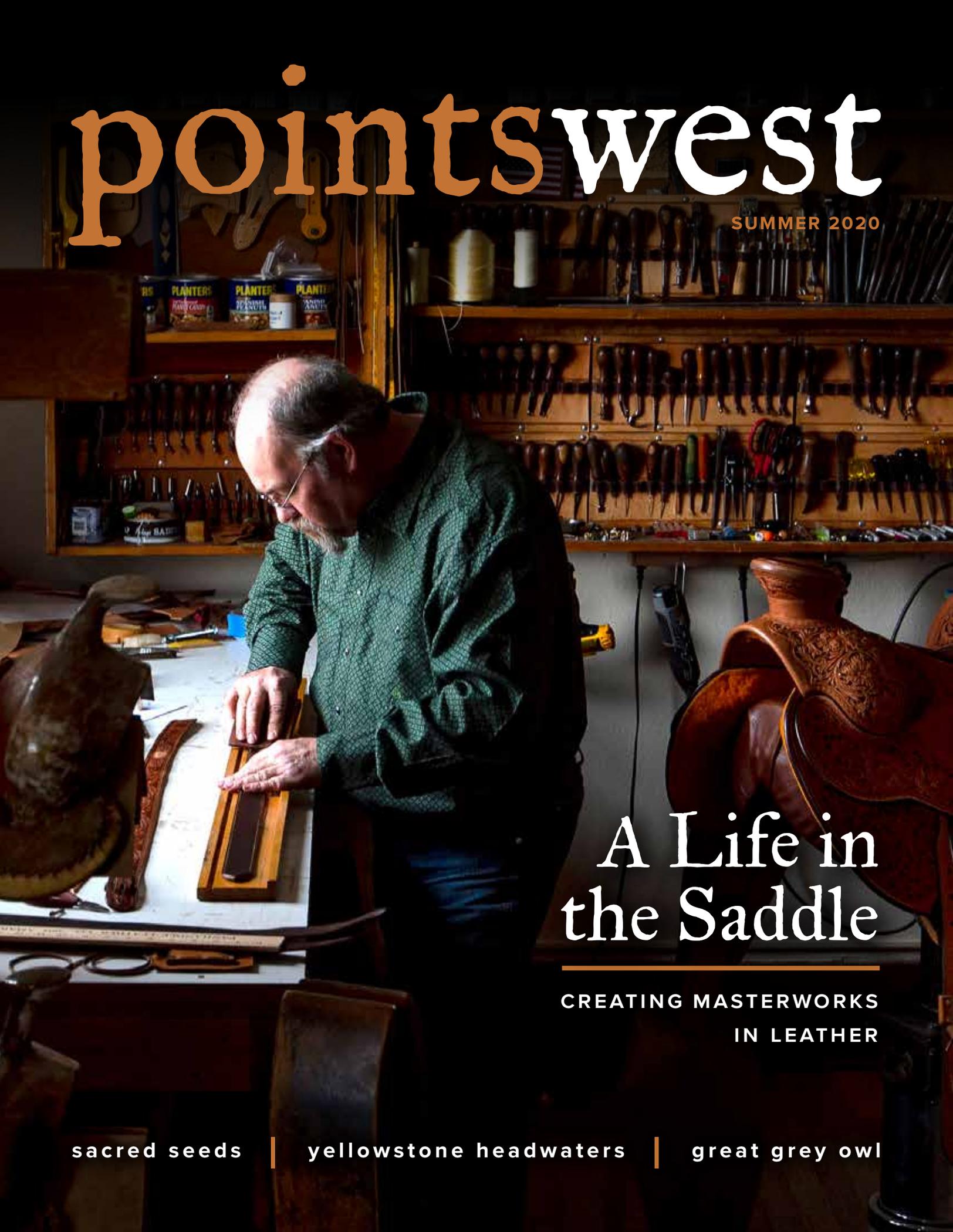


# pointswest

SUMMER 2020

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a green patterned shirt, is focused on working on a wooden saddle frame in a workshop. The workshop is filled with various tools hanging on the walls and shelves, including knives, saws, and other leather-making equipment. A finished, ornate leather saddle is visible on the right side of the frame. The lighting is warm and focused on the man's work area.

## A Life in the Saddle

CREATING MASTERWORKS  
IN LEATHER

sacred seeds

yellowstone headwaters

great grey owl

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

**PETER SEIBERT**

*Executive Director and CEO*

This has been one of the most difficult columns I have written. Not for lack of enthusiasm, but because events continue to change and swirl around us at an incredible pace. When I began to think about this issue, our lobby was empty of visitors. Today, I see families in masks coming in the front door.



As we have been weathering the storm of COVID-19, the museum has been far

from quiet, as construction continued on three wonderful projects that will expand visitor services. We have reconfigured our front desk to better serve visitors. Our new ticketing configuration will admit guests more quickly and easily.

We also have been updating the museum store. Focusing on new locally and regionally produced treasures, our redesigned store offers a contemporary look while still retaining a genuine western feel.

Finally, our big new attraction this year is the Scout Saddle Co. We have created a fully functioning 1920s saddle shop to interpret the history and ensure the future of this important Wyoming trade. The shop is staffed by Master Saddle Maker Keith Seidel and three apprentices.

I have been struck by the passion saddle work inspires. We had more than 100 applicants for the three apprentice positions! In an era when high-tech is the rule, it is inspiring that so many are drawn to hand work.

In numerous studies, young people find tremendous value in hand work, from carpentry to gunsmithing, millinery to saddle making. That sense of accomplishment in a physical project means the difference to many. Bringing saddle making to life for visitors is truly an incredible story.

Finally, I want to offer a sneak peek into our plans. As we work toward our new mission of connecting people to the stories of the American West, we are also looking to better represent the rich diversity of those stories. A team from our Curatorial, Education and Museum Services Division is working to integrate the many stories (religious, ethnic, cultural) of the West into not only our permanent exhibitions, but our rotating installations as well.

So, stay tuned for more.

*Peter Seibert*

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## sacred seeds

A JOURNEY TO THE PAST TO  
CHART A NEW FUTURE



# a life in the saddle

CREATING MASTERWORKS  
IN LEATHER



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# yellowstone headwaters

WATER BRINGS LIFE, CULTURE,  
AND COMMERCE TO THE WEST

**ABOUT THE COVER** | Keith Seidel has created prized leather saddles for decades from his Cody, Wyoming, workshop. Now he teaches apprentices and shares his expertise with visitors at the Scout Saddle Co., an authentic 1920s saddle shop at the Center of the West's main entrance.

*Points West* is dedicated to connecting people to the stories of the American West as the quarterly membership magazine of the private, nonprofit Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

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## How to safely load your six-shooter

BY ASHLEY HLEBINSKY



Any fan of westerns knows the Colt Model 1873 single-action revolver. Seeing their heroes on screen—quick-drawing the iconic handgun, twirling it around, and fanning the hammer—has inspired many people to purchase their little slice of Hollywood and history.

However, purchasing a historic gun without doing your homework (or attempting any of the aforementioned tricks) can lead to negligent discharge and legal controversy with this iconic gun of the West.

The original Colt Model 1873 was designed in 1872, a decade after company founder Samuel Colt died. It was adopted for the military, and became popular on the civilian market. However, this marketed “six-shooter” must be carried in a specific way to be safe: loaded with only five rounds.

The single-action description refers to the number of “actions” performed by the trigger. To fire the gun, the shooter must cock the hammer back fully before pulling the trigger. This action must be repeated for each shot.

The hammer on original Colt single-actions could be placed in four positions: full-down, safety notch, half-cock, and full-cock. Soldiers on the battlefield realized that if they loaded all six chambers and left the hammer in the full-down position, the firearm could accidentally discharge when dropped.

That’s because the firing pin is attached to the hammer. Therefore, the hammer in full-down position has the firing pin resting directly on the cartridge primer. If the revolver is dropped, the firing pin can hit the primer with enough force to fire the gun.

As a result, the safest way to carry a loaded Colt-type single-action revolver is with only five rounds loaded, placing the hammer on the sixth and empty chamber.

Of course, the basic rules of gun safety always apply to handling any firearm.

### THE FOUR TOP RULES ARE:

1. Always point the gun in a safe direction.
2. Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.
3. Keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.
4. Know your target and what’s beyond.

