likely go on to be first-generation homeowners, first-generation investors, first-generation retirement-account holders.** Exposed to opportunities that result from a college degree, these kids can now imagine themselves living



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in a more prosperous world. When they spread that influence to their families, they begin to break the generational cycle of poverty.”

The foundation, celebrating its 15th anniversary this year, was begun by Bob Craves and Ann Ramsay-Jenkins as the Washington Education Foundation, with the help of a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Craves and Ramsay-Jenkins were serving on the board of a state agency devoted to improving higher education. The goal of their new foundation was to provide scholarships to increase the number of college-bound students from 16 predominantly low-income public high schools in the Puget Sound area.

After five years, the organization recognized that scholarships alone were not successful in boosting college-completion rates among low-income students. “We saw the need to have programs that offered multiple touchpoints along the way,” Haggard explains. “We needed to be constantly in their ear, pushing college.”

The name changed in 2006 to the College Success Foundation, and the focus broadened to include mentoring and outreach—talking to kids about college and how to prepare for college, as well as about scholar-

College Success Foundation By the Numbers

97% of students who join the CSF high school program obtain a high school diploma (overall, approximately 80 percent of public high school students nationwide, from all income levels, graduate from high school).

76% of CSF Scholars enter college the first fall after high school graduation, and 60% of those CSF Scholars succeed in obtaining bachelor's degrees; some continue to postgraduate degrees (overall, 63% of high school graduates nationwide, from all income levels, enter college the first fall after high school graduation, and less than 11 percent of low-income students nationwide earn bachelor's degrees).

43,893 students have received assistance from CSF—ranging from support services and mentoring to scholarships—over the past 15 years. In 2015, CSF has assisted more than 12,000 students.

95% of middle-schoolers who have contact with CSF programs report believing that college is a possibility for them.

—Source: CSF (collegesuccessfoundation.org)

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ships administered by CSF and other sources—starting as early as seventh grade.

Additional information and support through 10th grade help prepare students to apply for CSF's Achievers Scholars program for high school juniors and seniors. **The upperclassmen meet monthly with community volunteers known as hometown mentors—successful business-people who may have attended the same high school as the students or have come from a background similar to theirs.**

The mentors facilitate conversations about college, and their presence models for the students what success can look like. Achievers Scholars also meet regularly with a CSF staff member assigned to their school, who helps them with college preparation, including making sure they take college-entrance exams on time.

Another service—often utilizing past Achievers Scholars who are now juniors and seniors in college—has been added to help keep students on track once they begin their postsecondary-school studies. The upper-level students, paid a stipend, are trained to mentor the college freshmen and sophomores. Activities range from holding discussion groups to assisting the newer students with paperwork for retaining federal financial aid, to game nights that provide social networking.

"Students can feel isolated on campus," says Kellie Nakano, CSF's regional director of program fidelity and quality, who notes that CSF-assisted students are attending colleges across the country. "Our mentoring program helps them feel included as part of a familiar group."

CSF has also expanded its geographic scope to now include the Seattle, Highline, Tacoma, Yakima and Spokane school districts in Washington state, and to provide a slightly different version of CSF services for Wards Seven and Eight in Washington, D.C. Administrators for the school districts and wards determine which of their schools will participate in CSF programs.



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Nico Roach, a 17-year-old 11th-grader at a D.C. high school, started benefiting from CSF programs when he was in middle school. CSF advisers visited his school each year to talk to students about going to college, and scholarships they could apply for. For eighth-graders, CSF also presented four extensive lessons during the school year to help students understand the specific steps that would prepare them to apply for college.

In addition, when Roach was in eighth grade he joined a CSF program in which advisers regularly met one-on-one, and in small groups, with him and other eighth-, ninth- and 10th-graders to explain and promote college opportunities, and **encourage students in the belief that through their efforts they could overcome economic or social barriers, and be successfully college bound.** Among other things, the students learned how to prepare academically, complete homework, study for tests, ask questions in class and manage their time.

"Nico grew up in poverty, far away from opportunities," says his father, Anthony. "[CSF] has been a great help to my son."

Now Nico is in the process of fulfilling requirements to apply for a CSF scholarship. The application process includes writing four 150- to 300-word personal essays, as well as being interviewed by a panel.

During the 2014-15 school year, Jonathan Hayden, the CSF adviser at Roach's school, also encouraged Roach to apply for the U.S. State Department's Central American Youth Ambassadors (CAYA) student-exchange program. Roach was one of the select group of students chosen this year from applicants across the United States. The high-schooler spent 10 days in the Dominican Republic and 10 days in Nicaragua.

"The D.R. was an eye-opener," he says. "They didn't have much ... no hot water, not much food. A lot of kids were homeless. There were people with no shoes."

In Nicaragua, a boy making souvenirs out of palm flowers at a local market gave one to Roach. "He didn't ask for money,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 68

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INSIDE

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- WASHINGTON** p.4
- OREGON** p.10
- NORDIC SKIING** p.15
- IDAHO** p.18
- MONTANA** p.22
- BRITISH COLUMBIA** p.29

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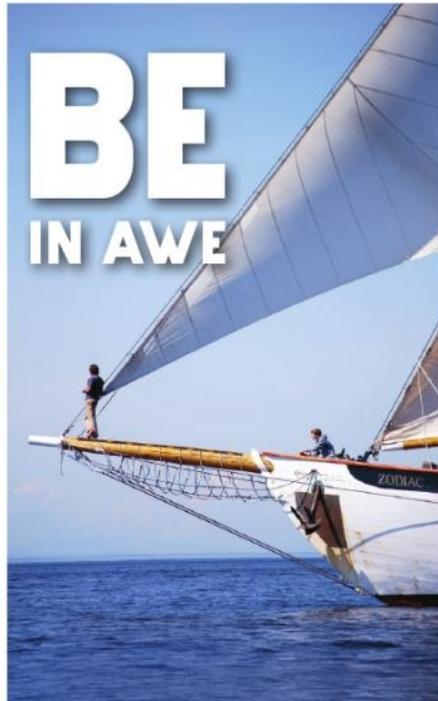
Cover: A winter sleigh ride near Big Sky, Montana.
Photo courtesy: Lone Mountain Ranch

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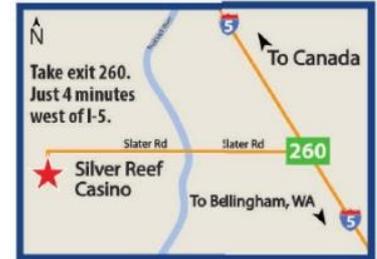


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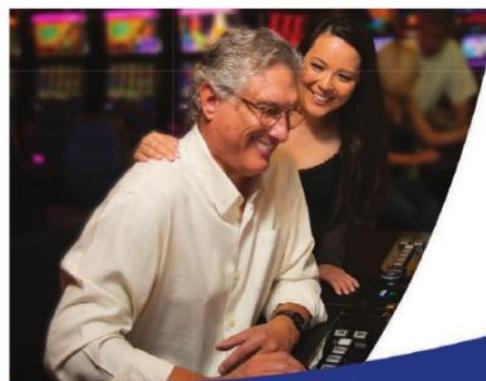
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WASHINGTON

Touring the Evergreen State

BY CANDACE DEMPSEY

▶ As a Washington native, I've always marveled at the Evergreen State's unique landscapes. In the west, you'll find craggy mountain ranges, dense old-growth forests and primeval beaches. East of the Cascade Range, Washington's sage deserts and basalt plateaus create breathtaking vistas. The following are some of my favorite locations in this beautifully varied state.

Seattle

To see the Emerald City in all its grandeur, head for the world-famous Space Needle at **Seattle Center**, next to the EMP museum and the Chihuly Garden and Glass museum, which celebrates the work of

artist Dale Chihuly. From the Space Needle's observation deck, 520 feet up, enjoy an amazing view of the Cascade Range, including Mount Rainier and the Olympic Mountains. You can also see how the city curves around Puget Sound, a large Pacific Ocean inlet that is dotted by islands and navigated by everything from freighters to kayaks.

Seattle has a compact, easy-to-walk **downtown**, with glass skyscrapers, upscale shops, coffeehouses, gourmet restaurants and two stadiums in its south end. The downtown is also home to the Seattle Art Museum; Benaroya Hall, where the Seattle Symphony performs; and many other cultural gems. You can enjoy the nightlife in Belltown and historic Pioneer Square. And the International District offers terrific Asian food.

Among Seattle's most popular attractions is the **Pike Place Market**, where you can watch fish sellers toss salmon. You can also listen to street performers, shop for high-quality handicrafts and enjoy an amazing selection of fresh foods.

Walk down to the **waterfront** to visit fun shops, restaurants,

the Seattle Aquarium and the Seattle Great Wheel, which offers unique views of both the city and the Sound. At the waterfront's north end is the Olympic Sculpture Park, a public space full of fascinating art and fantastic water and mountain views.

To get out onto **Puget Sound**, take Argosy Cruises' tour of Elliott Bay, catch the *Victoria Clipper* to Canada or hop on a Washington State Ferry. Many visitors ride the Bainbridge Island ferry just for views of the city skyline.

Bellevue

About 10 miles east of Seattle, across Lake Washington, is Bellevue, a high-tech hub and a



Above: The skyline of Seattle, Washington's largest city. The Space Needle is in the foreground, and Mount Rainier is in the background.

Left: The colorful ceiling of Tacoma's Chihuly Bridge of Glass features works by famed artist Dale Chihuly.

Below: A snow princess poses with a toy soldier drummer on Snowflake Lane, a holiday event held along Bellevue Way, next to Bellevue Square, each December.



CHUCK PELEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



GEORGE WHITE LOCATION PHOTOGRAPHY



Water Sites

► **Potholes State Park:**

Fish for walleye, rainbow trout, smallmouth bass and largemouth bass year-round in the Potholes Reservoir near Moses Lake.

► **Palouse Falls State Park:**

See the magnificent 198-foot waterfall drop into Palouse River Canyon in an amazing setting—the treeless and flinty lands of the Columbia Plateau.

► **Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge:**

Kayak through the Nisqually River Delta at the southern end of the Puget Sound. The delta attracts a variety of animals, from birds to fish to harbor seals. —C.D.

GINO RIGUCCI / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

major shopping destination.

The city, where high-tech firms such as Expedia, Microsoft and T-Mobile have offices, is also known for hiking trails, beach parks and public gardens.

However, the city's major attraction is The Bellevue Collection shopping area. You'll find more than 250 shops among Bellevue Square, Lincoln Square and Bellevue Place, plus movie theaters, top hotels and more than 30 restaurants. The Bellevue Arts Museum is nearby, and even more high-end shopping can be found at The Shops at The Bravern.

Tacoma

The port city of Tacoma, which has been used as a backdrop for

such films as *Say Anything* and *I Love You to Death*, is located about 30 miles southwest of Seattle on Commencement Bay.

The city has an expansive **Museum District**, which is home to six major museums, including the Museum of Glass, which focuses on works by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly and other artists. Stroll across the delightful Chihuly Bridge of Glass to the Tacoma Art Museum, which houses an extensive collection of Native art. LeMay—America's Car Museum showcases a rotating collection of 300 vintage vehicles from the LeMay family and various other sources.

At the city's **Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium**, it's always fun

JACK SULLIVAN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



to visit the clouded leopard cubs, a Malayan tapir and other rare animals. Anyone 10 and older can also go underwater in a cage to see the aquarium fish up close. On a second dive, you can go outside the cage in the aquarium's newest attraction, "Beyond the Cage Shark Dive."

📍 The iconic Public Market in Seattle first opened in 1907.



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Northwestern Washington is famous for its large winter populations of seabirds, bald eagles, snow geese, and trumpeter and tundra swans, and offers some of the country's best raptor viewing, according to the Audubon Society of Washington.

Cross the stunning Tacoma Narrows Bridge to visit the colorful town of **Gig Harbor**. Hike or bike the 6.2-mile Cushman Trail. If you enjoy microbrews, stop at 7 Seas Brewing or another town pub.

The Coast

Washington is known for its rugged and mostly undeveloped coastline, where visitors can find amazing coastal formations fashioned by nature at such locations as **Cape Flattery** on the northwestern tip of the **Olympic Peninsula**. Farther south is the beach community of **Ocean Shores**, where people come year-round to stroll along the wide beach and enjoy the roiling surf. At the southern end of the state's coastline is the **Long Beach Peninsula**, which has a 28-mile-long sandy beach, cozy places to stay, numerous attractions and delicious seafood. Families enjoy beachcombing, kite-flying and other activities. You can also ride bikes and mopeds and enjoy the many arcades and shops.

About 100 miles southeast of Long Beach, on the Columbia River, is the historic city of **Vancouver**, a gateway to river activities. There are more than a dozen wineries in the area, as



GOHRE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

well as the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. You can also explore the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, which is home to an array of birds and mammals.

Into The Mountains

The **Cascade Range** runs from British Columbia to Northern California. It divides the state into the lush and green west side and the drier east side, where the 1,243-mile-long **Columbia River** flows in from Canada, carving the awesome Columbia River Gorge, and

forming most of the border between Washington and Oregon, before reaching the Pacific Ocean.

Travel to the Cascades for **winter sports**, plus mountain biking, backpacking and hiking in the spring and summer. The 2,600-

Above: The rugged Washington Coast is known for breathtaking formations.

Right: The Front Street Gazebo in Leavenworth hosts various activities during the holidays.

Left: Lake Chelan is one of Eastern Washington's newest wine regions.



