Quote

“Thank you for providing quality, educational, family-friendly programming and ethical news coverage.” — Jonathan and Heidi

Witnessing a Moment in Idaho History

From time to time in our line of work, we get to be part of something really cool. Recently I watched an event that I will probably never witness again: the christening of a submarine. The USS Idaho SSN 799, to be specific.

You may have seen the Idaho Experience documentary Idaho’s Nuclear Navy. If you haven’t, you really should take the time to stream it. Aaron Kunz, producer of the program, along with many others, did a wonderful job of documenting the U.S. Navy’s efforts in developing nuclear propulsion on the site that also houses the Idaho Nuclear Laboratory.

The Navy is dismantling the site, and the Idaho Historical Society asked if we would document it. Besides showing you history, our goal in each Idaho Experience episode is to look toward the future. It just so happens that the newest member of the Nuclear Navy, the USS Idaho SSN 799, is being built as we speak.

This brings me back to my point, which was witnessing something cool. On March 16, we were able to see the christening of the USS Idaho. The ship itself is massive, over 370 feet in length. It was amazing to see it out of water. Dignitaries like Congressman Russ Fulcher and Governor Brad Little spoke about the importance of the ship. It was a sight to see.

Soon, you will get to see Idaho’s Nuclear Navy with additional footage from the christening in Groton, Connecticut. Expect to see more photos and video of those historic prototype reactors in Idaho before they are demolished. And we’ll tell you more about the man who created the Naval Reactors program, Admiral Hyman G. Rickover. We hope to distribute this hourlong version to the entire PBS system in the coming months.

IdahoPTV Receives 14 Nominations for 2024 Northwest Regional Emmy Awards

Idaho Public Television has reason to celebrate as the Northwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS Northwest) revealed their nominations for the 2024 Northwest Regional Emmy Awards. With 14 nominations, Idaho Public Television has
been recognized for its outstanding work in various categories. The station’s producers, directors, filmmakers, photographers, and editors have been acknowledged for their exceptional contributions in the past year to the field of television. The winners will be announced at the 61st Annual NW Emmy Gala on Saturday, June 1.

**Environment/Science - Long Form Content**
- Outdoor Idaho: The Art of Falconry
  - Mya Long, Director/Lauren Melink, Producer
  - Tight Line Media • Kris Millgate, Producer

**Arts/Entertainment - Short Form Content**
- createid: Unicorn Farm
  - Troy Shreve, Producer

**Arts/Entertainment - Long Form Content**
- createid: SARA: A Life in Dreams and Symbols
  - Marcia Franklin, Producer/Andy Lawless, Director

**Historical/Cultural - Long Form Content**
- Idaho Experience: Ligertown
  - Aaron Kunz, Producer/Eric Westrom, Director

**Military - Short and Long Form Content**
- Idaho Experience: Idaho’s Nuclear Navy
  - Aaron Kunz, Producer/Eric Westrom, Editor

**Documentary – Topical**
- Nic Sick: The Dangers of Youth Vaping
  - Jenny Sue Weltner, Executive Producer/April Frame, Producer

**Children/Youth/Teens**
- Science Trek: Oceans: Saving Kelp with AI and ROV
  - Joan Cartan-Hansen, Producer/Jenessa Carson, Director/Troy Shreve, Photographer/Cassandra Groll, Graphic Designer

**Writer - Long Form Content**
- Forrest Burger
- Joan Cartan-Hansen
- Ruth Brown

**Editor - Short Form Content**
- Troy Shreve

**Editor - Long Form Content**
- Pat Metzler

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**In the Community**

**Idaho Public Television Partners With Idaho Business for Education to Highlight Youth Apprenticeship Week**

This Youth Apprenticeship Week (May 5–11), Idaho Public Television’s acclaimed web series Construction Jobs Explained is proud to partner with Idaho Business for Education to spotlight the pivotal role of Idaho’s burgeoning young workforce.