A five-shooter is admittedly not as sexy as a six-shooter, but all modern Colt-type single-actions with the four-position hammer clearly state in manuals to load only five rounds.

However, with the popularity of westerns after World War II, many with limited gun knowledge bought these types of firearms, leading to civil suits over negligent discharge.

Loaded and carried properly, the firearm is safe. But, if you’re still concerned, there are many single-action revolver models and reproductions on the market with additional passive and active safety devices.

*Ashley Hlebinsky is the Robert W. Woodruff Curator of the Cody Firearms Museum. She is a firearms history consultant, writer, and television producer and personality who enjoys whiskey and cigars.*

## Scout Saddle Co. hand tools

**Keith Seidel** is an award-winning saddle maker and the new Master Saddler at the **Scout Saddle Co.**, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's newly opened authentic, 1920s saddle shop. At right, in his own words, Keith tells the stories of the period-specific tools he uses to make saddles and other leather goods. Learn more about Keith and the saddle shop on page 10.



### 1 Dan Murray Briefcase (Circa 1980s)

Dan was an advanced craftsman in leather, silver, steel, and anything else he touched! He made an indelible impact on me at a time when I was very impressionable in my career. Dan's work was unparalleled in design and execution in the leather industry, and highly prized. This is the only piece I have that he made, and I am very proud to have been his friend.

### 2 Flax Linen Thread #5 Cord

Linen thread has been the traditional thread used for stitching leather goods for hundreds of years. The size can be identified by counting the number of strands or "cords" in the string.

### 3 Saddler's Hammer (C.S. Osborne)

Standard hammer used by many saddlers. All forged construction with rosewood scales on each side of the handle.

### 4 Head Knife (H.F. Osborne)

H.F. Osborne made some of the finest quality tools in the leather industry. This large, round knife is in near-new condition. It was once owned by the famous Connely Saddlery in Billings, Montana.

### 5 Stitching Awl, Overstitch Wheel, and French Edger

Awls are used to punch holes in leather when hand stitching. Because they are easily broken, I guard my awls very closely! The overstitch wheel is used to dress the final look of hand stitching and must match the stitch spacing perfectly. The French edger is a personal favorite for skiving and trimming parts on a saddle. These tools are very rare, especially in the larger sizes.

### 6 Bone Slicker (Douglas Saddle Co.)

Animal bones make great slickers for smoothing surfaces and moulding and fitting leather into tight spaces. I have one in my pocket almost all the time!

### 7 Rosette Cutter 1.5" (C.S. Osborne)

This vintage rosette cutter is hand-forged from flat stock and bent into the circle shape. Then the handle is forge-welded together. Great old tool from another era of manufacturing.

### 8 Heel Shave

Heel shaves are the traditional tool used by saddlers to skive leather for shaping the ground seat in a saddle. Many modern saddlers have abandoned this vintage tool for newer razor blade skivers. We are using this traditional skiver to shape our seats, just as was done 100 years ago!



### Dear Buffalo Bill,

Neither my husband nor I are particularly skilled chefs. We haven't been able to dine out much lately, and we're tired of eating the same few dishes at home over and over. Help!

— Can't Boil Water in Wichita



A poster from 1888 promotes “Mexican Hidalgo” (or “gentleman”), one of many romantic portrayals of Mexican cowboys in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West.

Dear Can't Boil Water,

I can certainly empathize with your situation. Eating the same thing over and over can be a culinary calamity. I learned this all too well when I had to hunt—and eat—a staggering amount of bison, also known as buffalo.

The Goddard Brothers paid me \$500 per month to hunt and deliver a dozen buffalo every day to feed 1,200 men who laid the rails across Kansas. Wonderful protein wandering around on the hoof out there. So why not use Lucretia Borgia, my .50-caliber Springfield, to take advantage?

Well, as you can imagine, working on the railroad is hardly a glamorous job. And there's only so many ways to cook a buffalo. After a while, even the tenderest humps turned gluttons into grumps.

Now that I think about it, I don't really have any good advice for cooking and eating the same thing over and over. Don't do it! Unless, of course, you can turn it into great publicity.

That's what happened when Buffalo Bill Comstock and I engaged in a big hunting contest, with the winner keeping the title “Buffalo Bill.” Or so the story goes. Modesty prevents me from sharing too many details, but I think you can guess how it turned out.

Some far better advice would be to engage in a cultural exchange, and try the exotic cuisines of foreign lands.

That's exactly what I did in 1886, while performing in New York City before my major London engagement. At a Mexican restaurant I created to promote my show, I introduced the tastes of our southern neighbor to visitors at Madison Square Garden.

The *New York Times* marveled at my “chileconcarne y frigolas,” which had “an enticing sound.” My “hencilades” were described as “the sort of grub the prodigal son subsisted on when he was in the hog business, though the corn husks merely answer as a covering to a thin coating of dough, which is filled with some inflammable material that calls for large draughts of iced claret.”

Food critics! Ha ha!! Anyway, you get the idea.

Of course, my show featured real-life Mexican vaqueros, including some famous ropers like Vicente Oropeza, who taught the lasso to Will Rogers. I played their heroic image against that of the Mexican bandito, all to great effect with the crowds.

So what's the lesson from all this? Well, variety is the spice of life, and don't be afraid to try new foods, or other new things. Just watch out for new foods with too many varieties of spices, unless you have plenty of iced claret handy.

*What Would Buffalo Bill Do* is a quarterly advice column written by Col. William F. Cody with assistance from Jeremy Johnston, historian of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Send your questions to [buffalobilladvice@centerofthewest.org](mailto:buffalobilladvice@centerofthewest.org).



## GREAT GREY OWL

### BY REBEKAH CHILDERS

One fall morning, I made a trip into Yellowstone National Park in search of wildlife. I had stopped to photograph a coyote when I learned that an owl was on the edge of a meadow, off the road. So, carrying several pounds of photographic equipment, I hiked through knee-high sagebrush, across ground covered with several inches of snow, to set eyes on my first great grey owl.

Great greys are a relatively rare species to see in the United States, with their range outside of Alaska limited to small sections of the Northwest. So this sighting was very exciting for me. These guys are huge—the largest species of owl in North America—and their wingspan can exceed five feet. Yet they glide through the air almost silently.

The owl I was watching would sit on a branch, occasionally gazing my way, but mostly

watching the ground for her next meal scurrying through the grass. She perched low, the backdrop often a mess of grey branches, and each dive took only a few seconds. Opportunities to make good images were limited, so when the owl finally landed on the top of a short pine tree with only sky behind her, I knew I had my shot.

Sure enough, her eyes locked with mine and I pressed the shutter button.

I shot hundreds of frames of this owl as I spent the morning with her, only leaving when my frozen feet and fingers could take no more. The piercing gaze of a beautiful great grey owl is something that will stay with me forever.



*Rebekah Childers is a wildlife photographer, traveler, and the Assistant Registrar at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.*



## DETAILS

**SHOT WITH**  
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- Sigma 150-600mm Contemporary
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- ISO 1600
- 484mm

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SEND HI-RES IMAGE AND 400-WORD STORY TO [EDITOR@CENTEROFTHEWEST.ORG](mailto:EDITOR@CENTEROFTHEWEST.ORG).

## Nathan Doerr

For Nathan Doerr, growing up in the outdoors of northern Wyoming has meant a life close to nature. So it's not lost on him on a gorgeous summer day that his office as curator of the Draper Natural History Museum is in a windowless basement.

But not to worry, he has a plan.

Doerr hopes to build on the Draper's broad survey of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem by adding a range of new outdoor programs and learning experiences.

"It's an exciting opportunity to take the exhibits and what they present and take it all outside with things like interpretive trails and outdoor programming" at places like the Paul Stock Trail, a nearby property owned by the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

"I've always loved being outdoors, and science class was always my favorite," said Doerr, who started at the Center last October after working previously as Curator of Education at the Wyoming State Museum. Doerr has also worked as Executive Director of the Sheridan County Museum and as a park ranger in Grand Teton National Park, where he also was an instructor and researcher at the Teton Science School.

Born and raised in Sheridan, Wyoming, Doerr

loves day hikes, and especially likes hiking the same routes year-round to see how they change. He has a professional interest in phenology, studying the changing seasonal cycles in plants, weather, and animals.

