

Celebrated author to visit Sisters

Renowned author Pam Houston will visit Paulina Springs Books in Sisters on Friday, February 8, at 6:30 p.m. for a reading and discussion of her latest book, "Deep Creek: Finding Hope In The High Country."

At 31 years old, fresh off a tour promoting her first collection, "Cowboys Are My Weakness," Pam Houston had "no job, no place to live except my North Face VE 24 tent." On an impulse and a good instinct, she spent her royalties on a 120-acre ranch near Creede, Colorado. It was more than she could afford, and required more maintenance than she could manage. And yet, twenty-five years later, it's the piece of land that's defined the largest part of her life.

"Deep Creek: Finding Hope In The High Country" tells the remarkable story of "that girl who dared herself to buy a ranch, dared herself to dig in and care for it, to work hard enough to pay for it, to figure out what other people meant when they used the word 'home.'"

In its chapters, Houston spends her days walking along the fences on her property, watching leaves on the aspens ignite into an eruption of fall colors, and caring for the animals on her ranch: the horses, sheep, chickens, Irish wolfhounds, and a pair of miniature donkeys with outsized attitudes. Houston's audacity and generosity are on full display as she cares for an elk calf abandoned by its herd and sleeps outside to comfort her old hound. Deep Creek raises concern about the many ways we endanger the natural world's delicate balance, and nature's enigmatic powers to survive and to save. It's also a chronicle of recovery.

Houston's childhood was marked by her parents' alcoholism and abuse—harrowing experiences, which with Houston's deft hand are imparted in a way that's both straightforward and deeply affecting. More shocking

than her surviving multiple car wrecks at the hands of her intoxicated parents are her strength of spirit and openness of heart, qualities that illuminate every page. It's no wonder that despite the seclusion of her ranch, Houston is never without friends, from writers like Antonya Nelson and Robert Boswell, to practical strangers who have her back in every situation. There are the locals who come to her aid when she's snowed in, the woman who shelters her as a child from her volatile parents, a surgeon who performs an astonishing operation on her pulverized arm, a wise neighbor who tactfully keeps the ranch from being bought out from under her, and firefighters who risk their lives to try and keep a massive wildfire from destroying her ranch.

The "Diary of a Fire" section is a gripping account of the West Fork Complex wildfire and the efforts to try and contain its growing intensity. The burning traveled all the way to Houston's backyard, which, by nothing short of a miracle, was saved by a valiant stand of aspen trees that kept it at bay. The fire scorched the mountains around her home, transforming her landscape, though not destroying it. Taking stock of the damage, Houston notices fireweed, baby aspen, woodpeckers, and the exquisite green of new grass shoots coming up through all the char.

Encompassing Houston's childhood, her adventures, and her details of everyday life at the ranch, Deep Creek is, above all, a testament. In holding on to her ranch, Houston carved a life to support her spirit and her talents, and discovered that she could be the cowboy of her own story.

"I know," she explains, "that when I claimed these 120 acres, they also claimed me. We are each other's mutual saviors."

Pam Houston is the author of the novels "Contents May



PHOTO PROVIDED

Pam Houston will visit Sisters on February 8.

Have Shifted" and "Sight Hound," the short story collections "Cowboys Are My Weakness" and "Waltzing the Cat," and "A Little More About Me," a collection of essays. Her stories have been selected for volumes such as The Best American Short Stories, The O. Henry Awards, The 2013 Pushcart Prize, and The Best American Short Stories of the Century. She is the winner of the Western States Book Award, the WILLA Literary Award for contemporary fiction, the Evil Companions Literary Award, and multiple teaching awards. She cofounded the literary nonprofit Writing By Writers, is a professor of English at UC-Davis, and teaches in the Institute of American Indian Arts' low-residency MFA program and at writer's conferences around the country and the world.

Outlaws wrestle at Oregon Classic

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

Two weeks ago, the Outlaws attended the Oregon Classic on Friday and Saturday, January 18-19, held at the Redmond Expo Center. The annual event brought in 94 high school teams, which were split into five divisions. In addition, this year also featured the expansion of the high school girls dual matches, with four girls teams. They also hosted the women's college tournament that included nine girls teams from Oregon, Canada, Illinois, and California.

"One of the best experiences I have as a coach is when I walk into the Expo Center and look at the faces of my wrestlers who have never been there before," said Outlaws Coach John Downs.

"They get to see the Expo Center floor covered with 16 wrestling mats, and over 4,000 athletes competing, warming up, or walking around."

Nineteen of the 94 high school teams in attendance were in the 4A bracket with Sisters.

Sisters started against No. 2-seeded Sweet Home. The Huskies are always tough competition and beat the Outlaws 72-0. In the second round, the Outlaws lost 72-12 to Estacada.

The two standouts in the match against Estacada were

junior Anthony Randolph (145 pounds) and freshman Wyatt Maffey (132 pounds). Randolph pinned his opponent in 1:55 and Wyatt took down his foe in 1:28.

In the third dual, Sisters faced No. 4-seeded Woodburn. The Outlaws lost, but again Randolph came through for the Outlaws. Anthony beat his opponent in an 11-4 decision.

In the final match of the night, the Outlaws lost to the Henley Hornets 72-12. Randolph pinned his opponent in 38 seconds to pull off another win, and Dalton Ford (126 pounds) pinned his opponent in 49 seconds.

On Saturday, the Outlaws started off with a dual against McLoughlin and lost 66-6. Ford (126 pounds) continued his winning streak and got the pin in 3:52.

The Outlaws finished up the tournament with a 42-18 loss to Marshfield. The highlight for Sisters was when freshman Michael Zoomajian pinned his opponent in 1:05. The Outlaws also received points with forfeits at 132 and 285 pounds.

Downs told *The Nugget* that the Outlaws had some individual success, especially Anthony Randolph, who finished the weekend with three wins and three losses.

The Outlaws will attend the Madras Invitational on Saturday, February 2.

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