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History Bites

Captain James R. Ogilvy Wills and his sister, Jeanette moved to Fairmont Hot Springs along with their mother in 1922. The siblings went on to build another small resort in what was, and still is today, known as 'The Meadows'. James and Jeanette were a ranching team from Scotland and purchased the 150 acres from a Joseph Young, who was killed in an out of control horse and buggy incident.

Captain Wills had been paralyzed on one side of his body as a result of a severe injury serving in the Canadian Army overseas in 1915. He continued ranching, despite his paralysis, as it had been his career before the war.

Initially the Wills used the property for raising cattle and sheep before developing part of it into a small resort and later, a subdivision. Part of the property they donated to be used for the Fairmont Cemetery, where all three Wills are buried in a family crypt.



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Fairmont Reads

Book Babe

When I hear a book is being made into a movie, I try to get the book read before it comes out, as I know I won't read it once I see it made for the screen. I like to interpret the characters myself rather than have Tom Cruise or Russell Crowe do it for me. As is the case with John Krakauer's *Into the Wild*. Once I read that Sean Penn was creating the film version (along with Eddie Vedder- sigh- doing the soundtrack) I had to read this one first.

I have not yet read Krakauer's *Into Thin Air*, but I'm familiar with his work as a contributor to *Outside Magazine*. This is a story that, in fact, began as a contribution to the magazine, back in the months after the young man's body was found in September of 1992.

Raised in an affluent family in suburban Washington, DC, Chris McCandless was a highly intelligent, athletic and energetic overachiever with a bright future ahead of him. He was also single minded in his idealism, enamored with the concept of minimalism and the life of the ascetic. During his time at Emory University in Atlanta, he grew to abhor the privileges that his parents worked long and hard to provide for he and his younger sister and rejected these advantages outright upon his graduation. He left Atlanta to travel out west and never returned to his family home, eventually cutting off contact with his parents entirely.

Having traveled briefly to Alaska during one of his college summer breaks, he was taken, as many are, with the wild beauty of the state and knew he would someday return. After drifting around the American west for nearly two years he arrived back in Alaska (crossing the border at nearby Roosville and making his way through our neck of the woods) in April of 1992. Alone and with less than adequate gear and supplies, McCandless made his way into the Alaskan wilderness. It was a pursuit to escape the comforts and excesses that North Americans have come to value and depend on; to live off the land; and most likely, to exorcize the demons in his own heart and mind. Not an uncommon right of passage for a man in his early twenties, as Krakauer goes on to explain using several other good examples, including his own terrifying experience at around the same age.

Despite his intelligence, athleticism and commitment to this expedition/mission/quest, he makes fatal errors in judgment. As one Alaskan put it, regarding McCandless and others like him, "they overestimated themselves, underestimated the country and ended up in trouble"

The author admits, in the beginning of the book, that he relates to McCandless. Given Krakauer's extensive experience in the backcountry as well as mountain climbing, a certain feeling of kinship is understandable. Despite this seeming sympathetic perspective, however, he gives voice to the frustration of the angry Alaskans who wrote to the magazine after the initial story, as well as McCandless's confused and distraught family, accompanying the grieving parents to the site of their son's death. There were certainly moments where I found myself angry at the selfish stupidity of this young man! As the mother of sons, I found this a frustrating though thoroughly absorbing and fast read.

I'm looking forward to seeing the movie!



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A Restaurant Review...