He wants to ramp up citizen science efforts at the Center to take advantage of a local community with strong ties to the outdoors.

"I love all the museums here, but I love art in general and I think some of the pieces in the Whitney (Western Art Museum) are just phenomenal," he said.

Doerr said there may be ways to use art from the Whitney to help interpret natural processes like phenology, including making some changes in the breezeway that leads from the Center's entrance to the Draper.

"That would be a great way to introduce the concept of phenology," he said about a route he walks regularly. "We could highlight seasonal changes through there in a way that would help showcase fresh exhibits that draw you into the Draper."



## Amy Sullivan

For Amy Sullivan, knowing donor demographics is one of the cornerstones of her work as the new Director of Development at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. But more on that later.

Planned giving has been an expanding national trend for growing nonprofit support, and now the Center has an opportunity to benefit from Sullivan's expertise in that field.

Sullivan is working with Wyoming families and the Center's donors from across the country to explore how estate planning can better meet their long-term goals of supporting the Center.

Before starting at the Center in March, she worked as Director of the Montana Office of Gift Planning at the Montana Community Foundation. She also spent

a decade working with both history and planned giving as the President and CEO of the Montana History Foundation.

Raised on a Montana ranch along the Rocky Mountain Front, Sullivan said she and her husband are thrilled to make the move to Cody, Wyoming and get back to the east side of the Rockies after living in Missoula, Montana for five years.

"It was a combination of a personal desire for a more rural lifestyle and the fact that the Buffalo Bill Center of the West

is such a beacon, a world-class museum in a small town," she said.

As for demographics, maintaining financial support for the center will involve solving a demographic puzzle every fundraiser faces: honoring current donors and finding ways to maintain and grow the nonprofit's relevancy to younger donors.

"The real growth in giving is going to come in the form of the more complex gifts as baby boomers age and retire. Until the millennial generation comes into their own in the charitable giving realm, a lot of nonprofits will find it difficult to grow their annual fund dollars because the generation in the middle just simply is not as large as the baby boomer or millennial generations," Sullivan said.

"We are going to reach out to successive generations and connect with them differently. Raising money can be complicated and challenging sometimes, but that's OK," she said. "Because I especially love this kind of work."





## Hitting the trail in West Yellowstone

BY MOLLY MOORE

Having lived in Cody, Wyoming, for many years, and now living in West Yellowstone, Montana, I love when summer arrives because it's time to hit the trail. I love trail running with my dog, Busby, and there are miles of gorgeous single tracks around to keep us busy for years.

In West Yellowstone, I like to start the day with an Americano at **FREEHEEL AND WHEEL**, an outdoor gear store and coffee shop a half-block from the West Entrance to Yellowstone National Park. I can also grab a protein bar there, or some other snack for the trail.

Then I head north about 20 miles on Highway 191 to run the Fawn Pass Trail inside the park. It's about 13 miles round-trip, with wide open views of the Gallatin Range as you follow along the **GALLATIN RIVER**. Keep an eye out for moose, grizzly bears, elk, and other wildlife.

From there, I love to head out along the north shore of **HEBGEN LAKE** and go to **HAPPY HOUR BAR**. It's a fun, funky bar on the north shore of the lake, known for garlic burgers, nachos, and Moscow mules. The crowds are rowdy, and when someone orders a mule, served in a copper mug, the bartender yells, "Copper on the bar!" Then everyone else shouts: "Copper on the bar!" In the summer, people roll up in kayaks or canoes and they sound a giant foghorn to welcome them.

For dinner in West Yellowstone, **MADISON CROSSING** does a great job accommodating special requests. I get the gluten-free prosciutto pasta, but they make a regular version too. I definitely have to get a dirty martini there.

I like to catch the bands on the weekends at **WILD WEST PIZZERIA & SALOON**. I've seen some big names there, but they also do a great job of showcasing local acts.

When I can make it to Cody to visit my mom and sister, I love to run a 10-mile out-and-back to the top of **FOUR BEAR MOUNTAIN**, off the North Fork Highway between Cody and Yellowstone.

And because my late father was the superintendent at **OLIVE GLENN GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB** for nearly 20 years, where he took care of the grounds, I love to play nine holes there when I get a chance. I played a lot of golf there with my dad—my middle name is Par—and the course is always in great condition and offers awesome views.



*Molly Moore has formerly worked at the Plains Indian Museum at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and as a park ranger in Yellowstone National Park. She is a recreation management specialist for the Custer Gallatin National Forest.*

Master saddle maker Keith Seidel works in his second-floor workshop in the historic Seidel's Saddlery building on Sheridan Avenue in Cody, Wyoming.



# A Life in the Saddle

**CREATING  
MASTERWORKS  
IN LEATHER**

**STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY MARK DAVIS**

**D**on't let the downtown office and the polished sales pitch fool you—Keith Seidel is 100-percent cowboy. He didn't earn his spurs through fashion. Spending "a million hours in the saddle" gave him his cowboy credentials.

But in a roundabout way, it was simply a cheap saddle that led him to working with leather, and eventually, to saddle-making fame. "I broke a lot of gear and couldn't afford to pay somebody else to fix it. It's a lousy way to learn, but it'll get you in the business."

Seidel's father, Harvey, was a Baptist minister, and the family never had much money. He introduced Keith to Wayne Lundvall, who helped him learn how to rework his crude tack, and his career began.



“ I’ve made more saddles in my career than most people could make in two or three careers. I started young and didn’t have a life.”

— KEITH SEIDEL

It took him years to get his education. Seidel worked his way through high school for Wayne Lundvall’s boot shop on Sheridan Avenue in downtown Cody, Wyoming, starting at age 14.

After graduating, his passion led him away from his home in Cody. As a kid, he never thought he’d leave the mountain trails in his “backyard.” Park County is where he met and married his high school sweetheart, Lisa. They married in 1986.

After school, they traveled across the West from saddle shop to saddle shop. Keith stayed long enough to learn from each maker. When he felt he had become accomplished in their methods, he’d find another shop, hoping to reach a new plateau or a different style.

“In the beginning I went wherever they’d take me,” he said from his second-floor workshop in a historic downtown building with an iconic neon Seidel’s Saddlery sign. “After a while, all I had to

do (was) walk into a shop and say, ‘Would you like some help?’ And they’d clear me a bench.”

Confident in his abilities, Seidel returned to Cody and opened his own shop. He bought a building on Sheridan Avenue. Buffalo Bill Cody’s Irma Hotel is across the street, and it’s just a few doors down from Wayne’s Boot Shop. Soon, business was booming. Seidel had a 10-man crew working his designs upstairs, as he and Lisa worked the main floor retail shop.

“After everybody left, I’d come up here and go to work,” he said.

Seidel worked from 6 to 10 every night for the next 25 years.

“I’ve made more saddles in my career than most people could make in two or three careers. I started young and didn’t have a life,” he said. “This is what I do.”

In his leather room, stacks and rolls of leather hides are kept on wide, deep shelves in the

darkened room. No two pieces are the same. And it’s not the same from one end of the hide to the other. But after all these years, he knows what to look for. Pieces for each custom saddle are hand-cut only after multiple consultations with clients.

There’s a type of saddle for every activity and type of horse. For each, Seidel draws on his experience as a rider to look for the perfect balance. The way the saddle sits on the horse is as important as how the rider sits in the saddle, and how it all relates to the movement of the horse.

Seidel says the saddle must be comfortable for both horse and rider, but also strong and durable. But it also has to look great cosmetically.

“I like a lot of cosmetic. I’m pretty flamboyant,” he said while saddling his own horse, Jack, for a training ride.

Seidel hand- and machine-stitches each custom saddle together like a puzzle. He said a person would have a hard time wearing out a



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:  
Keith Seidel guides his horse, Jack, through a training ride; Seidel peers out from the in-progress Scout Saddle Co. at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West; Seidel has won numerous awards for saddle and leather work; Seidel's personal saddle; Seidel stitches a strip of leather; Seidel's tools for saddle and leather work.



saddle these days, since horses aren't the main form of transportation for most folks.

As Seidel's skills grew, his hand-crafted saddles and accessories began commanding top prices and affording his family a comfortable life. His commissioned display saddles would take hundreds of hours to create, showing off all of his talents; some of those saddles sold for up to \$50,000. Products were flying off the shelf, leading Keith and Lisa to open a second store in Carefree, Arizona. They'd work the summers in Cody and the winters in Carefree, grossing as much as \$2 million a year in sales.