Join us online as we delve into the lives of the talented teens and young adults poised to shape our state’s future, alongside the forward-thinking companies guiding their journey. Find their stories during Youth Apprenticeship Week and throughout the year on Instagram and YouTube @constructjobs_explained and @idahobusinessed.

“Apprenticeship programs offer immense benefits, providing skill acquisition and career opportunity,” says Matthew Baltzell, host of Construction Jobs Explained. “For young Idahoans, these programs are a gateway to mastering critical hands-on skills, earning while learning to sidestep college debt, and securing valuable
certifications that pave the way to rewarding careers. Businesses, in turn, enjoy the cultivation of adept employees tailored to their needs, reduced hiring costs, enhanced productivity, and the infusion of fresh, innovative perspectives into their industries."

Idaho Business for Education (IBE) plays a crucial role by helping companies craft robust apprenticeship programs and linking them with enthusiastic students eager for real-world opportunities. As Baltzell often highlights in his videos, “It’s important work that benefits all of Idaho!”

Idaho Public Television has teamed up with IBE to build awareness for IBE’s Youth Apprenticeship Program, which aims to create a highly educated and skilled workforce that is able to strengthen the business climate and fuel a prosperous Idaho economy.

IBE is a group of nearly 250 business leaders from across the state who are committed to transforming Idaho’s education system.

According to IBE, building workforce-ready labor requires a collaborative effort among government, business, and education. The Youth Apprenticeship Program connects people aged 16–24 to training, mentors, and careers in Idaho.

Through a joint effort with the Idaho Workforce Development Council, Idaho Department of Labor, and Idaho Division of Career and Technical Education, IBE is scaling up Idaho’s Youth Apprenticeship Program, with a goal of placing 400 apprentices by 2024 in some of the 1,200 federal apprenticeships.

Idaho Public Television’s online series Construction Jobs Explained host Matthew Baltzell spends the day with some young apprentices working with the Knife River Corporation to construct a concrete highway barrier.

Jobs Explained is part of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting’s American Graduate initiative that was launched in 2011. The goal of Jobs Explained is to illuminate career pathways for students exploring all types of post-secondary education and employment.

Teacher Kris Foster Joins Idaho Public Television

We’re adding another veteran classroom teacher to the staff at Idaho Public Television! Born and raised in Idaho Falls, Kris Foster earned a degree in elementary education from Idaho State University in Pocatello before returning to her hometown, where she taught third and fourth grade for an impressive 34 years, retiring in 2023.

But she didn’t stay retired long. Foster joins the team of Science Trek, IdahoPTV’s long-running, award-winning digital and broadcast project designed to introduce science topics to elementary-age schoolchildren, to provide educational materials for teachers and parents, and to inspire students to investigate science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) career possibilities.

Foster will write curriculum to accompany Science Trek videos for Idaho teachers to use in the classroom, with topics ranging from artificial intelligence to zoology. She steps in as Janna DeLange retires after seven years of
“I have some pretty big shoes to fill,” Foster says.

“We’ll miss Janna so much,” says Joan Cartan-Hansen, creator/producer and host of Science Trek, “but I’m excited to have Kris join the team.”

Foster explains, “I love the connection between IdahoPTV and education. I used a lot of IdahoPTV videos in my classes. In my classroom, I’ve found that using Science Trek videos has opened so many discussions for us. And I could take the lesson further with a hands-on experiment or use the provided Science Trek resources.”

She says that in the last eight years or so, students have become much more engaged with visual learning, more specifically compelling video segments.

Education manager Kari Wardle says that having experienced Idaho classroom teachers on staff at Idaho Public Television is essential to the organization’s ability to serve the state’s families, whether in creating locally produced educational content or hosting outreach events.

“There are some incredibly talented people at IdahoPTV,” says Foster. “I’m really excited to be here!”

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Our IdahoPTV Productions

“Ghosts of the Frank”

— Airs Thursday, May 16, at 8 p.m. and repeats Sunday, May 19, at 7 p.m.