DANITA DELIMONT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

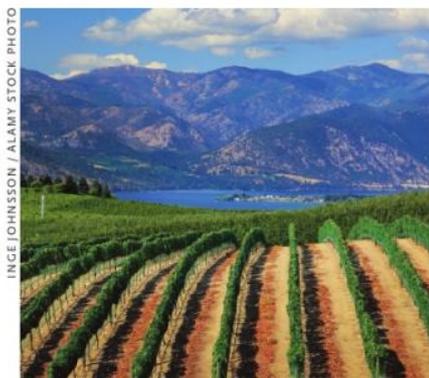
acre Crystal Mountain Resort, the state's largest ski area, is on the northeast side of Mount Rainier. It has more than 50 runs, plus the Mount Rainier Gondola, which rises almost 2,500 vertical feet to near the top of Crystal Mountain. You'll find more ski areas at Mount Baker, White Pass, Stevens Pass and The Summit at Snoqualmie. Most of the ski areas also offer Nordic skiing trails, sledding and snowshoeing.

The Bavarian-themed resort town of **Leavenworth** is one of my favorite locations for Nordic skiing. Located on the eastern

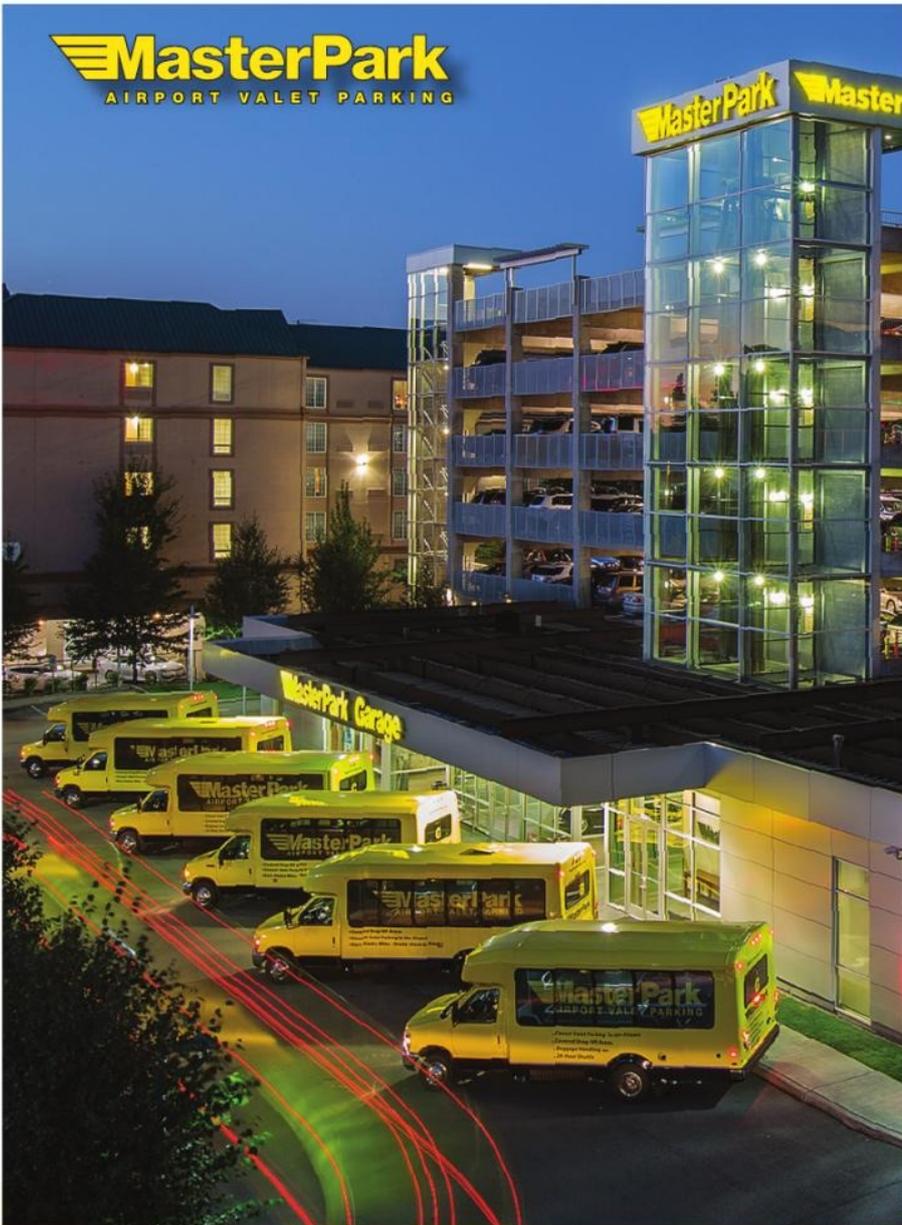
slopes of the Cascades, the town makes for an enchanting winter wonderland. Families love the Christmas lights and annual **Bavarian IceFest** on January 17. The charming village is also known for its shops, German food, comfortable accommodations and wine-tasting rooms.

Wine Country

Speaking of tasting rooms, Washington is the nation's second-largest wine producer and is home to **more than 800 wineries**. Almost all of the wine grapes grown in the state are



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Great Northwest



CHRIS COOPER-SMITH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

The Spokane Falls Skyride is a favorite activity at the city's Riverfront Park.

cultivated in Eastern Washington. From Lake Chelan to Walla Walla, from Wenatchee to Spokane, you'll find an abundance of tasting rooms and wineries offering world-class wines.

Where the arid Columbia Plateau meets the green Spokane River valley is where my hometown of **Spokane** is located. Set about 20 miles from the Idaho border, Washington's second-largest city is the business and recreational center for much of Eastern Washington and the Idaho Panhandle. The slopes of Mt. Spokane Ski & Snowboard Park are only about 30 miles northeast of downtown for convenient winter recreation. In spring and summer, enjoy the gorgeous gardens in Manito Park, 15 regional public golf courses and numerous area lakes. And the 37-mile-long **Spokane River Centennial Trail** begins at the Idaho/Washington state line and follows the curve of the river through downtown Spokane, gliding past Gonzaga University and the spectacular Spokane Falls.

Exciting cities, snowcapped volcanoes, vast wilderness and water everywhere. These are some of the reasons I love living in the Evergreen State. **GNW**

Candace Dempsey currently writes from Seattle.

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OREGON

Urban, Rugged and Diverse

BY JOHN GOTTBORG

▶ If you've ever wanted to strap on a pair of snowshoes, Southern Oregon's **Crater Lake National Park** is one of the best places to give the winter activity a try.

The deepest lake (1,943 feet) in the United States is also one of its snowiest inhabited locations. The historic Crater Lake Lodge, which overlooks the stunning, cobalt-blue lake from its southwestern rim, receives an average annual snowfall of about 44 feet. While the lodge is closed in winter, the south entrance to Crater Lake, readily accessible from Medford, is open year-round. On weekend afternoons (and daily between Christmas and New Year's Day), park rangers lead free two-hour guided **snowshoeing tours** through meadows and forests near the rim, describing how plants and animals survive the winter.

On a crisp, clear day, there are few activities more thrilling. Everything is cloaked in white, from the headlands, which rise 1,800 feet above the alpine lake's surface, to Wizard Island, the distinctive red cinder cone on the lake's west side.

Snowshoeing at Crater Lake is just one of the many winter

and spring recreational opportunities to be explored here in the Beaver State. From Portland to the Oregon Coast, Redmond to Medford, there are activities for travelers of all ages.

Portland

A great place to start a tour of Oregon is in Portland, the state's largest city. Known as a burgeoning culinary center and the state's economic engine, Portland is also one of the urban bicycling capitals of the United States.

Rain or shine, Portland boasts up to 20,000 cyclist commuters during the summer who cross Willamette River bridges. Many of those riders use the city's new **Tilikum**

Above: A view of snow-dusted Wizard Island in Crater Lake, the deepest lake in the United States, measuring 1,943 feet.

Right: Portland's MAX light-rail system has 84 stations and 52 miles of track, which efficiently connect the city's neighborhoods and metropolitan area.



SUSAN SEUBERT



JOHN VALLS

A Wine Center

► Oregon has become one of the nation's top wine producers. According to statistics from 2014, the state has more than 670 wineries producing about 3 million cases of wine each year. There are also more than 27,000 acres of land planted in wine grape vines.

Many of the vines and wineries can be found in the Willamette Valley, which stretches for more than 100 miles south from the Portland area to past Eugene, where King Estate Winery is located. Renowned for Pinot Noir, the region also produces dozens of wine varietals, including Pinot Gris, Chardonnay and Riesling. The heart of the area is the town of Newberg, home of The Allison Inn & Spa. Not far away is Ponzi Vineyards, which features a new tasting room with multiple fireplaces.

Vineyards are also found in the Rogue and Applegate valleys near Medford and Grants Pass, as well as the Umpqua region near Roseburg and the Columbia River Gorge, east of Hood River. These regions are known for many wine varietals, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay. —J.G.

☞ Portland has one of the largest populations of bicycle commuters in the nation.

Crossing bridge, which opened in September of this year and is the only bridge in the country dedicated to light rail, buses, bicycles and pedestrians—no automobile or truck traffic allowed. The cable-stayed bridge links Portland's South Waterfront district with the Central Eastside.

Where do these cyclists go, besides school and jobs? In winter and spring, you will find

some at the **Moda Center** to watch Portland's popular NBA team, the Trail Blazers. In the summer and fall, MLS' Portland Timbers take center stage in sports. Another destination is the **Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI)** in the Central Eastside.

Parks and gardens are popular destinations in this family-friendly city. One of the best is **Washington Park**, an expansive



WOODS WHEATCROFT / AURORA PHOTOS

IAN SHIVE / TANDEMSTOCK.COM

Great Northwest



area in the Arlington Heights neighborhood. It includes the world-famous **International Rose Test Garden**, which is home to about 8,000 plants and 600 varieties of roses, and the **Portland Japanese Garden**, which will reopen on March 1, after undergoing a \$33.5 million expansion allowing for more Japanese cultural and art forms to be practiced in a traditional village setting. The garden is considered one of the most authentic of its kind outside of Japan.

Washington Park is also home to the **Oregon Zoo**, whose “Elephant Lands” enclosure, new in 2015, underscores the commitment to an Asian

elephant breeding program that has gained worldwide renown. The new 6.3-acre habitat offers a number of features, including a 160,000-gallon pool.

The Oregon Coast

Less than 100 miles west of Portland is the Oregon Coast, where you’ll find more than 360 miles of resort towns, great beaches, rock formations and exciting discoveries, accented by romantic lighthouses.

Extending south from the mouth of the Columbia River, Oregon’s series of landmark lighthouses were erected on rocks, reefs and headlands to

Portland’s International Rose Test Garden has about 8,000 plants and 600 varieties of roses.

protect maritime traffic. Many are open for public visits, including the **Yaquina Head Lighthouse**, which overlooks a series of tide pools north of Newport, a coastal fishing port.

But they couldn’t protect every ship. According to the **Columbia River Maritime Museum** in Astoria, many vessels have sunk at the Columbia River bar since Captain Robert Gray first sailed into the river in 1792.

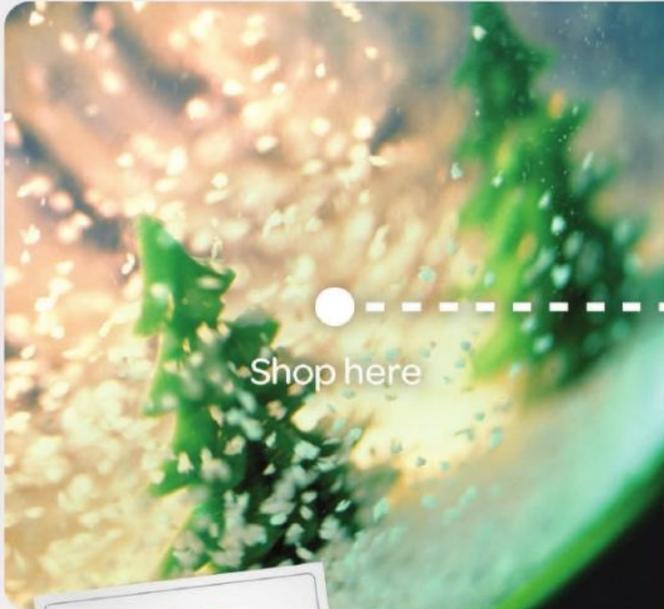
You can explore the rusted steel frame of the *Peter Iredale*, which lies half-buried in the sands of **Fort Stevens State Park**, just west of Astoria. The ship ran aground in 1906 and is now a favorite destination for



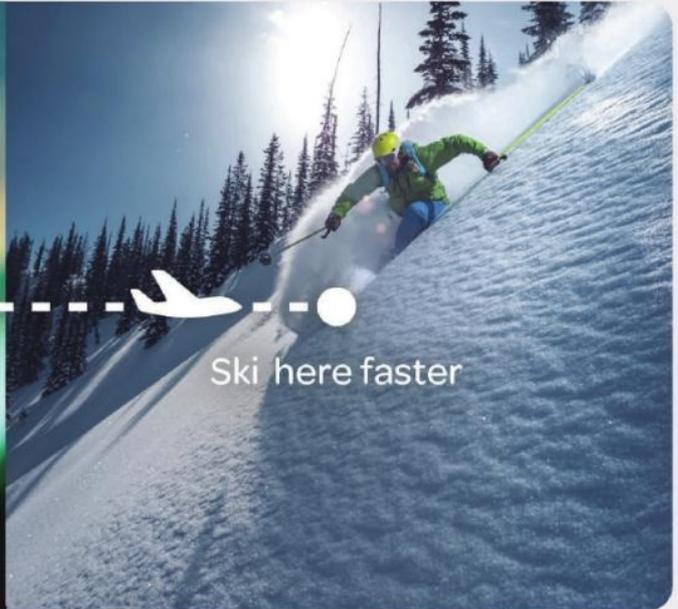
An exhibit at the Oregon Coast Aquarium illustrates how sunken vessels are located and preserved.

