

My OTE

DOES MY VOTE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

BY MARK JOHNSTON GENERAL MANAGER

Thomas Jefferson once said, “We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate.” How true this is. As a democratic society, all U.S. citizens are privileged to elect the individuals who represent them. Here’s the funny thing about democracy: It only works when we, the people, exercise that privilege by voting.

Frequently, those who don’t cast a ballot argue, “My one vote doesn’t really matter.” Personally, I believe that is simply not true. In recent years, we have seen examples in Alaska, New Mexico and Virginia where races that would determine which party controlled major components of state government ended in a tie. In many states, if a race is tied, the winner is chosen at random: by drawing a card, drawing straws or flipping a coin. To me, the sad part about determining the winner this way is that normally less than 40% of eligible voters cast a ballot.

Like our government, Mountain Parks Electric is a democratic organization. The second of MPE’s seven cooperative principles is “democratic member control.” That means that you, our consumer-members, elect an accountable board of directors to represent your interests. It would be nice if all of MPE’s consumer-members expressed their opinions by casting a vote. However, in

the last two contested MPE board elections less than 20% of those eligible cast a vote.

You might think, “Does it really matter who represents me on the board?” My response is an emphatic “Yes!” Why? Just check out this partial list of our board’s functions:

1. Review and approve changes to Mountain Parks’ rates
2. Review and approve changes to Mountain Parks’ tariff
3. Review and approve the capital and operating budgets
4. Review and adopt long-range financial plans and policies essential to maintaining a sound financial structure
5. Review and approve the retirement of capital credits
6. Determine, in consultation with the general manager, communications policies for maintaining a well-informed membership
7. Select the general manager

As a consumer-member, casting your vote is the first step in making your voice heard, but not the only one. MPE provides a number of channels for your feedback — good and bad — with the board and

management. If you want to contact board members directly, their contact information (email and/or telephone number) is available on our website. You may also speak with us directly at monthly board meetings (during the public comment period) usually held the second Thursday of the month. Another open line of communication is MPE’s online survey, accessible from our website. Or you can simply call us at 970-887-3378, email us at CustomerService@mpei.com, connect with us on social media, stop in our Granby or Walden offices or write us at PO Box 170, Granby, CO 80446.

Going forward, MPE wants to engage you even more. It starts with us hearing more of what you have to say.



MARK JOHNSTON



YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A \$100 BILL CREDIT!

It’s easy! To enter our \$100 bill credit drawing, just email GM@mpei.com and tell us if your last interaction with MPE was positive or negative (and provide any relevant details). Contest ends April 30. You must be an MPE consumer-member to enter. **Good luck!**



Mitch Bangert: Elevating your cuppa' joe

BY ROB TAYLOR MANAGER OF COMMUNICATIONS

❑ Mitch Bangert is a ski instructor at Winter Park Ski Resort and Granby Ranch

Mitch's award from the Specialty Coffee Association for Best New Product: Coffee or Tea Preparation & Serving Equipment (Consumer) 2012

The most discerning nose in Grand County might belong to Winter Park Ski Resort instructor Mitch Bangert. It has nothing to do with his time spent on the slopes. Or genetics. He won't deny that. Admittedly, his olfactory senses peaked in late adolescence. But 8 years ago, Bangert, then 54 years young, found a way to turn age on its head with his own version of applied science.

He never expected Harvard University would take notice.

Like many novel ideas, this one was carved by circumstance. On a blustery day, after steeping tea (his second favorite hot beverage), his inner wine connoisseur surfaced. Bangert cupped his hand over the back of the mug and breathed in the jasmine before taking a sip. After swallowing, the floral notes lingered beyond expectation. Curious, he tried doing the same thing with coffee, cupping and sniffing again before sipping. The result was

similar: The concentrated aroma, he was convinced, elevated the flavor. He knew that he would always wonder "what if?" if he didn't pursue the idea further.

And so in 2011, Bangert hired a potter to mold a prototype mug – the back of the vessel taller than the front. He patented the design, then hit the trade show and distribution circuits. The peculiar cup drew a crowd. Bangert poured those who gathered coffee and tea and watched their reactions. "To make a long story short," he says, muting a smirk, "people just love my mug."

