Waving Hands Review, the literature and arts magazine of Colorado Northwestern Community College, seeks to publish exemplary works by emerging and established writers and artists of Northwest Colorado. Submissions in poetry, fiction, non-fiction, drama, photography, and art remain anonymous until a quality-based selection is made. Unsolicited submissions are welcome during the academic year between September 15 and February 15. We accept online submissions only. Please visit the Waving Hands Review website at www.cncc.edu/waving_hands for detailed submission guidelines, or go to the CNCC website and click on the Waving Hands Review logo.

The staff of Waving Hands Review wishes to thank President Russell George, the CNCC Cabinet, the Rangely Junior College District Board of Trustees, and the Moffat County Affiliated Junior College District Board of Control. Thanks also to those who submitted work and those who encouraged submissions.

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## On the Covers:


Back cover: Joseph Lansing, *Off in the Weeds* (watercolor painting)

## Editors' Choice Awards

**Artwork:** Heather Fross for her painting

**Non-Fiction:** Landon Wardell for *Fred's Stitches*

**Fiction:** Peter Edward Forbes for *Red Gulch*

**Poetry:** David Morris
Sheepmen of Northwest Colorado: A Hidden History of the Wooly West
By Andrew Gulliford

At first they were reviled. Cattlemen hated sheep and thought they damaged grasses by pulling them out by the roots, but those same cowboys failed to acknowledge overgrazing caused by too many cattle. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, sheepmen and cattlemen sparred across the Western Slope, with cowboys “rimrocking” sheep—driving them off cliffs—burning sheep wagons, and threatening or shooting sheepherders. Walking with flocks across miles of sagebrush into the high country wasn’t easy.

Cowboys get all the myth and folklore. They get the boots, the songs, the movie stars. But sheepherders and sheepmen also shaped the American West, and in the counties of Northwest Colorado, sheep-owning families have played prominent social, cultural, and economic roles. Grazing sheep in Colorado’s high country is a hidden history.

Sheep had a secret. They were easy to manage, cheap to purchase, and they produced two cash crops a year—wool and lambs—in a time when a range-raised steer took three years to get to market. Some of the earliest homesteaders into the Rangely area owned sheep. Bart Owens settled at Brush Creek. Cook and Harris lived between Carr and Cathedral Creeks. Loran Holmwood raised woolies at the head of Soldier Creek, as did Ed and Frank Colton at the head of Carr and Roan Creeks. Joe Nash, Warren Beebe, Nick Harmston, Albert Kirby, Harvey Mercer and John Rasmussen were on Lake Creek. Ed Milner, Ed Hall, Roe Carroll, and the Bowmans had sheep on East Douglas and Douglas Creeks.¹

In the eyes of cattlemen, however, “Everything in front of a sheep is eaten and everything behind is killed.”² Edward Wentworth wrote, “The American public land policy placed a premium on the man who got there first—because he got the most. Hence this combination of an ability to graze deeply into the grass roots, and a national land policy that rewarded despoliation, gave rise to the long-endured crime of the open range—the cattle-sheep wars.”³

“No one was arrested in the cattle country for running sheep off the range, and, even in cases of murder, it was usually impossible to secure a conviction. In most communities, popular sympathies were with the
[cattle] stockgrower,” state Charles Towne and Edward Wentworth in *Shepherd’s Empire.* A case in point is Craig, Colorado.

On August 25, 1893, the *Craig Pantagraph* newspaper pronounced, “From a standpoint of justice, the cattlemen are right. They have done much more to build the West and do not intend to be driven out. They have the people with them.” In the same year that the *Craig Courier* rallied for cattlemen, the 1893 Panic or financial depression dropped range cattle prices from $9 to $8 to $7 per head, with no buyers. “Some ranchers cut their herds, improved the breeding, and sought out permanent hay lands on which they could raise winter feed. Others stunned their neighbors by turning to sheep,” explain Duane Vandenbusche and Duane Smith in *A Land Alone: A History of the Western Slope.* Yet, deep animosity continued.

A year later in 1894 during Palisade’s Peach Days, the Peach Days Massacre occurred when forty armed and masked cowboys drove about 3,800 sheep off cliffs near DeBeque. “The citizens of Eastern Mesa County are armed and will protect their homes against Utah’s vandal herds [of sheep] at all hazards,” reported the *Pagosa Springs News.* But, economically, sheep made sense.

Because sheepmen generated cash quicker than cattlemen, they quietly homesteaded or bought land along routes where they trailed sheep from low altitude winter range to high altitude summer range. Sheepmen moved into banking and purchased mortgages and foreclosed properties. By the 1920s “the open range days were over, killed by falling cattle prices, dangerous overstocking of the range which had turned once-lush pastures into dust, and by more and more homesteaders fencing in the open range,” note Vandenbusche and Smith.

For sheepherders willing to work hard, and for families just beginning in the wide open spaces of Rio Blanco, Moffat, and Routt Counties, herding sheep on land no one wanted and then trailing them up into the national forests, established after 1905, was a way to make a start. For immigrants, the goal was to come to America, earn money, and then return home. Herders often sent their wages back to the Old Country to help with family debts. Money from the United States returned to Europe to preserve one’s farm or village.

For some Basque and Greek herders in the early 20th century, America became home. They took their wages in ewes, saved every penny they could, purchased their own flocks, and homesteaded or invested in land. The 1916 Stockraising Homestead Act allowed an individual to “prove up” on a full section or 640 acres. Greeks who crossed the ocean to labor in Utah coalmines near Price gradually worked their way up and out of the mines to herd sheep on a vast sagebrush sea. At one time 50 Greek villages had family members toiling in the Price coal mines.

They started with nothing. Their families now own thousands of acres across western Colorado with names like Jouflas, Halandras, Theos, Peroulis, and Raftopolous. Each family has its own story, and each story is about hard work, perseverance, and survival and success in a foreign land.

Regas Halandras took a ship to America. His parents told him to “strike it rich” and send funds back to support the family farm in Lamai, Greece. With $25 in cash, he left his homeland to go to Chicago, then on to the Utah Coal and Fuel Company at Castlegate where, at only 13 or 14 years of age, he began working in low-ceilinged mine tunnels. In 1919 at age 17, he became a herder near Price, earning $65 per month with one horse, one dog, and 2,000 sheep owned by Paul Jensen. Regas then received a letter from home that explained a relative had stolen all the money he had sent and that his family desperately needed $7,465. Heartbroken, he asked Jensen for a loan and swore he’d pay back every dollar. It took seven years.
Though the cattle and sheep wars had almost ended, disputes continued. In 1921 while Regas was herding at the head of Roan Creek, 14 riders threatened to kill him and another herder and gave them six days to leave the range. When the riders returned with rifles, his cousin Nick Svarniás hid behind a rock with a .30-30 Winchester while Halandras met the cowboys wearing a six-gun and riding a mule. A cowboy lassoed a tent peg and threatened to level the sheep camp. Despite the tension, Halandras yelled in Greek to the other herder not to fire.