COURTESY: OREGON COAST AQUARIUM

visitors to the area. At the outstanding **Oregon Coast Aquarium** in Newport, a new “Secrets of Shipwrecks” exhibit focuses on locating, exploring, excavating and conserving sunken vessels. The exhibit also features a video about underwater archaeology produced by the United Nations Educational,



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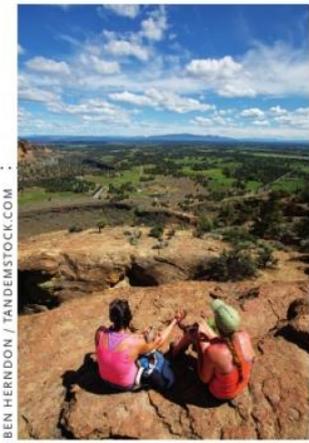
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BEN HERNDON / TANDEMSTOCK.COM

Smith Rock State Park offers great views of the Bend area in Central Oregon.

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). For a different kind of beach experience, travel south past the town of Florence to visit the **Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area**, a 40-mile stretch of massive wind-sculpted sand dunes.

Central Oregon

Throughout the year, Central Oregon offers an array of activities. There's typically

plenty of snow in winter. The **Mt. Bachelor Ski Resort**, just outside of Bend, is among the largest in the country and averages 462 inches of snow annually.

In spring and summer, the area is a popular hiking and rock climbing location. At **Smith Rock State Park**, a few miles north of Redmond, the Misery Ridge Trail steeply ascends picturesque sandstone

cliffs above the meandering Crooked River. As long as the trail remains free of ice and snow, you can hike the trail year-round.

In the warmer months, Smith Rock lures rock climbers from around the world, many being drawn to Monkey Face pillar, a unique attraction that does resemble a primate. From the summit of Smith Rock, on a clear day, you can see many of Oregon's major Cascade peaks—from Mount Hood in the north to Mount Bachelor in the south.

For those who want to enjoy the urban scene, the resort city of **Bend** has become famous for its many craft brewers. There

are 28 Central Oregon breweries, and the number is growing. **The Bend Ale Trail** allows visitors to take an afternoon or two to explore such spots as the Deschutes, 10 Barrel, Boneyard and Worthy breweries. Such alehouses are great places to warm up from the inside out after indulging in the area's many outdoor activities. **GNW**

John Gottberg writes about Oregon from his home in Bend.

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NORDIC SKIING

Cross-Country Stories

BY KATHRYN TRUE

▶ As I glided across unbroken snow on my trusty Nordic skis one sunny morning in Washington's Methow Valley, a movement on the nearby river caught my eye. I slowed to a stop near the frozen edge and scanned the water. There, on a

midstream boulder, was a small, jaunty gray bird. Its bobbing movement and flashing white eye markings confirmed for me that it was an American dipper—North America's only true aquatic songbird—known for its ability



D.C. LOWE / GETTY IMAGES

Classic cross-country skiing destinations include Washington state's Mount Rainier National Park (above) and Methow Valley (below, showing a skier on one of the area's renowned groomed trails).



STEPHEN MATERA / TANDEMSTOCK.COM

Great Northwest

to literally walk on stream bottoms searching for insects, oblivious to the swift-moving currents above. Over and over it leaped into the water, then deftly returned to the rock, only to splash again into the glistening shallows. And I was here to witness this fascinating breakfast scene thanks to my beloved red L.L.Bean cross-country skis.

These skis have transported me to Olympic Mountain hot springs under a full February moon, and through a snow-storm to a Mount Tahoma Trails Association cabin on the flanks of Mount Rainier. Once, they allowed me to follow the tracks of a lynx to a stream

where the big cat's trail ended, leaving me breathless and guessing at the continuation of that story told in snow. My skis have also brought me cautiously alongside iced-in rocky shallows, where trapped water worked its way through a maze of frozen bubbles that glowed like embers.

On these skis I've embarked on sleety, sweaty expeditions through "Cascade concrete"—dense, wet, heavy snow that can bog down even the heartiest skier. One such excursion took me to a warming hut where my soggy sandwich tasted like a king's feast.

My skis have helped me toast a friend's spring-equinox



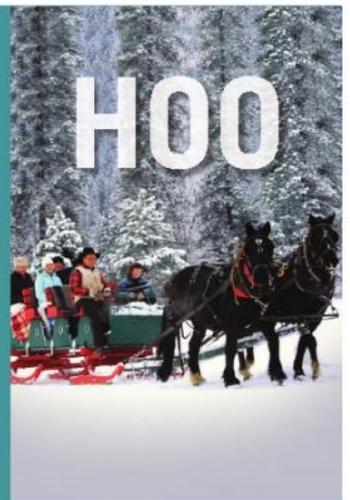
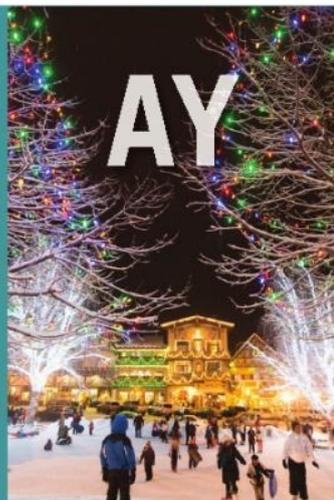
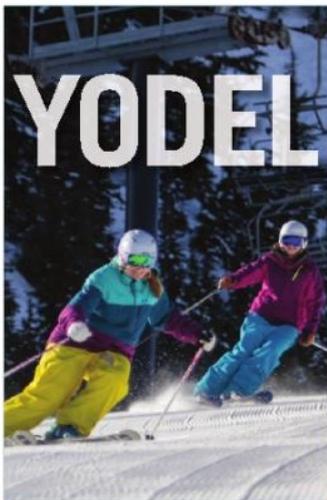
A young skier slides through the snow near Mazama, Washington.

STEPHEN MATERA / TANDEMSTOCK.COM

birthday that coincided with late snowfall on a railroad-track-turned-trail near Washington's Snoqualmie Pass. They've bounced me laughing around a hilly loop at Mount Washington on Vancouver Island—and let me follow locals to a starry

meadow in Ketchum, Idaho.

By ski I have huffed up long inclines into the rustic embrace of the Methow Valley's Rendezvous Huts, where the night sky was so clear that I spied that awe-inspiring stellar smudge that is our neighboring galaxy,



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Andromeda. With my skis I have raced beside my daughter's parallel tracks—through her childhood to the point when I knew I would henceforth always come in second.

The thing about cross-country skiing is that it lives up to its name, literally allowing me to cross greatly varied Northwest landscapes—and, in the process, combine aspects of other activities that make me love living in the region. There are elements of downhill skiing, ice-skating, hiking and trail running—plus birding and tracking. A relatively quiet sport, Nordic skiing allows us to blend in gently with the forest around us, such that,

upon encounter, even a skittish Douglas squirrel might express more curiosity than fear. And the trees, too, seem to offer hidden wonders to skiers—the way fir needles sprout ice crystals, wolf lichen acquires a chartreuse glow, and the Ponderosa's puzzle-piece bark releases a vanilla scent.

This winter I'll be out again on my skis, near the river where the dipper swims ... searching for new stories written on the landscape, and making more stories of my own. **GNW**

Kathryn True writes and (in certain winters) cross-country skis on Vashon Island, Washington.



KEVIN SYMS, COURTESY SUN VALLEY RESORT

Skate skiers push uphill in Sun Valley, Idaho. World-renowned for its downhill skiing, Sun Valley also offers nearly 25 miles of groomed cross-country trails, accessed through its Nordic & Snowshoe Center.

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IDAHO

Travels in the Great Outdoors

BY GREG HAHN

▶ If most of what you know about Idaho centers on potatoes, then it could be time for another visit to the Gem State. There is so much more to Idaho than you realize.

The state has some of the most beautiful mountain ranges and river systems in the country. It also has many award-winning craft beers and a booming wine industry that has grown from just 11 wineries in 2002 to more than 50 today. Many of Idaho's wineries are located around the Snake River Valley region, a short distance from Boise, a bustling, high-tech center.

The state's arts, cultural and music scenes also are thriving, highlighted by Boise author Anthony Doerr, who this year won the Pulitzer Prize for his novel *All the Light We Cannot See*.



🔍 Idaho is known as the Gem State, and it is one of the few places on Earth where the star garnet is found. You can hunt for your own gems in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest's Emerald Creek Garnet Area, outside of St. Maries, about 80 miles southeast of Coeur d'Alene. —G.H.

Sure, you can find some great spuds. However, you can also wander the riverside Boise State University campus to share a selfie from the iconic Albertsons Stadium, and get away from it all in Idaho's seemingly endless backcountry. The following are some of the ways you can experience Idaho.

The Panhandle: A wilderness getaway
Richly forested and punctuated with some of the deepest lakes in the United States, Northern Idaho's Panhandle should be on every outdoor lover's list of destinations. In winter and early spring, the region takes on a serene beauty.

Schweitzer Mountain Resort is a prime example. One of the state's largest ski areas, this alpine destination is a great place for families, with 40 percent of its 92 trails rated for intermediate skiers.

The Hermit's Hollow Tubing center offers downhill fun for all ages and abilities. If

you're more of a cross-country touring skier, look into **Farragut State Park**, part of Idaho's state-wide parks system, which offers more than 300 miles of groomed Nordic trails.

In nearby **Sandpoint**, located along the shores of **Lake Pend Oreille**, between three mountain ranges, try an Alpha Dog Imperial IPA from Laughing Dog Brewery. You can also see what's on the playbill at the Panida Theater, the local performing arts center, and stroll through the quaint small town, which is known as a great spot to begin an exploration of the nearby wilderness.

For a special experience, visit Hill's Resort on **Priest Lake**, one of Northern Idaho's most beautiful bodies of water. A bustling marina and beachside restaurant in the summer, the resort serves as a winter gateway to more than 400



Above: A skier enjoys fresh powder on a run at Schweitzer Mountain Resort, in the Idaho Panhandle. Schweitzer is one of the state's largest ski areas, with 92 runs and 2,900 acres of skiable terrain.

Below: A hiker explores the Snake River National Recreation Trail in part of Hells Canyon, the nation's deepest river gorge and a favorite recreation area for anglers, boaters and campers.



LEFT: WILLIAM MULLINS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; RIGHT: BEN HERNDON / TANDEMSTOCK.COM

miles of snowmobile trails, many overlooking the lake.

Another fun winter location is **Lake Coeur d'Alene**, where the Holiday Light Show, one of the nation's largest, with more than 1.5 million lights, glows along the waterfront of The Coeur d'Alene Resort from Thanksgiving to January 3.

As the snow melts and you start longing to hit the golf fairways and greens again, spoil yourself with the resort's world-



A snow owl sculpture from a past McCall Winter Carnival; the 2016 carnival will be January 29 to February 7.

class accommodations and picturesque golf course, which is home to the par-3 14th hole with its floating green. Players ride a watercraft to reach the putting surface.

If you're in need of top-quality outdoor equipment, travel east to **Post Falls** where the Buck Knives company offers factory tours year-round. Four generations of the Buck family have been making knives since 1902.

Lewiston: Confluence of rivers and industry
The **Clearwater River** flows into the **Snake River** in the town of Lewiston, before the Snake rolls on toward the Columbia River. That confluence makes Lewiston perfectly situated as a recreation launching pad for boating, fishing and hiking. Some of the world's premier jetboats are built in Lewiston

and tested upriver in the aptly named **Hells Canyon**, North America's deepest river gorge, when measured from the tallest of the **Seven Devils Mountains** that soar to the east of the canyon. The gorge warms earlier in the spring than many parts of Idaho, so whitewater rafting begins as early as May.

During winter, anglers usually have great luck casting for steelhead on the Clearwater, and spring runs of chinook salmon are also a major draw.

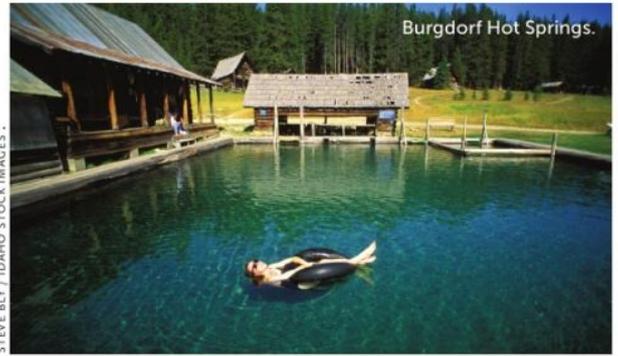
History buffs will enjoy exploring the Lewis and Clark sites in the area, as well as following the **Nez Perce Historical Trail**, which talks about the origins of the people who call themselves the Nimi'ipuu and are widely known as the Nez Perce Tribe.

Through January 2, 2016, Lewiston is bright with holiday excitement, thanks to the Winter Spirit light show at Locomotive Park, which uses 500,000 lights to create a winter wonderland.

McCall: Activities for each season

There is no shortage of boating, fishing and hiking year-round in McCall and the nearby Central Idaho wilderness.

However, this is a place that also thrives when the temperatures drop. One of the state's premier cold-weather festivals, the **McCall Winter Carnival**



STEVE BLY / IDAHO STOCK IMAGES

When you go

► **The Atlanta School:** This architecture and arts school is located northeast of Boise at the southern end of the Sawtooth Mountains. It offers spring and summer classes on a variety of subjects, including cooking, painting and much more. Participants stay in restored 1880s-era mining cabins—no running water, no electricity, and no cell reception.

