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Winter Guide



INSIDE:

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it's a paradox

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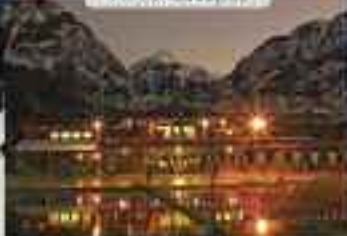
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Between the Covers Table of Contents

- 7 • An Introduction**
The editor speaks
- 8 • Scheduled Events**
Overview of the fun to be had
- 11 • A Look at Our Town**
Why we're so proud
- 12 • Challenged Climbers**
They dare you to call them "crippled"
- 14 • Glitter Girl**
An ice climber summits addiction and depression
- 16 • Guide to Guides (and more)**
A directory of goods and services you want to know about
- 18 • Summer of Love**
What to do when it's not freezing
- 20 • Snow Trek**
Off the beaten path: cross-country skiing and shoeing
- 21 • Trailway to Heaven**
Rocky-road-tripping in the San Juans
- 22 • More than a Post Card**
What to do in a winter wonderland
- 25 • Take a Hike**
Covering ground the old fashion way
- 26 • To the Rescue**
Rigging the odds to bring them home
- 27 • Passing it on**
Teaching the youngsters to climb and how to love it
- 28 • Extreme Playground**
Testing the boundaries of San Juan winters

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ASOLO ROCKICE

From the Editor

One of life's pleasures since my transplant from Southwest Missouri to a special corner of Colorado and the stunning San Juan Mountains has been the opportunity to work with the Ouray [Colorado] Ice Park to produce the official guide for the Ouray Ice Festival – North America's largest such event – the Sundance of ice festivals.

This year's issue, with a several-times-bigger print-run than before and a far-reaching, yet targeted distribution, proves to not only celebrate this outstanding facility and the world-class athletes who assemble from around the globe to participate in its top-shelf event, but to invite more folks to town to bear witness to the festival and other regional attractions and amenities.

Ice oozes and builds from the porous rock of my native Ozarks. The ice draped limestone bluffs often hang so close to highways they whisper secrets of hidden rivers and streams as steam-expelling cars slide by. During a certain time of the year, ice seems to live as surely as coral and ebbs and flows as if tide.

In my adopted Ouray County, some of the best climbers in the world assemble to assault towering curtains of ice – helped along by man by spraying hundreds of thousands of gallons of water per week over the walls of a deep and narrow gorge of hard rock.

Climbers often come to Ouray because of the ice park that world-renown mountaineer and former president of the American Alpine Club, Jim Donini, called “the best venue in the world to develop ice-climbing skills.” It is a sight to behold.

Ouray's ice festival, held each January, is the crowning centerpiece of the ice park's three-month season. “Have an ice day” appears in merchants' and hoteliers' windows, as the best of the best gather in town to challenge the ice like a showdown on Main Street.

While I long to pet the rock-clinging ice from home, these athletes and adventurers live to conquer the challenge awaiting them between “here” and “there” and do it with strength, style and tenacity.

As a local, wintertime T-shirt proclaims: “Ice climbers: A few cubes short of a full tray.” WellSpring is pleased to tell their story and for the opportunity to bring you additional information about our corner of the world.

DALE MCCURRY

Production Perpetrators

Contributors to the production of this official publication of the 17th annual Ouray Ice Festival are: Publishers – The Ouray Ice Park and Jennifer Mandaville and Dale McCurry of WellSpring Publishing; Editor/Contributor – Dale McCurry; Copyeditor/Contributor – Jennifer Mandaville. Design and Layout – Kristin Schroeder of Avalanche Graphics. Photographers – Brent Goudreau, Lora Slawitschka and Michael Seamans. A special thank you to all of the sponsors and

17th Annual Ouray Ice Festival: January 5th – 8th, 2012 Schedule of Events

Thursday, January 5th, 2012

Slide Show; Main Street Theatre
Pre-Party; Location TBA

Friday, January 6th, 2012 Ouray Ice Festival Park

Friday's Ouray Ice Festival Day Park Events:

