

Vail Daily

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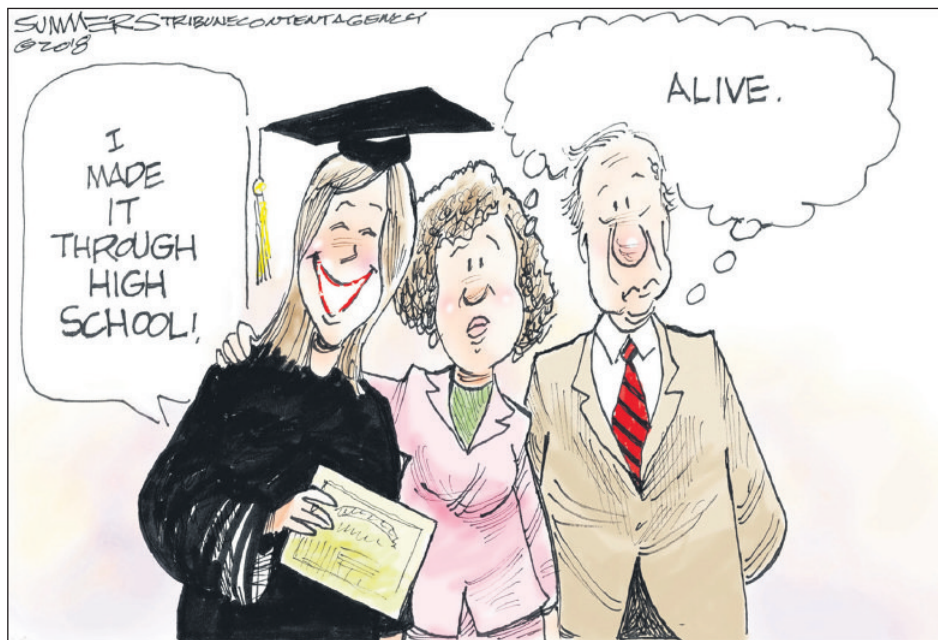
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Summer safety in the Rockies

As we begin our days of earlier sunrises and later sunsets, with warmth that penetrates the soul, our sense of adventure is once again awakened. As we continue to push the envelope of life, there are certain realities that we must consider.

The joys of living in the Rockies. We like to think we've got it all covered because we have lived here for quite some time, but it helps to be reminded of some of the things we occasionally forget.

When enjoying the outdoors ...

- Bring a fully charged cell-phone. Even with no reception, a 911 text can often be received.

- Even if familiar with the trail, bring a map (in case an alternate route back is needed).

- Bring a compass in addition to your GPS.

- Don't go alone, if possible.

- If alone, then tell someone where you are going and an estimated return time. Even a note taped to a neighbor's door is helpful. If not back within two hours of that time, then instruct them to call 911.

- Leave a copy of hiking plans in the car. If it's a regular destination, then keep a permanent copy visible.

- If lost, then do not move. You are easier to locate at the point of distress.

- Always bring water and, if possible, iodine pills or a water filter to replenish.

- Bring some snack bars to keep energy up and in case your hike is longer than expected.

- Bring a small first aid kit and Swiss army knife. An extra pair of socks and light jacket can be a welcome relief, particularly if you are still out when the sun sets. The smaller and lighter, the more likely you are to take these with you.

- Bring a tarp in case of sudden rain or as a shelter for an unexpected night stay.

- Be aware of altitude sickness. Remember that at 10,000 feet, oxygen is required and many of our local mountains are 11,000 to 14,000. Also, altitude drugs dehydrate, so if taking them, then water is essential.

- Bring sunscreen; even on cloudy days, the altitude makes you susceptible to overexposure.

- Remember that satellite phones only get reception 70 percent of the time, so they may not be reliable.

- If in an area with active wildlife, then

carry bear spray.

- If biking, then bring a multitool, spare tires and small pump.

When bike riding, use an audible signal when passing others and announce on which side you are passing. The right-of-way goes to uphill hikers and bikers. Cyclists have the right-of-way over hikers, and equestrians go before all others.

When hiking, avoid muddy trails. Not only do you have greater footing on dry paths, but muddy footprints and tire tracks, when dry, leave damage that must be corrected manually.

If hiking with a dog, then keep it on a leash for its safety. You may encounter a number of wild-

life. Bear, elk, deer, moose and coyote will usually attack a dog because it has ventured onto their turf, and that cute, furry thing that your dog wants to play with will be fiercely protected by momma.

Speaking of wildlife, bears are cute ... don't feed them. Remember, a fed bear is a dead bear. Never leave food in your car; a bear will actually open the door or break a window to reach it. Mother bears with cubs are dangerous. If you find yourself between a mother and her cubs, then slowly back away, shout in a deep voice, and try to make yourself appear large. Never turn your back on a bear.

We do have moose and mountain lions. If you find yourself near a moose, then back away slowly and step behind a tree, where they are unlikely to charge at you with a tree in the way. Also, moose view dogs as coyotes, which they consider a threat, so they will attack. If you are surprised by a mountain lion, then you must fight back; they may consider you to not be worth the trouble.

Nothing says the great outdoors better than a row of RVs. Of course, tents and huts are the locals' outdoor housing of preference. Be careful with campfires, acknowledging that there will occasionally be bans when wildfire risk is high.

Summertime is a wonderful opportunity to explore this incredible landscape we call home. Be safe.

James van Beek is the Eagle County sheriff. You can reach him at james.vanbeek@eaglecounty.us.

Education begins at home

Editor's note: Find a cited version of this column at www.vaildaily.com.

William Burroughs once wrote, "The aim of education is the knowledge, not of facts, but of values." Which begs the question, does the American education system create the space where differing philosophies are presented and collide, where a wide variety of viewpoints are welcomed and where students, especially those in higher education, are allowed to debate and test opposing theories and philosophies?

Consider the following: A National Association of Scholars study indicates the ratio of liberal to conservative college professors now stands at 13:1.

Meanwhile, two of the top 50 organizational contributors to political causes during the 2016 presidential election year were the American Teachers Union (ninth largest) and the National Education Association (11th largest), which, when combined, contributed \$63 million to democrats and liberal causes.

In an age when the vast majority of college professors admittedly embrace a liberal ideology and 99 percent of the teachers' union donations go to liberal causes, how can we ensure that our young people are exposed to ideas and concepts that widen and not constrict their horizons?

I believe the vast majority of educators want their charges to be open-minded, but at the same time, I suspect the liberal orthodoxy of academia can't help but rub off on our kids.

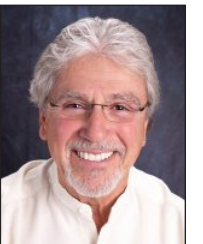
I've long believed education begins in the home, and as parents, we have a myriad of responsibilities regarding our progeny. Certainly, teaching manners, etiquette and grooming are important, but like the biblical parable, we serve our children far better when we focus on teaching them "how to fish" so they can become self-reliant and prosper after they leave the warmth of the parental hearth.

Too often, children are taught to be quiet and dutiful when we should be trying to develop expressive and open-minded little personalities.

And the surest way to have interesting children is to be interested in them as human beings, not just in their grades or the cleanliness of their rooms.

Years ago, I came across a philosophy about education that actually does focus on values, rather than facts.

The first tenet of this approach to education is the view that the ultimate responsibility for a young person's success or failure in life lies with the individual, and it's the level of a young person's self-confidence that ultimately determines the level of his or her success ... academically, athletically, interpersonally and, most certainly later in life, economically.



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