Later the cattle owners themselves showed up instead of their hired guns. Halandras offered hospitality, lamb chops, biscuits, and hot black coffee in their herders’ tent. “They said they sure would appreciate it if I moved the sheep, and I told them since they talked so sensible the sheep would be on the next mountain come morning. And we all shook hands. They sure did enjoy those lamb chops,” he recalled years later.

In 1922 Halandras brought 2,770 sheep through downtown Meeker in a tense confrontation that required six lawmen to prevent trouble. The woolies had wintered in Emery County, Utah, and would summer near DeBeque. As often as he could, he “hollered at those sheep and switched at their rumps to make them move,” and he got his flock through town without incident.

By 1931 Regas Halandras had become an American citizen, filed a homestead claim, owned 2,000 sheep, and had begun to buy land. Then on April 27, 1932, a fierce spring blizzard froze young woolies that had just been sheared. He lost 1,462 sheep within 40 hours. He would always remember: “I paid $18 a head for those sheep, and the carcasses were piled so high I walked on their bodies. It was the worst thing that ever happened to me.” So he started over.

Halandras brought 17 Greek herders to the West. Half of them stayed. He traveled to Greece “to find a bride” in 1937, and he began a family tradition of ranching that today includes his son Gus who helped establish the popular Meeker Sheep Dog Trials, which just celebrated its 25th year as a major tourist event and annual get-together in Rio Blanco County. A poor immigrant from the Old Country, Regas Halandras persevered.

“Halandras did become rich, but it took him half a century. He did it dollar by dollar, sheep by sheep, acre by acre. Along the way he taught himself to read and write, became a proud and honored American citizen, survived natural disasters and the sheep and cattle wars, and founded a new Halandras dynasty in Colorado,” wrote Olga Curtis in *The Denver Post*.¹¹

The Theos family owned 9,600 acres in Rio Blanco County, leased 4,000 acres in two summer U.S. Forest permits, and owned 2,000 acres with a 12,000 acre BLM lease in Utah for their sheep and lambs.¹² Steve Simos bought the George Bassett Ranch in Brown’s Park to graze sheep. When he passed away, his young wife Georgia returned to her home village in Greece and married George Raftopoulos, whom she had known since childhood. They returned and continued to raise sheep close to Brown’s Park.¹³

French and Spanish Basque sheepherders also found that hard work paid off. Jean Urruty, a determined young Basque, eventually had large landholdings in western Colorado and 8,550 acres near Roosevelt, Utah. Sheep made money.
Even a Jewish immigrant, a shoe cobbler from Russia, could make dollars on woolies. When Old “Izzie” or Isadore Bolten went to borrow money to purchase livestock, he was advised to try sheep. Bolten, who lived near Hayden, Colorado, asked, “Sheep in a cattle country?”

“Folks can’t kill you for it—but they might try,” his financial advisor warned. Later Bolten said, “Right there, if I had any friends I lost them all overnight.” Izzie bought woolies but almost froze to death one night as he lit sagebrush fires to keep coyotes from his ewes. He stayed alive by tramping a slow circle deeper and deeper into the falling snow. For months he lived on mutton, beans, and rice. He did not shave, bathe, or go to town. Instead, he watched his sheep.

Just as Regas Halandras had to defend against rowdy cowboys in 1921, in Routt County in 1922 Bolten had cowboys set fire to one of his sheep wagons, and then shoot and club sheep to death with wooden wagon spokes. Eventually, Isadore would come to own the ranch that had forced him to pay food and lodging when he was a broke, itinerant homesteader. His 160-acre homestead in the steep-sloped “rimrock country” north of the verdant Yampa River Valley grew into a sprawling 400,000 acre ranch and multi-million dollar livestock empire that stretched from Routt County, Colorado, into Carbon County, Wyoming, and included feeding lambs on Kansas wheat fields. He was the first woolgrower to graze sheep near Hayden.14

Mormon families like Norman Winder’s also brought sheep from Utah into Northwest Colorado. Other sheepmen included Dean Visintainer, Ralph Pitchforth, and Joe Livingston. Lou Wyman’s father homesteaded at Milk Creek at the Milk Creek Battle Site of 1879. Wyman explains, “Sheep were more profitable and utilized rougher country better.” He puns, “There was quite a lot of cowboy sentiment in Rio Blanco County. We had real dyed in the wool cowmen.”15

In the early decades sheepmen trailed their flocks from low-level BLM desert land up into the high country. Their strategy involved...
purchasing acreage every seven miles or so when sheep would need to bed down for the night. The Wyman family ran 5,000 head of sheep with a BLM permit and four permits on the White River National Forest. Their sheep trailed 50 miles to winter range where they grazed sagebrush, and only one year in five or ten did the animals need additional winter feed. Lou remembers hiring herders from northern New Mexico and some from Coyote, New Mexico. To help them take pride in having the best lambs, he’d buy a new Stetson hat for the herder with the fattest lamb crop.

In the beginning cattlemen hated sheep and spurned sheepmen, but there was money in woolies, which transformed Northwest Colorado. By 1949 envelopes mailed through the Craig post office proclaimed “World’s Largest Wool Shipping Center” on the cancellation. By 1956 more than half of Routt and Moffat Counties were owned or leased by sheepmen, who shipped 3.5 million pounds of wool from Craig. Four years later in 1960, the Rocky Mountain News proclaimed Craig “the largest shipping point for wool in the country.” Hayden, Colorado, had become a national shipping point for young lambs.

In the Rocky Mountain News, Pasquale Marvanzino wrote “Tenders of the Sheep,” an article about successful Greek families who wait for September when the sheep come home. “Then begins a series of feasts—all of them based on religious name days and great celebrations. Their ladies turn out the dolmates—the hamburger and rice wrapped in grape leaves, the lamb curry, the great mounds of green bread. And the husbands sit around and talk and dance over homemade Zinfandel wine oddly flavored with pitch.”

But now there are 60% less sheep in the country. Sheep families make incomes by guiding hunters and participating in the Colorado Parks & Wildlife program titled Ranching for Wildlife.

The Wymans near Craig got out of the sheep business, as did the Halandras family near Meeker and the Joufas family of Grand Junction. Regas Halandras, grandson of the immigrant who came from Lamai, Greece, says, “We’re out of the business these 15 years. It was so much work and Dad was getting older.” There are fewer and fewer historic ranching families running sheep, and now the U.S. Department of Labor is forcing a change in working conditions and pay scales for herders, many of whom come from Peru on H-1 visas or permits. The conduit for herders from northern New Mexico villages ended in the late 1960s.