Then the bottom dropped out of the saddle market during the 2008 recession. "It wasn't fun anymore. The profits were gone," he said while crafting a belt for a client.

They closed the southern location and eventually, with a little push from his wife, he closed the retail store in Cody in 2012, moving the entire operation upstairs. He still had work, so much so he still has a years-long backlog.

For the past few years it's been just the two of them. Most of the work is commissioned pieces.

Then, along came Peter S. Seibert, Executive Director and CEO of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. He wanted to embark on a new venture at the Center, featuring historic trades. Seibert was formerly Executive Director of the Education, Research, and Historical Interpretation Division of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Virginia. That museum is the largest outdoor living history museum in the country, upholding an educational mission through immersive, authentic 18th-century experiences and programming.

Seibert knew bringing his Williamsburg experience to the Center would appeal to new generations of visitors. The Scout Saddle Co. newly opened this summer at the Center of the West, is the first in a series of traditional crafts to be featured there.

"It's not just an interpretive experience. It's

all about preservation," Seibert said. "It's about keeping those hand skills—work skills—alive today and well into the future."

"People want to see that process," he said.

As the saddle shop opens to the public this summer, Seibert is already looking into other trades, both important in the West and in danger of losing contemporaries. A traditional 20th century hat shop is at the top of his list.

When Seibert first approached him, Seidel resisted. He knew it would curtail his retail dreams.

Yet, he reconsidered. "It has become painfully obvious that the industry is dying," he said.

Seibert's plan intrigued him. It was a promise of a future for the industry as art.

Seibert didn't want just a display on how saddles are made. He wanted to provide an apprenticeship for future saddle-makers, using Seidel's years of experience and natural talent for teaching to ensure those moving forward in the craft were well-versed.



Surrounded by tools stained in his sweat and blood, Seidel knew this was a way to help guarantee the craft would move forward. A flood of light beamed through the tall windows of his workshop downtown as he began to assemble the tools of the trade for three new apprentices.

He picked the trio from more than 100 candidates, all willing to head to Cody for a program that could take as long as 5 years.

The youngest apprentice said the program for “long-term, hands-on training” is a one-of-a-kind opportunity. “There aren’t many opportunities to be paid to do leatherwork that isn’t in a production environment,” said Kali Shatto, of California.

The program provides mentoring on a level that would never be possible in a class setting, she said. After the training is complete, she sees herself being able to teach others saddle-crafting.

There are few women in the industry. “Being the only woman in the program, I feel, gives

me a unique opportunity to inspire other young women to want to learn how to work with and create pieces of functional art out of leather,” she said.

Shatto comes to the program after being mentored by her grandfather, famed Southern California leather products and tool maker, Chuck Smith. He has been working with leather for more than 70 years, and is someone Seidel considers one of the best toolers alive.

“I remember when I was probably 10 or 11 he gave me my first set of tools,” Shatto recalls. “I fiddled around with it on and off for a few months, but never really picked it up. He gave me a tooled leather wallet with my name on it for my 16th birthday and I think that was the seed that kept leatherwork in the front of my mind,” she said.

“I’m blessed to have had a mentor who is not only one of the biggest names in the industry but is also family,” Shatto said.

She’s equally excited to work with Seidel,

one of the top saddle makers in the world. Before shutting down his retail stores, he won the Saddle Maker of the Year Award from the Academy of Western Artists. He won’t tell you much about the other numerous awards he has received, but his wife Lisa will.

“It’s a Lifetime Achievement Award,” she says of one in particular. “That’s pretty cool,” she said.

There are many other great awards and achievements in Seidel’s storied career. By passing his craft on to future generations, he’s determined to ensure there are many more for others as well.



*Mark Davis is the outdoors reporter for the Powell Tribune. He has worked previously as a reporter and photojournalist in Chicago and Omaha and enjoys hunting, fishing, birdwatching, and all outdoor sports.*



# YELLOWSTONE HEADWATERS

## Water brings life, culture, and commerce to the West

BY RUFFIN PREVOST

Ask people where they get their water, and they're likely to tell you it comes from the tap, or maybe a bottle from the convenience store.

But for an estimated 55 million Americans whose water comes from the Missouri, Columbia, and Colorado river systems, the answer is the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). The 22-million-acre region around Yellowstone National Park is a headwaters for seven major rivers that flow from both sides of the Continental Divide to the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

By that measure, at least one out of every six Americans gets at least some of their water from GYE rivers, lakes, and streams, said Nathan Doerr, curator of the Draper Natural History Museum.

"When you think of the size of the greater Yellowstone region, it's roughly 1 percent of the physical surface of the contiguous U.S.," Doerr said. "So it's crazy to realize that 1 percent of the land area is serving as headwaters for 16 percent of the people."

Water in the West dictates the lives of the plants, animals, and people that depend on it. It also shapes the cultures and economies of regional communities large and small.

"Water is by far the most valuable resource in the American West, period," said Buffalo Bill Center of the West Historian Jeremy Johnston.

Nearly every phase in the development of every culture in the West was dictated by the availability of water, Johnston said.

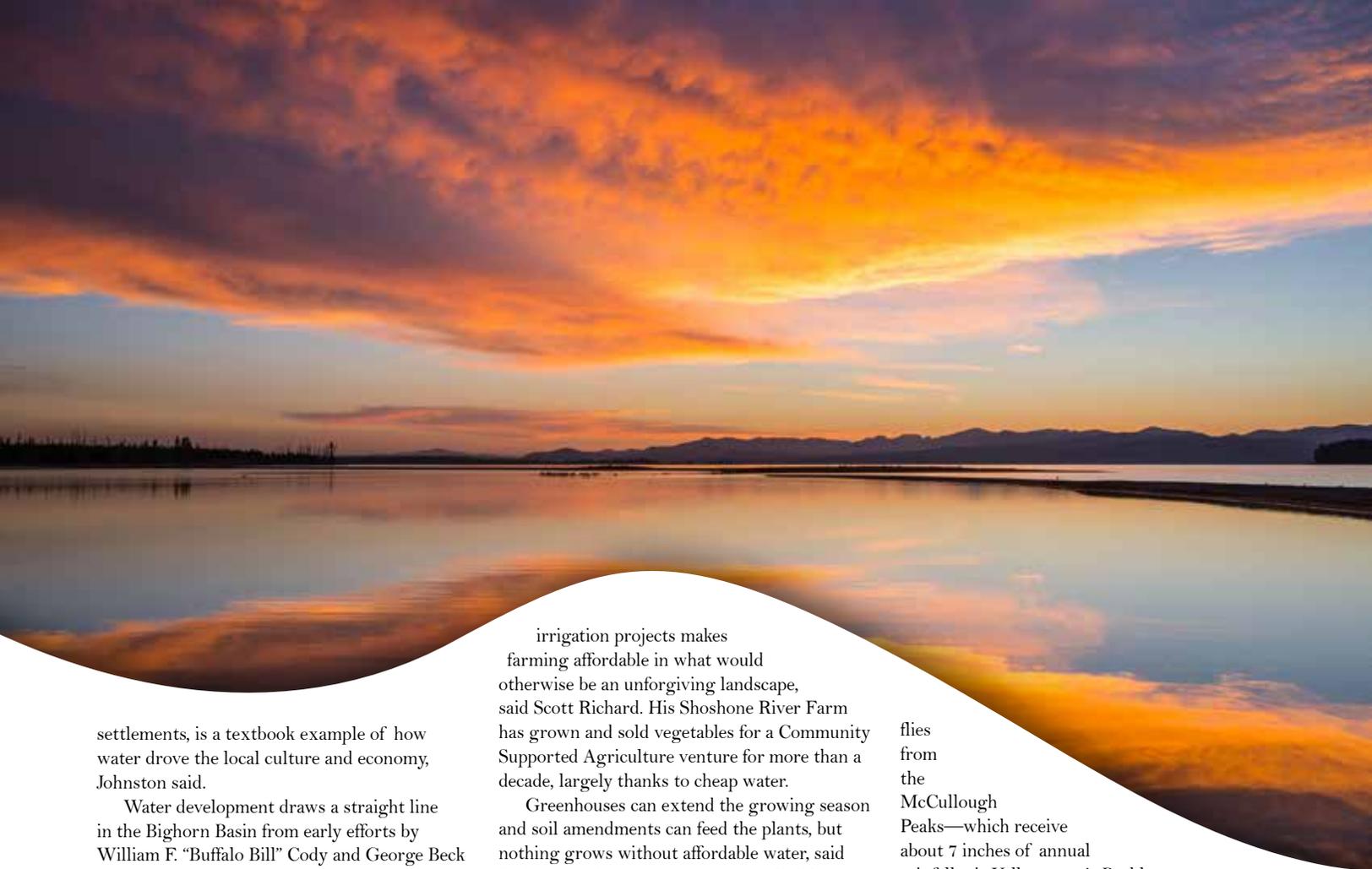
Before the horse, Indigenous People were less populous throughout the arid regions of the Great Plains, he said, because it was impractical to be too far on foot from good water. Early European settlers saw much of the West as a useless desert.

