



Courtesy

Saddled up in support of 4-H

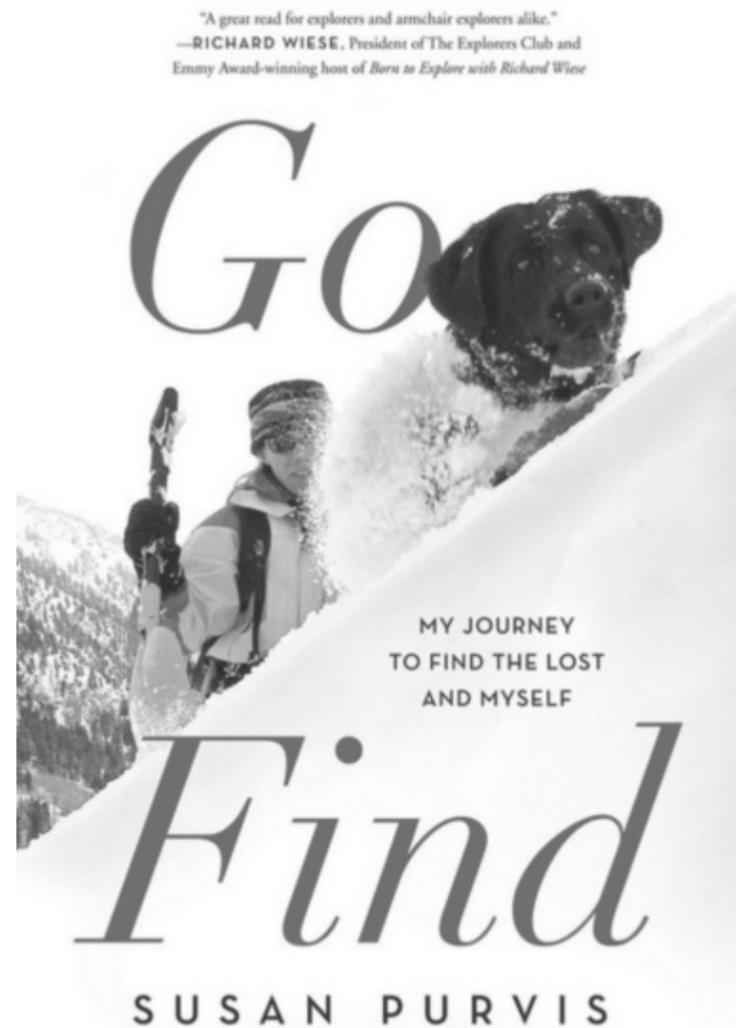
An annual 4-H Poker Ride fundraiser took place this past Sunday at Mill Creek north of Gunnison, scenes from which are pictured here. Riders took to the trails on three separate courses and were offered cash prizes for the best hands as well as other prizes. The event was made possible by sponsors Tomichi Creek Trading Post, Phil Chamberland, Davison Engineering, Loop Cattle Company, Sun Sports Unlimited, Gunnison Motorsports, Tough Enough to Wear Pink, IM Silver and Turquoise Junction.



Chris Rourke

Royalty on the road

The Cattlemen's Days royalty made a road trip to the Elizabeth Stampede on Sunday. Queen Catherine Washburn and Princess Abby Rourke assisted with mutton busting, placed race barrels and handed out brochures promoting our local rodeo. Here are scenes from their trip.



Former local recounts training dog for rescue missions

Emilya Ramsey
Special to the Times

In the winter of 1989, an unexpected avalanche was triggered on Sunlight Ridge above the Town of Mt. Crested Butte, burying three children near the Mountain Sunshine Condos below. Two of the children were found in the first six minutes after the slide, while the third was not found for another 37 minutes and ultimately died.

Six years later, Susan Purvis, a 33-year-old newlywed who had been splitting her time between the Dominican Republic as a gold exploration geologist and Gunnison, heard about the accident and couldn't help but question the outcome.

"I posed the question to myself: What if I trained a dog to save a life?" Purvis remembers.

This coming fall, Purvis will release her first book, "Go Find: My Journey to Find the Lost and Myself." The book tells the story of the woman's journey with her dog, Tasha, as they work together to save the lives of others, as well as Purvis' personal journey to find herself.

At the time she learned of the avalanche tragedy in Mt. Crested Butte, Purvis was at a point in her life in which the work she was doing in the Dominican Republic no longer felt safe or fulfilling. The death of the 6-year-old boy on Sunlight Ridge propelled Purvis to seek a new passion.

She began her journey by buying a 5-week-old puppy. Over the next several years, Purvis and Tasha struggled to be taken

seriously as an avalanche dog team in the Gunnison Valley. However, they eventually became the first certified dog team in Gunnison County and were sought out to help in emergency situations.

Purvis' book details the trials and tribulations she and Tasha faced — both as the first female team of its kind and also as the first certified dog team locally. The book also recounts the missions on which they embarked after acceptance as a team. Purvis also reflects on her experience of getting caught in an avalanche herself.

"I'm as lost as any of the people I was looking for," Purvis says.

Jerry Roberts, a retired Colorado Avalanche Information Center forecaster, describes Purvis' book by saying, "Go Find' is a story of evolution and self-discovery, as a woman and her dog struggle to enter the 'male macho clubs' of the 90's but with ultimate success."

Purvis, who now resides in Whitefish, Mont., remembers wanting to write a book since she was in third grade but says she didn't have the confidence or the content.

"Once I lived that story with Tasha, I knew I had a story to tell," Purvis says.

Just as she persevered in the face of adversity when training Tasha, Purvis says that she was not going to let anyone shatter her dreams of writing a book.

"Learning how to train a dog is not different than learning how to write a book," Purvis says.

Purvis will release her book Oct. 2 of this year. However, "Go Find" is currently available for pre-order on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Indie Bound.

This coming fall, Purvis will embark on a book tour in many of the counties and towns where she and Tasha once worked — including Frisco, Breckenridge, Vail, Buena Vista, Carbondale, Aspen, Ouray and Crested Butte.