

WOMAN VALLEY

One copy free, all others 50¢

SMALL TOWNS / BIG LIVES



**DO WOOD RIVER
VALLEY WOMEN
HAVE IT ALL?**

**BREAK INTO
BOOK CLUBS**

**WOMEN IN
MEN'S BUSINESS:
FIREFIGHTERS**

**GIRL POWER:
PIONEERING
THE WEST**

W O M A N O F T H E Y E A R

*Kimberly
Coonis*

Express photo by David N. Seelig

WOMAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

**JULIE SLOCUM DAHLGREN
CAROL HARLIG
LARSEN PETERSON
MUFFY RITZ**

OTHER WOMEN WHO WERE NOMINATED

AIMEE CHRISTENSEN AMANDA WALTON **ASHLEY DEAN** BEGE (JOAN) REYNOLDS **BETSY CASTLE** BETTY MURPHY **BROOKE BONNER** CAROLYN NYSTROM **COLLEEN DALY** DARREL HARRIS **DORO LOHMANN** ECHO LYNN CHRISTENSEN **ELISSA KLINE** JEANNE LISTON **JENNY BUSDON** JIMA RICE **JOANNE DIXON** JULIE WRIGLEY **KARIN MARTIN** KAREN MORRISON **KAREN OSWALT** KATHY JONES **KAZ THEA** KIM GARVIN **KRIS CRONIN** L'ANNE GILMAN **LEE DABNEY** LISA HOROWITZ **LORY BROWN-RAINEY** LYNN CAMPION WADDELL **LYNNE STONE** MARCIA LIEBICH **MARTA HERNANDEZ GUTIERREZ** MARTHA HARRIS **MARY AUSTIN CROFTS** MARY FAUTH **MARY GERVASE** MENDY BENSON **MICHELLE STENNETT** MIDGE PATZER **MITZI MECHAM** MO BARRY **MOLLY BROWN** MONICA CORNELISSEN **PAM MORRIS** PATTIE DUGGAN **SARAH WALKER MCLAUGHLIN** STEPHANIE FREID-PERENCHIO **SUE AHERN** TERESA BEAHEN LIPMAN **THERESA GRANT** TRINA MCNEAL **WENDY JAQUET**

BIKE FOOLS Annual Preview

Scott SantaCruz RockyMountain Nirve Felt

thursday, april 1st

3pm-7pm

main street ketchum

AND

saturday, april 3rd

11am-5pm

main street hailey

BRATS & BEERS with SCOTT factory reps

10% OFF

ALL 2010 BIKES, BIKE ACCESSORIES,
BIKEWEAR & SHOES and SHOP SERVICES

20% OFF

ALL YAKIMA & THULE CAR RACKS
and CARGO BOXES

ALL 2009 BIKES and BIKE PRODUCTS

ask about our in-store
bike financing!



www.sturtos.com



FROM THE EDITOR

WELCOME TO VALLEY WOMAN

What makes a Wood River Valley woman unique? While researching stories for this new special section of the Idaho Mountain Express, I asked many women that question. Few were able to provide an answer. So, we turned to the men (read their thoughts on page 7).

For me, as a big-city girl transplanted into rural Idaho with little clue of what I was getting myself into, it is their chameleon abilities. One morning you'll see them clad head to toe in Lycra, probably beating a good number of the men in a friendly road bike race. That evening, you'll see them dressed to the nines, sporting Jimmy Choos that complement their stylish outfit and trendy hair do.

Somehow, somewhere along the way in the evolution of this town, the women have created the perfect place to indulge in two often distinct female identities: athleticism and femininity.

How they did this, I have no idea. Perhaps it's because so many women have had a firm hand in helping shape our valley. There are few businesses, city councils or boards that don't boast a large number of women intimately involved in their decision making. Perhaps it's because so many people come here to be able to express their true identities, feel less beholden to society's ideas of fashion, career progression or lifestyle. After all, living here is hardly a traditional path to follow.

So, how could we resist celebrating this unique breed? This smorgasbord of fabulous females?

A first step was to create the inaugural Idaho Mountain Express Woman of the Year Award. Recognizing one woman who has made the biggest difference to the Wood River Valley over the past 12 months, the award's basis is simple: to celebrate a woman who has made Blaine County a better place, through her actions, contributions and positive outlook on life.