Hispanic groups are suing over better living and working conditions for current herders. No one seems to remember how hard it was a century ago to get started in the sheep business, yet for some immigrant families the isolation, long hours, and lonely working conditions became a time for contemplation, reflection, and developing a financial strategy of grazing and land ownership that still works four generations later.

But the free land that immigrants filed on under the Homestead Acts ended with passage of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, which permanently quieted cattle and sheep conflicts. Today’s foreign herders do not have opportunities to lease or buy sheep and to acquire base properties to start ranches of their own. Near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, the living landscape of a working West has become the leisure landscape of skiers, hikers, and bicyclists. Across most of Colorado, shepherding in the high country is a forgotten memory.
Yet at Meeker and Craig, traditions remain. At the Wyman Living History Ranch and Museum, established in 1971 near Craig, a sheep wagon rests inside the large facility with a framed photo from more than half a century ago of Lou’s brother standing near a sheep wagon. The Meeker Museum has a beautiful wooden sheep wagon complete with antler door handles, a small stove, and a bed across the back. In each wagon a “tin dog” hangs from the door handle. This is a genuine herder’s artifact, a wire hoop strung with Columbine condensed milk cans for herders to shake and rattle like a tambourine to set sheep moving down a trail.

And each September in Meeker the Sheep Dog Trials keep herding traditions alive. This year, flags flew from 13 different countries as the dog handlers stood near the wooden pole, shepherd’s crooks in hand, whistling for their dogs to bring sheep through a fixed obstacle course. When a Border Collie, keeping the small flock in line, heads up the hill through the last gate, the audience applauds.

Andrew Gulliford, professor of History and Environmental Studies at Fort Lewis College in Durango, is researching and writing a book-length 120-year study on Colorado sheep and sheepmen and would welcome stories and photos. Please contact him at Gulliford_a@fortlewis.edu or 970-247-7011.

ENDNOTES:
1. List of homesteaders’ names and the location of their sheep ranges from an exhibit at the Rangely Outdoor Museum, June 2015.
5. For the best synopsis of sheep and cattle wars in Northwest Colorado, and many citations from Craig and Steamboat Springs newspapers, see John Rolfe Burroughs, Where the Old West Stayed Young (New York: Bonanza Books, 1962).
9. Vandenbusche and Smith, 156.
The morning was cool and overcast, kind of gloomy, but not really threatening—good weather for the horseback ride I had planned with my cousin. The grey clouds blocked the sunlight that would have warmed the temperature enough to make the fifteen-plus mile ride we had planned a difficult one, rather than just a good workout for the horses. As a result, the horses were feeling energetic and ready to go, which was good because we had a big hill to climb right off the bat.

We enjoyed the view of the river bottom: the shining, winding strip that was the White River far below, and the ranch house and fields that receded as we rode on. We urged the horses up the ever-steepening hill, switchbacking where we could. As we climbed, the horses blew and snorted, and white lather formed where the saddles rubbed against their dark, glistening hides.

We finally reached a height where cliffs kept us from continuing up the hill, forcing us to ride across a narrow ledge along the hillside; the ledge was just wide enough to permit a single rider passage with one foot brushing the cliff on the left, and the other foot hanging over empty space on the right. I had ridden this trail before on Ranger, the horse that my cousin Colt was on, and I was confident we could negotiate it, even though the horse I was riding, Fred, had not been on the trail before. I urged Fred forward, feeling him tense and shy away from the drop-off to our right. Fred was more timid than Ranger, and I knew that he might not go across the ledge without some extra urging. That being said, it still kind of surprised me when he snorted, dropped his head, and scrambled backwards as fast as he could, not seeing where he was going, and nearly pushed Ranger and Colt off the ledge. I turned Fred around, pulling his head toward the drop-off so that, if he continued to back up, the cliff would stop him. After getting him turned and settled, I told Colt to let me lead Ranger across the ledge first so that Fred could see that the ledge really was traversable. I knew that after I led Ranger across, Colt could easily get Fred to follow.

As I figured, after I had led the way with Ranger, Colt had no trouble getting Fred to follow us. But as I saw them crest the hill where I had just been, something on Fred’s shoulder caught my eye. Bewildered, I realized that the dark stain I saw streaking down Fred's shoulder was blood. “Holy Smokes; he got slashed!” I said as Colt led him toward me. “Huh?” Colt's eyes widened as they followed my stare to the six-inch gash in the horse's shoulder. The cut was fairly deep, going through the thick skin and almost an inch into the muscle. The meat inside looked like the middle of a raw steak—only bloodier. Fortunately, it was not bleeding too badly, as we were at the top of a hill with at least a 30-minute ride back to the house.

As we worked our way through sagebrush, cedar trees, and rock ledges down the hillside, I assessed the situation and began forming a plan. Fred needed stitches—that was certain, but who would stitch him up was more questionable. The nearest veterinarian was an hour away, in Vernal, and might not be able to make the trip over to Rangely. Besides, vet bills were expensive. I knew some people who had likely dealt with similar situations before, but they lived even further away than the vet. I had read about giving stitches, and had seen them in my dog before, and it did not look too complicated....

After getting to the corrals and unsaddling the horses, I asked Colt to clean the gash while I went to find a needle, thread, and Neosporin. The only needles I could find were short, hardly as long as the last two joints in my forefinger, and very thin and straight – good for sewing buttons on shirts, but awkward and flimsy for trying to sew a horse’s shoulder back together. But as that was all I had available, that was what I would use. I sharpened the needle so it could go through tough, thick horsehide, and then used my Leatherman to bend the needle into the shape of a thin crescent moon. After threading the needle, smearing hand sanitizer along it, and dabbing Neosporin along the now-clean cut, I was ready for surgery. I think I flinched more than Fred the first time I jammed the needle through his thick hide. Then, as gently as possible, I worked the needle under the cut and out the other side with my Leatherman, as the needle was too small and slick for me to grip with my fingers.

Considering what he had to endure, Fred was a real trooper. He put up with the stitching admirably, as Colt held his leadrope and I talked to him softly. All went well...for the first four stitches, and then Fred started...
shying away and moving around too much for me to continue. So we had to scotch him up. Now, with a hind leg held off the ground by a rope tied to his neck, Fred could stand three-legged and breath fine, but he could not move around as much without falling over. So, in went stitch number five. When I attempted number six, however, he threw a big fit and flopped over on his side – the side I had been stitching. After chewing him out for being so inconsiderate, we got him up again and checked the cut. The stitches had held. “Whew!” After I brushed him off, I used super glue and duct tape to finish the job. It looked tacky, but it worked.