Outdoor Gear Expo — check out the newest gear
Interactive Clinics — Registration Begins November 13th online
Mic'd Demonstrations (lower bridge) — Free

Friday's Ouray Ice Festival Evening Events:

Ouray Community Center (340 6th Ave.) — Open to Public
Sponsored by OVFD and OIP
Dinner & Music
Bottomless Pints Beer — New Belgium Brewery, Ice Tea, Lemonade,
Water
Outdoor Gear Expo & Demos
Silent Auction
Friday Night Slide Show

Saturday, January 7th, 2012 Ouray Ice Festival Park

Saturday's Ouray Ice Festival Day Park Events:

Outdoor Gear Expo — check out newest gear
Interactive Clinics
Competition
Ninth Annual Kids Climbing College
The North Face ice axe throwing contest

Saturday's Ouray Ice Festival Evening Events:

Ouray Ice Park live auction — New Belgium beer
Saturday Night Screening
Saturday Night Party

Sunday, January 8th, 2012 Ouray Ice Festival Park

Sunday's Ouray Ice Festival Day Park Events:

Outdoor Gear Expo — check out newest gear

Interactive Clinics

Ouray Ice Festival Mic'd Demonstrations (lower bridge)

Ninth Annual Kids Climbing College

Ouray Ice Festival Sunday Evening Award Ceremony

Asolo Awards Ceremony, and Stump Auction



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Our Town

Ouray was founded in 1876 as a prosperous mining town. Located at 7,800 feet above sea level in southwest Colorado. It is surrounded on three sides by 13,000-foot peaks, earning it the nickname “The Switzerland of America.” Ouray is home to several hot springs pools and vapor caves, the largest is the city-owned, million-gallon Ouray Hot Springs Pool, which is open year-round. Ouray is an outdoor enthusiast’s paradise, offering rock climbing, canyoneering, hiking, four-wheeling and mountain biking in the summer and ice climbing, backcountry skiing, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter. To learn more, go to www.ouraycolorado.com.

The Ouray Ice Park is the world’s first park dedicated exclusively to ice climbing and hosts the Ouray Ice Festival held each January, which attracts athletes from around the world. The park is located in the Uncompahgre Gorge just south of Ouray. Natural classic routes in the gorge like Stone Free and Tangled Up In Blue have been climbed since the 1970s – often with wooden Chouinard-Frost piolet, snags, and Goldline. In 1991, Bill Whitt and Gary Wild placed pipe and sprinkler heads to flow water over the sides of the Gorge and “farm” additional ice climbs. Their effort attracted enough attention that in 1997 OIP was formed to formally organize the park. The park spans more than a mile of the Uncompahgre Gorge, with a gravity-fed plumbing system spraying more than 150,000 gallons of



Staff Photo

water on the canyon walls on a typical winter night.

The Ouray Hot Springs Pool is open year-round and free of the sulfur smell typical of many hot springs.

The Ouray County Historical Society Museum is housed in the 1887 Miner’s Hospital and recommended by the Smithsonian Institute.

The “Million Dollar Highway,” the portion of highway 550 between Ouray and Silverton, is part of the famed San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway.

The Box Cañon Falls & Park offers an opportunity to watch from above or below as thousands of gallons of water rush through this portion of Canyon Creek and tumble down the 285-foot waterfall.



Photo courtesy Paradox Sports

Defying Gravity

By Jennifer Mandaville

In 1999, Malcolm Daly and Jim Donini went to the Alaska Range to find a new route up the southeast side of Mount Hunter. At nearly 14,000 feet, Mount Hunter is topped by a large, low-angled glacier plateau with long, corniced ridges extending in various directions with exceptionally steep faces. As a “tune-up,” Daly and Donini began with Thunder Mountain, a spur of Hunter, as Hunter was such a big project.

After eight days exploring the options and opportunities of Thunder Mountain, something went terribly wrong.