By Always Hungry

It was late Sunday afternoon and the clouds were thick, grey and heavy, just hanging there, parked overhead with nowhere to go. But enough about my poker game, lets get on with the review. When I got home it was time to get out, and I mean right away. The kids were screaming bored, the spouse wasn't talking and Grandma was in town for the weekend "helping out". So we all packed up and hit the road needing some place to go; a place unknown and warm with coffee and muffins and maybe even a cute waitress just to take your mind off things. And Dear Reader find it we did, right here in Fairmont, just behind the Village Mall at The Smoking Waters Café. They had it all quality caffeine for the girls, delicious fresh baked goodies for the kids and a huge choice of killer sandwiches for yours truly. Not only did the Smoking Waters have exactly what this (seemingly normal) family of five needed, they had it all ready in a flash. Before you could say "Hey, has anyone seen Grandma?" I was juggling giant plates of fresh food and was feeling better by the second. Quite full and comfortably sat, I looked upon my herd and realized that I had learnt an important lesson that day. Not a character building kind of togetherness /adventure thing, no, no - I was just thrilled to have everyone quietly munching for LESS THAN THIRTY BUCKS. What a deal. Sure wish I were that lucky at the poker table every Sunday, oh well.

Music & Entertainment

George J. Blisner

Hi folks and welcome to November and the time for gathering firewood; enjoying the fresh air and clear blue skys. My condolences to Bubba's family and friends, we will all miss his girth and mirth! Bubba was a friend that cared for the place we live in and the people that cared for it. He also let me play at one of his productions & introduced me to his parents after 25 years. Thanks guy!

October was another month that was full of music and art. The Bavin's annual glass blowing weekend at **Strands Restaurant** with two young local jazz musicians and their quartet (the sax player has to be one of the most innovative blowers I have ever heard). Shaun and Morgan made their dads (and moms, too) pretty proud, I bet. The Canadian Tenors (a younger version of the 3 older guys) sang their hearts out in the Christ Church Trinity's beautiful acoustic building to a very appreciative crowd. Another local group also impressed me. *Thinking Man* played at **The Hoodoos** last Saturday for the Halloween party. They have a new vibrance that the valley 's music scene really needs and no more beasts- yes ,they kinda let me play. Also a high point in the music and joy at Friday nights' party was *The Rockstar*. He returned to the valley with his unique guitar sound and caring heart. I can't remember *Rockstar's* name, but I think it rhymes with Rory.

This month's entertainment is rather impressive considering its November. The **Fairmont Hot Springs Lodge** has most of the early months entertainment, starting with this weekend's *Sixth Annual East Kootenay Wine Festival*: 18 major BC winerys strutting their wares. We do create some very exquisite Cabernet Sauvignon's. Along with Canadian cheeses to munch on there will be live entertainment provided by a local accordion player, *Franz, The Stigelmeister*, who has expanded his repertoire to include some Rock and Roll, Cajun Blues and Tex Mex. Look out Mothers. On the same weekend, playing the **Bears Paw Lounge**, *Stan Foster*, a Neil Diamond look alike, plays Easy-Rock as well as Neil's stuff. The new management has also created a new concept for **Tuscano's Restaurant**. On Fridays and Saturdays, tapas (Spanish appetizers) and wine bar. An evening of quiet, tasty smozzing.

Down at the **Sportman's** in the **Riverside Golf Course Clubhouse** there is *Thursday Night Jam with John Cronin and Friends*. Tuesdays is 15 cent wing night. There is Free Pool Wednesdays and Fish & Chips Fridays.

The Hoodoos Lounge & Grill has a local band playing halloween evening, the creative group *Half Sack* (yes they let me play, too, if I don't talk). The big night for all the boys in town is on the 8th when *The Cracker Cats*, three young pussy cats from out east come back again to stir the boys hearts up with their brand of blue grass rock! Come out ladies ,it could be a hell of a cat fight.

The Farside Bar & Eatery has their very popular Karaoke Nights with the our local talented *Weird Gal*. Fridays has been picking up as the place to be when *Ken, The DJ* spins tunes to rock too.

I don't have enough space to write about the rest of the valley's hotspots but keep your eyes open because we do draw alot of talent here. I am fibbing ,i didn't have time to go and ask what they have coming. Awwwww, too bad, so sad. November can be a cold lonely month but good music to all, helps. Enjoy!

PS. The music tip of the month is to find and enjoy *The Eagles* new album, *Long Road Out Of Eden*.

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