I had to leave for work for a couple of days, so I arranged for a neighbor to come check on Fred while I was gone to see how he was doing. When she called back to report, she said that he was healing great, and that the stitches looked like they had been put in by a veterinarian. I sure was glad to hear that! Now it is several weeks after the incident, Fred is mended, and the scar is disappearing—good results, given the circumstances.
FADE IN:
SNOWY SAGEBRUSH FLAT BELOW HILL - EARLY MORNING
RIFLE SCOPE POINT OF VIEW - Crosshairs tremble over a bull elk's back on the side of a hill. Another bull stands off to its right.
BLAKE, 13, dressed in hunting orange, QUIETLY EXHALES. He's holding a .243 rifle, eye up to its scope, as he lies on his stomach in a clump of sagebrush.
BLAKE'S SCOPE POINT OF VIEW - Crosshairs hover over the elk's shoulder.
GRANT (OFF SCREEN)
Correct your distance.
Blake pushes his eye closer to the scope.
GRANT (OFF SCREEN) (CONT'D)
I said, correct your distance.
Blake gives a questioning look to GRANT, early 30s, in a trucking hat and orange vest, lying behind Blake.
Beside Blake is DAN, bearded, late 40s. He sits cross-legged, aiming a .270 rifle up in the direction of the bulls.
DAN
You're a little low.
GRANT
It's 200 yards. Aim higher.
BLAKE
Yes, sir.
BLAKE'S SCOPE POINT OF VIEW - Crosshairs are just over the elk's shoulder.
DAN
I take right, you got left.

BOO-BOOM!
Dan's elk drops, dead. Blake's elk stumbles and then runs. Blake reloads and FIRES again. A far miss. The bull disappears behind the hill.
GRANT
You jerked. Get ready to track.
Grant runs towards a beat-up red pickup a hundred yards away.
GRANT (CONT'D)
Forgot my pistol.
THE SLOPE OF THE HILL - MOMENTS LATER
Blake stands behind Dan, who holds his rifle out over the corpse of his dead elk. The elk's empty eyes stare at them.
DAN
(not to Blake)
Thank you.
DAN (CONT'D)
You can't take without gratitude.
He steps to the left and finds a small pool of blood and bile. Specks of blood trail up the hill.
DAN (CONT'D)
You nailed yours in the gut.
Grant approaches them, a pistol holster in his belt.

Grant
That's what happens when you jerk.

He HUFFS up and sees the bloody bile.

Grant (CONT’D)
Yep. Got him in the bread basket.

Dan drops to his knees over his elk and pulls out his knife.

Grant (CONT’D)
You need a hand with that, Dan?

Dan
No, you go on with your boy.

Dan looks at the overcast sky.

Dan (CONT’D)
Better make it quick though.

SAGEBRUSH FLAT - MINUTES LATER

Grant and Blake follow drops of blood on the snowy flat.

Blake
How far could he go?

Grant
A mile, not much more.

Blake stumbles on a root. Grant catches him.

Grant (CONT’D)
You need me to carry your gun?

Blake
No, sir. Why can't we just go to the store? I don't want to kill.

Grant
You think your hamburger last night didn't come from a killed animal? You're almost a man. I'm not sending you back East to your mom and her . . . and Mark . . . before you get your bull. A man shouldn't eat meat if he's not willing to kill something.

Blake
Yes, sir.

Grant
You don't have to call me that. I never asked you to call me 'sir.'

Blake
Mom said you liked it.

Grant
I like 'dad’ better. What do you call Mark?

Blake
Just 'Mark.'

Grant
Good.

Blake
He's a vegan.

Grant
Figures.

ABOVE RED GULCH - MINUTES LATER

They stand above the edge of a deep gulch with thirty-foot red walls down to its dry stream bed.

The blood trail descends the gulch at an angle. They follow, digging their feet into the slope.

RED GULCH STREAM BED - MOMENTS LATER

Grant bends over and touches a small pool of blood and bile.

Grant
Still warm. Five minutes maybe.

Grant steps to the next drop of dark blood.

Grant (CONT’D)
The gulch walls get steeper ahead, until it ends in a box canyon. What does that mean?

Blake
He's trapped?

Grant
Is that a question or an answer?

Blake
A . . . answer.
Okay. Lead the way.

STREAM BED FROZEN POOL - CONTINUOUS
Blake steps forward around boulders and rocks. Grant follows.
Blake's foot CRACKS through a patch of ice into a shallow pool. He quickly jumps to the side.

GRANT
Did it get in your boot?
BLAKE
No, I'm good.
GRANT
No, you're not good. You'd be liable to get hypothermia.
And spook the elk.

DEEPER IN THE GULCH - MINUTES LATER
The walls are steeper, more enclosed. They pass by a hollow in the wall, carved out by the stream and erosion. There's a patch of blood inside. Grant touches the blood.

GRANT
Get your gun ready.
Blake unslings his gun. Snow begins to fall. Grant stops.

BLAKE
Maybe it'll let up.
GRANT
No. Can't risk it.
BLAKE
What about the bull?
GRANT
We'll try later. Come on.
Grant turns around, walking back.

BLAKE
But the snow will cover the blood--
Rocks RATTLE. Blake's elk stumbles into view from the bend up the stream. Blood trickles from a wound in its gut.
Blake instinctively raises his .243. Grant freezes.

GRANT
Okay. Okay. Take it easy. Real careful.
Blake steadies his aim. BREATHES out.

GRANT (CONT'D)
Shoot.
BLAM! The gun's report ECHOES along the walls. The elk DROPS.
Blake is shaking. Grant grabs his gun and steps forward.
The elk's breath is a mixture of steam and saliva. Blood drips from the new wound above its front shoulder.

GRANT (CONT'D)
Are you calm?
Blake TAKES A DEEP BREATH, holds it, EXHALES. He nods.

GRANT (CONT'D)
Tell me with words.
BLAKE
Yes. Yes, sir. Yes, Dad.
GRANT
Remember how I taught you.
Grant guides him forward and hands him the pistol.
Blake aims down the iron sights.
BAM!
A tuft of snow showers up behind the elk's head.
Blake starts to shake again.

GRANT
Calm down--

BAM! Another miss.

GRANT (CONT'D)
Stop shooting! You're not even aiming.
BLAKE
I can't do it. I can't kill it.
GRANT
You've shot it. You're responsible!