With the climb 90 percent completed and Malcolm and Jim on descent, Malcolm plunged 200 feet past Jim suffering compound fractures in his right tibia and fibula and shattering his left heel. Forty-five hours later, Malcolm was plucked off the mountain side via a 200-foot rope, a rescuer and a rescue helicopter; forty five hours in which Malcolm suffered frost bite on his feet, almost bled to death and kept his body alive and mind sharp doing thousands of windmills with his arms. Malcolm's injuries kept him in a wheelchair for a year, lead him to the eventuality of being a multiple-amputee

and ultimately to the executive director position of Paradox Sports.

It's a paradox

Paradox Sports, headquartered in Boulder, founded in February of 2007 and incorporated in May of the same year, has current programs in California, Colorado, New Hampshire and Kentucky and is ever expanding – going where there is interest and need. While listing the mission as providing “inspiration, opportunities and adaptive equipment to the disabled community, empowering their pursuit of a life of excellence through human-powered outdoor sports,” Malcolm expands by explaining that these sports are “non-competitive at their soul.” Programs range from climbing ice and rock to summiting 14'ers to white-water kayaking, all done with “how hard you push yourself as the real goal.”

What on ice?!?

Two former Paradox programs, Gimps on Ice and Gimps on Rock and have now become the more politically correct Paradox Ice and Paradox Rock.

Malcolm explains that while “gimp” is off-putting to the mainstream it is “part of our internal, tribal language ... we are proud of our accomplishments, doing

things most ‘normals’ would not consider, let alone those who are profoundly disabled.”

The weekend of March 2 – 4, 2012, Paradox holds its annual ice climbing competition at the Ouray Ice Park, with a fundraiser for the program the evening of the 3rd at The Outlaw Restaurant.

“Year round, Ouray is very accommodating to disabled athletes,” Malcolm shares. “If you’re in a wheelchair and you want to ice climb, they’re like ‘Yeah, we’ve got it ...’ It is not unusual to see amputees around town.”

No labels, please

While falling two hundred feet, and the subsequent injuries sustained, could have shut many doors in Malcolm Daly’s life, it didn’t. In his self-deprecation, he bills

himself as an “out-of-shape, middle-aged, post-cardiac, multiple-amputee with a head injury” kind of guy, but that is not quite right. He continues to pursue passion and the things he loves, albeit time has changed those definitions.

Malcolm shared this quote as a way to sum up his current passion:

“... We defy the notion disabled people are crippled. We may be amputees. Or blind. Or even ‘normal.’ But not even close to being crippled. We aren’t supposed to walk? Okay, we’ll climb instead. We defy the concept of normal. Really, who’s normal anyway? We defy what holds us down. We defy constraint. We won’t stay in our assigned seats. We defy ‘broken’ and choose to be unbreakable. We defy gravity.”

—Paradox Sports, Ambassador Program.



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Margo Talbot's Climb Through Pain

By Dale McCurry

Margo Talbot's Facebook profile picture is of her at the South Pole standing on a sea of ice with her jacket and shirt wide open, wearing only a bikini top and an expansive smile from the waist up. The photo below is of Talbot hamming it up, climbing in one of Ouray's Chicks with Picks ice climbing clinics while wearing a leopard-print suit.

Margo wasn't always so much fun.



Margo Talbot hamming it up in Ouray Ice Park at a Chicks with Picks clinic.

Photo by Marion McDevitt

Glitter girl

In "Prologue: The Stage," from her book *All That Glitters: A Climber's Journey Through Addiction and Depression*, Talbot

describes the significance of standing atop Mt. Vinson, Antarctica's highest peak, in February 2006. Speaking of the contrast between that moment and many others since and an earlier time in her life, before her recovery, she wrote: "I have known darkness and have chosen the light."

The darkness came not only in the form of the depression she can't remember life before, but the myriad of substances she used to self-medicate. "The drugs and alcohol were a way of dulling the pain and anxiety," she says with certainty.