Throughout the 1800s, major rivers and streams became a transportation network for commercial trade. A major goal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804 was to find a (nonexistent) navigable "Northwest Passage" to the Pacific.

The idea of reclamation in the West—"to make the desert bloom"—took hold toward the end of the 19th century, largely as a result of the work of John Wesley Powell. Namesake of Powell, Wyoming, the Civil War veteran, geologist, and explorer drove the concept of using dams and diversions to irrigate the arid West.

Wyoming's Bighorn Basin, one of the last regions in the U.S. to see widespread white

Clockwise from top left: Boaters paddle out onto Lewis Lake in Yellowstone National park (NPS photo by Neal Herbert); A bald eagle snatches a trout from Yellowstone Lake (NPS photo by Jacob Frank); Yellowstone Lake glows at sunset (NPS photo by Neal Herbert); Jesse Barber navigates rapids on the Shoshone River, just below Buffalo Bill Dam (Robyn Barber photo); Anglers cast in the early morning mist along the Madison River in Yellowstone (NPS photo by Jacob Frank); A chorus frog croaks in Gibbon Meadows in Yellowstone (NPS photo by Neal Herbert).



settlements, is a textbook example of how water drove the local culture and economy, Johnston said.

Water development draws a straight line in the Bighorn Basin from early efforts by William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody and George Beck to develop a major irrigation network (see page 17); to the development in 1910 of what was then the largest concrete arch dam in the world; and through to current farming enterprises that range from thousands of acres of beets for sugar, barley for beer, and other commodity crops.

Affordable water from large-scale federal

irrigation projects makes farming affordable in what would otherwise be an unforgiving landscape, said Scott Richard. His Shoshone River Farm has grown and sold vegetables for a Community Supported Agriculture venture for more than a decade, largely thanks to cheap water.

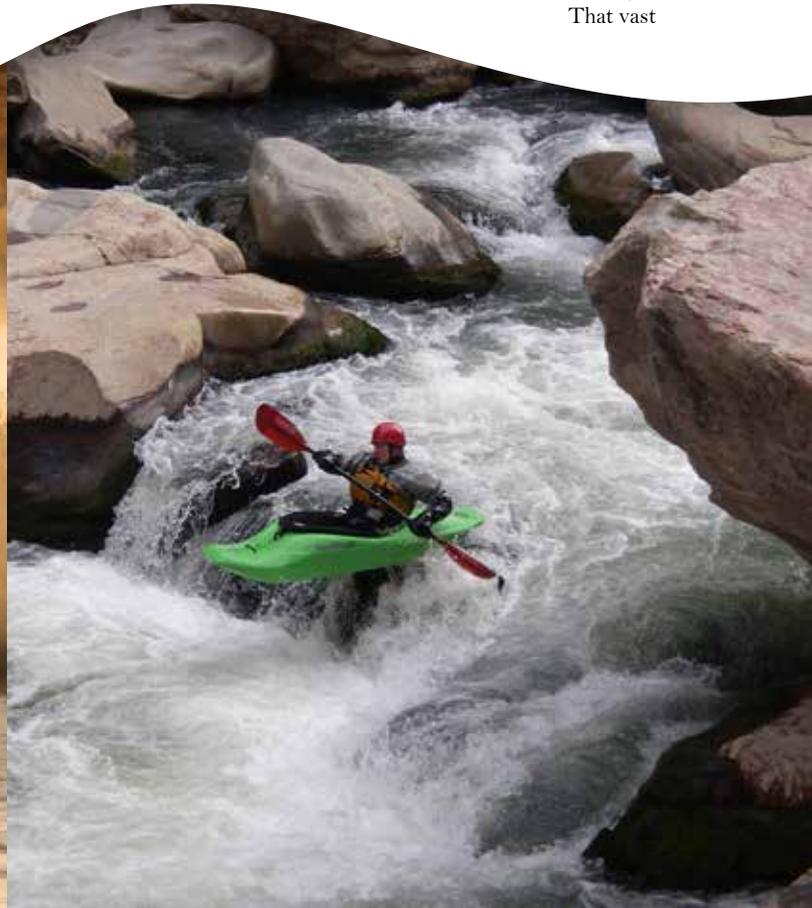
Greenhouses can extend the growing season and soil amendments can feed the plants, but nothing grows without affordable water, said Richard, adding that water is a “negligible” expense in his overall operations.

“We live in a desert,” he said. “If we didn’t irrigate, it would look exactly like the McCullough Peaks.”

Just more than 100 miles as the crow

flies from the McCullough Peaks—which receive about 7 inches of annual rainfall—is Yellowstone’s Bechler region, in the southwest corner of the park. Known as Cascade Corner for its abundant rivers, streams, and dozens of waterfalls, the Bechler region can see as much as 80 inches of rain annually.

That vast





A farmer cuts hay in preparation for baling in an irrigated pasture along the South Fork of the Shoshone River southwest of Cody, Wyoming. (Points West photo by Ruffin Prevost)

differential in moisture helps explain part of the profound biodiversity of plants and animals in the GYE, as well as the wide range of adaptations among them, Doerr said.

Sagebrush, an iconic species of the West, has evolved multiple adaptations to survive dry summers and take advantage of snowy winters and wet springs.

“Nearly everything about sagebrush is a result of how it uses water,” Doerr said.

Sagebrush’s light-colored leaves help reflect light to melt snow during winter, and tiny hairs on the leaves capture condensation and prevent transpiration, he said. Its evergreen foliage remains year-round, serving the plant after its deciduous leaves drop at the end of the dry season. A long taproot (six feet long or more) pulls moisture from deep soil, while a network of shallow roots capture surface water.

But wetlands and riparian species also abound in the region, including plants like willows and Rocky Mountain pond lilies, and animals like American white pelicans and chorus frogs.

The latter species survives freezing winters by converting glycogen to glucose, which acts as anti-freeze as the frog’s blood sugar rises to 200 times normal levels. As the frog’s internal body water freezes, reaching a threshold of 60 percent ice, its heart and breathing stop, preserving the animal in a kind of suspended animation until it thaws.

The Yellowstone cutthroat trout, an iconic and ecologically critical fish species, has an interesting origin story in the regional aquatic habitat. Historically a Pacific drainage species, the Yellowstone cutthroat has somehow traveled across the Continental Divide into Atlantic drainages, including Yellowstone Lake.

Sitting at 7,733 feet above sea level and covering more than 135 square miles, Yellowstone Lake is the largest alpine lake in North America. It drains to the Yellowstone River, the largest undammed river in the lower 48 states, and is home to the largest inland population of Yellowstone cutthroats.

The native fish species is an important food source for bald eagles, grizzly bears, river otters, and many other animals. Cutthroats are also highly prized by anglers from across America and around the globe, said Joe Moore, a senior fishing guide at Big Sky Anglers and co-owner of the Golden Stone Inn in West Yellowstone, Montana.

“We pretty much live at the top of the water chain, and it feeds the fishing everywhere around here,” said Moore, whose fishing clients include families with three generations of anglers who return nearly every year.

“Yellowstone Country is the Mecca, it’s the homeland of everything, and all the greatest trout waters pretty much start in Yellowstone National Park and spread out from there,” he said.

Moore said the wide range of waters around the park play “a huge role economically” in driving business across the region, based on the “sheer amount of aquatic insects” that make fly fishing so pleasurable for novice and experienced anglers.

