



If catching a huge tarpon is something you daydream about, throw it on the bucket list. (Courtesy photo)

# Daydreaming and bucket lists



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

I come from a time before they invented bucket lists. Back then, we called it daydreaming. Whenever the jaws of tedium got a firm grip on me, I would just turn down the lights of my mind and drift off into a daydream. My daydreams always were about some type of outdoor adventure, and they always starred You Know Whom, who bore a striking resemblance to a young Clint Eastwood.

I dreamed about hunting dangerous game

in Africa, stalking water buffalo in the jungles of South America, fishing above the Arctic Circle in Canada, hunting bears in the north country, fishing for tarpon, bonefish and permit on the flats of the Keys, and catching marlin, sailfish, and other pelagic species in the Bluewater.

There was many a time this ability to daydream saved me from a loathsome childhood affliction known as school. While it may have saved me, it caused ulcers in several of my teachers. My English teacher, Mrs. Eichstad, predicted that her and I would both spend the rest of our lives in 5th grade.

The bucket list is a recent invention, meaning a “list of things to do before you die.” The term was used in 1999 by American and British screenwriter Justin Zackham in his screenplay for the 2007 film The Bucket List. In theory, you dream of things you want to do,

toss the idea in the bucket, and throughout your life you draw things from the bucket and accomplish them.

My wife claims I have way too many buckets, all overflowing with ideas and dreams. She says they are all over the house and she is tired of having to dust and clean around them. She is convinced there is no way I will ever see the bottom of one of those buckets, and she is probably right.

The dream bucket lives right next to a bucket full of worries. The worry bucket is always full too. Things like sickness, kids, grandkids, bills, bounced checks, insurance claims, car repairs, and taxes, all make sure the worry bucket is overflowing with worries. Whenever you take a worry out of the worry bucket, a new worry is right there, ready to jump in and occupy the space left by the outgoing worry.

I make no apologies for being a dreamer of outdoor adventures and concentrating on the dream bucket. I will leave the worry bucket to my wife, who takes care of most of the worries in that bucket anyway. Hell, she even says most of the worries in the worry bucket were caused by me in one way or another. I don't remember exactly what she was saying because I faded off into a daydream about leopard hunting in Zimbabwe.

The whole idea of the bucket dates to the 16th century. The story is widely circulated but I question its validity, although it sounds good. A person who wanted to commit suicide, would stand on a large bucket with a tied off rope around their neck, and at the moment of their choosing, would kick away the bucket. Hence the term “kick the bucket.”

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# Stay above the new snow



## Outdoors

By John T. Unger

Three days ago, two red exclamation marks and one main message made up the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC) forecast. That message was: “During this time, traveling in or near avalanche terrain is not recommended.”

The danger rating being “High” put the hazard at four on a scale that goes from one through five.

The phrase “in or near” is particularly noteworthy, in that two avalanches in the past week were triggered by snowsports activities from above, and endangered other groups who were traveling below the people who had inadvertently set them off.

This situation is becoming more common. Avalanche aware or avalanche uneducated, risk tolerant or risk averse, carrying transceiver/probe pole/shovel or not, one's choices affect

themselves and unknown others, too.

Furthermore, this rating applied to every mountain region in Colorado west of or near the Continental Divide, from Steamboat Springs in the north all the way down to the Southern San Juan Mountains by Pagosa Springs.

That is rarely the case. This fresh foot or two of snow is, of course, very much needed in the long run to hold off the drought conditions which have worsened in the past two decades. In the short run, this is critical for every snow recreationalist and for the businesses who rely on them and for the ag community who are growing our groceries, too.

With each passing day, even when we have sunny warm days instead of new snowfall, the likelihood of avalanches changes. Regularly check the CAIC's website at [avalanche.state.co.us](http://avalanche.state.co.us) or download their free app onto one's phone.

The winter storm warning that was set to expire yesterday, Thursday, applied to Grand Mesa, and to the Uncompahgre Plateau, and to the Southwest San Juans. Having been forecast to receive ten to twenty-four inches of snow, the added wind effect is the wild card.

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The new signs at Divide Road Nordic Trails are studied by columnist John Unger last Friday afternoon. Today the snow is likely to be deeper there by another foot or more. (Courtesy photo)



# After Christmas Sale Storewide Savings



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A friend of mine, who crossed the last horizon several years ago, ran a safari outfitting business. One of his signature trips was a year-long, round the world fishing trip. Over the year, you would fish in 42 countries. He had a similar hunting trip. They were pricey, but what a great idea for a bucket list, having one premade for you, together with all the arrangements. All you have to

do is go on the trip and give your family finances a double hernia in the process.