Over 250 citizens of Blaine County nominated their woman of the year, resulting in more than 50 women being singled out (see all the nominees on page 2).

A staggering 1,200 people cast votes for their choice of the top five nominees (Kimberly Coonis, Julie Slocum Dahlgren, Carol Harlig, Larsen Peterson and Muffy Ritz.) The award goes to Kimberly Coonis. Read about her inspiring story on page 8.

Within this issue of Valley Woman, you'll also read stories of women succeeding in the traditionally male-dominated role of fighting fire, explore the struggles of the work-life balance of Wood River Valley mothers and explore the predominantly female world of the book club.

Then, meet three women who have achieved that sometimes lofty goal of carving out their particular niche in this valley: Karin Martin, Langley McNeal and Carol Knight's paths help show future generations that may choose to follow in their footsteps how to tread.

—Jennifer Tuohy, Editor, Valley Woman

CONTENTS

IT'S A MAN'S WORLD
Women in men's business: Firefighters 4
by Dana DuGan & Jennifer Tuohy

IT'S A WOMAN'S WORLD
Hardly ever by the book: Why women love to talk about books..... 6
by Dana DuGan

MAN ON THE STREET
What makes Wood River Valley women unique and special? 7
by Willy Cook

WOMAN OF THE YEAR
Golden Girl: Kimberly Coonis..... 8
by Van Gordon Sauter

WORK/LIFE BALANCE
Can valley moms have it all?..... 10
by Jennifer Tuohy

PIONEERS
Girl Power: Finding a path in Ketchum 12
by Jennifer Tuohy

Langley McNeal..... 14
by Dana DuGan

Carol Knight 15
by Pat Murphy



Express photo by David N. Seelig

North & Co.

would like to honor the professional women of the valley by offering 10% off a pair of Dansko Professional



Bring coupon in on or before 3/31/10 for your discount 1 pair per coupon

THANK YOU
to all the hard working ladies of the valley!

101 S. Main St. Hailey 788-2783



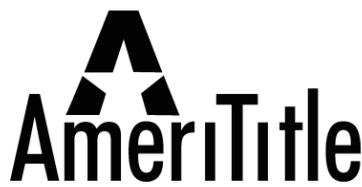
Amy Andreason

Kara Ambrose

Debra Vadalma

Elizabeth Zellers

(not pictured: Jamie Springer)



171 West Sixth Street / Ketchum
726-4595

We salute our professional women for their hard work and dedication!

Proudly awarded "2009 & 2010 Top Places to Work In Idaho!"



iDESIGN&PRINT

& I can help YOU express YOUR creative side on the web - in video - in print, on fabric

20 YEARS ON A MAC

MOUNTAIN DREAMWORKS
208-720-1342 411 N. LEADVILLE AVE. KETCHUM
(new location next to the Coffee Grinder)

Burnsies

FUN FASHION & FITNESS WEAR

To quote Coco Chanel
"I don't do fashion I am fashion"
 My intent is to engage women in discovering their own style, personality, and uniqueness through color, fabric, and comfort.

To quote Yves Saint Laurent
"Fashions fade, style is eternal"
 My sales staff and customers are my family and support group, my goal is to create a place for all of us to be ourselves.

Thank You all women
 for continuing
 to work on yourselves.
 You Are Beautiful!

Deborah Burns

MONDAY-SATURDAY 11-6 SUNDAY 12-5
 WALNUT AVENUE MALL www.burnsiesstore.com
 631 SECOND STREET, KETCHUM 725-1833

WOMEN IN MEN'S

THE FIRST FEMALE CAREER FIREFIGHTER IN THE VALLEY AND THE MOST RECENT DISCUSS WORKING IN A MAN'S WORLD



Ketchum Fire Department engineer Annie Stout Leady and fellow female firefighter Lt. Lara McLean battle a garage fire in Ketchum in 2007.
 Express Photo by Willy Cook

When your house is on fire, or your husband is having a heart attack, the last thing you really care about is the gender of the person carrying the hose or administering CPR, as long as someone does.

"Gender is a non-factor," Ketchum firefighter/paramedic Annie Stout Leady said. "You all have the same job and same task and you're going to do it together. The question is, do you want to do it and are you ready for the job?"