“From Memorial Day weekend until the end of July, you can throw a salmon fly or golden stonefly out on the water and catch a trout in so many places,” Moore said. “There’s nowhere else in this hemisphere between here and Patagonia that can touch what we have as far as the rivers and insect and fish populations.”

Rivers, lakes, and streams help attract more than 9 million overnight visitors annually to a state with fewer than 600,000 residents, bringing in nearly \$4 billion in visitor spending, said Diane Shoher, executive director of the Wyoming Office Tourism.

“Water is a source of life for everything around here, and it’s extremely important in our recreation economy,” Shoher said.

Andy Quick, owner of Gradient Mountain Sports in Cody, Wyoming, sells and rents rafts, kayaks, and other river gear, and guides visitors to places like the Clarks Fork River, a remote, wild and scenic river on many paddlers’ bucket lists.

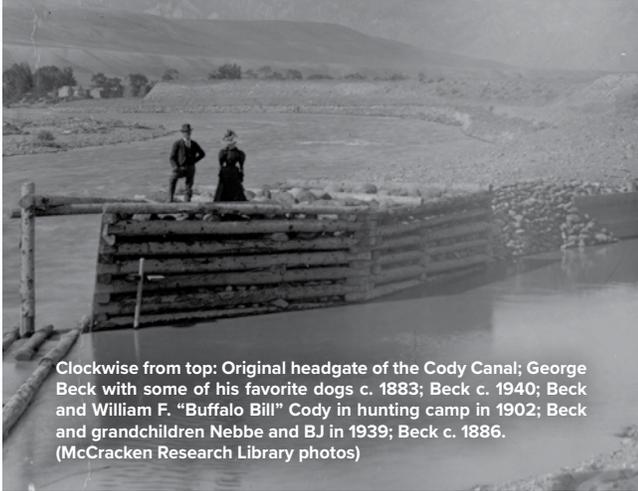
While Cody lacks the whitewater traffic of other vacation destinations, it has some legendary rapids that experienced kayakers dream of navigating, he said.

One such section is known as “The Box,” located in the Clarks Fork Canyon. It is optimally floated for only a few weeks each year, during peak runoff in late spring and early summer.

“It’s world-class whitewater in one of the steepest and most gorgeous canyons in America. It makes you feel really, really small and vulnerable,” Quick said. “That may not be what everybody is looking for, but it’s just amazing to know those places exist, and you feel lucky to be able to go there.”



*Ruffin Prevost is a freelance writer from Cody, Wyoming, and editor of Points West. He operates the Yellowstone Gate website and covers Wyoming and Yellowstone National Park for the Reuters global news service.*



Clockwise from top: Original headgate of the Cody Canal; George Beck with some of his favorite dogs c. 1883; Beck c. 1940; Beck and William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody in hunting camp in 1902; Beck and grandchildren Nebbe and BJ in 1939; Beck c. 1886. (McCracken Research Library photos)

# BECKONING FRONTIERS

## MEMOIR DETAILS ROLE OF CODY'S PRAGMATIC FOUNDER

New towns along remote sections of the western frontier sprouted up and withered away like cheat grass in the late 1800s and early 1900s, with plenty of ghost towns providing silent testament today to big plans that went bust.

A successful future for Cody, Wyoming, was hardly a sure thing. And a new book offers a strong case that it wasn't just the town's namesake showman who deserves great credit for building Cody's early foundations. It was also George Beck, a pragmatic entrepreneur who collaborated with William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody to turn Cody into a thriving town.

Buffalo Bill could focus tremendous publicity on a venture, and Beck worked effectively behind the scenes to help realize their common vision.

That's how things between friends and partners Beck and Cody got done, said Buffalo Bill Center of the West Historian Jeremy Johnston. Together with Director and Curator of the Cody Heritage Museum Lynn Houze, Johnston has edited Beck's memoir and released it as *Beckoning Frontiers: The Memoir of a Wyoming Entrepreneur*.

The annotated memoir details how Beck, an experienced developer, scouted the area around Cody and shared news of its promise with others in Sheridan, Wyoming, including Buffalo Bill. Beck teamed with banker Horace Alger to finance a vast land and irrigation company, and Buffalo Bill wanted to buy in.

"They figured selling this would be tough, so it would be easier if they got Buffalo Bill to help," Johnston said.

Beck forged ties with Eastern financiers, politicians, and other well-connected backers in Washington, D.C., and even California, places many in Wyoming wanted nothing to do with.

"He really had a sense of how people could each serve a certain role and make this happen," Johnston said.

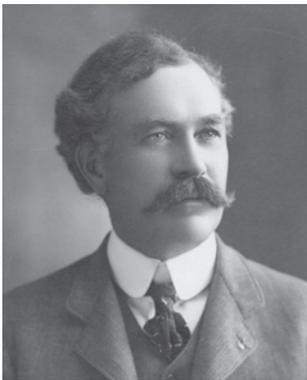
When the Cody Canal Company was running out of money, Beck approached family friend Phoebe Hearst for investment capital. The wife of mining magnate George Hearst came through, saving not only the nascent town of Cody, but also Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

While streets in Cody are named after Beck, Alger, and other male founders, Phoebe Hearst remains unfairly forgotten, Johnston said.

"Things like how he worked with Phoebe demonstrate what it took to successfully build these kinds of communities in the American West," he said. "It was his ability to compromise, reach out to supporters, and make connections that made it work."

"A lot of the town's history was mythologized by Buffalo Bill," Johnston said. "Beck's manuscript gives you a unique perspective with behind-the-scenes insight into how the town took off."

*Beckoning Frontiers: The Memoir of a Wyoming Entrepreneur* is published by University of Nebraska Press. It is available in the PointsWest store and on the Center's website, and through bookstores and online outlets nationwide.



# SACRED SEEDS

A JOURNEY TO THE PAST  
TO CHART A NEW FUTURE

BY MICHAELA JONES

When a longtime mentor and friend asked Taylor Keen what he was doing to protect his corn, he could only reply: “Do what?”

For Keen, a member of the Omaha Tribe and Cherokee Nation, that question was the genesis of an idea that soon turned into a passion that took root in his own backyard and has since grown far beyond.

Referring to historic varieties of tribal corn, Keen’s mentor, Deward Walker, a professor emeritus of anthropology at Colorado University, Boulder, warned him about the potential dangers from large agrochemical companies. If any of the remaining pre-colonial species of Native American seeds were to cross-pollinate with corporately owned seeds, Walker explained, major agricultural companies could try to patent the product, claiming the offspring as their own.

That conversation, which took place 15 years ago, ignited Keen’s mission to help bring the rich history and tradition of Indigenous and heirloom seeds back to his native Omaha and Cherokee people, and away from industrial farming practices.

Though Keen had little knowledge of gardening or growing food at the time, he knew it was “terribly important,” and a race against the clock to preserve what was left of these rare seeds.

“We got started, and I had a couple of classes come help me, and they helped define what the work was,” said Keen, an instructor at Creighton University’s Heider College of Business. He is also a member of the Plains Indian Museum Advisory Board. “We began to research and explore further, and really began to uncover this legacy.”

In 2014, Keen founded Sacred Seed, a nonprofit that propagates tribal seed sovereignty and promotes



Plains Indians have used a variety of edible plants for food and medicine. (Plains Indian Museum photos)



“Will it ever happen?  
I don't know. Can I see  
the dream? Yes.”

— TAYLOR KEEN

sacred geography, with a focus on Indigenous seeds of the upper Missouri River tribes.

That movement with humble backyard beginnings has exploded with plots dotting the Omaha, Nebraska, area, promoting local, traditional, and sustainable agriculture to offer healthy food to those in surrounding communities.

Through a partnership with The Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, growers are working with seeds donated by Keen to grow crops like Cherokee White Flour corn, Scarlet Runner beans, Lakota squash, Arikara sunflowers, and others.

But six years ago, Keen began the project by creating small plots in the backyard of his previous home. He planted the Three Sisters, a traditional trio of corn, beans, and squash cultivated by a range of Indigenous People. He also added a commonly found fourth sister, sunflowers, to the mix.

When planted together, these Four Sisters do much more than provide a fruitful harvest—they thrive together, each serving an important, individualized role, Keen explained. Sunflowers protect against the strong Nebraska winds and divert birds from the corn. Corn acts as a trellis for beans and takes nitrogen out of the ground. Beans return nitrogen to the soil, and squash fends off raccoons and other pests.