Margo describes waking up on a January morning in 1988 with blood covered hands and not a clue what had happened. "I felt like a hollowed-out shell, eerily empty and devoid of hope," she writes. "For months I had barely been functioning. The hardest thing was waking up and realizing I had to make it through another day. On this morning, birds were chirping outside my window, and I told myself that if they could be so thrilled about the new day, surely I could get out of bed. Yet within hours of comparing myself with the birds, I was calling the suicide crisis hotline."

The climber/the writer

"I had no intention in writing about the deep dark secret that was my life," Talbot says. "The book was born of the Banff Mountain Writing Program in which I was involved. I was told that every time I touched on the reality of my life, my writing came alive, and I was encouraged to write my memoir as confession.

“The book’s release was like 500 pounds lifted off of me,” she says. “It was an unburdening.”

Meanwhile Talbot has published numerous climbing-related articles, as well as being the instigator and main contributor to the fourth edition of *Waterfall Ice Climbs in the Canadian Rockies* and says that, though it cuts into her time climbing, she is driven to write and speak. “I want to spread the message that there is always hope – no matter the situation. Always hope to find a way out of it.”

No dope, full of hope

“My recovery has allowed me to go climb without the weight of the world on me,” Talbot says. “In turn, climbing has helped my recovery.” She adds that a major benefit of climbing is that it requires her to be “fully in the moment.”

Talbot has competed in a number of climbing competitions, including the ESPN X-Games and the Ouray Ice Festival. A sponsored athlete with Outdoor Research, she also guides for Chicks with Picks and runs an adventure guide company for women called The Glitter Girls.

As for Ouray

“I like alpine and rock, but my biggest passion is ice climbing,” Talbot says. “I like the rhythmic quality of it. I have always loved the winter; I love the cold. And I really love the equipment,” she says, adding she knows that probably sounds crazy.

“I have been coming to Ouray since ’97.” Margo says. “That part of Colorado is one

of my favorite places on the planet ... and I have been to some pretty fabulous places. Ouray’s festival is the premiere event of its kind. I like many of the smaller ones, don’t get me wrong, but Ouray is the best venue for climbing I know of. And I have made good friends there over the years.

“I feel at home in Ouray.”

To learn more

All That Glitters: A Climbers Journey through Addiction and Depression, Talbot’s first book, is a finalist at the Banff Mountain Festival. Margo lives in Winlaw, British Columbia with her partner Warren Macdonald.

Find out more at www.margotalbot.com and/or www.allthatglittersbook.com.

The advertisement for Comfort Inn in Ouray, Colorado, features a blue background with a yellow and red logo at the top. The text lists several amenities and offers, including a 20% discount for local park members, a hot springs pool, and a hot breakfast. The contact information and website are provided at the bottom.

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Ouray, Summer Mountain Paradise

What makes Ouray a one-of-a-kind city is its personality, coupled with the majestic mountains and charming Victorian streets. The spirit of the Old West permeates the streets, and Ouray's denizens keep it alive by valuing what's true, genuine and from the heart.

This historic energy reverberates along the valley's walls and makes simple things like walking the Perimeter Trail, strolling through the eclectic shops along Main Street or grabbing a bite at one of the fantastic locally owned restaurants especially memorable and romantic.

Charm and resilience equal charisma here in the land of extremes. Bright, cloudless days fill the sky three-quarters of the year. As the sun warms the crispest, cleanest air in all North America, and town awakens to a new day, visitors and locals enjoy sips

of locally-roasted espresso, homemade Danish and good old American breakfast.

You may decide to relax, visit the deer in the park, go to the hot springs and soak up the stars at night. Or, maybe you crave excitement and decide to go rafting on the wild local waters or four-wheel up into some of the highest, most spectacular scenery of the Rocky Mountains.

Either way, we're sure that you will agree that Ouray is a one-of-a-kind town. After all, what other town in America offers three museums, an ice climbing park, canyoneering, ghost towns, the Alpine Loop, rare-birding, cultural events, the San Juan Scenic and Historic Byway, art galleries and homemade fudge ... all amidst the dazzling and incomparable setting of the San Juan Mountains? The answer is: "There's no place like Ouray, Colorado."