In 2023, Idaho backcountry skier and filmmaker Dan Noakes set off on the adventure of a lifetime — a ski traverse of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, the largest contiguous wilderness in the lower 48.

On his journey, Noakes was forced to reckon with the risks he was taking and the family waiting for him back home. He filmed his journey of survival, perseverance, and powder-skiing to create an Outdoor Idaho program that will astonish some and inspire others.

“There is a fine line between thriving and surviving,” Noakes said upon his return. “Once a person crosses that threshold into the surviving territory, he can go downhill very fast.”

Throughout his traverse, Noakes heard stories of the miners and homesteaders who once lived in the backcountry. This documentary expertly weaves Noakes’ personal adventure with the history of a rugged landscape and the people who once called it home.

Join Outdoor Idaho as we live wildly and vicariously through Dan Noakes in “Ghosts of the Frank.”
“Idaho’s Lost Treasures”

— Airs Thursday, May 30, at 8:30 p.m. and repeats Sunday, June 2, at 7:30 p.m.

In its early days, Idaho was a crazy place with a multitude of ways to strike it rich — some legitimate, some not. Bank robberies and bandits, stagecoach heists and holdups, and stories about missing loot still waiting to be rediscovered echo through Gem State lore.

“Everything that people watched in movies with cowboys and Indians, stagecoach robberies — those things happened here. It was a crazy place in the 1860s to be in southern and eastern Idaho,” says historian Justin Smith.

“Idaho’s Lost Treasures” dives into tales of sunken silver ore in Lake Coeur d’Alene, Butch Cassidy’s legendary heist in Montpelier, and a crooked sheriff’s daring robbery of a stagecoach in Bannock County.

Historian Jeff Wade tells us, “Robbing the stagecoach was a big risk. But think about $75,000 back then. [That’s] about four million dollars today.”

And then there’s the mysterious Chief Bigfoot, a man as legendary as his mythical counterpart, who supposedly stashed loot in the Owyhees. “They would find these large footprints up to 17 and a half inches long, about seven inches wide,” says Wade.

While these stories live on, is there actually treasure hidden in Idaho’s deserts and lakes? Find out on Idaho Experience.

“Biomimicry”

Biomimicry comes from two Greek words: bio meaning life and mimesis meaning imitate. So, biomimicry is the science of imitating nature to solve human problems. In this month’s videos from Science Trek, find out how biomimicry is used to design buildings, protect crops, and make injections painless.

Each month, Science Trek explores subjects with short videos available on the website (sciencetrek.org), YouTube, and PBS LearningMedia. The website has facts, games and lesson plans correlated to Idaho and national science standards. Look for Science Trek: The Podcast with hosts Evie and Garrett wherever you find your podcasts!

createid

Benjamin Weaver and Megan Joyce, two members of our communications team, helped createid, our online arts series, cover Treefort, the major annual arts festival in Boise. Their lively stories were a fun addition to the show’s social media feeds. Here’s one of their pieces https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZBoRCn5WO0, on the beautiful dance form of flamenco.

To watch others, check out createid’s Instagram feed: https://www.instagram.com/createidahoptv or its YouTube page: https://www.youtube.com/@createidahoptv.
In the News

A conversation with Idaho Reports on legislative transparency
Jason Mercier
Apr 10

I had the opportunity to join the Idaho Reports Podcast this week to discuss options for legislative transparency reforms to help citizens better engage in the process. While there are several good resources available after action is taken on a bill, it is difficult to know ahead of time what lawmakers are working on.

This is why we believe there should be at least a three-day notice for public hearings, remote testimony options provided for all public hearings, and legislative bill pages should be updated in real-time when a roll call vote occurs so you don’t have to be actively watching floor action to know if a bill was adopted.

On the positive side, we also discussed how Idaho’s legislative budget process is very transparent and could become a model for other states.