Before long, what was once Keen's backyard soon became home to dense, vibrant vegetation and a thick forest of golden sunflowers that nearly camouflaged the roof of his home.

Though Sacred Seed's reach has expanded significantly in recent years, Keen has no plans of slowing down.

Between 1858 and 1870, he explained, many tribes were nearly or entirely economically self-reliant, just through the sale of excess corn.

“That just blew my mind,” Keen said. “Because we have, in our past, these models of how we could take care of ourselves.”

His hope is that, one day, Omaha tribal members will be fully economically self-sufficient by growing corn without harsh pesticides or fertilizers on land the tribes lease to farmers.

“Will it ever happen? I don't know,” he said. “Can I see the dream? Yes.”

While economic sustainability is the ultimate goal,



it's only one of the benefits of preserving Indigenous crops and reviving the traditional farming methods of his ancestors. Long before European settlers plowed the Great Plains, corn was a staple in the diet of several Native American tribes.

"Many Native Americans are lactose intolerant," said Rebecca West, curator of the Plains Indian Museum. "These food and dietary changes have caused issues and have had lasting negative effects on their health."

Keen said that "in the bigger picture of things, I understand what Monsanto and Syngenta and some of these other big seed companies are trying to do. They're trying to feed the world, and that's a terribly important thing."

But promoting seed diversity and preserving traditional farming methods are important goals too, he said.

"There are many people doing all these things—tribal peoples who are reconnecting with their seed varieties and their ancient agricultural Indigenous lifeways, and we're all trying to make the world a better place," he said.

Time and time again, Keen has found his work paying off in unexpected ways.

A few years ago, he went for a run along the winding Shoshone River in Cody, Wyoming, after being struck by the words of Philip J. Deloria, the only tenured Native American professor at Harvard University. Deloria had wondered when we will start listening to the plants and animals again.

Completing his run, and continuing to mull over those words, Keen stopped by the river, where he offered a prayer and said: "If ever the plants and animals need to tell me something, may I be a sturdy enough vessel for that honorable task."

"I didn't realize what a powerful prayer that was," he said.

Later that day, Keen headed back to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West to meet up with West, a longtime friend and colleague.

West asked Keen if he'd be interested in looking at some unidentified objects downstairs.

Enthusiastic to do so, they eyed the carefully sealed tribal artifacts. Slowly looking through the box, he unveiled an object, revealing a perfectly preserved ear of corn with its crown painted blue and decorated with thin lines leading toward the husk.

"I immediately realized that we had found the Omaha Mother Corn in the collection at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West," Keen said.

This sacred artifact, believed to have been lost to the tribe for more than 130 years, brought bounty and fertility to the Omahas, and was traditionally used to bless newborn infants.

"We got it moved to the sacred collection, and [West] gave me time so I could pray, and I talked to the collection of the objects. Those bundles—we viewed them as people," he said.

"It was a really moving experience," West said. It's moments like these that show corn is not only representative of food, but also spiritual sustenance.

With the beginning of summer, Keen always looks toward his roots and the ways of his ancestors as he prepares for each new planting season with the Four Sisters.

"We'll watch them grow and take care of them and protect them from the wind, the rain, and the hail," he said. "It's always, always a journey."



*Cody native Michaela Jones is the communications/ social media specialist at Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming. In her free time, she enjoys reading, writing, cooking, and paddle boarding.*



# BRINGING THE MUSEUM TO YOU

## What we learned about programming during the COVID-19 shutdown

What is a museum to do when it can't open its doors to the public? This was (and is) the burning question for the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and other museums across the world during the unprecedented COVID-19 lockdowns. With many folks shut in at home, the road ahead became clear: instead of people coming to the museum, the museum must come to them.

"I was very pleased with our ability to turn up the power of virtual programming during the shutdown," CEO & Executive Director Peter Seibert said. "We have watched our online presence grow and seen more passionate and engaged audience members. That is what makes people come to Cody and enjoy our museums."

The Center premiered several new virtual programs — along with the usual fare — including virtual raptor programs, Facebook Live Q&As, geology exploration videos, and Skype lessons for virtual classrooms and homeschooling families. These programs provided educational resources, entertainment, and most importantly, engaging stories of the American West to those sheltering at home.

We hope our audiences learned a lot during this unprecedented time — but what did we learn? How will this pandemic change the way we approach programming, educational outreach, and storytelling? Here are three lessons we learned during the shutdown that changed how we work and think as museum professionals.

### 1) There are so many ways to connect museum collections to the world around us.

For George Miller, the Center's Digital & Outreach Educator, spending time working from his home gave him a new perspective on virtual education and storytelling. George



**Natural Science Educator and Interpretive Specialist Emily Buckles shares facts on Steamboat Geyser — and hopes for it to erupt — during her "Backyard Briefings" program in Yellowstone National Park.**



**Live Raptor Program Manager Melissa Hill introduces virtual audiences to Monty, an eastern screech owl who was most likely hit by a vehicle before her rehabilitation.**



**CEO & Executive Director Peter Seibert shares his expertise on how historic photographs are made in his "How Old is My Family Photo?" program.**

lives at the edge of the Clark's Fork Canyon, a hotspot for experiencing the diverse geology of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem — which has allowed him to take concepts from the museum collections and apply them to the world around him through geology videos that meet educational standards, enhance Skype lessons, and provide social media followers with interesting content.

"The museum is where the content and interpretation are," Miller said. "But when

you take that content into the real world and apply it, you create a memorable and useful educational experience. When I create geology videos, people are right there with me and experiencing just as much as they're learning — and I'm experiencing it with them."

### 2) Virtual programs allow us to reach a larger global audience.

The cancellation of all in-person lectures due to COVID restrictions hasn't stopped Nathan Doerr, curator of the Draper Natural History Museum, from continuing engaging Lunchtime Expedition lectures. He turned to Zoom web conferencing tools and Facebook Live to offer lectures on the virtual stage — and it has immense potential in terms of diversifying the audience, lecturers, and subject matter.

"It's an unexpected silver lining," Doerr said. "Through virtual means, we gain access to speakers and audience members who wouldn't otherwise make it out to Cody, and we can bring in multiple speakers at once to collaborate and provide multi-disciplinary perspectives on single topics."

### 3) Virtual programming is part of the "new normal."

COVID-19 has inevitably reshaped the world in many ways — and it has changed how museums will engage with audiences in the future. But it's also given them a new perspective from which to approach educational outreach and programming.

"In a popular culture vein, a museum is defined as 'stories and stuff,'" Seibert said. "Purely 'stuff' is a picture post card album — pretty to look at but not much to remember. Purely 'stories' is a book which is great but does not resonate with much of the population. Combine those two elements together, whether in Cody or online, and you have what makes this place so special."

*Want to learn more about our virtual programs? Follow us on social media @centerofthewest or visit [centerofthewest.org/center-virtual-programs](https://centerofthewest.org/center-virtual-programs).*



## TAX LAW CHANGES MAKE IT EASIER TO HELP

If you are looking for a way to help the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and are considering a charitable donation, you should know that in addition to the CARES Act's sweeping economic relief initiatives, the legislation enacted in late March 2020 also includes new incentives to encourage charitable donations. These changes are effective for gifts given directly to non-profit organizations in 2020, to be claimed on 2021 tax filings.

The changes apply largely to gifts of cash, by individuals and corporations, and incentivize direct cash contributions so that gifts can have a greater short-term impact. Here are some highlights and options to consider when donating to the Center of the West. If you are interested in donating, call us at 307-578-4008, so we can ensure proper processing and recognition for your gift.

### The New Universal Charitable Deduction.

Individuals who do not normally itemize their taxes are now able to claim a charitable deduction of up to \$300 for cash donations made directly to nonprofits in 2020. This change al-

lows those taking a standard deduction (the majority of taxpayers) to now claim this charitable giving benefit without itemizing!

### Individual Giving: Adjusted Gross Income Eligibility Increased.

The percentage of adjusted gross income eligible for charitable deductions by those who do itemize their tax returns has been increased from 60 percent to 100 percent. This means those wishing to make larger donations can now see tax benefits for gifts of up to 100 percent of their adjusted gross income.