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Staff Photos

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Ouray Historical Walking Tour – Ouray is proud to be designated as a National Historic District. Stop by the Ouray Visitor Center or Historical Museum for a complimentary brochure and map that helps one explore the entire town, showcasing private homes and other examples of Victorian architecture.

Hiking – Ouray is home to more than seventy spectacular well-maintained trails, many of which are easily accessible from

town. Enjoy the Ouray Perimeter Trail, Uncompaghre Riverwalk, Bear Creek National Recreation Trail, and more. Hiking maps and books are available at the Ouray Visitor Center.

Jeeping and off-highway adventures – Ouray offers access to hundreds of miles of historic mining roads, popular with off-highway and four-wheeling enthusiasts. Traverse a variety of forest and alpine terrain, and view extreme mountain peaks, wild flowers and waterfalls. Visit ghost towns and historic mining buildings. Local tour and rental companies let visitors customize their adventure.

Water sports – Fishing, boating, rafting and canyoneering are just a few of the water sports available in the Ouray area.



Cross-Country Paradise



Staff Photo

As a winter-sport destination, Ouray is known the world over for its ice park. The park draws thousands of climbers to town each year and solidifies Ouray's reputation as a climbing town.

But the "Switzerland of America" is no one-trick pony. The town, and the area surrounding it, has developed some serious credibility among cross-country skiers and snowshoers. A small but growing group of athletes makes its way to Ouray each year thanks to the region's stunning winter scenery and accessible, pristine winter trails.

Options in town

A day on skis doesn't require a trip out of town in Ouray. The river-walk trail on the north end of town is groomed regularly for cross-country skiers and snowshoers, providing a gentle two-mile trail. Another trail stretches around the ice park, providing a stunning view of those enjoying Ouray's most famous winter sport. For kids and beginners, Lee's ski hill offers free rope tows on afternoons and weekends.

Ironton Park

Ironton Park is one of the true gems of the San Juans. Located just south of Ouray, in a flat valley ringed by mountains, the area offers a little more than four miles of



Staff Photo

trails maintained by the Ouray Nordic Council. Those trails wind through the ruins of what once was Ironton, one of many towns that popped up in southwest Colorado during the mining boom of the late 19th century.

In addition to the groomed terrain, the park has many miles of ungroomed trails, which take skiers to mineshafts and cabins.

The Top of the Pines

In the town of Ridgway, just 10 miles north on highway 550, the landscape breaks open. While Ouray is walled off by towering peaks, the views from Ridgway reach all the way to the horizon. Ouray County's Top of the Pines skiing area, which includes four miles of groomed trails, is perched atop a high mesa, offering a peek at stunning vistas around every turn.

The trails were built and are maintained by members of the local community, and Top of the Pines is still community owned. A small donation is requested from skiers or snowshoers who use the park, and a season pass can be purchased for \$50.

A full description of the trails, facilities and current conditions is available at the park's website, www.topofthepines.org. For additional information about trails throughout the area, visit www.ouraytrails.org.

Road Tripping

In whatever vehicle you choose to take, Ouray offers the most scenic, adventurous and enjoyable roads in the state. From the “Million Dollar Highway” to the San Juan and Alpine Loops, travelers in passenger cars, motorcycles, bicycles and ATV/OHVs will find road tripping paradise in southwestern Colorado.



Photos courtesy Riverside Inns

Skyway ranges from elevations of 6,200 feet near Cortez, to 11,008 feet at Red Mountain Pass. Dramatic mountain passes, expansive cattle and farming ranges, historic mining structures and Native American cliff dwellings are just a few of

the sights along this route. Ouray is the perfect starting or ending point for visitors wishing to make the loop.