BAM! Blake nicks an antler.
GRANT (CONT’D)
Shoot the elk, dammit!
Blake turns the gun away from the elk and points it down the gulch.
BAM! The bullet RICOCHETS off a rock.
Grant jumps forward for the pistol.
Suddenly the elk heaves itself up, slamming into Blake.
Blake trips and falls.
BAM!
The elk stumbles away around the bend.
Grant writhes in the snow, gripping his waist.
GRANT (CONT’D)
Shit! Oh, shit! Shit!
The pistol rests on the ground, and snow is falling heavily.
Blake stands in shock as he watches blood drip from Grant's side.
BLAKE
Dad! Oh, Dad!
Blake runs back the way they came.
RED GULCH STREAM BED - MOMENTS LATER
Blake runs through blinding snow, following the wall, avoiding boulders
and jumping over rocks.
BLAKE
Uncle Dan! Uncle Dan!
DAN (OFF SCREEN)
(from a distance)
Grant! Blake! Where are you?
BLAKE
Uncle Dan! We're here! Uncle Dan!
DAN (OFF SCREEN)
(farther away)
Blake . . . Grant . . .
BLAKE
Uncle Dan! Uncle--
Blake's foot CRASHES through ice, and he SPLASHES face-forward into
a hidden pool of ice water.
He stands. Falls again. Finally he climbs out.
His whole body is soaking wet. He stumbles forward.
DEEPER IN THE GULCH - MOMENTS LATER
Blake traces his icy hand against the wall. The wall drops away. His foot
KICKS something soft.
Grant GROANS.
BLAKE
Dad?
Grant is halfway in the hollow in the wall they saw earlier. Grant's fresh
red blood mingles with the elk's old pool of blood.
GRANT
Blake?
BLAKE
I got turned around. I thought--
GRANT
You're freezing wet.
BLAKE
I fell.
GRANT
Strip down and get in here.
Grant labors to take off his coat.
Blake crawls into the hollow with him.
STREAM BED HOLLOW - MINUTES LATER
They sit back to back, sheltered from the snow. Blake holds heat packs,
shivering underneath Grant's coat with just a t-shirt and boxers.
A blood-soaked piece of Grant's shirt is stuffed into Grant's wound. His
face is pale.
Blake SOBS.
BLAKE
I shot you. I shot you.
GRANT
It wasn't your fault. I should have seen that coming.
BLAKE
It doesn't matter. It was me.

GRANT
Whatever happens, I never want you to say those words again or even think it. It was an accident. Understand?

BLAKE
Yes, Dad.

They're silent for several moments. Grant pushes his pistol toward Blake.

GRANT
I'm going to pass out soon. It's got one shot. Wait to shoot until you think it can bring help.

Blake picks up the pistol.

STREAM BED HOLLOW - MINUTES LATER
The heat packs lie at Blake's feet. His teeth CHATTER. Grant sleeps, his BREATHING LABORED. Snow piles around them.

DAN (OFF SCREEN)
There you boys are. Holed up like rabbits.

Blake looks up. Dan isn’t there.

Snow CRUNCHES.
Blake's elk emerges from the snow and COLLAPSES. Its body walls them inside the hollow.
The elk WHEEZES steamy breath.
Blake reaches out, touches its hide. The elk looks at him but doesn't move.
Snow inside the hollow begins to glisten and melt. Grant BREATHE MORE DEEPLY.
Blake pulls himself closer to the elk and pulls Grant to the bull’s rump.
Blake buries his hand into the elk's hide. His fingers run gently up. They touch the sticky shoulder wound.
The elk SNORTS and flinches. It pushes up on its front knees.

BLAKE
No, don't! I'm sorry. Don't move!

Blake picks up the pistol and aims it at the elk’s head.

BLAKE (CONT’D)
Please, I can't... I can’t...

Snow WHIRLS in underneath the elk as it stumbles up. Grant WHEEZES in the sudden cold. The elk stops and looks at Blake.
Blake swallows, tears in his eyes.

BLAKE (CONT’D)
Thank you.

BAM!

CUT TO BLACK.

STREAM BED HOLLOW - LATER
Blackness. MUFFLED VOICES.
Hands brush away snow from Grant's coat and pull it back.
Blake stares up from under the coat, right into Dan's face.

DAN
They’re here! Blake, are you all right?

BLAKE
I'm okay, but Dad's been shot.

WILDLIFE OFFICERS and HUNTERS pull the elk's body off of Grant and Blake.

DAN
Grant, you hear me? You all right?

GRANT
I've had lighter blankets.

Grant's wound is dressed. Blake is lifted into a stretcher and wrapped in an emergency blanket. Grant is strapped into another stretcher.

GRANT (CONT’D)
Great shot, son.

The rescue party carries the two away.
Blake watches his dead elk disappear as they step around the bend.

FADE OUT.
Margaret Slaugh
Winter Bluebird (photograph)

Kathy Simpson
All Is Quiet (photograph)
Glenden Reuer

*The Sundial* (photograph)

Kathy Bassett

*Yellow-headed Blackbird* (photograph)
Jenny Meyer  
*Rhythm of the Pow Wow* (digitally altered photograph)

Clancie Guinn  
*Waiting to Rope* (drawing)
Augassi, the Ute Tribe, 
and the Uintah Railway

By Rodger Polley

The original residents of eastern Utah and western Colorado were the various bands and groups of indigenous peoples known collectively now as the Ute Tribe. Sharing a common ancestral language and customs, these peoples lived in an area that spread from the four corners region north to the Uintah basin and southern Wyoming, and from around Meeker, Colorado, west to the Great Salt Lake. Early Mormon settlers in the Salt Lake Valley, along with mining and western expansion in Colorado and Utah, caused the U.S. government to create a reservation of the Utes in northeastern Utah in the 1860s. Originally, this reservation stretched all the way to the Colorado border, but as with many other Indian reservations, the original size of the Ute territory was periodically and systematically whittled down.

The discovery of valuable minerals in the area along the Colorado border made for political expediency to “open up” the area to white settlers, and an act of Congress in 1903 provided for mining claims. With the opening of the land to “settlers,” the original prospectors were quickly bought out of their claims by organized business interests whose primary goal was the mining of Gilsonite, a rare and chemically unique substance found in large veins north and south of the White River, just west of the Colorado-Utah border. With the claims organized into mineable deposits, the Uintah Railway was incorporated to build a narrow gauge railroad from Mack, Colorado, to the closest mineable deposits at Dragon, Utah. The railroad was built over the spring and summer of 1904, traversing Baxter Pass on the Book Cliffs range, piercing the Uintah Basin with its most economical and viable transportation to that date, and changing the economy of the small Utah towns of Vernal, Jensen, and Roosevelt, along with that of Rangely, Colorado. The Utes, too, were affected, as the railway traversed ancestral homelands to portions of the Tribe, as well as areas where Utes who had been recently and forcibly removed from other parts of the country now called “home.”

The Utes who lived near and utilized the Book Cliffs as part of
their hunting and gathering range were associated with the Utes who had been forcibly brought to the reservation, but who were more at home in this area than some of their tribesmen who had been brought to the reservation from hundreds of miles away. The management of the Railway, in naming the Uintah after the Ute Tribe, used the American public's fascination with all things Western and Indian as a marketing tool for ridership. The paying excursion passenger was seen by the Uintah's management as a lucrative addition to revenues—second only to hauling Gilsonite ore. Original flyers and pamphlets for the Uintah described not only the beautiful landscapes of the Book Cliff range, but also the “wild” frontier atmosphere of the Railway and the proximity of the Indians. Place names like “Chepeta Wells” (a stage stop on the way to Vernal) and Atchee, Colorado (the Railway’s center point and rail yards), gave a nod to important figures in the Ute Tribe. Atchee was named in honor of the Chief Sam Atchee, a Uintah chief and brother-in-law of Chief Ouray and related to Ouray’s wife, Chipeta. Chief Atchee was respected among Indians and whites in both Utah and Colorado.