► **Boise winter markets:** The Capital City Public Market and the Boise Farmers Market are open every Saturday from April to December 19. The markets offer winter options for food lovers and those shopping for presents. The markets also celebrate the holidays with special events.

► **Burgdorf Hot Springs:** The natural mineral hot springs, near historic and rustic lodging, are located outside McCall and are open for most of the year (closed through December 17). The resort can be reached by snowmobile in the winter. Burgdorf Hot Springs is where many locals go for a relaxing and quiet getaway.

► **Hobo Cedar Grove Botanical Area:** Located in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest, the grove of old-growth western red cedar trees is estimated to be 500 years old. The area offers picnic benches and trails that meander among these cedar giants. —G.H.



a few of my
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(January 29–February 7, 2016) fills the streets of this town on the shores of Payette Lake with giant and elaborate ice sculptures being admired by families prepared for low temperatures.

Some 320 inches of base snow on average draws skiers from around the region to Brundage Mountain Resort, just a few miles north of McCall. Ponderosa State Park offers scenic Nordic skiing, with postcard views of the lake.

Pamper yourself at the swanky and historic Shore Lodge, or enjoy a taste of old timber-town ambiance by stopping by the Foresters Club for a beer. Craft-brew aficionados have a few choices as well, with one favorite being the Salmon River Brewery.

Sun Valley: A historic mountain retreat

Of course, no downhill, Nordic or après-ski fan in the country should miss the original winter resort experience that has lured Hollywood celebrities and giants of industry for decades.

Anchored by the world-class skiing at the **Sun Valley Resort**, a winter excursion into Idaho's most famous outdoor playground also offers you the opportunity to visit the nearby town of **Ketchum**, shop at fashionable designer stores, hang out with the locals over a schooner of beer and one of the best burgers in Idaho at Grumpy's, and see Nobel Prize-winning author Ernest Hemingway's grave (many leave copies of his books, flowers or even adult beverages at the site).

December is a magical time at Sun Valley Resort, which is always beautifully decorated. But when spring blooms in south-central Idaho, Sun Valley delivers options for everyone: spring skiing, long and beautiful bike rides, excellent trout fishing and much more.

Boise: A dynamic capital

As one of America's fastest-growing cities, Boise is indicative of the overall changes happening throughout Idaho.

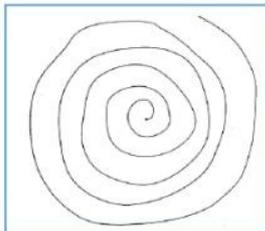
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► The iconic Ketchum restaurant, Grumpy's, is famous for its half-pound hamburgers, which are considered by many to be among Idaho's best and feature a "secret sauce." The french fries are, of course, made from the finest Idaho potatoes.



Known as a high-tech hub and the home of **Boise State University**, Idaho's capital city is also becoming a **craft-beer center**, with nearly 20 area brewers using hops grown in the region to produce beers that are served in regional tap-rooms, bars and restaurants.

Local wineries are also on the rise. The **Snake River Valley American Viticultural Area** stretches from Hells Canyon to near Twin Falls and is the state's first appellation. About 30 wineries are located throughout the region, with a number of them around the Boise area.



BOISE FRY CO.

The popular local restaurants Boise Fry Company and Guru Donuts share a space in downtown Boise.

Three of the finest local labels, Cinder, Coiled and Telaya, currently share a converted warehouse in the Boise area's **Garden City**. Next year, Coiled and Telaya will open a new shared space near the Boise River. On the food scene, two of Boise's favorite restaurants, Guru Donuts and The Boise Fry Company, share an innovative new space.

Boise's reputation as an arts destination is also on the rise. The homegrown music, technology and arts festival, **Treafort Music Fest**, brings more than 400 bands and thousands of fans to downtown Boise each March. The up-and-coming dance troupe LED—created by musician Andrew Stensaas and dancer Lauren Edson—combines live music and modern dance.

Despite its growth in recent years,

Boise remains true to its outdoorsy roots. You can still fly-fish in the Boise River, just blocks from the **Idaho State Capitol Building**, hike the Boise Foothills and ski at the nearby Bogus Basin Ski Area.

Like Idaho itself, Boise is a sophisticated place that still retains a wild side. And that's just the way we natives like it. **GNW**

Greg Hahn writes from Boise, Idaho.

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MONTANA

Winter's Gifts Under the Big Sky

BY ALAN KESSELHEIM

▶ Last time I was at Lone Mountain Ranch in Big Sky, Montana, for the sleigh-ride dinner, I met the draft horse team, Curly and Larry. My brother-in-law, Paul, manages the horse teams in the winter, and he took me to the barn for a face-to-face. The massive horses looked up when I approached. Their velvet noses grazed my hand, searching out the carrot chunks I held in my palm. They stood calmly in the twilight barn—colossal animal engines of tremendous power.

Later, on the sleigh ride, Paul stopped the team for a break at the top of a rise. With guests of the ranch bundled up against the cold, and Curly and Larry shifting in the harness, and the sharp stars glinting like snowflakes in the blackness, it struck me again—as it often has in more than three decades of living in the state—how Montana's winter, which can be forbidding and bitter, can also be its season of deepest rewards.

Of course, Montana is spectacular in any season. No matter where you travel in the Big Sky state, or what time of year you visit, there are rich experiences to enjoy. From Big Sky to

Kalispell, and from Missoula to the Great Falls of the Missouri River, you'll find trails to ski or hike, rivers to raft or fish, extraordinary dining, and museums and cultural sites that highlight regional art and celebrate the state's history. The following is a winter-slanted sampling of the great and varied experiences Montana has to offer.

Enjoy Rustic Dining

Every evening during snow season, longtime Montanans and visitors who embrace winter find a seasonal culinary adventure in **Big Sky**, about 40 miles southwest of Bozeman.

At **Lone Mountain Ranch**, wranglers hitch up the horses, continuing a tradition that goes back more than 35 years. The ranch itself is celebrating its centennial this year, having been homesteaded in 1915.

As night deepens, sleighs creak along the snowy trail, blanketed in near-fathomless silence, to the North Fork cabin, a place that feels like a throwback to the homestead era. Once inside, guests cozy up at family-style tables with checked tablecloths and oil lamps.



Prime rib dinners may be followed by pie, with live performances by cowboy musicians. Outside, the temperature may be near zero, but inside, the atmosphere is warmed by hearty food, spirited music and cheerful conversation.

Farther up the road—near **Big Sky Resort**, a renowned skiing destination—another dining option draws visitors to the Montana Dinner Yurt. Motorized snow-coach vehicles depart from the resort's base



More Great MT Activities ...

- ▶ Tour Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park, outside Three Forks, west of Bozeman (cave tours are May through September, with candle-light tours on select dates in December).
- ▶ Fly-fish a classic stretch of river, such as the Gallatin or Madison near Bozeman, or the

Yellowstone near Billings (April–September, ideally).

▶ Visit the Montana Historical Society Museum, adjacent to the Capitol in Helena.

▶ Enjoy summertime golf at public courses such as Whitefish Lake Golf Club (Whitefish) or Old Works Golf Club (Anaconda; via Bozeman, Missoula or Helena).



COURTESY: LONE MOUNTAIN RANCH

Left: A sleigh ride at Lone Mountain Ranch, in Big Sky, southwest of Bozeman, is a classic wintertime activity, with associated dinner tours available.

Below left: The Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts, which has operated in Helena since 1951, lets visitors watch artists at work and offers works for sale.



RACHEL HICKS, COURTESY: ARCHIE BRAY FOUNDATION

area, carrying guests to a torch-lit sledding hill and campfire. The three-course, candlelight dinner, inside the wood-stove comfort of the yurt, features a main dish of filet mignon with peppercorn sauce and is accompanied by live acoustic guitar. Diners are surrounded by more than 5,800 acres of ski terrain cascading off the flanks of the area's picturesque pyramid, Lone Peak. Big Sky Resort is an experience not to be missed.

Watch Artists at Work

From a distance, the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts, on the northwest side of Helena, looks like a ramshackle industrial site. Close up, it is a whimsical enclave of artists-in-residence who work in buildings once used by the Western Clay Manufacturing Company.

Founded in 1951 by patron of the arts Archie Bray, who envisioned for ceramic artists "a fine place to work," the "Bray" is home to a storied tradition of ceramic artists. Studios, classrooms, a gallery and a clay-manufacturing operation are spread across the 26-acre site. Fantastic ceramic work beautifies the grounds; tours are provided; and artists share their

► Take a hike with magnificent scenery in Glacier National Park, accessed via Kalispell.

► Enjoy historic downtown Bozeman, with its restaurants, shops, galleries, and events such as the Sweet Pea Festival (in August).

► Near Billings, tour Pictograph State Park, home to 2,000-year-old rock art. —A.K.



COURTESY: LONE MOUNTAIN RANCH

Tour West Yellowstone by Coach

► Ride a warm, comfortable snow machine from West Yellowstone (90 miles south of Bozeman, on Highway 191) into the winter heart of Yellowstone National Park. View Old Faithful, where the world's most famous geyser gushes regularly; where stoic, frost-coated bison weather the season; and where America's first National Park reveals its crystalline winter grandeur. —A.K.

stories. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Holiday Exhibition and Sale showcases the work of artists-in-residence.

Ski Among Glaciers

Of the dozens of cross-country trails in Glacier National Park, those that start at the Polebridge entrance gate may be the most intriguing. Access is via the thriving alpine-and-Nordic ski town of Whitefish—a destination in itself, including Whitefish Mountain Resort, about 20 miles north of Kalispell.

The small, remote community of Polebridge lies just south of the Canadian border along the North Fork of the Flathead River. The 45-mile drive from Whitefish to Polebridge, up the broad valley that marks the western border of the national park, is visually stunning, especially in winter. The Polebridge Mercantile and Bakery, where skiers fuel up on hot drinks and baked goods, is due to reopen in January 2016, with winter weekend hours (and the store now has a Whitefish branch).

Trails begin across the river at the gate. The park road's "alpine section" is

Polebridge Mercantile and Bakery (in Polebridge and Whitefish) tempts guests with delicious baked goods.



COURTESY: POLEBRIDGE MERCANTILE

Great Northwest



◀ The C.M. Russell Museum pays homage to Charlie Russell. Chief Plenty Coups' cabin (right) stands at Chief Plenty Coups State Park.



also closed to cars in winter. Ski routes lead to Bowman Lake, Lone Pine Prairie and Big Prairie in loops, 3 to 12 miles long, with grand vistas and terrain for varied skill levels.

Explore History and Art

Lewis and Clark spent many days toiling around the giant cascades of the Great Falls

of the Missouri River in a grueling, 18-mile portage that tested the endurance of the Corps of Discovery.

Near the modern-day town of **Great Falls**, the **Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center** extols the expedition's adventure. The venue features replica dug-out canoes, journal excerpts, a theater, and

educational programs that illuminate American West exploration, as well as regional Indian history. Outside, a **river-side walkway-bikeway** winds upstream into town.

In the center of Great Falls, the **C.M. Russell Museum** pays homage to Charles (Charlie) Russell, Montana's favorite-son cowboy artist and social commentator—famous for his landscapes, portraits, sculptures and stories. In addition to Russell's home and log studio, the museum holds an extensive collection of his paintings, sketches, letters and memorabilia, as well as the works of other prominent American West artists, such as painter-illustrator O.C. Seltzer.

Tour the Bitterroot Valley

Highway 93 winds south from **Missoula** along the course of the cottonwood-lined Bitterroot River and the **Nez Perce (Ne-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail**, some 90 miles, to the Idaho border. Paralleling the snowcapped Bitterroot Range to the west, the history-rich route is worthwhile for its scenery alone.

A short side trip west on Highway 12 leads to **Lolo Hot Springs**—along Lewis and Clark's westbound route—where a centuries-long tradition of soaking in mineral baths continues.

Snowmobile trails lead off from there into hundreds of miles of backcountry. A drive through the **Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge** highlights diverse wildlife, including moose, beaver, pileated woodpeckers, foxes and sandhill cranes. And small-town charm punctuated by bookstores, cafes and art galleries makes for an enjoyable stop in the **community of Hamilton**.

Experience the Billings Area

Legend has it that Chief Plenty Coups—the visionary leader of the Crow tribe who lived from 1848 to 1932—dreamed about a natural spring where he would build a cabin and live out his days. In 1883, as he traveled north of the Pryor Mountains

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Great Northwest

(near the just-founded town of **Billings**), he stumbled across the spring from his dream, and true to the vision, a simple cabin was built for him to live there. The spring still bubbles out from under the spreading roots of a huge cottonwood tree near Pryor Creek, and Plenty Coups' cabin still stands at the site, which has become **Chief Plenty Coups State Park**, and a National Historic Landmark, complete with a visitor center and museum, walking trails and picnic grounds. About 30 miles south of Billings, the small park on the edge of Crow Country is a peaceful and evocative reminder of Indian culture and history in the West.

In downtown Billings, the **Yellowstone Art Museum** provides another cultural experience, celebrating regional art, hosting traveling exhibitions, and offering classes and activities. Permanent exhibits are defined by the Montana Collection, some 2,000 works of art inspired by the American West, as well as the Virginia Snook Collection of author-illustrator Will James' art. In early December, the annual **Winterfair** (December 4-5) at the museum adds another dimension to the Friday **downtown art walk** in Billings, and provides holiday shopping opportunities. The museum shop and downtown art galleries also offer year-round shopping.