This year, for a New Year's resolution, why not start your own outdoor bucket list. Throw in trips, hunts, fishing trips, hikes on specific trails, travels to exotic lands, and whatever you dream about doing. Don't waste a good resolution on things you know will fail anyway, like diets and joining gyms. Most of the resolutions I make are forgotten by New Year's lunch, so I gave that up

years ago.

Along the way, maybe you can pilfer a little money away from each paycheck, to put towards those dreams in a bucket. I always tell my wife that I would rather be a broke old man, looking back on all the memories of good experiences, instead of an old man with money left over and nothing to look back at.

I have been very fortunate to do many of the adventures in my bucket list. I have fished on 4 continents, includ-

ing North of the Arctic Circle. The Keys were really good to me for 24 years chasing tarpon and everything else down there. I made it to South America twice, got my water buffalo, and been all over Canada. A big trip to Africa is coming in 2023. My wife will be at my side for these upcoming trips now that she is retired.

My wife asked me what happens when the dream bucket is empty. I had to think about that a while. My guess is that you die,

so make sure that bucket is never empty; keep dreaming. Throughout the year, I occasionally write about things like tarpon, bonefish, hunts and the like, that people have told me are on their bucket list, and maybe it plants a seed with some of you. I hope every one of you have a blessed 2023 and get a few things done on your bucket list. Now if you will excuse me, I read about hunting Caribou and Muskox in Greenland, and I want to add that to my bucket.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email [info@mcspi.org](mailto:info@mcspi.org)

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Winds on Grand Mesa were expected to be blowing at 35 miles per hour, and even higher winds for the Uncompahgre Plateau. Then much of that snow gets rearranged in unpredictable ways, loading some avalanche paths that would not otherwise be expected to run.

Both styles of nordic cross-country skiing (classic and skate skiing) often allow a skier to not have to deal with avalanche concerns. But for those planning on driving the hour and a bit up CO Highway 65 onto Grand Mesa, recall that two

weeks ago, the highway had been closed for several hours at midday to conduct avalanche control.

So even the largest flat-topped mountain in the world (the Grand Mesa) contains highways that pass under an avalanche zone.

In addition to the CAIC website and the state of Colorado's road travel website cotrip.org, another site with more localized forecasts for weather and road access conditions exists. That is the Grand Mesa Nordic Council's gmnc.org. Frequently updated, it can save a group a wasted trip by posting notice of road closures due to avalanche

control work.

If a skate skier wants to find out if their favorite trails have not yet been groomed, it is noted there. Or if a classic skier only wants to go up onto Grand Mesa if the trails have had tracks set for their skis, that site will say so or not. At 11,000 feet elevation, skiing their trails has been consistently very good to excellent, ever since late October this season.

The Divide Road Nordic Trail system has the newest and nearest ski trails to Montrose. This system now has excellent trail signs, mapped and numbered on posts at trail intersections.

Working under a Volunteer Agreement with the U.S. Forest Service, the Uncompahgre Nordic Association (UNA) is a non-profit Colorado group who manages, grooms, and maintains non-motorized over-snow public trails.

With this recent storm, their website ([unaxski.com](http://unaxski.com)) will have information on if and when the Dave Wood Road and Divide Road have been plowed enough for their parking area to be accessed. This even applies to high-clearance 4WD vehicles with experienced drivers behind the steering wheel (and maybe passengers with them

who can shovel and who can push when needed).

The UNA relies on volunteers' time and donations to cover the costs of providing this system for public use. I skied on its newest trails just last week, and enjoyed how well it is laid out and marked and cared for.

At just twenty-some miles from downtown Montrose, in a short couple of years it has become a gem and now offers yet another unique and valuable experience just uphill from our valley.

With its highest point being 9,700 feet above sea-level, it is just shy of 4,000 vertical feet higher than downtown Mon-

trose. So prepare properly for the possibility of having to survive a night in your vehicle if you go, particularly given the snowstorms that have just hit those elevations.

And let us all be grateful for the moisture in the snowfall.

*John T. Unger is a Diplomate of the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians, and in 2022 achieved the credential of Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine. He can't help being thrilled at yet more fine outdoors options. Your feedback and ideas for future columns are welcomed at [www.sportsdocunger.com](http://www.sportsdocunger.com).*

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By Katharine Heidelberg kathyheidelberg@montrosepress.com Apr 3, 2021

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