As the railroad was completed to Dragon, Utah, in 1904, and expanded again in 1911 to Watson, Utah, the Utes who used this area for seasonal pastures and hunting were a frequent and welcome sight to the railroad men and miners. Interactions with the Tribe were commonplace at Atchee and Dragon. One of the more colorful characters of local lore was a Ute Indian known as Augassi (author’s spelling; pronounced...
Aug-uh-sy). Very little has been written about him, and what is known is often second-hand, or the sixty- or seventy-year-old memories of folks who knew him when they were children.

Here is what is known about Augassi: He was a Ute Indian famous among the Uintah Railway employees and townsfolk who lived in Dragon and Atchee in the late 1920s and 30s. His story was unique in that he was an outcast within the Ute Tribe and was made to wear women’s clothes. He was known as “old Augassi” in the 1930s and was thought to be in his sixties. The various reports as to why he was made to wear women’s clothes vary from “cowardice” in battle, to refusing to fight at the Meeker Massacre, to refusing to fight in World War One. Although being branded a coward and shamed by the Tribe was a lifelong punishment, no known details of his supposed cowardice were ever revealed for certain. Even if he had been in his early teens during the 1879 Meeker Massacre, that would put him closer to seventy years old in the 1930s, so his participation—or a lack thereof—in that event seems improbable, though not impossible. There were many small uprisings of various Ute tribes against whites in the late 1800s, and any number of these could have been an action that got Augassi in trouble with the Tribe. There is a verbal recollection of Augassi refusing United States military service in World War One, but that too seems questionable. The citizenship of the Utes and American Indians in general was still murky with regard to the Selective Service Act at the onset of World War One. And to think that Augassi was part of a conscientious objector movement in remote eastern Utah—before telephones, or even a real understanding of the legal boundaries of the reservation—seems far-fetched as well.

Whatever the case, Augassi was somewhat of an outcast of the Tribe, often traveling alone, removed from the culture of togetherness within the Tribe. “Dressed as a squaw” was the common phrase used by folks who were interviewed about their recollections of Augassi back in the 1990s, and the only photographs that have been published show him in a dress. He had a semi-permanent home in Dragon, Utah, in the 1930s, and it was described as “seasonal” by the folks who were only children at the time. This author never has had a direct talk with anyone who was an adult when Augassi was alive, and all first-hand stories of the folks I interviewed were from their perspectives as children. The “cabin” was located along a wash that ran down the canyon from the Dragon Mine, through the town of Dragon, to meet up with Evacuation Creek. The small wooden shack was a one-room affair with small pens out back for chickens, goats, or pigs. The shack was located just across the dirt “street” from Finnicum’s store. A walkway—a single-plank wide “bridge”—crossed the wash near the front of Augassi’s cabin, and connected with a boardwalk that ran from the Uintah Railway’s depot to the store and the company houses beyond.

It is here that the children’s memories of Augassi were placed. For one, the young kids in town had a running battle with “old Augassi.” They pestered him, and he likewise scared them silly. Taunting and rock tossing by the children at the cabin from the bridge were commonplace, and the occasional brandishing of a large hunting knife and a screaming “war holler” from Augassi’s front door sent the little brats scurrying for
Atchee, Colorado, circa 1930s. The Uintah Railway ran through the remote high desert of western Colorado and eastern Utah. The little company towns that sprung up to support the Railway were the natural places for members of the Ute Tribe to interact with the surrounding culture. (photograph from the author’s collection)

The Bear Dance was an annual spring ceremony held near Dragon, Utah, by the Utes, who called that area home. Here a Ute woman, her child bound to her back, walks towards the Bear Dance entrance as a crowd of curious white folk gather around to watch the festivities. Note the American flag flying above the cedar tree enclosure. These large trees had to be cut down from the surrounding hillsides by the Tribe days in advance. Preparing the grounds for the multi-day ceremonies was a laborious task. (photograph from the author’s collection)
Death Watch
By David Morris

Out cruising
on a dusty county road
I stop to watch an ancient crippled ram
left to fend for himself
by an aloof and faraway
rest of the herd.

He gimps awkwardly
across a field of sun-drained
graying grasses
and tolerates the magpie who
cowboy tall
rides astride his wiry back.

As a rule I question magpie motives
I'd bet he plans to be
first in line
when the time is right
when death claims an old ram's life
and the dinner bell rings.
Another in a Too Long Line of Found Poems

By David Morris

I pluck a sheep bell
rusted bent
and near buried
from its ancient tomb
of bentonite and blowing sand
in a long forgotten ripple of dry arroyo
far out in the Red Desert.
I turn it over in my hands
an anomaly
out of place and out of time
and formulate the scene:
Once upon multiple decades ago
A crotchety ewe
tired
of relentless sun
dust
and the ever present hot wind
managed to shake off
one irritant at least:
the constant clanging bell
roped like an anchor
around her neck.
She stomped it as a parting shot
and wandered off to join the rest of the girls
in search of limp
gray
water-starved grass.
That's my theory
I found the bell
I get to decide how it got there.

Tiny Man

By Jeff Stoddard

“I've seen him. I think.
He's really small? I mean really, really small. Right?
To be honest he must not have made that big of an impression on me.”

–Maynard Preston, Assistant Manager, Bob's Market.

I

don't know how I got this tiny. I just am. How tiny? I suppose about
the size of a gnat, or maybe a grain of pigmy rice. Look around your
house and find the smallest thing you see. That's my size.

But don't worry. Life isn't as hard as you think it might be for a
tiny man. For instance, it doesn't take much food to fill me up. Like just
yesterday while I was walking across the kitchen floor, WHAM! Not a
hundred yards away this huge chunk of cheese the size of an elephant falls
out of the sky. “What luck!” I say to myself. Two or three bites of that bad
boy and I'm good for three days. But you have to make use of that kind of
luck within two days or it becomes a nasty, moldy bit of business.

Insignificance breeds imperviosity. When you're as insignificant as I
am, bugs, beetles, and birds don't ever threaten me. They won't mess with
me, because it's probably a lot of trouble for nothing. Last week, when I
was trying to remember what I did with my shoes, I was standing on the
coffee table leaning on the TV remote. A hideous monster slithered out
from between the pages of the TV Guide. Big as a bus, a thousand legs,
and jaws that could snap a telephone pole in half, his bulbous eyes looked
right through me. I thought I was a goner for sure. In his arrogant
indifference, the beastly trumbled past me like I was a stray fingernail
clipping.