WITH SUCH A WEALTH OF OPTIONS TO BE found in Montana, I know I'm lucky to live here. Fortunately for others, it's also easy to visit. Whether you're seeking outdoor adventures or indoor explorations of distinctive cultural, historical, artistic and culinary experiences, Montana is ready to provide—in this season of winter rewards, and beyond. The horses are hitched up and ready to go. **GNW**

Alan Kesselheim writes from Bozeman.

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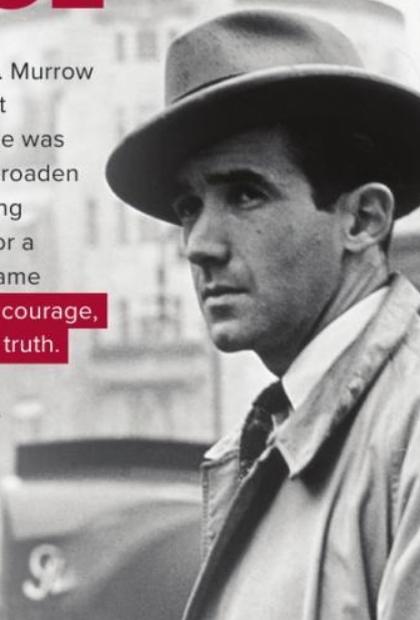


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Famed news broadcaster Edward R. Murrow discovered a world of possibilities at Washington State University. Here he was inspired to excel in the classroom, broaden his world view, and hone his speaking skills. That created the foundation for a 25-year career in which Murrow's name became synonymous with **personal courage, integrity, and an unending quest for truth.**

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A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue and green patterned tank top and blue shorts with green trim, stands on a balcony. She is looking out over a vast landscape of vineyards and mountains under a clear blue sky. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

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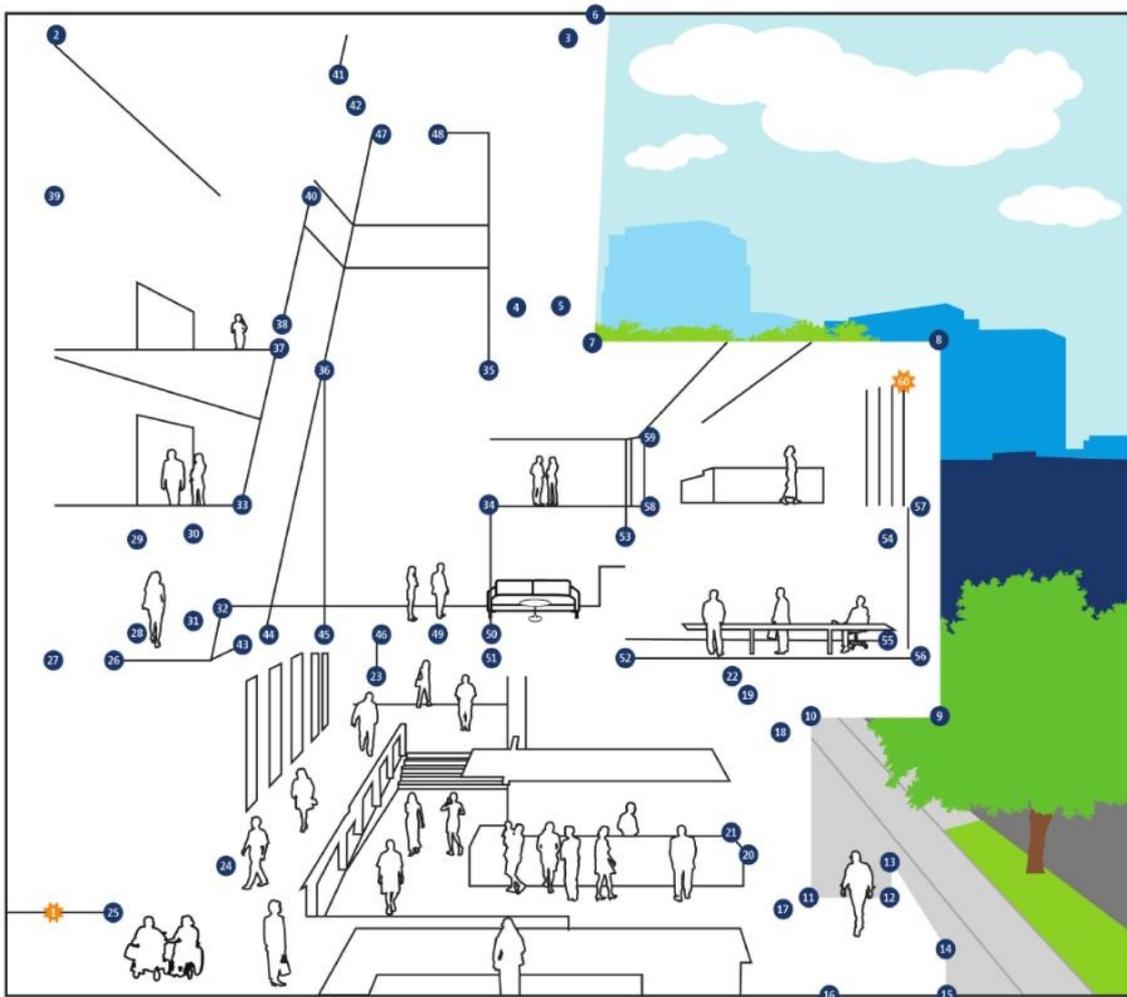
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BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dining, Innovation and Tradition

BY ERIC LUCAS

▶ One of the highest-profile new restaurants in Vancouver has as many facets as a cut-glass chalice. **Bauhaus Restaurant** is in Gastown, a historic part of the city now enjoying a 21st century heyday as a dining and nightlife district. The restaurant is in a building with exposed brick, massive timbers, ductwork high above and polished metal fixtures. It's named for an early-20th century German design school that is still relevant a century later.

A quote on the wall from Bauhaus School founder Walter Gropius fends off skepticism about the restaurant's unusual focus on modern German food: "The mind is like an umbrella; it functions best when open."

British Columbia has been a star of global cuisine for the past 20 years. Restaurants in Vancouver and Victoria pio-

neered a style of cooking called West Coast that blends the province's lavish array of fresh ingredients with its diverse cultural flavors—Asian, First Nations, Continental. Gourmets travel over continents and oceans to savor innovative meals at famous B.C. culinary shrines such as Vij's, Blue Water Cafe and West.

But now there's a move to reinvigorate classics, and Bauhaus epitomizes the trend: The menu includes German standards such as sauerbraten and wiener schnitzel, items that have appeared on very few B.C. menus for years. And, in keeping with the province's embrace of innovation, the foundations of German cuisine have been entertainingly stretched by Michelin star-winning chef Stefan Hartmann. For instance, halibut arrives in an Asian-style



SYDNEY LOW

Bauhaus Executive Chef Stefan Hartmann revisits classic German dishes, such as chicken fricassee with roasted market vegetables.

white porcelain bowl. The fish is lightly seared, atop a bed of sauerkraut with blood sausage and apple puree. The sauerkraut and sausage enliven the fish, and the apple puree contrasts nicely with the tart underpinning. Old and new, in one serving bowl.

A back-to-the-future reinvention of classics is the province's culinary direction, according to B.C. food guru Eric Pateman. "It's where the market is going," says Pateman, founder and president of Edible Canada, a culinary tourism operator, retailer and restaurant company. "Today's menus are far less

aimed in the direction of recent trends such as molecular gastronomy, far more toward old-school dining."

Many B.C. restaurants illustrate the revival of fine dining:

- **Hy's Steakhouse**, a mid-century stalwart in downtown Vancouver, recently remodeled its chophouse-style interior to add glitz and glamour, and it beefed up its drama with new offerings such as steak Diane (flambéed while you watch), chateaubriand and bananas Foster. "We wanted to enhance the extra sense of ceremony surrounding our meals," says Hy's spokesman, Paul Done.



Hy's Steakhouse, in Vancouver, uses only Prime Grade Canadian beef, cut in-house, dry-aged a minimum of 28 days, and grilled carefully over mesquite charcoal.

Great Northwest



The albacore tuna tacone (a taco rolled into a cone) is a highlight at Vancouver's Red Fish Blue Fish.

REBECCA WELLMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Other B.C. Attractions

► Both Vancouver and Victoria have museums with world-class collections of **First Nations art and artifacts**. These are prime attractions any time of the year.

► The **Vancouver Art Gallery** just received a huge donation of modern and historic indigenous art. The gallery's Gund Collection includes work by famous artists such as Bill Reid and Robert Davidson. Highlights are on display through January 31; vanartgallery.bc.ca.

► Nearby, the **Bill Reid Gallery** is showing "Gwaii Haanas: Land Sea People" through March 27. This exhibit depicts Haida and other Canadian artists' reverence for their homeland; billreidgallery.ca.

► The city's **UBC Museum of Anthropology** displays a vast set of Northwest Coast Art: masks, totems and more; moa.ubc.ca.

► Vancouver's **Stanley Park** has hiking, biking and beachcombing

year-round; vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture.aspx.

► Vancouver residents and guests enjoy snow at three ski areas north of town: **Cypress Mountain, Grouse Mountain and Mount Seymour**; tourismvancouver.com.



This argillite platter (c. 1880–90) from the Vancouver Art Gallery depicts Wasco, a sea wolf of Haida legend.

► In Victoria, the **Royal BC Museum** has galleries dedicated to First Nations culture, including a longhouse, and many works by leading artists; royalbcmuseum.bc.ca.

► The **Art Gallery of Greater Victoria** features works by B.C.'s own Emily Carr; aggv.ca.

► Victoria's 34-mile **Galloping Goose Regional Trail** leads through parks and countryside; tourismvictoria.com. —E.L.



FAIRMONT EMPRESS

▲ Visitors to the Empress Room at Victoria's Fairmont Empress hotel dine in old-fashioned sumptuous style.

• The December menu at **Shaughnessy**, at VanDusen Botanical Garden, includes lamb shank, an old standard (though the update here is that it is Thai-braised).

• Another Vancouver destination, **Bishop's**, has always been a fine-dining stalwart. Proprietor John Bishop can still be found greeting guests; and white linen, silver, and crystal glassware have always graced the tables. The current Classics menu includes clams on the half shell, roast chicken breast and "Death By Chocolate."

• Possibly the most popular restaurant in Victoria, **Red Fish Blue Fish** offers a staple of dining throughout the former British Empire: fish-and-chips. RFBF, as the restaurant is known, is open seasonally (it reopens in mid-February 2016) and draws many people to the waterfront. Its fast-food meals present West Coast twists on classics—such as fried tempura batter on sustainably harvested salmon, cod and halibut.

• Nearby, at the Fairmont Empress hotel's **Empress Room**, classic elegance has remained standard fare. And a "Royal Table" add-on brings silver cloches and candelabras, customized wine selections and chef's favors to the table.

There is still ample room for innovation. **Blue Water Cafe**, the premier Vancouver seafood restaurant, has Arctic char with seaweed and trout caviar, as well as sauteed scallops with candied ginger and a wild rice cake. **Hawthorn Restaurant**, the high-end bistro in Vancouver's Hotel Georgia, blends pan-roasted sablefish (black cod) with lentils and cauliflower, and glazes duck breast with tamari and macadamia nuts—a perfect illustration of the multicultural flavor of a West Coast approach.

At Bauhaus, the goal stated before opening was for the restaurant to be the No. 1 restaurant in Vancouver, according to dining columnist Alexandra Gill, of *The Globe and Mail*. And Gill has called the restaurant "a modern German fine-dining classic unlike anything else."

Subtract the word *German* and you could apply that phrase to much of B.C. cuisine. A venerable song reminds us that everything old is new again—in this case, marvelously so. **GNW**

Eric Lucas is contributing editor.

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RACHEL TOPHAM / VANCOUVER ART GALLERY



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During this holiday season, all of the principals at Patterson Buchanan hope that your travels are smooth and that you are blessed, as are we, with wonderful people to surround you. We wish you prosperity and hope, now and in the coming year.



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Optimizing your financial well-being

By M. Sharon Baker

As you enjoy festivities this month and look forward to the year ahead, it may also be a good time to give yourself the gift of enhancing your financial plan. The following tips from expert advisers can help you reach your financial goals.

Be aware of opportunities

Consider what you might do in December and in the year ahead to maximize financial opportunities. For example, you may be interested in charitable giving this month. If so, make sure you charge the gift to your credit card or mail your check before the end of the year so that you can claim the deduction for the 2015 tax year. (See irs.gov for more information on qualified charitable giving. Also ensure that you have an IRS-accepted way of proving 2015 delivery of your donation.)

If you're able to contribute more to your Health Savings Account before the end of the year, you may want to do so, since those funds can roll over year-to-year. If you have a Health Care Flexible Spending Account, determine whether you've spent all the money in it for this year. Depending on what option your employer offers, some or all

of the money you contributed this year might not be eligible to roll over to next year. You might lose the money if you don't use it for 2015 expenses.

Evaluate your contributions to your 401(k) plan (especially whether you are contributing at least up to the amount of employer matching) or to your IRA or Roth IRA. Are you able to contribute more money to these plans this year or next year toward your retirement funding?

If you're getting a year-end bonus from your employer, determine whether it would be beneficial to use some of that money to pay down credit card debt or to make an additional house payment.

Also determine whether your stock portfolio is on track to meet target goals and is appropriately balanced, says Brian Whitaker, a client adviser at Laird Norton Wealth Management who includes stock-portfolio assessments in his annual reviews with clients.

A balanced portfolio is one that has the right mix of assets to provide for your specific needs in terms of liquidity, cash flow and capital preservation, based on numerous factors, including your investment timeline and your dependents' needs.