It took many decades, but today women who fight fires are part of the team.

"You put on your turnouts and you go and do the same thing as everybody else," Leady said.

According to International Association of Women in Fire & Emergency Service (iWomen), 6,200 women currently work as full-time, career firefighters and officers in the United States, and an estimated 40,000 are in the volunteer fire service. Twenty-four fire departments have women as their top-level chief. But it wasn't until 1973 that a woman, Sandra Forcier, was actually paid as a full-time member of a fire department. She went on to become battalion chief.

Nineteen years later, at age 47, Terry Thompson of Hailey was the first full-time female firefighter/paramedic to be hired in Blaine County, and one of the first in the state of Idaho. While a survey conducted by iWomen found that 85 percent of women firefighters said they experienced different treatment because of their gender, Thompson says she never felt singled out or mistreated due to gender.

"I never felt I was thought of badly because I was a woman," she said. "But it's Shangri La here as far as that's concerned, especially compared to other departments in Idaho."

Born in London, England, Thompson and her husband, Michael Burke, moved to the Wood River Valley in 1976. Ten years later, as she was searching for a new career, she heard a piece on the radio about an Emergency Medical Technician training class.

"It sounded interesting," she said, with a smile.

One can easily imagine her showing up for the first class with a bit of British insouciance. The instructor was Dennis Patterson, now fire chief for the city of Carey. That was probably her first clue that she was heading down a very different path from her former job as a Pan Am flight attendant.

north valley emergency dispatch center) was hiring," she said. "So I applied for a paid job with them. In those days you had to carry a pager if you were a dispatcher, so I said, 'Why don't I be a volunteer for the Ketchum Fire Department, too?'"

She had intended to volunteer as an EMT but the powers-that-be told her she would have to be a firefighter as well.

In 1988, within a year of hearing that radio ad, she was a full-time dispatcher and a fully trained volunteer firefighter/EMT with the Ketchum Fire Department and the Blaine County Ambulance District. But the glass ceiling was still intact. No department in the valley had yet hired a woman to be a career firefighter.

Four years later, she smashed through that glass.

"I tested four times to get on the department," she said. "I got the job on the fourth attempt. I was thrilled, but, honestly, I didn't think about the fact that I was the first woman."

There was one moment, though.

"The day they were going to announce who the hire was, I had already been told by the chief, but no one else knew. I was at the station standing chatting with two of the other (male) full-timers. They were discussing who it might be, going through the list. They went over everyone but me. It was clear that they hadn't thought in a million years it would be me!"

Listening to Thompson reminisce about her years of service, Annie Stout Leady, the most recent woman in Blaine County to be hired as a career firefighter, has a lot to thank her for.

"I do feel the way was paved nicely before I showed up," said the eight-year veteran, who was hired full-time in 2007. "And it continues to be."

Leady came to fire by a similarly roundabout way. A theater major at Boulder, Colo., she "got a bug" to go to massage school. While training, she discovered that she had switched from "right-brain to left-brain and gotten into the science of it all."

Theater and massage went out

We're back
 with a
 vengeance!



We have...

the largest art and craft
 selection in the valley

a full selection of office
 and paper supplies

a back room full of goodies
 to make you laugh

jane's artifacts
 arts / crafts / papers / office / party

106 South Main, Hailey - 208-788-0848



Hired in 1992, Terry Thompson, right, was the first career female firefighter to be hired in Blaine County. Annie Stout Leady, left, is the most recent, she was hired in 2007.
 Express photo by Jennifer Tuohy

**"I DO FEEL
 THE WAY WAS
 PAVED NICELY
 BEFORE I
 SHOWED UP."**

Annie Stout Leady

After graduating, she landed a volunteer role with the Blaine County Ambulance District (which later merged with Wood River Rural Fire Department to become Wood River Fire & Rescue). In those days, volunteer emergency personnel were not paid, so she looked for other ways to supplement her valley lifestyle.

"Ketchum Comm (then the

BUSINESS

By **DANA DUGAN** For the Express

the window and she took off to pursue a career in search and rescue, moving to the Wood River Valley in 2001 for a job with the Sun Valley Ski Patrol.

"I found out shortly after moving here that in order to get into EMS (the ticket into rescue) I had to join the fire department. I never saw myself going that way until it became the path I had to take."