### Corporate Giving: Eligibility for Deductions Increased.

Eligible deductions for charitable cash giving by corporations has also been increased from 10 percent of a corporation's taxable income to 25 percent.

### Another change to consider:

Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) in 2020 have been suspended for many retirement plans. If you were expecting to make your first

RMD this year, you do not have to until 2021 – and if you have previously made an RMD, you may not be required to do so in 2020. Even though the RMD requirement has been suspended this year, you can still make a Qualified Charitable Distribution to the Center of the West.

It is not clear if couples who plan to file jointly and take a standard deduction in 2021 will be able to claim a combined universal charitable deduction of \$600. Congress may specify with further legislation, or the IRS may interpret the language of the CARES Act later.

The language of the CARES Act regarding the increase of eligible Adjusted Gross Income to 100 percent only applies to gifts of cash given directly to registered charities and does not apply to contributions donated to supporting organizations, private foundations, or donor advised funds. The language in these provisions may be updated in further Congressional legislation, or it will be interpreted by the IRS.

Please consult your tax professional regarding your specific retirement plan, and all donations under these new guidelines, as they may change or be re-interpreted during 2020.

## SAVE THE DATE

COVID-19 can't keep us down – Patrons Ball is set for September 19. To register and stay up-to-date on the week's happenings, go to [rendezvousroyale.org](http://rendezvousroyale.org).



## THANK YOU!

From all of us in Cody, thank you for joining, renewing, upgrading, giving a special gift (\$72,363!), donating for the first time, and connecting people to the stories of the American West during our recent closure!

## A MAN, A CAR, AND BUFFALO BILL

DAVID NORTH IS  
CONNECTED TO THE CENTER  
IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE



David North at work  
at General Motors.

**D**avid North has crossed paths with many celebrities over the years. He went to design school with Ralph Lauren, broke convention to design the world-famous Pontiac GTO with John DeLorean, and even appeared on *Jay Leno's Garage*.

But it's one celebrity connection that stands out above the rest: his connection to William F. Cody.

"Buffalo Bill and my distant relative Frank North were in business for many years," David said. "Frank is the reason Buffalo Bill is famous."

According to David and the stories passed down to him, Frank was approached by the infamous dime novelist Ned Buntline during a stay in Fort Sedgwick in 1869.

Buntline wanted to write a story about Frank and his time as a leader of the Pawnee Scouts against the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers at the Battle of Summit Springs.

Frank declined an interview but told him he should meet Cody, a gregarious man and acclaimed scout, who hunted bison for the railroad.

"Frank North and the Pawnee Scouts played a major role in the Indian Wars," said Dr. Jeremy Johnston, Historian at the Center

of the West. "Frank tended to shun attention for his deeds while Buffalo Bill embraced publicity for his achievements, including the killing of the Cheyenne warrior Tall Bull at Summit Springs, who Frank's brother Luther later claimed was killed by North."

Frank and Cody worked together for a few years on Buffalo Bill's Wild West, with Frank and his brother, Luther, managing the Pawnee performers until Frank's death in 1885.

Over the next several years, Frank's descendants would move to what is now Billings, Montana. This would include David's grandfather, Austin — a man well-known for building

"The Castle" in downtown Billings. Austin was friends and business rivals with P.B. Moss, the creator of Moss Mansion.

"My grandfather and Moss were obsessed with who could build the bigger mansion," David said. "They'd fight to attract famous house guests, too. My grandfather was pleased when Buffalo Bill paid him a visit near the end of his life."

Billings is where David's story begins — it's the place where he grew up, the place he currently resides, and the place where he was discovered by Harlow Curtice, then Chairman



Frank North (1840 – 1885),  
William F. Cody Collection,  
McCracken Research Library.

of General Motors. This is what launched his career in car design, sent him to Detroit, and gave him the opportunity to design the Pontiac GTO.

"It was a rebellious car made in a rebellious way," David said. "John [DeLorean] and I broke every rule in the book to make it happen, and it worked."

This September, the Center of the West is raffling off a 1967 GTO. It's no surprise that David feels strong links to his past when he thinks about the raffle.

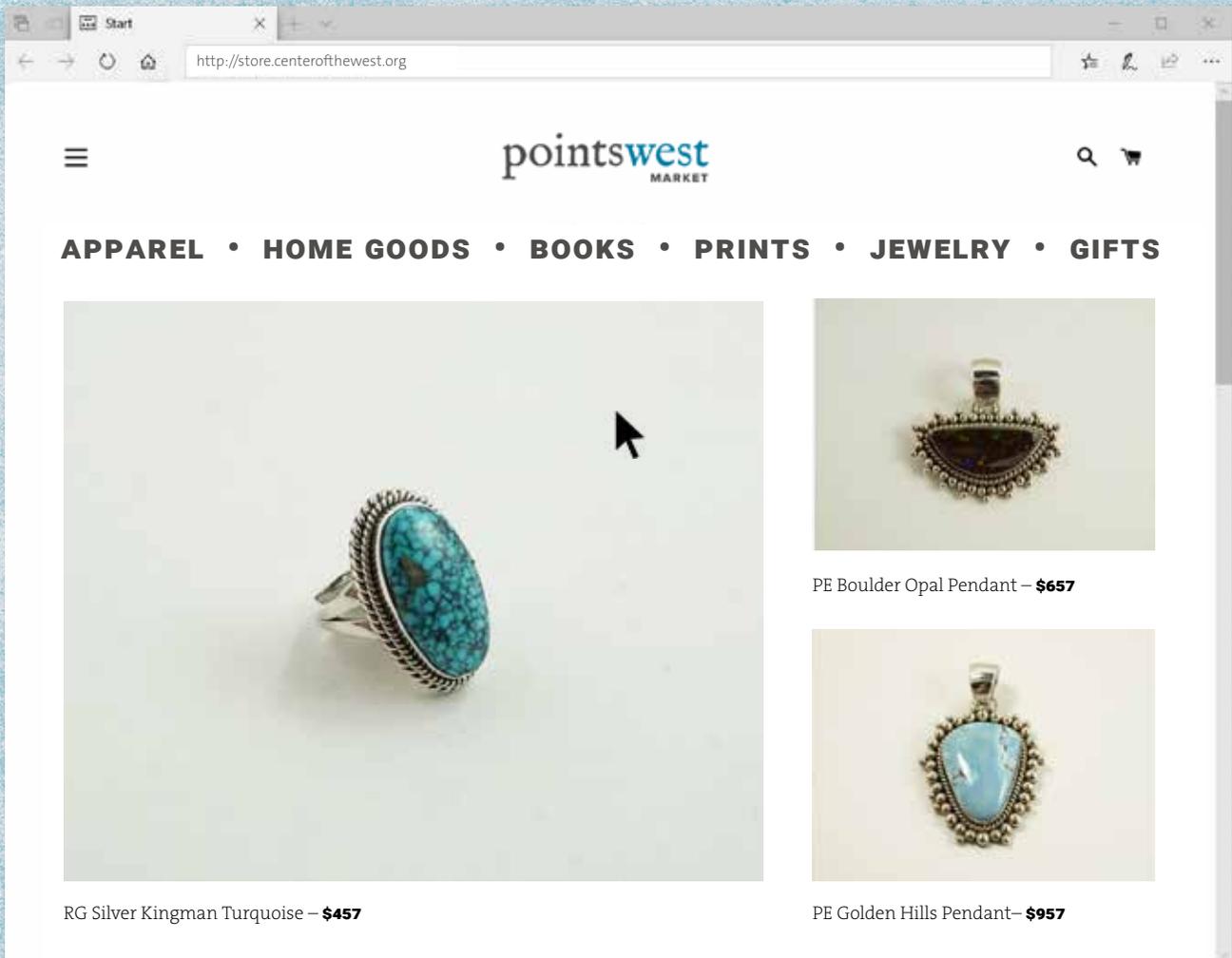
"I visited the Buffalo Bill Museum in the early 1970s when it was still a log cabin," David said. "These days, I go there and feel connected to my history in more ways than one."

For more information on this year's 1967 Pontiac GTO, Buffalo Bill, and Frank North, visit [centerofthewest.org](http://centerofthewest.org).



The 1967 Pontiac GTO. Raffle tickets are 1 for \$20 and 6 for \$100 and can be purchased at [tickets.centerofthewest.org](http://tickets.centerofthewest.org).

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