So I picked up a chunk of salt that was knocked off a corn chip the
night before and I chucked it at him. It bounced off his slimy back end.
“Hey. Big ugly bug!” I said. “Don't you dare disregard me like that.” It was
like I wasn't even there. He crawled away and disappeared behind the
National Geographic.
The ultimate insignificance for a tiny man? When the vacuum cleaner won’t even suck you up. I was making my way through a thick section of carpet between the living room and the dining room. It was like hiking through a tangled forest of fuzzy blue trees. It started with a low rumble and quickly became an ear-splitting roar. The vacuum cleaner made a low pass over the forest. It was like a tornado. Hairs, the size of python snakes, boulder-sized bits of dirt, a button like a flying saucer, and even a scrap of paper big enough to cover a shed roof came whizzing by my head. And then it was gone.

It didn’t even mess up my hair.

But it’s not like I have no fun at all. Last week I took a couple of days to hike to the top of the desk in the den. With the help of a canvas bag leaning against the desk and a rope-sized piece of thread dangling out of a drawer, I found myself at the end of the second day sitting on the edge of the mirror-smooth desktop. I’m guessing it was about ten or fifteen acres of glass-topped walnut. A gargantuan computer sat in the middle of the desk like a sprawling warehouse with a 20-story movie screen attached. I was still several hundred yards away and the only thing I could make out on the screen was a flashing red box that said LUNCH or something. (I never was very good at reading giant flashing letters.)

I wandered around to the side of the plastic building and decided to explore one of the gaping holes in the side, past some giant letters that read “USB.” I found myself in a maze of copper paths embedded on a shiny green floor. A soft light glowed from somewhere in the distance, accompanied by a low humming noise. I followed a path to what looked like a giant glass tank on its side. To get a better look inside, I started climbing on the hoses that were attached to the side of the tank. With a loud “crack,” one of the hoses broke off and instantly the interior of the warehouse went pitch black… oops.

Luckily, I didn’t fall far and there was still enough light coming from the entrance hole for me to escape without being noticed…as if anyone would notice me anyway.

I used to hide when the “Significants” came around. (That’s what I call the giant people.) But not anymore. They flick pieces of lint off the desk, but never notice me. Two of them came into the room yelling at each other about launch codes and “windows of opportunity,” and the like. “Just hit the button!” the big one yelled.

As I shimmied back down the thread rope and past the desk drawers, my mind drifted to what that could mean.

“As meager as I am,” I thought. “I can still mess up a Significant’s lunch date.”

Whatever.
A Float Beneath a Nervous Bird
By David Morris

An ungainly adolescent
Great Blue Heron flaps his extended wings
and teeters at the end of a dry branch
high in an ancient cottonwood

reluctant
afraid
unwilling
to make that first leap
towards adulthood.

Come on, I call,
Take the plunge!
Close your eyes and dive
into the waiting arms
of a cloudless sky!

Like all parents
yours need and want you gone
they’re ready
for the empty nest.
Vikse Gwenn  
*Wheels of Harvest* (photograph)

Jeff Stoddard  
*Rangely Rocks* (photograph)
Sister
By David Morris

At the apex of a steep bluff
above the Yampa
with a view
of miles of jagged distant hills

I placed the eagle wing—

the one my sister years ago found
and cherished

the one found a second time
satin wrapped in a closet
by her son
when we emptied her apartment—

on a sagebrush
surrounded by lithic litter and fire rock
left behind by the Utes
who long ago lived here.

Maybe
(with her affinity for all things
spiritual magical mystical otherworldly)

and maybe
(because she really would have loved this place)

just maybe

she went into the wing.

Revisiting Shakespeare
By David Morris

I feel for the cantankerous
naive
and stubbornly misguided
King Lear.

Prone to less than stellar
decision-making skills

he gave his children
his all his everything

and when the going got
wind-blown
rocky rough

he believed
he could bite back
re-swallow
his own words

start giving orders again

and how'd that work out for him?

I say
I feel for the guy—

my children
don't

pay much attention
to what I think
either.
She was coppery, slim,
sculpted with curves
drawn into points,
pulled up to the height
of the man who held her
loosely at his side
till the music began,
and he turned to draw her near.

He bowed his head,
he stroked her neck,
plucked lazy rhythms,
pounded throbbing beats. He and that wanton guitar
looked ready to fly
with his quivering arm
and her answering vibrato.

The coo of mourning doves
has never sung sadness until
this moment when I thought of you,
of yearning through the years
for your little self
so suddenly gone
from the fabric of our family,
our sorrow finally the gentle gray
of doves’ feathers
ruffled in the morning breeze.
Contributors’ Notes

Shayna Allen is currently a student at CNCC, Craig. She will be transferring to Colorado Mesa University in the fall of 2016 to pursue a degree in Graphic Design: Motion Graphics & Animation. *Charcoal in Charcoal* was created in one of Mr. Holloway’s art classes with the use of charcoal and a blending stick.

Ken Bailey writes, “I have lived in Wisconsin for forty-four years, but I grew up in Rangely and went to middle school and high school there in the 60s and 70s. I am a lifelong hobby cartoonist and specialize in comic book writing and art, using my own characters, such as the Mighty EnergyGirl, a middle-aged ‘Super Schoolmarm’ who serves a fictional small city in north-western Illinois as the local superhero. Her civilian husband in the stories grew up in ‘Strangely’, a fictionalized version of my own oilfield former home, and the two are taken back to that place occasionally as an homage. My first comic book to be ‘published’ was done with the aid of a former Rangely middle school principal, and my father once worked at Rangely College.”

Kendra Brown from Rangely writes, “I am pursing my Equine Studies AAS at CNCC. My dream is to have a career in equine rehabilitation. I am in Phi Theta Kappa, an honors society at CNCC, and between school and horses stay very busy. In my free time I enjoy taking flower or ‘action’ pictures. Photography holds a special place in my heart and always will.”

Kathy Bassett says of her photograph Yellow-headed Blackbird, “While sitting in my truck one day waiting for the mail carrier, this fella decided to sit on a post outside my window and keep me company,” and of her painting Relaxing. “This is a scene from Douglas Mountain, Moffat County. I drive by this frequently and just decided one day that it needed a couple bull elk relaxing in the grass.”

Tony Benson writes, “I have lived in Rangely for 8 years with my wife, Deanna, and our 2 children, Logan, 7, and Kira Jo, 6. I have been drawing and painting for about 40 years, with 25 years in the sign business, and driving a truck in the oil patch. *Promises* is a gift for my wife, Deanna. It’s a self-portrait with both of our children, our home in Rangely, and our convertible Mustang used just for summer transportation! At the bottom of the drawing behind the glass on the frame I wrote, ‘I Promise to bring you as many more great years as I can. I Promise to be a better man today, to be a better husband for you. I Promise I will show our children my love for you, to inspire them to love as well. I Promise to learn to cook a better steak, with home-made mashed potatoes and gravy.’”