Within a few months, she was a fully trained volunteer with the Sun Valley Fire Department, and in 2003 gained her EMT qualification. A year later, a full-time position opened on the Ketchum Fire Department. She competed in a field

of five volunteers (three men, two women) to become the first non-paramedic hired on the combined fire and medical department (she qualified as a paramedic shortly after).

Both women agree that no matter the nearly 20-year difference in their experience, becoming a firefighter, in whatever degree, is a huge commitment. Besides classes, drills and testing there is the

actual work, which invariably falls on weekends and in the middle of the night.

But there is a unique camaraderie between the female firefighters.

"It starts from the day they decide to join," said Leady, whose department leads the way in firefighter equality in the valley (a third of its staff are women). "Now I'm in a more senior role, they look to you for direction. 'I'm joining a man's world—how can I fit in and still be a woman?' We don't all have to be butch to be good at this job."

"The most 'grueling' physical aspect is probably humping 200 foot of charged two-and-a-half-inch hose into an interior structure, especially if you have to go up the stairs and around the corner."

But generally, the physical aspect is something Leady enjoys—it's part of the job.

"There are so many things that require your full physical strength, including being able to rescue your shift partner when the time comes. We train hard on that. My shift partners both weigh over 200 pounds."

Leady is currently facing a uniquely female challenge. She is expecting her first baby this June.

"It's all been really positive," she said. "And I say that with shock in my voice. I kind of expected to

get the rolling of eyes and it really hasn't happened. You have to do the job that you signed up for that day. When the pager goes off, you're committed."

But in mid-March, the six-months pregnant Leady took a step back.

"As of today, I have to decide that I'm no longer willing to pump extrication equipment or pick up a 250-pound dude."

Beyond the physical challenges, it is the chance to help people that drew these women to the job.

"I couldn't get enough of it," Thompson said. "They are so thankful to see us. It made you feel good about yourself. I remember walking down the street after I'd been through training and thinking, 'Wow. If something happened I'd know what to do.'"

It's in this vein that there is one major advantage to being a female firefighter/paramedic.

"That female, motherly instinct can make you more sensitive to what people are going through in the tough times you usually meet

them in," Leady said. "For example, when you have a 19-year-old female in a domestic abuse situation, having a female medic step in can be a world of difference."

Thompson retired from Wood River Fire & Rescue as a captain/paramedic in 2006.

"I just didn't feel good enough anymore," she said. "Now I work part-time at St. Luke's in the emergency room as a technician."

She admits to still having and listening to a scanner.

"These people are still in my heart. I see the firefighter/paramedics in the hospital when they bring people in," she said.

Does she miss it, though?

"I have quite easily let it go."

There are currently three full-time and two volunteer female firefighter/paramedics in the valley. Blaine County as a whole employs three women full-time and 30 women as volunteers.

"To a certain degree, society still teaches us that we are the daintier gender," Leady said. "But the numbers (of female firefighters) in this valley proves that we are just as capable of doing anything men can. You just have to want it."

—Additional reporting by Jennifer Tuohy

"TO A CERTAIN DEGREE SOCIETY STILL TEACHES US THAT WE ARE THE DAINTIER GENDER."

Annie Stout Leady



Thank You

KETCHUM AND THE WOOD RIVER VALLEY
TO ALL THE HARDWORKING
PEOPLE WHO MADE THE
RE-OPENING OF WHISKEY JACQUES' A

Reality

COME VISIT
THE NEWLY
OPENED
UPSTAIRS

**WHISKEY
JACQUES**
MAIN STREET • KETCHUM

—KARIN MARTIN, OWNER



**CITY of SUN VALLEY
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments would like to acknowledge the women and the men of our local fire departments for their valuable contributions to our emergency services organizations. The Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments encourage any interested men or women to sign up to be part of your local fire department and help your friends and neighbors in their time of need.

Thank you to all emergency services workers in our valley!



Ketchum / Sun Valley firefighters.
Cliff View Apartments, Ketchum.
Training fire.



Terry Thompson and fellow former Wood River Fire & Rescue captain/paramedic Shane Quarles train on assisting a patient's breathing in one of the combined fire and medical department's three ambulances. Photo courtesy ESS