Fast forward to 2020. Bangert's creation has won several industry awards, including the Specialty Coffee Association of America's prestigious Best New Product Award of 2012. He has sold tens of thousands of his Offero mugs, which retail for \$9 - \$12. Today, they are on sale in more than 500 college campus gift shops. His biggest client is Harvard University.



Yes, that one – the oldest and first institution of higher learning in the United States. Locally, they are sold at the Perk in Winter Park, and you can order branded mugs at Kopy Kat in Granby.

Success breeds expectation. What next? Bangert's colleagues ask.

"Not sure," he answers. "I'm still percolating." For now, he's doing what he loves: giving ski lessons and hiking while other people retail his mugs. He has explored the idea of mass producing a similar wine glass design, but he may or may not pursue that.

Facetiously, people regularly inquire if Bangert's Offero mug is half empty or half full. "It's half elevated," he replies. "Trust me. You really wouldn't want it any other way."

High-County Outdoor Lifestyle Tip



COLORADO ADVENTURE PARK IN FRASER

Open 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. daily
970-726-5779 | www.coloradoadventurepark.com

IDEAL SNOW-TUBING CONDITIONS

FAMILY FRIENDLY: We recommend soft, fresh powder days (generally slower snow).

ADRENALINE RUSH CROWD: We recommend late afternoon and early evening hours after a sunny day, when the snow melts a little and then ices up as temperatures drop.

WAYS TO SAVE

SPRING INTO SAVINGS

BY LINDSAY MCCANN BILLING SUPERVISOR

When the weather warms, the season changes and the potential for freezing water pipes subsides, so don't forget to:

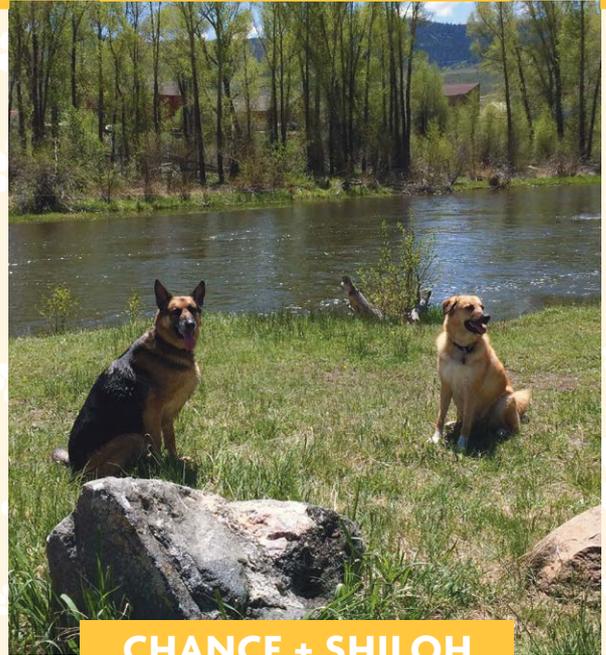
- Turn off heat tape
- Turn off livestock water tank heaters
- Adjust HVAC thermostats



Find Your Name Win \$5

If you find your name in this magazine, contact Mountain Parks Electric to receive a \$5 credit on your power bill. Winners must contact MPE within one month of the date of issue.

PETS OF THE MONTH



CHANCE + SHILOH

These two just love the Colorado outdoors!

Owners: Frank and Karen Nieto

Email your pet photos and pet bio to rtaylor@mpei.com

John Artach, ACCT 1026015



Chef Brandon

Local Chef SPOTLIGHT

RESTAURANT:

THE PEAK BISTRO & BREWERY

78491 U.S. Highway 40, Winter Park
970-726-7951
thepeakwp.com

HOURS:

11 a.m. – 11 p.m. | 7 days per week

SPECIALTY:

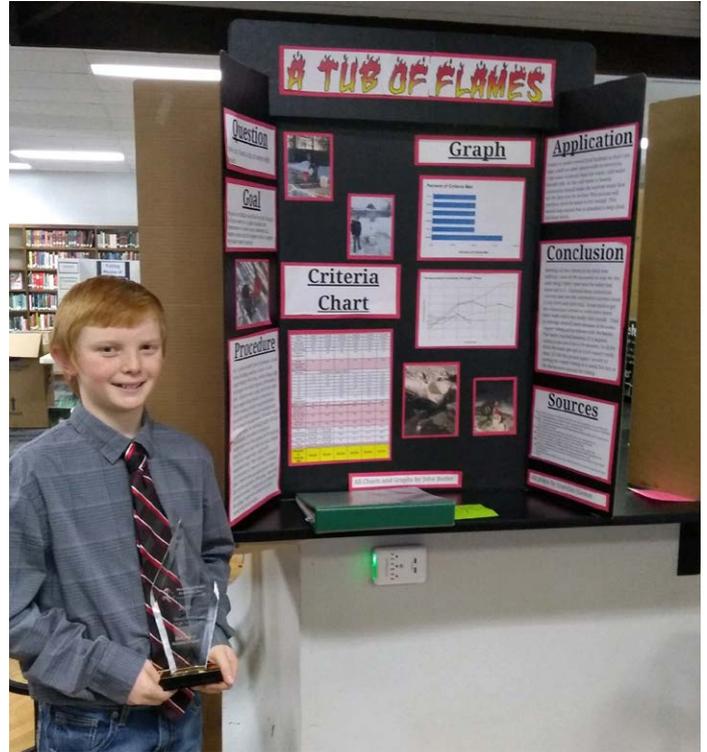
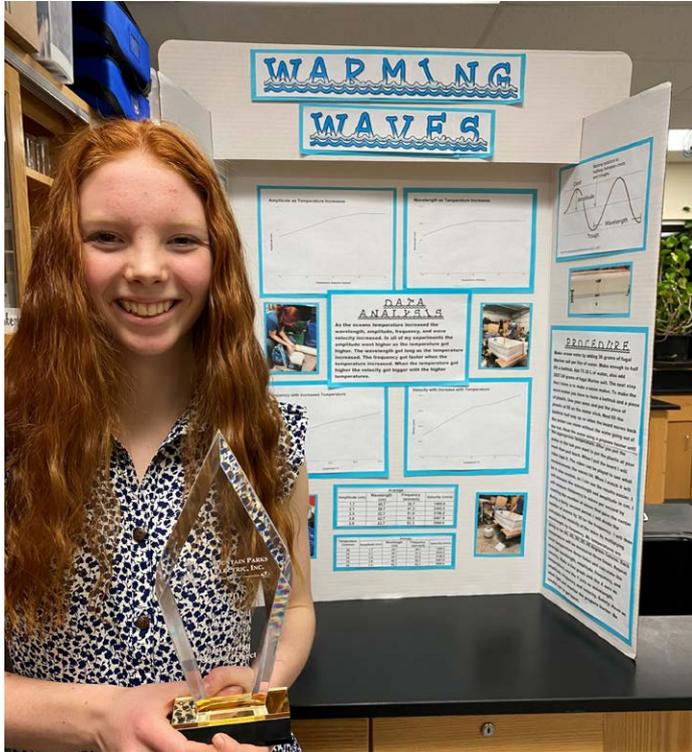
Forward-thinking pub food and specialized brews.

COOKING TIP FOR MPE READERS

Always brine large cuts of meat overnight. Key brine ingredients: salt, sugar, water and aromatics like thyme, herbs and other spices.

Dennis Furlong, ACCT 1024796

SIBLINGS WIN SCIENCE FAIR AWARDS



Meet this year's West Grand High School Science Fair winners, siblings Lily and John Butler. Lily (left), a ninth-grader, won the Best Overall Project for her study of the climate's effect on ocean waves. John (right), a sixth-grader, won Best Energy-Related Project for his study of wood-fired, convection-heated hot tubs. Every year, MPE provides judges and trophies for four local science fairs. Congrats to the Butlers!



On His Way to D.C.

Congratulations to West Grand High School's Charlie Multerer, this year's winner of MPE's annual energy-related essay contest. As the winner, this June, Charlie will head to our nation's capital, joining high school juniors and seniors from across the United States. Together, the students will visit our national monuments, learn about the electric industry and meet legislators. MPE funds this trip using unclaimed patronage capital, and not through its electric rates.

Cindy Bendall, ACCT 1018553



On Her Way to Leadership Camp

Congratulations to North Park High School's Samantha Westfahl, this year's runner-up in MPE's annual energy-related essay contest. Samantha will head to Youth Leadership Camp in Clark, Colorado, this July. At camp, she will be joined by students from Kansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming and Colorado. The camp provides a variety of leadership engagement exercises, an overview of the electric industry and recreational activities. MPE helps fund this camp using unclaimed patronage capital, not through its electric rates.