Steve Cochrane of Rangely photographed *Riding Out the Storm* in Mesa Verde National Park. He writes, “I try to focus on capturing the briefest of moments, the momentary eye contact with an animal, the light reflecting off a waterfall, and the transient light at dawn and dusk. All these aspects illustrate the beauty of nature and provide an everlasting impression.”

Peter Forbes grew up in and around Dinosaur, Colorado, and currently lives in Rangely. He holds a B.A. in literature and has been accepted into the master of fine arts program in film at Columbia University for fall of 2016. *Red Gulch* was partially inspired by an elk hunt from his boyhood.

David Foster of Craig, Colorado, is a graduate of CNCC and regular contributor to *Waving Hands*. He comments, “*Weird Eatery* was taken in October 2015 with my Canon Rebel XTi. Hope you enjoy it!”

Heather Fross is a resident of Craig. Her watercolor painting is of her daughter, Ella, who loves being outside and using her imagination to play.

Clancie Guinn writes, “I am a western pencil artist. The subject matter I choose to draw is mostly western themed and I try to capture as much detail as I can in each drawing I create. This drawing is of a few folks who were waiting to rope at a local team roping event. I hope everyone enjoys all the little details in this drawing!”

Andrew Gulliford is a professor of History and Environmental Studies at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. He can be reached at gulliford_a@fortlewis.edu.

Vikse Gwenn photographed Wheels of Harvest. She writes, “I have enjoyed photography for many years. Here in Moffat county we have so much beautiful scenery and wildlife to be thankful for.”

Rene Harden of Rangely writes of her photograph *Gotta Go*, “This Momma Barn Sparrow was on a fast break to go get her babies more food. The picture was taken on my travels in 2013 in Sterling Heights, Michigan.”

Janele Husband of Craig writes that her photograph *Winter Tears* “was taken after a spring snowstorm in Santa Fe, NM, on Canyon Road.”

In Memoriam:
(a tough year for CNCC)

Sue P. McCulloch, 1936-2015
One of the first English instructors at Rangely Junior College remembered by Nathan Ivey, first president of the College.

Steve Lathrop, 1954-2016
Automotive Technology Instructor, Craig Campus

Cindy Horntvedt, 1958-2016
Math Instructor, Rangely Campus

Anthony “Tony” Benson, 1961-2016
Local artist and *Waving Hands* Contributor

Tony Benson
*Promises* (pencil drawing)
Rick Kawchack of Craig writes, “I have been a boilermaker for over 20 years. My wife and I founded Kawchack Metal Art four years ago, and have designed several pieces of metal art together. This is one of them. We wanted a piece that could stand on its own, yet show a flowing expression. Annie designed The Stance, then I built it. It was finished with a brushed look over aluminum. Another of our pieces, Styxosaurus! was featured in several publications.”

Joseph Lansing writes, “My painting is heavily influenced from years of driving the back roads and bumping down the two tracks of the Western US. I have an eye for the worn and weathered, beaten and bashed. Somewhere in these images is the past fading further and further away.” About Eye of the Beholder he writes, “This once-gaudy tail light was on a mostly whole Ford Thunderbird found under the 5th Street bridge in Grand Junction, CO. I painted the car whole, but decided to do this close up piece for more impact.” and of Off in the Weeds, “This truck was found behind a farmhouse along with barrels and bed springs and tires in and alongside a gully north of Loma, CO. It’s amazing to see what farmers of the past kept around for decades.”

Michael Melneck notes that he got his first camera out of a cereal box: “I was eight years old. I moved to digital after—probably—a thousand miles of film, one frame at a time. Digital won’t make you a better photographer, but it should make you a better thinker. This barn door shot comes from an abandoned farm south of Hamilton, CO. I love ruins, abandoned places—they all have stories to tell.”

Jenny Meyer of Craig writes of Rhythm of the Pow Wow, “This photograph was captured at a pow wow in British Columbia, Canada. You could feel this young woman’s rhythm as she danced to the beating of the drums. This is my interpretation of that brief moment in time,” and of Mom’s Side, Wild & Free, Sand Wash, “The original photograph was of mom’s yearling and this year’s foal grazing by her side together, wild and free in Sand Wash Basin in Moffat County. This is my interpretation of this photograph using various digital tools. I love capturing the personality of wildlife with my camera.”

David Morris taught language arts for 35 years. He has published three books of poetry and has an unpublished novel. He tries his hand at a variety of art forms, and loves to let those creative juices flow.

Patti Mosbey has two photographs in this Issue, Buffalo Blizzard and Heated Discussion. She writes, “I am so glad to call Moffat County my home. I love rural America and the great outdoors that our area has to offer, capturing the beauty of Northwest Colorado and sharing it to entice others to want to discover the same.”

Rodger Polley is a native resident of Rangely, Colorado, and wrote two books on the Uintah Railway published in 1999 and 2001 respectively (Uintah Railway Pictorial, Volumes I and II). He attended CNCC and Mesa State College and earned credits in history while pursuing a BBA in business administration. He currently resides in Rangely with his family and operates a local hardware store.

Glenden Reuer of Craig is 16 years old and has begun a career in photography and metal sculpting. Of Berries he writes, “This picture was taken with my Nikon D3100. It is a close up of a cluster of berries found on a tree in California.” Of The Sundial he writes, “This picture was taken with a Nikon D3100 in California. It is of the Sundial Bridge.”

Kathy Simpson of Craig notes that her photograph All Is Quiet was “taken from the Swinging Bridge in Brown’s Park in February 2016,” and that Guarded by Angel Wings is “a view looking towards Mantle’s Cave.”

Margaret Slaugh of Rangely photographed Winter Bluebird and writes, “I have been taking classes and working on improving my photography for about 10 years now. I have always loved taking pictures and would have a camera with me when I could. I am an opportunistic photographer. Whatever is available is what I take pictures of.”

Kyle Stewart of Rangely writes, “I’ve been doing metal artwork for almost 8 years now. Bear Catching Fish was something to challenge myself with, as I had never done such extensive grinder detail before.”

Jeff Stoddard is a freelance writer, graphic designer, photographer, and amateur sculptor of junk. He lives with his wife, Franziska, in Craig.

Landon Wardell grew up on a ranch near Rangely and spent a lot of time on horseback, riding as far east as Rangely and as far west as Vernal, Utah. Fred’s Stitches is the story of one of his many adventures in the area.

Joyce Wilson (“I like to go by Old Lady, New Poet”) writes, “I heard a Dakota Blonde concert in Grand Lake in August 2015. I was swept up by the bass and its player, right into lines of High Country Concert. She says of her other poem, “Mourning doves have what has always been a favorite song, until the morning I wrote the poem about the loss of our little son.”