In the immediate vicinity of Ouray, seventy-five miles of rugged

roadways traverse the San Juan Mountains connecting the towns of Ouray, Lake City, Telluride and Silverton. Used mainly by 4x4, ATV/OHV and dirt bike riders, the Alpine Loop offers everything from easy scenic drives to rugged and challenging mountain passes. The roads were originally trails built by early miners working the area’s silver and gold mines. The trails climb to spectacular heights, abundant with wildflowers, ghost towns, abandoned mines and wildlife. Local guide services and vehicle rentals are

The “Million Dollar Highway” refers to the stretch of 550 between Ouray and Silverton. Once a toll road, this breathtaking highway takes you over Red Mountain Pass, past historic mining ghost towns and the entrances to the networks of jeeping and off-highway trails. The spectacular scenery includes waterfalls, red mountaintops, dramatic peaks and canyons, summer wildflowers and pine and aspen forests.



The San Juan Skyway includes the 550 route from Ridgway to Durango, as well as U.S. Routes 160 between Durango and Cortez, 145 between Cortez and Placerville and 62 between Placerville and Ridgway. Considered one of the most scenic drives in America, the San Juan



Winter Wonderland

Ouray is the place to be in the wintertime whether you seek adventure, solace, relaxation or all of the above. Come winter, “The Switzerland of America,” as Ouray is nicknamed, is wrapped in a blanket of crisp, white snow and offers plenty of activities and events to warm the hearts and souls of visitors of all ages. The most popular winter attraction is the Ouray Ice Park (www.ourayicepark.com) – the world’s first park dedicated exclusively to ice climbing. The park is suitable for everyone, from beginners to experts and those who just want to admire the athleticism from afar. The Ouray Ice Park typically opens in December, weather permitting. It is free for anyone to use, however, visitors are encouraged to purchase an Ouray Ice Park membership, which helps fund park maintenance. As an added perk, Ouray Ice Park Members receive discounts in various Ouray businesses.

The park’s signature event, the Ouray Ice Festival (www.ourayicefestival.com), takes place in January. Known as the premiere international gathering of its kind,

the festival draws top athletes from around the world, as well as gear exhibitors and spectators who simply want to watch the pros scratch their way up the latest slippery slope.

The popular Chicks with Picks have been sharpening the skills of female climbers in a safe and supportive environment for more than ten years. The “Girly Guides” teach three-and four-day clinics. Chicks with Picks also sponsors the Betty Ice Ball in January so ladies can get a taste of what ice climbing is all about. The ball offers half-day clinics at discounted rates, a catered dinner and public events for gals and guys.

If powder is more your speed, Ouray has just the ticket. The San Juan Mountains beckon winter adventurers looking for back-country skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing and snowmobiling to cut fresh tracks in deep, untouched powder. Visit nearby Silverton Mountain (www.silvertonmountain.com) – if you dare – to experience the steepest, most powder-filled slopes in the United States.

For a much milder ride, hit Ouray’s own ski hill with a free towrope, or take a ride down the nearby sledding hill. Visitors can find world class downhill skiing and snowboarding at the nearby resorts of Telluride and Durango while enjoying the small town hospitality of Ouray.

After a hard day of play, there is nothing better than a relaxing and





Photos by Brent Gourdeau

rejuvenating soak in natural, sulfur-free hot springs. The Ouray Hot Springs Pool is open year-round and offers more than a million gallons of crystal clear natural hot springs water. The pool offers several soaking sections at varying temperatures, as well as a lap section and a shallow section for the kids. Consider staying in one of the three lodging establishments that offer on-site hot springs pools, soaking tubs and vapor caves.

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Happy Trails

Once visitors arrive in Ouray, they can park their car for the rest of their stay. Hiking, biking and general touring and strolling on foot are all available within the city limits.

There are seventy-six area hiking trails, twelve of which begin within the city limits. The Box Cañon Falls Trail starts at the west end of Third Avenue. Hikers can walk up to see the falls, then decide if they are up to climbing a series of stairs along another quarter-mile trail to a bridge above the canyon. The views from the top are simply spectacular.