A balanced portfolio also includes asset classes that mitigate risks such as the market going down, rising interest rates, deflation and falling value of the U.S. dollar.



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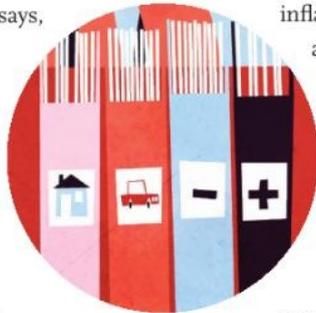
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And if you have been astute enough to boost your stock gains by selling high after buying low, you may also want to sell some of your declining stocks before the end of this year to lower your income tax. “Many of our clients have benefited from cashing in on the rising stocks of Northwest technology companies such as Amazon,” Whitaker says, “and as we get to the end of the year, they may have a desire or need to significantly reduce their tax bill. In December, we still have a window in which to sell some investments at a loss to offset some of those gains.”



Analyze how you are spending your money

Next, turn your attention to your spending and savings plans for 2016. Experts suggest reviewing all your financial accounts—bank, stock, 401(k), credit card, mortgage, life insurance, etc.—at the end of the current year or the start of the new year. Gather all the latest statements; check your online balances; and record your assets and debts on a single piece of paper or on a spreadsheet to gain a current financial picture and see where you want to make adjustments.

A 50-something Seattle couple, Michelle and Andy, note that their annual financial review is one of the most important things they do as a couple. “We started keeping track of our spending in 1994 when we got married, and we look at it at the end of each year, and quarterly, to make sure our spending doesn’t get out of control,” Michelle says.

The annual review includes comparing the current year’s expenditures to their average spending over the prior decade; creating a budget for the year ahead, including trips

they want to take; and doing a detailed assessment of their retirement funds.

Michelle tracks their spending in Quicken throughout each year and uses several Excel spreadsheets for analysis, including one devoted to retirement income. “It calculates our retirement funds, adjusted for inflation and a 5 percent assumption of growth in the portfolio, and tells us how we’re doing based on what we plan to pull out, going to when we are both 100,” she says.

While she and Andy represent the ideal for financial review and planning, it’s helpful to do even a scaled-back version. For example, if reviewing past expenditures seems too daunting, start by tracking your spending for the first month to three months of the new year to get a better picture of where your money goes.

Also remember to factor in quarterly, semiannual and annual expenses, such as home and car insurance, and property taxes. Divide each of those expenses into an amount to put away each month so you’ll have the payments already saved by the time you need them.

Some couples also have budget categories for items such as home maintenance, car repairs and health care that they contribute to each month, so if something comes up, at least a portion of the money is already available.

“Most people are surprised to learn where they have leakage or money going to areas that aren’t extremely important to them or aligned with their goals,” says Todd Pietzsch, a spokesman for BECU, a Seattle-based credit union serving

Washington state residents.

Various tools are available to help you track your spending, such as Quicken and Mint.com, and your financial institution also may have a useful app, such as BECU’s Money Manager (becu.org/everyday-banking/bank-anywhere/money-manager). Money Manager allows you to view all your accounts—not just BECU accounts—in one place to track spending and debts, set up alerts and create a budget, among other financial tools.

When you look at where your money is going, keep these general rules of thumb in mind to see how you measure up to what many advisers consider ideal:

- Do you have three to six months of your pay saved as an emergency fund?
- Is your mortgage or housing payment (including principal, interest, taxes and insurance) less than 28 percent of your gross monthly income?
- Is your total debt-to-income ratio no more than 38 percent?
- Are you being careful not to overextend yourself when it comes to credit card debt? If you’re not able to routinely pay off your credit card bill in full each month to ensure you’re not charged interest, it usually



makes sense not to utilize more than 10 percent (preferable) to 25 percent (at most) of your total available credit card limits. For instance, if you have two credit cards, and the credit limit on one is \$20,000, and the credit limit on the other is \$35,000, it would be prudent not to use more than 10 percent of \$55,000—or \$5,500.

Too often, Pietzsch says, he sees people running up credit card debt, using 80 to 90 percent or more of their limits, or buying items that are

more expensive than would be advisable. “If you have a young family, you may want your kids to have the nicest clothes or live in a bigger house—it’s hard for many to visualize that achieving medium-term and longer-term goals may provide more gratification in the long run.”

Align spending and saving with your financial goals

Once you see where your money is going, the next step is to review whether that spending and saving are aligned with your short-term, mid-term and long-term goals. “I don’t like the word ‘budgeting’ because it makes us feel like we are constrained,” Pietzsch



says. “I prefer to look at it as a spending plan. You have limited income, so how are you going to put it to work for you?”

Short-term goals might include monthly savings toward vacation travel in 2016 or 2017. Mid-term goals might include saving for a car. Long-term goals might be saving for a home, or a vacation home, or a dream trip, or for retirement.

One Puget Sound-area woman was surprised to discover how much she was spending on scrapbooking each month. She adjusted her spending plan by creating a not-to-exceed monthly amount for her hobby so that she could put more money away for key goals such as returning to college to get a graduate degree in a few years when her three sons were older.

“Align your spending with your goals—prioritize what money can be redirected or sums modified to help you achieve those goals,” Pietzsch says. “Remember, if you don’t live within your means, you will snowball your debt, and it will catch up with you.”

Once you’ve established a spending plan aligned with your goals, review your actual spending monthly to make sure you’re on track.

Make saving automatic

Part of any spending plan should include setting aside money for savings. Nadia Allaudin, a financial adviser with Merrill Lynch, a Bank of America company, says the easiest way to save money is to make it automatic. Set a dollar amount that’s automatically deducted from your paycheck and directed to a savings account. You can also have your financial institution automatically transfer



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As a rule of thumb, you will need 85 percent of your pre-retirement income to maintain your current lifestyle when you retire.

money each month from your checking to your savings account.

In addition, you can use tools such as the Merrill Edge Automated Funding Service, which lets you automate contributions to a Merrill Edge IRA from another account at Merrill Edge or at Bank of America or at other financial institutions. (Merrill Edge is the online brokerage for Bank of America/Merrill Lynch.)

To help you figure out how much to save for major goals such as retirement, you can consult online calculators such as the Merrill Edge Personal

Retirement Calculator (merrilledge.com/retirement/personal-retirement-calculator). It explains that as a rule of thumb, you will need 85 percent of your preretirement income to maintain your current lifestyle, and it provides a hypothetical estimate—based on factors such as your current age, salary and retirement savings, and the monthly amount you're putting away for retirement—of how much you'll need to save.

People having a hard time saving any money should start small, Allaudin says. For instance, save \$50 or even just \$25 a month. "Saving money doesn't have to be in \$1,000 blocks. Just make sure you make the commitment and habit of saving," she says.

Savings can be obtained in more ways than simply cutting back, Allaudin adds, such as paying attention to

interest rates on credit cards and reducing that debt, shopping for the best deals, reinvesting interest and dividends, and banking any gifts you get from relatives.

Make annual reviews a priority

Get in the habit of making time at the end of the current year and the dawn of the new year to review your finances and make adjustments. People who carve out time to track spending and find ways to boost their savings reap the rewards as they age, Allaudin points out.

"Clients who have managed their spending are typically thriving in their retirements," she says. ■

Writer M. Sharon Baker lives in the Seattle area. This story is for general information only. Be sure to consult qualified financial experts for information specific to your situation.

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Good Financial Strategies

Sharon Gueck, a portfolio manager and financial planner with Becker Capital Management in Portland, Oregon, says that it's easy for people to make some basic financial mistakes each year. Below are some strategies that can help you be more financially fit in 2016.

Contribute enough to your IRA, Roth IRA or company-sponsored retirement plan:

Making regular contributions to your retirement-savings vehicle is one of the most effective ways you can save for retirement. A good rule of thumb is to invest up to 10 percent of your pre-tax income, to the available limits. If you can afford to invest more than 10 percent, including catch-up contributions as permitted, that may be a good idea. If your company offers a voluntary tax-deferred retirement plan, make sure you contribute up to the corporate matching amount.

Have an emergency fund: Maintaining an adequate emergency fund is important at any age. These funds should be held in highly liquid cash accounts and should cover a minimum of three months, and preferably six months, of living expenses.

Don't pay for children's education in lieu of saving for retirement:

With the rising cost of college, many parents are put in the position of deciding between paying for school or saving for retirement. However, sacrificing retirement

dollars can negatively impact your future—you can't take out a loan to pay for your retirement—and can be financially detrimental to your children in the long run if they have to use significant amounts of their own income to take care of you.

Save enough for future living expenses:

Thanks to increased life expectancies, someone who retires at age 65 may need to fund 20 to 30 or more years of living and health-care expenses. That needs to be a key consideration in your financial planning.

Learn how to maximize Social Security benefits:

It might be tempting to start receiving Social Security checks as soon as you can, but you could be leaving a substantial amount of money on the table. There are many different strategies for maximizing your benefits, so ask a qualified adviser about your options, and start planning early.

Don't assume Medicare will adequately cover your health-care expenses after you reach age 65:

Because of expenses such as out-of-pocket costs related to Medicare coverage, most people will need to purchase supplemental insurance or a private health-care plan. This also needs to be factored into your financial plan. —M.S.B.



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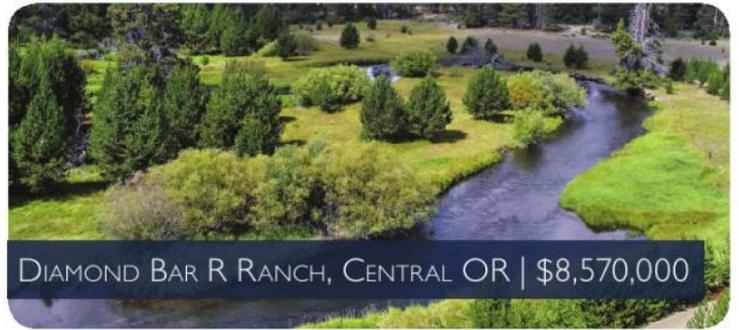


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A PLACE AT THE TABLE

ACROSS

- 1 Milan's La ____
- 6 Meadow sounds
- 10 Ski lift
- 14 Lets go
- 19 Parcel out
- 20 Monique's friend
- 21 Massive
- 22 Careful
- 23 Tether
- 24 Radial
- 25 Readies the bubbly
- 26 Onslaught
- 27 Viewer's option
- 30 Troop formation
- 32 Had a little lamb
- 33 Not morn
- 34 Spread to dry
- 35 When Macbeth kills Duncan
- 37 Somme summer
- 38 Bedecks
- 40 Record
- 45 Crowfoot
- 50 Stable bit
- 51 Guarantee
- 52 Black cuckoos
- 53 Greek island
- 54 Blueprint
- 56 The Mikado, e.g.
- 57 Under the weather
- 58 Less together
- 60 Word-of-mouth
- 61 Some
- 62 Orderly
- 65 Quotable collection
- 66 Brahmputra state
- 68 Pool member
- 69 Kind of dive
- 73 Honks
- 77 List starter
- 79 Physics abbr.
- 80 Chemistry Nobelist Calvin
- 81 Luxury resort
- 84 "Batman" actress
- 85 Actium victor
- 88 Bullring shout
- 89 North Atlantic birds
- 91 Xenophanes' birthplace
- 92 Galahad's title
- 93 Guilty or not guilty
- 94 Gofer's assignment
- 95 Fink
- 96 Hay mover
- 98 Hurts
- 99 Norwegian island
- 102 The NRC replaced it
- 103 "The Balcony" playwright
- 105 Suffer
- 106 Pen
- 107 Medallion ribbon
- 110 Turkish gulf
- 114 Music milieu
- 118 "____ Doone"
- 119 Bruce's ex
- 121 Culture medium

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
19					20				21				22							
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27					28				29			30	31							
32				33			34			35	36									
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45	46	47				48	49			50			51							
52					53			54	55			56								
57					58			59				60				61				
62			63	64				65				66			67					
68					69	70				71	72			73		74	75	76		
			77						79				80							
81	82	83		84				85				86	87				88			
89			90					91				92				93				
94							95				96				97					
98							99			100	101			102						
				103				104					105			106		107	108	109
110	111	112	113					114	115				116					117		
118						119	120				121				122					
123							124					125			126					
127							128					129			130					

- 122 Isolated
- 123 Mine exits
- 124 Qom's country
- 125 Novelist Vidal
- 126 "Rawhide" character
- 127 Some trucks
- 128 Standing
- 129 Termini
- 130 Molts

DOWN

- 1 Chip dip
- 2 Traction provider
- 3 Winged
- 4 Finish second
- 5 Michael Jordan, e.g.
- 6 Paris quarter
- 7 Leave off
- 8 Bug
- 9 Started a lawn
- 10 Not that
- 11 Fifteenth president
- 12 ____ of Reason
- 13 Bowler's button
- 14 Beau Brummel

- 15 Netman Nastase
- 16 Virginia's dance
- 17 Thus
- 18 Tommy's gun
- 28 With suspicion
- 29 Altar answer
- 31 Theaters
- 36 Okla. zone
- 37 Movie-alien dolls
- 39 Elsa's reply
- 41 Lao-____
- 42 Nimbus
- 43 Sci-fi flick
- 44 Spooky
- 45 Lures
- 46 Dark
- 47 Senora's need?
- 48 Whisper sweet nothings
- 49 GI's hangout
- 54 Salmon variety
- 55 Trickle
- 56 Irish
- 59 D.C. group
- 60 Klutz
- 63 Business abbr.