Boise High senior awarded grand prize in ‘My Life Outdoors’ contest

ERIN BANKS RUSBY erusby@idahopress.com
Apr 21, 2024

The U.S. celebrates Earth Day on Monday, and students across Idaho have been contemplating what Idaho’s outdoors mean to them.

Henry Baldiga, a senior at Boise High School, was awarded the grand prize for his video entry to the “My Life Outdoors” contest, which invited Idaho students 13-18 to submit videos or essays about an important experience they had in Idaho in nature. Zoe Zufelt, an 11th grade homeschooler, was the runner-up, with an additional seven winners acknowledged for their contribution.

Baldiga said his video, which shows him making the choice to “disconnect” from technology and rock climb with friends, emphasizes the connection between outdoor recreation and mental health, an issue particularly important for teens.
“I not only believe in this strategy but use it often,” Baldiga told the Idaho Press in an email. “My friends and I make the trip out to Swan Falls, just outside of Kuna, Idaho, to boulder and enjoy the outside. There’s no cell service there. I thought it would be a great place to make the video because you can’t connect even if you want to, it’s a perfect way to escape distractions.”

The grand prize is a two-night trip to Stanley, including a rafting trip, and a $500 college scholarship.

The other winners are:

- Lucas Smith. 12th grade, essay. Wood River High School, Hailey
- Lucy Rodes. 12th grade, essay. One Stone, Boise
- Zosha Kocemba. 12th grade, essay. Boise High
- Ethan Flicker. 11th grade, video. Grace Lutheran High School, Pocatello
- Tucker Thomas. 9th grade, video. Madison Junior High, Rexburg
- Claire Arpke. 8th grade, essay. North Idaho STEM Charter Academy, Rathdrum
- Akshara Natara. 8th grade, Riverglen Junior & Treasure Valley Math & Science Center, Boise

Contest partners included the Idaho Press, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, LifeOutdoors, and Idaho Public Television.

Here is a look at some of the top essay writers:

**A JUMP INTO LONESOME LAKE**

The frigid water took my breath away as I dunked my entire body into the lake. I came up gasping and sputtering as my entire body reacted to the effects of the freezing water. I noticed ice floating on the other side of the lake as I scrambled out of the water and back onto shore. My dad gave me a high five as my two friends, sister, and I huddled together, trying to generate some heat after jumping in the lake.

It had not been our original plan to swim in the freezing lake. Just the night before it had been pouring rain on our little tents in the White Cloud mountains, and I could still smell a hint of rain in the air as we stood at the top of the mountain. Our main goal of the day was to reach the highest lake in Idaho, Lonesome Lake. It was named Lonesome for a reason — we had had to scramble up a steep, rocky mountain to reach it. The only plants at this altitude were surrounding the small stream cascading down from Lonesome to a lake far below.

As we crested the last few boulders and reached the lake, a sense of accomplishment overcame me. I was at the highest lake in Idaho! I did that! I thought to myself. I had not wanted to go on the hike but my dad told me I would always regret the adventures I didn’t take, so I had trudged up the mountain behind everyone else. Now, as I stood looking back down the mountain at the lakes, trees, mountains, and sky, I was grateful for the opportunity to experience this adventure in the outdoors.

Just as we set our packs down and collapsed onto various rocks, the sky began to cloud. The warm sun was covered and a chilly wind started to blow. At this instant my dad proposed his crazy idea.

“Who wants to jump in the highest lake in Idaho with me?” he questioned.
There were groans all around. What else would you expect from teenage girls who had just climbed a mountain? But as I sat there, I realized I might never get this opportunity again.

With persuasion and encouragement from each other, my sister, our two friends, and I decided to jump in with our fathers.

As the sky continued to darken we peeled off our hiking layers to our swimsuits. The first step almost sent me running in the other direction, but we all managed to stand ankle-deep. With a “one, two, three!” from one of the girls, we all jumped into the water.