The Lower Cascade Falls Trail provides access to Ouray's most notable waterfall, which is visible from nearly every point in town. This quarter-mile hike will take about thirty minutes. Hikers can reach the falls by hiking two blocks uphill from Main Street on Eighth Avenue.

The Ouray Perimeter Trail, a four-and-a-half-mile trail around, well ... the

perimeter of Ouray, begins east of the Ouray Visitors' Center located at 1230 Main St. There are a number of accesses to the trail, including the Lower Cascade Falls Trail and many of the trails around Ouray. To continue the hike, follow the Cascade Trail for a short distance before forking off to the right and going south around the amphitheater. Continue on the trail as it connects with the Baby Bathtubs Trail and then head south on the Portland Trail across Portland Creek and up to the Three Pines Area near the Portland Mine Road. After crossing the road, the trail continues to the Potato Patch. From here descend to Highway 550, cross the road and intersect with Ice Park Trail. Then, proceed to the Camp Bird Mine Road. Head west on the road across the bridge and connect with the Box Cañon High Bridge Trail, which leads back into town.

For other hikes, visit www.ouraycolorado.com



Photos by Brent Goudreau



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Rigging for Rescue, Teaching Advanced Rope Skills

If you find yourself with a need to be rescued in or around Ouray, there's a good chance ropes will be involved. The area's vertical terrain has made it famous, but the same dramatic features that draw climbers and sightseers often get them into real trouble.

"Almost every rescue we do is a roped rescue," said Bill Whitt, a veteran member of Ouray Mountain Rescue. Where mountain rescue teams are concerned, Ouray's is undoubtedly one of the best in the country with ropes. They owe that not only to the nature of the landscape, but to a skilled team and the work of a local company: Rigging for Rescue.

Based in Ouray since 2002, Rigging for Rescue is one of the world's preeminent roped rescue schools. The company doesn't just train professionals with the Ouray and Yosemite rescue teams, but oil-rig workers, U.S. Special Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police and more. They're the best in the business, if not the biggest.

A lasting approach

"We're not a training mill," said Chris Jackson, who works out of the company's

base in Ouray. "We don't ever try to teach people by rote."

Many rope rescue schools design their curriculums around a few basic techniques.

Their students leave their classes with a set of knots and pulley systems burned into their memories, Jackson said, but don't necessarily take away a real understanding of the concepts involved. In the rescue field, where scenarios can change in the blink of an eye, that surface-level knowledge is rarely enough.

"I think it's very rare that an actual rescue goes like a case study in a textbook said it should go," Jackson said. "In the actual situation, not everything is going to be laid out for you."

That means Rigging for Rescue courses are intensive. The idea of the course is to give students a real understanding of what makes rope systems effective, so they can improvise when necessary.

"It's sort of like drinking from a fire hose," Jackson said. "But by the end of the course people have a really good understanding."



Photos by Lora Slawitschka



Beyond climbing

Whether they are rescuing a hiker who got in over his head or a driver who veered off the Million Dollar Highway, the ability to improvise with ropes and pulleys is exactly the skill-set the Ouray Mountain Rescue team needs on a regular basis.

Many of the team members are strong rock and ice climbers or mountaineers, Whitt said, but even those skills aren't always enough.

“Rope rescue is totally different from just going out and climbing for fun,” he said. “There are some shared skills for sure, but it’s a whole different animal.”

Rigging for Rescue offers seven-day rope climbing rescue seminars across North America. Contact them at info@riggingforrescue.com or 970.325.4474



Generation Next

The 2012 Kids' Climbing College offers an opportunity for kids ages 8 to 17 to try the exciting sport of ice climbing for free. Held annually at the Ouray Ice Park Kids' Wall, The KCC is a super fun way for youths to get a taste of this great local winter sport. The Kids' Wall is a specially developed forty-foot-high, 140-foot-wide slab of ice located at the top of the ice park within easy walking access. It features a dozen different routes with various levels of difficulty for all the kids.

The 2012 Kids' Climbing College will again be hosted by San Juan Mountain Guides and sponsored by the Ouray Ice Park.