- 64 Mirror
- 67 Tiny weight
- 69 Scribbles
- 70 Farm worker
- 71 Asta's mistress
- 72 "Richard ____"
- 74 Convex molding
- 75 Floor installer
- 76 Skulk
- 78 U.S. jurist
- 80 Strongly accented
- 81 Spout
- 82 Cat hum
- 83 "Hair" do
- 85 Female singer
- 86 Greek letter
- 87 Peach stone
- 90 Bleacher creature
- 91 Mortal
- 93 Army abbr.
- 95 AAA concern
- 96 Triangle, e.g.
- 97 High times
- 100 ____ de mer
- 101 Fodder

- 104 It's the pits
- 106 Lesions
- 107 "Shiloh" writer
- 108 Held the title
- 109 Sanctify
- 110 B.C.'s neighbor
- 111 Protuberance
- 112 Decorate
- 113 Not for
- 115 Barnyard sound
- 116 Precinct
- 117 Humdrum
- 120 Important time

Solution on page 68.



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SHARE A PHOTO of something that you discovered while exploring an Alaska Airlines destination. Whether you are an amateur or professional photographer, you may submit up to three images to *Alaska Beyond* and *Horizon Edition* magazines for our 2016 Photo Contest. Entries may include natural scenics, urban landscapes, wildlife shots or human-interest photos. In addition to awarding prizes for the top three photographs, the magazines will publish the top 10 photos in our May 2016 issues. **Entries must be postmarked by February 16, 2016.**



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22



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Puzzle on page 66.

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Roach says, “[but] I saw he didn’t have any shoes, so I gave him money anyway. He said, ‘Thank you: This [being given funds to buy shoes] is the nicest thing I ever had.’”

The CAYA program made a big impression on Roach, who hopes to study mechanical engineering in college. “Once I earn my degree, I plan to go back to Nicaragua to start programs to teach them what I’ve been taught, how to find help into a career,” he says. He will learn this spring if he has received a CSF scholarship, and if that doesn’t pan out, CSF will help him apply to other funding sources, Hayden says.

Elwis Johnson, now a vice president with a corner office at a Puget Sound-area financial institution, was a 2001 graduate of one of the 16 original CSF-supported high schools. In his senior year of high school, when he first learned about CSF, he was fortunate to already have an acceptance letter



Elwis Johnson.

COURTESY COLLEGE SUCCESS FOUNDATION

from Washington State University, but he didn’t see how he could afford to attend. “I couldn’t pay, so I assumed I wasn’t going.”

When CSF awarded him a scholarship, everything changed, he says. He began studying harder and looking forward to a better future. “The scholarship put the pedal to the metal.”

The first two years of college didn’t go well for Johnson, who was pursuing a marketing degree. He overloaded his schedule, nearly failed, and had to retake some courses in summer school. “I was struggling. I thought about dropping out. It was the CSF adviser who convinced me to stay in.”

The adviser, Pam Gant, helped Johnson revise his course load, and after Johnson received his bachelor’s degree in 2006, she helped him write a resume and cover letters for job applications. “She even taught me

how to negotiate salary when I went to interviews,” says Johnson. He has, in turn, helped other students. From 2006 to 2009, he served on the CSF Alumni Board, and this year he began co-teaching, with CSF’s Riley Haggard, a series of classes on financial goal setting for adults who participated in CSF programs when they were high school and college students. “CSF helped make me who I am today,” Johnson says.

While college completion is not a guarantee of economic prosperity, CSF believes it is the best pathway to opportunity. “If we don’t see college completion, we’re not successful,” Haggard says, adding that if a generational cycle of poverty

is to be broken, the final leg of the CSF pipeline should include passing on the education legacy.

Zuri Cambron encouraged her brother, Luis, three years her junior, to follow her example. He visited her while she was at

college, and she counseled him to apply for CSF’s Achievers Scholars program and work toward postsecondary education.

Her persistence paid off. Luis received a CSF-administered scholarship and went on to graduate from the University of Washington this year with a bachelor’s degree in medical anthropology and global health.

“Now I mentor my cousins,” Zuri Cambron says. “I tell them: ‘You, too, can go to college, travel, do all the things you see me doing.’”

“We strongly believe that a college education creates opportunity,” says CSF CEO Yolanda Watson Spiva. “The ZIP code into which a child is born should not be a predictor of his or her future success.” ■

Scott Driscoll lives in the Seattle area. For more information on the College Success Foundation, visit collegesuccessfoundation.org.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A2	Onboard Amenities	A4–A6	Route Maps
A3	For Your Safety	A7	Customs and Immigration Forms
A3	alaskaair.com	A7	Airport Gate Location Maps
A3	Mileage Plan™		

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- › Remote-control toys
- › Electronic cigarettes

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Alcohol may not be consumed unless it has been provided by a Flight Attendant.

Cellphones may be used while the boarding door is open until advised by your Flight Attendant that cell service must be turned off. Upon landing, your Flight Attendant will advise when cell service can be enabled.

Headphones must be worn when using portable electronic devices that produce sound.

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Please join our effort to reduce our environmental footprint by separating recyclable paper, cardboard, plastic, glass and aluminum, and passing these items to flight attendants for recycling in participating locations. Thank you.



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Alaska Airlines is proud to serve more than 100 destinations throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and Central America. On routes that require a connection to one of our partners, we strive to make your journey as easy as possible by taking care of your bag transfer and providing assistance at any stage of your journey.

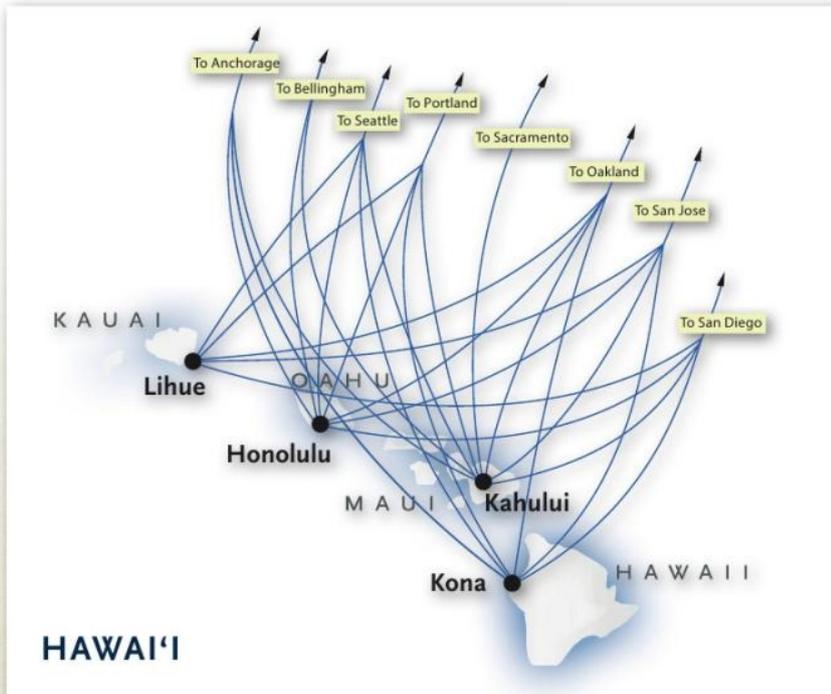
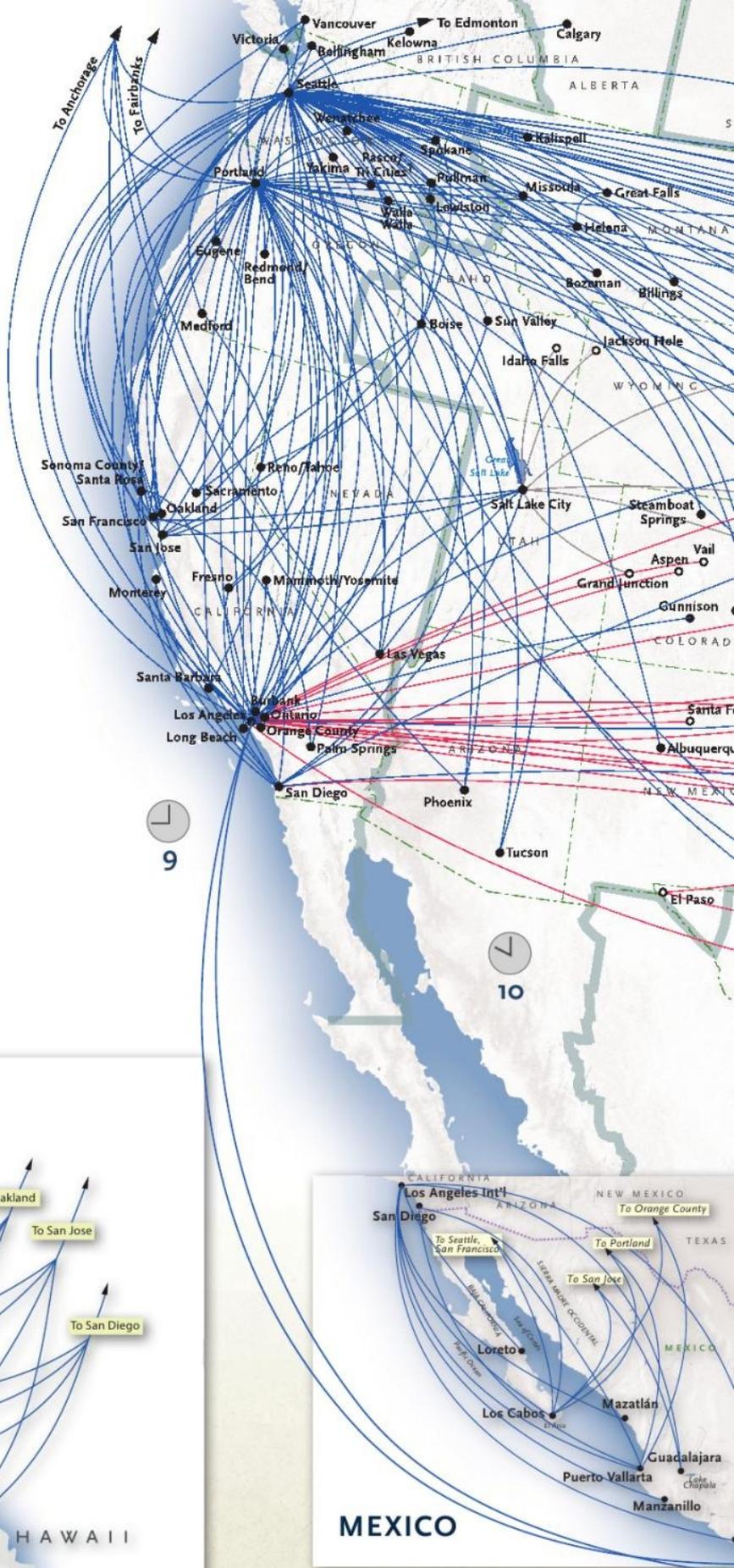
U.S. MILEAGE

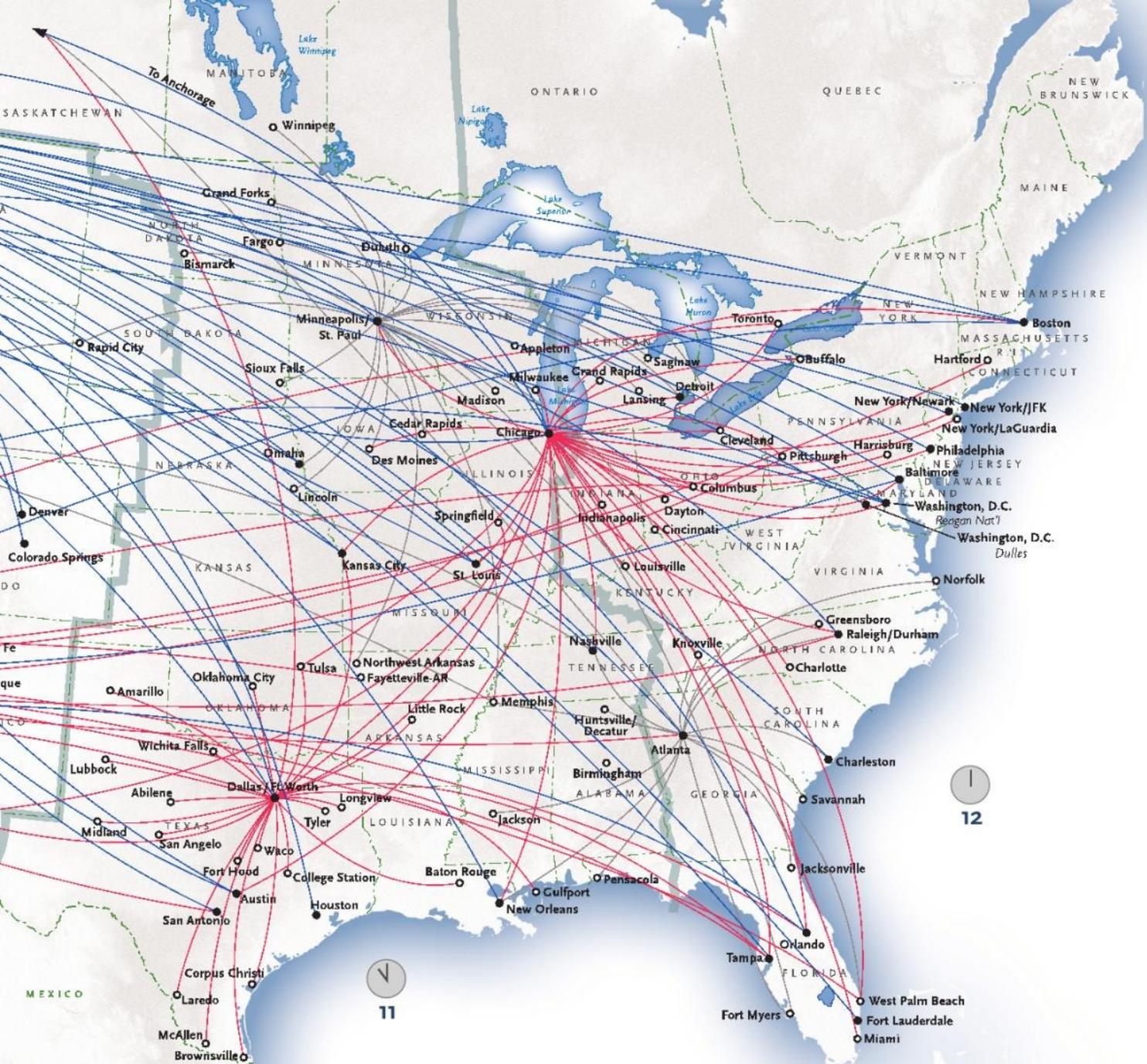
Between	Mileage
Seattle &	
Boston	2,496
Denver	1,024
Fort Lauderdale	2,697
Honolulu	2,677
Los Angeles (LAX)	954
New York City/Newark	2,401
Orlando	2,553
Phoenix	1,106
San Francisco	678
Washington, D.C.	2,306
Portland &	
Los Angeles (LAX)	834
San Diego	933
San Francisco	550

LEGEND

-  Alaska
-  American Airlines
-  DELTA

Some Alaska Airlines service operated by Horizon Air or SkyWest Airlines.
Some routes shown operate seasonally.