I will never forget this experience and the mental and physical challenges I was able to overcome that day. Jumping into Lonesome Lake has become one of my favorite memories. It reminds me that I can do hard things and inspires me to say “yes” to an awesome life of adventure.

By Zoe Zufelt, homeschool student

THRILL OF THE CLimb

Life. It liked to play games with us, toy with us, throw us around. But almost never does it leave us without options. In a way, it’s like one of my favorite activities, rock climbing. On the wall, you could be met with large, friendly holds that allow you to progress upward quickly. The next instant, you could be met with an intimidating, sheer wall of flat rock, with holds that look stable, but crumble away the moment you latch onto them. The only way to truly master the sport of climbing is to take what nature throws at you and spin it in your favor, trying over and over until you get it right.

This summer, while climbing with my family at the City of Rocks, this reality hit harder than ever. It was the last day of the trip, and I was about to set off on my sixth and final climb of the day. I had previously attempted to lead this climb, but I hadn’t made it to the top, relying on a stranger to finish it and retrieve my gear. This year I was coming back more prepared, a better climber. I clipped on my chalk bag, took a deep breath, and began my ascent.

I breezed through one of my favorite sections and made it to the hardest point of the climb. I was ten feet above my last bolt and risked falling over twenty feet before being slammed to a stop by the rope. I reached for the next hold, but the fatigue of the day kicked in. My hand lost strength and I plummeted. I shook off the scare, took a second to breathe, and tried again. And again. Falling every time. I eventually accepted that I needed to find a new way up. A way better suited to my style of climbing.

I needed to make it to the top. There was no one else in my family who could lead this, and we were running out of daylight. I started back on the wall, this time aiming for a ledge to my
left where I could stand up and make my way back over. If I fell, I would swing like a pendulum straight into a granite wall. So I tucked my head in and kept pushing onward, legs shaking and heart racing. I made it to the next bolt, and then the next, and eventually the top, pumping with adrenaline.

As I was lowered back to earth, a number of things started to settle in. Climbing, like life, is never straightforward. There is no single way to do it. It took a while, but I found my path to the top. It’s not about the right technique or the perfect route. It’s about tying in and giving it your best shot. It’s about looking at things from a new perspective.

It’s about moving through the hard parts, through the fear and stress, pushing onward in any way you can.

Lucas Smith, senior at Wood River High School (Hailey)

THE WHITE CLOUDS

We were hiking over so much different terrain: from mellow foothills to steeper wooded areas to open meadows to scree slopes. We stretched over a saddle and I laid eyes on a tall, rock barrier. It was a jagged wall, blocking us from crossing. Blown away with the landscape surrounding us and astonished with the treacherous rocks towering above me, I zoned out. It wasn’t long before my dad’s voice shook me back into reality, “Hey Luce, that’s Devil’s Staircase.”

It was my first big adventure.

We snacked on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in the car and listened to Chris Ledoux and George Strait — anything that would calm me and remind me that this is fun. It’s a father-daughter backpacking trip, of course it’s going to be fun.

After winding roads, we arrived at the trailhead, got ready, and started the 10-mile trek into the White Clouds.

I was nervous because I always hated heights. I’m afraid to fall and I’m a cautious mountain biker, skier, and hiker. When I was a little girl and swinging in a swing set, I would clench up my whole body and freak out; I would be stuck and wouldn’t know what to do. Anytime I hear I should expect steeper trail, my mind goes into battle mode. I remind myself to have fun, but I’m awaiting the part that I’m scared for the whole time, and on this trip, I was terrified of Devil’s Staircase.

I felt uneasy our whole descent down into the valley and to the base of my rocky roadblock. Dad told me I could do it, so I had no choice but to believe him. When it comes to my abilities and fears, he knows me better than I know myself, so I forced my legs to take step after step over big boulders, rocks the size of my head, and lots of scree. My dog Bandit was jumping all around me, my dad was encouraging me from behind, and I was in my head more than ever before. I just had to remember: mind over matter. I had never been more scared in my life.