The KCC is free, ages 8-17, first-come-first-served. SJMG will provide harnesses, helmets, boots, crampons and ice tools. Participants should bring: a fun-loving adult to sign paperwork, warm clothes, gloves and warm hat (ski clothes work well for climbing). Participants' families should park in the designated Ice Park parking areas and walk up to the Kids' Wall.

An advertisement for the Ouray Victorian Inn. The top half features a photograph of a large, snow-covered evergreen tree in front of a building. The text "Ouray Victorian Inn" is written in a large, yellow, serif font. Below it, in a smaller white font, is "The place Ice Climbers call home". Further down, in white text on a dark green background, is "Closest hotel to the Ice Park" and "Great rooms, Great breakfast, Great Value". At the bottom, in white text on a dark green background, is the website "www.victorianinnouray.com" and the phone number "800 84-OURAY".

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Going to Extremes

The San Juan Mountain Range in southwest Colorado offers some of the most extreme winter sport opportunities in the world. From mountaineering to ice climbing to backcountry skiing and snowshoeing, this region of Colorado provides something for every adventurer. With a history deep in mining, the pristine San Juans' rugged peaks, magnificent basins and vertical canyons have become a Mecca for extreme athletes.

Mt. Sneffels Range, culminating atop the Sneffels peak at 14,500, offers a challenging concentration of mountaineering opportunities. While summitting Mt. Sneffels' north face is the daring coup d'état of the range, there are many other climbing opportunities, including: Teakettle, Gilpin Peak, Kismet and Dallas Peak – each offering a wide range of challenges.

Additionally, to the east of Ridgway rises the Cimarron range, a Yosemite-like collection of spires that offers the popular Uncompahgre and Wetterhorn peaks, both more than 14,000 feet, along with lesser-known, lower-altitude, but technically challenging, Horse Peak, Coxcomb Peak and Matterhorn.

Ice climbing has become the classic extreme-winter-sport in Ouray County. Box Canyon offers the perfect natural arena and Mother Nature provides the right combination of dry, light moisture, snow filled days and freezing nights. Freezing snowmelt is the key to creating the magnificent ice for which Ouray Ice Park is known the world over. With a little help

from Ice Park staff and an extensive irrigation system, the ice is guaranteed to be plentiful and fat every year. World-class climbers can be seen from mid-December into spring dangling from the icy spires. Clinics are available throughout the Ouray Ice Festival January 5 – 8, offering classes for kids and adults, beginners to advanced.

Backcountry skiing combines the best of mountaineering with the thrill of downhill skiing. The San Juan and Uncompahgre

USFS lands have a honeycomb of trails that access practically limitless backcountry skiing. Coal Bank, Molas and Red Mountain passes, replete with powder, offer 10,000-foot-plus access to the best backcountry the San

Juans' offer. Guides and tours are available out of both Ouray and Silverton.

Silverton hosts an annual Skijoring festival Feb. 18 – 19. Skijoring Silverton style boasts skiers pulled by horses racing for glory on the remote mountain town's infamous Blair Street.

Snowshoeing in the San Juans' is a hiker's, photographer's and adventurer's ticket to the backcountry in winter. Many roads and trails spin off of the Uncompahgre valley offering breathtaking views of the stunning mountains and sweeping valleys. The USFS has great maps for snowshoeing as well as backcountry skiing.



Photo by Brent Goudreau

Chilly winter days in Ouray County are consummated by slowly submerging in one of the mineral-rich hot springs sprinkled throughout the county. Lodges, hot spring resorts, as well as the public pool in Ouray, offer a variety of therapeutic soaking options.

Winters in Ouray County are rich with adventure, history and recreating opportunities.

“We had such a wonderful playground with all these mountains to go hike, climb and play around in ... in the winter everyone used horse and sled ... it does not matter whether you were born here or whether you just moved here. You are here because you want to be here.” ~ Roger Henn and Bernice Henn, lifelong Ouray residents.




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