UPCOMING NEW SERVICE

Route	Service Begins
LAX–Gunnison, CO	Dec. 16, 2015
Portland–Kansas City	Feb. 18, 2016
Portland–Minneapolis	Feb. 18, 2016
Portland–Omaha	Feb. 18, 2016
Orange County–Reno	March 16, 2016
Orange County–Santa Rosa	March 16, 2016

ALASKA



ALASKA MILEAGE

Between	Mileage
Anchorage &	
Cordova	160
Kodiak	252
Fairbanks	261
King Salmon	289
Dillingham	329
Bethel	399
Nome	539
Kotzebue	549
Juneau	571
Prudhoe Bay	627
Ketchikan	776
Dutch Harbor	792
Seattle	1448
Portland	1542
San Francisco	2045
Los Angeles	2375
Honolulu	2776
Chicago	2847

Between	Mileage
Fairbanks &	
Barrow	503
Seattle	1533
Chicago	2785
Between	Mileage
Juneau &	
Sitka	95
Petersburg	123
Yakutat	199
Ketchikan	235
Seattle	909
Between	Mileage
Ketchikan &	
Wrangell	83
Sitka	185
Juneau	235
Seattle	679

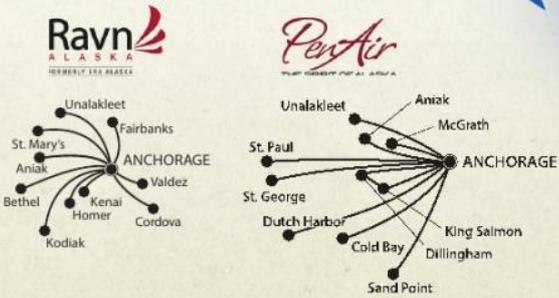
Mileage Plan members receive mileage credit (500 miles minimum) based on the nonstop mileage between the origin and destination indicated on the ticket. For more information on the Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan, see page A2.

Alaska Airlines Cities

Some routes shown operate seasonally.
 † Dutch Harbor–Anchorage service operated by PenAir.

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CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION

Customs and Immigration forms are distributed by flight attendants during your flight. Prior to landing, complete all forms that pertain to you, following the tips below.

Las formas de Aduana y Migración son distribuidas por los sobrecargos durante el vuelo. Antes del aterrizaje en su destino final complete las formas correspondientes usando las indicaciones que se proporcionan a continuación.

TO THE UNITED STATES

U.S. CUSTOMS DECLARATION

Who must complete this form?

All travelers

Helpful tips

- One form per person or one per family (family defines those in the same household who are related by blood, marriage, domestic relationship, or adoption)
- Lines 5, 6 — If not using a passport, leave these lines blank
- Line 9 — Enter "AS" for Alaska Airlines
- Sign at the "X"



DECLARACION DE ADUANA

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?

Todos los pasajeros

Datos de ayuda

- Una forma por persona o por familia con la misma dirección
- Línea 5, 6 — Si no tiene pasaporte, deje esta sección en blanco
- Línea 9 — Use "AS" para Alaska Airlines
- Firme en la "X"

TO MEXICO

MEXICO CUSTOMS DECLARATION

Who must complete this form?

All travelers

Helpful tips

- One form per person or one per family with same address
- Section 6 — It is not necessary to declare medicine for your personal use



DECLARACION DE ADUANA

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?

Todos los pasajeros

Datos de ayuda

- Una forma por persona o por familia con la misma dirección
- Sección 6 — No es necesario declarar sus medicamentos de uso personal

FMM

Who must complete this form?

All travelers except citizens of Mexico

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?

Todos los viajeros, excepto los ciudadanos de México



FEM FOR MEXICAN NATIONALS

Who must complete this form?

Citizens of Mexico

FEM PARA MEXICANOS

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?

Ciudadanos de México (Aun siendo residentes permanentes de EE.UU.)

Datos de ayuda

- Complete una forma por persona. No olvide firmarla.
- Seleccione la opción "Entrada a México".
- En la línea 5 escriba el tipo y número del documento que usara como identificación.



AIRPORT GATE LOCATION MAPS

Seattle/Tacoma International Airport (SEA)



Portland International Airport (PDX)



Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)



San Francisco International Airport (SFO)



Tracking Santa

Answering kids' questions adds to the Christmas spirit | BY BETH WEIR

NORAD Tracks Santa. How may I help you?" I said right on script for my first call. The voice that came back was loud and stretched with excitement. "Are you an elf?" the little boy asked. "Sure," I said. On impulse I added, "I'm Santa's favorite." I heard a peal of laughter from the child's mother in the background.

My daughter, Claudia, and my husband, Bruce, and I were Christmas Eve volunteers on the 2 P.M. to 4 P.M. shift for NORAD Tracks Santa. NORAD stands for North American Aerospace Defense Command, a U.S.–Canada bi-national command that is responsible for defending the skies and monitoring the sea approaches for both nations. NORAD expanded its mission at Christmas by an accident of history. In 1955, Sears ran a newspaper ad with a phone number children could call to talk to Santa.

Fortunately for posterity, a misprint, one digit off, directed callers to a red phone being manned by Colonel Harry Shoup at the Colorado Springs command center for the military agency that evolved into NORAD. The number on that phone was available only to the president of the United States and senior Pentagon leaders.

"Where is Santa now?" that first caller is reputed to have inquired in a small voice. The colonel thought it was a bad joke, but after talking to the child's mother, he realized something was both amiss and magical. So he began the tradition of tracking Santa on Christmas Eve, and he came to be known as the "Santa Colonel."

Six decades later, NORAD is tracking Santa in style, and with about 1,500 more elves than the colonel and his crew. After our briefing, Bruce, Claudia and I were ushered into a room, one of four, where volunteers sat festooned in Santa hats and Christmas sweaters. In front of everyone was a phone. A screen displayed a map of the general area where Santa had most recently been sighted and the time in seconds to the presumed next destination.

In the two hours Bruce, Claudia and I worked, Santa traveled through parts of Asia, Europe and Africa. Another screen, displaying the running total of presents dispensed, showed that the jolly fellow

completed the Herculean task of giving out more than 3 billion gifts while we were phone elves.

The most common question we got was, "Can I speak to Santa?" "Well, Santa is in Uzbekistan delivering presents and is too busy just now," I would explain. I would be sure to add: "If you are in bed and asleep, Santa will be very happy to deliver your presents. But you have to be sleeping." This was always followed by a resounding "Yes!" from a parent hovering in speakerphone vicinity.

The calls and questions came as furiously as snowflakes in a blizzard. With so many fellow chattering elves for company, we were not always certain that what we thought we heard was what was meant. But after explaining that Santa was now in a given location,

we soldiered on as best we could, hoping we were not wrecking a cherished dream. When we surrendered our seats to volunteers from the next shift, we staggered to the refreshment table for some sugar and shared tales. A large pad stood on an easel next to the food table, with an invitation to report unusual questions and comments:

"Does the sleigh have an air bag?" "Santa is on the naughty list because he broke into our house." "Where do babies come from?" ("Santa brings them.")

Bruce, Claudia and I shared our own tales on the drive home. "Am I on the good/nice list?" popped up with regularity. My explanation was rather Scrooge-like in retrospect: "Only Santa knows that." Bruce was a lot more generous. "Oh, I don't know. ... Wait, I see your name now."

"Will I get a _____?" For that question, we were all careful to reply, "Only Santa knows that." Don't promise a present was an underlined injunction in the playbook.

Bruce and I reported that by the end of the hectic two-hour shift, we were cheerfully responding, "NORAD Sacks Tranta." But we felt transformed—as full of the Christmas spirit as Scrooge after he met his ghosts.

One little boy told Claudia that some of his friends said Santa was not real. "Is he real?" the caller asked.

"Yes," said Claudia without hesitation. "He is real."

Beth Weir is also executive director of Dunn Gardens in Seattle. For Santa-tracking info: noradsanta.org and, on Dec. 24, 877-HI-NORAD.



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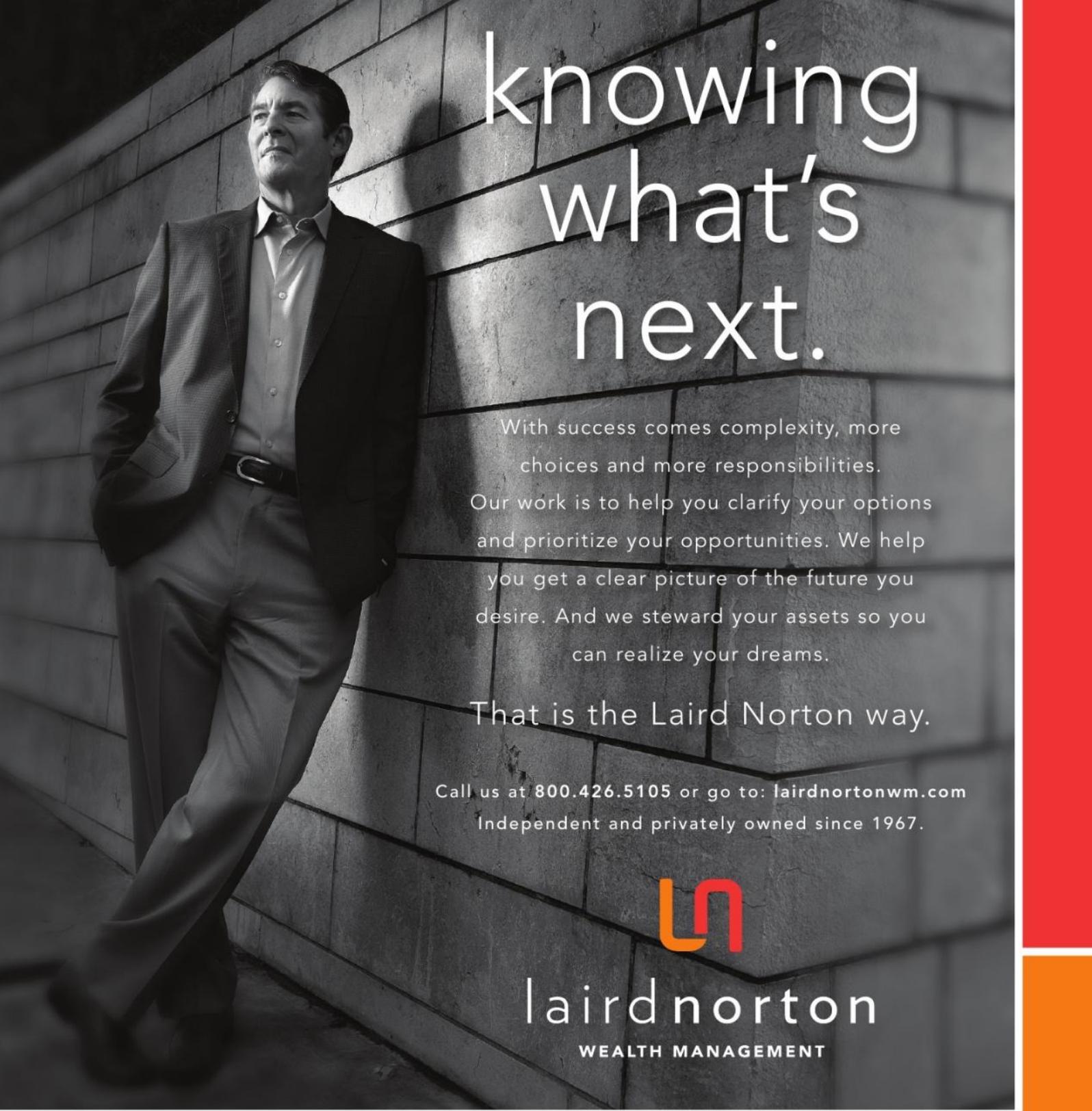
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*The definition of hassle free buying is the customer's choice to buy without the hassle of negotiating.

A black and white photograph of a man in a suit leaning against a stone wall. The man is looking upwards and to the left. The wall is made of large, rectangular stone blocks. The lighting creates strong shadows on the wall.

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