I reached the top of Devil’s Staircase and was greeted by a gorgeous view of the electric-blue Noisy Lake, situated in a pocket of terrain surrounded by all the mountains that make up the White Clouds. I had made it up and down Devil’s Staircase.
In two days we hiked 26 miles of steep, hard trail and climbed three 10,000ft+ passes. This trip taught me to push myself and was the catalyst for the idea that I can already accomplish my goals in life. I learned I had the mindset to push myself and do hard things. Over the next year I trained to climb Mt. Rainier, a goal of mine since I was a little girl. I summited as a 16 year old and I know that wouldn’t have been possible without the White Clouds — my first big adventure.

Lucy Rodes, senior at One Stone (Boise)

FEELING FREE IN THE BOISE FOOTHILLS

I start on the pavement. The stiffness of concrete ricochets through my bones. The light rain patters my cheeks and the morning chill of late fall inspires goosebumps. It’s 0.3 miles to the vacant trailhead, and the soft damp sand cushions the thunder of my shoes. The symphony of a Wednesday morning — tearful clouds and bitter cold creates the song of silence. The only sounds that ring are the twitter of a distant finch, the tinkle of rain on my skin, the slosh of my waterpack, and the constant knock of my stride.

At mile 2, the hills start. The rolling spine of the trail bringing me closer to the low hanging clouds. The air is sweet, the earthy tones a fragrant bouquet of sage bush moist silt. At mile 4 I pass a magpie, sitting solo on the branch of a gnarled desert bush, the black feathers deflect the mist of rain and the dampness makes the creature shine serenely even with the sun hiding. It cocks its head and peers at me, a strange sense of calm serendipity overcomes me, so I stop running and watch it discreetly, desperately not wanting to startle it. The bird and I stay in the motionless world, the magpie watching the skies and fields, and I watch the magpie. Then the shimmery wings unfold and carry the bird away with the heartbeat of flapping feathers. I continue on.

Mere feet later I forsake my balance to avoid a pile of berry filled coyote scat. My heart skips. It’s extremely fresh. Eyes darting around, I only see what the film of clouds limits me to view, a pair of curious canine eyes is nowhere among the landscape. I keep running, speeding up to get out of the cloud line, seeing pile after pile of signs that I am not alone. It’s eerie knowing if anything goes wrong I am completely helpless. By the fourth or fifth sign I stop and look around again, playful wind dancing my hair across my vision, tickling my chin. From above the cloud line I can’t see a single building of Boise, just a vast white gray puff, behind me the crawling foothills, and above — Shafer Butte. In this moment I choose against feeling vulnerable to the world around me and let it in. There is no need to feel alone when I am surrounded by life. Absorbing the dampness of the oxygen fueling my lungs, I shut my eyes and keep going.

At mile 10 I am far from the magpie’s branch, and running just below the rumbling clouds on a flat plateau. I feel a thick drop, it catches magnetically on my eyelash, the next falling on my arm, then the sky liberates its emotion and a downpour begins to drench everything in sight. I run faster and faster, until I am sprinting as fast as I can. Not to outtrace the downpour but to feel every drop possible. My mouth opens, my arms outstretch, and I run. All the while realizing; this is amazing. Not only this moment but each breath I take when surrounded by nature, and animals I cannot see. The world is a magical beast — untamed, and uncaring, completely ready to swallow anything that offends it, but nurturing the mutualistic lives habitating its voluminous folds. Being alone in the wilderness is impossible, we can look for that company but there is nothing more honest, nurturing, and protective than finding that friendship in the very thing we take for granted: the outdoors and the raw land that knows more and will see more than our blip of time ever lets us. Protect our planet, and you can ensure that those in the future can run through rain in the wide free world and experience the marvelous gift that we are treasured enough to see. Love our planet and it will love you back.

Zosha Kocemba, senior at Boise High School