

## LOOKING BACK



### 45 years ago ...

Grand Teton National Park celebrated its 39th birthday. On Feb. 26, 1929, President Calvin Coolidge approved an act of Congress to establish it. Teton Park extended from Webb Canyon south to Granite Canyon. The western border excluded Jackson Lake but included Jenny, Taggart, Leigh and Bradley lakes and the northern half of Phelps Lake. The park was enlarged in 1950 to include the Jackson Hole National Monument. ... Seventy-six retail establishments were counted in Teton County in a national survey done by the Department of Commerce. That amounted to one store for every 55 citizens. The average ratio in the U.S. was one store for every 114 people. The Wyoming average was one store for every 81 people. According to the survey, 46 retail establishments employed one or more persons in Jackson. An estimated 30 smaller stores were owned by families and listed no employees.

### 30 years ago ...

The National Park Service proposed a grizzly bear management program that restricted seasonal hiking and camping in 20 percent of Yellowstone National Park's backcountry. The program also called for a supplemental feeding program for the bears to stabilize the declining population. The report said regulating human travel to parts of the park during certain seasons would reduce the chances of bears becoming habitual users of artificial food sources. That in turn would reduce the number of human-bear conflicts, the report said. Proposed off-limits sites included Gallatin, Grayling Creek, Richard's Pond, Washburn, Antelope, Pelican Valley, Clear Creek, Two Ocean Plateau, Lake Spawn, Riddle Lake and Firehole. The closed areas added up to 452,995 acres. The supplemental feeding option for the grizzlies suggested that it be reserved for years when a lack of natural food weakened the population. During those periods, elk or other large mammals would be shot and provided to the bears by park biologists. The park said only 197 grizzlies lived within the Yellowstone ecosystem in 1981.

### 15 years ago ...

Teton County residents spoke out against leasing 370,000 acres near the Gros Ventre Wilderness in the Bridger-Teton National Forest to oil and gas companies. The emotional meeting with U.S. Forest Service officials was intended to uncover additional issues regarding the leases, but the public outcry became the dominant topic of discussion. "We have a treasure," resident Horton Spitzer said at the meeting. "That's why we're here. We've got as much right as industry." Spokesman Scott Fitzwilliams said that he understood the public's sentiment and that the Forest Service was taking the issue very seriously. The Forest Service was analyzing the oil and gas company requests and had put together an environmental impact statement that generated 1,400 written comments. The topics studied ranged from infrastructure to the effects the leases would have on everything from grizzly habitat to tourism. The only individuals in favor of the proposed leases were county commissioners, according to the report.



BRADLY J. BONER / NEWS&GUIDE

**John Morgan runs Dialogue Business Strategy, helping businesses become experts in customer service and sales training. His first job in the valley was national sales manager for Jackson Hole Mountain Resort.**

# Salesman becomes training guru

Morgan balances being a business owner with volunteer work and time with wife and daughter.

By Lindsay Wood

John Morgan came to Jackson Hole in 1993 on a college spring break ski trip with friends. Before he left the airport for home, he made a prediction.

"I literally told my friends that I was going to live here someday," he said.

Luckily for Morgan, now 40, getting here for keeps included only one detour — in Boulder, Colo. — but that detour set him on his career path.

The Storrs, Conn., native didn't have a clear idea of his future. He planned to move out west following his graduation from Syracuse University and be a ski bum for a few years. He received his bachelor's degree in geography.

"I didn't know what I wanted to do when I was in college," he said.

Instead of hitting the slopes between seasonal jobs, Morgan was offered a sales position in Boulder, booking group ski trips. It was the tipping point that set the rest of his life in motion. He stayed with the company for about four years, getting to know people at every ski area and every hotel all over the western U.S. and Canada.

"That's what catapulted me into Jackson Hole," he said.

Morgan applied for a job with Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, and on Feb. 2, 1998, he made the leap to the valley as the resort's national sales manager.

It was through his position with the resort that he met his wife, Laura Cuddie, currently regional director of residences for Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. They were both traveling to a trade show in Livonia, Mich., and hit it off. Morgan found out that Cuddie, who lived in Park City, Utah, wasn't so far from him, so he pursued a relationship.

She moved to Jackson Hole in 2002, "and the rest is history," he said.

"If you were to put together a checklist of like, 'Oh gee, what am I looking for in a mate?' she fit everything that I listed."

The couple married in 2005 and brought little Fiona Morgan into the world three years ago. Their family makes the most of the valley's recreational opportunities: golfing, hiking and tennis in the summer and skiing and sledding in the winter. Two 9-year-old beagles, Libby and Molson, bring up the tail — or tails — end of the family.

In 2010, Morgan contemplated his career goals again.

"What do I really want to do with my life?" he said of his re-evaluation. "I didn't want to be a sales person forever."

Morgan's "aha" moment came as suddenly as his first job offer out of college. He wanted to start a company to help other businesses become experts in customer service and sales training.

## CLOSE-UP

John Morgan

In June 2010, his aspirations became reality in his new venture, Dialogue Business Strategy.

Clients, specifically in the hospitality industry, now come to Morgan to

receive training in public speaking, marketing strategy and becoming better sales and service agents.

"There's an intrinsic reward from truly feeling like I've helped people change something about themselves or their organization that was a challenge for a long time," he said.

Moving between the roles of father, husband and business owner is tough enough, but Morgan pushes himself to be his personal best. He felt like he needed to be more involved in the community, so his first order of business was to join the Rotary Club.

The volunteering bug caught. He not only serves on the Rotary and Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce boards but also is president of Teton Toastmasters and a member of the improvisational comedy troupe the Laff Staff.

While Morgan considers being a Laff Staff member one of his "roles" in the community, it's also his creative stress reliever.

"They've become friends of mine,"

he said of other members of the troupe. "We treat it as our outlet to be silly with other people who want to be as crazy and nutty as we are."

Through his connections in town, Morgan took on two additional roles. He teaches public speaking and human relations at Central Wyoming College and is a firearms coach with Jackson Hole Shooting Experience.

When Shooting Experience owner Shepard Humphries called Morgan to ask him to become a coach, Morgan was convinced his pal had the wrong telephone number. Morgan liked shooting guns, but didn't know the first thing about coaching someone else. Humphries explained that while he could hire on all the professional marksmen he wanted, the one thing he couldn't teach was customer service.

*"I feel much more like a local now than I ever have, even though I've lived here in town for a long time."*

— John Morgan

OWNER, DIALOGUE BUSINESS STRATEGY

That explanation sealed the deal. It was a natural fit for Morgan, whose business philosophy is to "think about every interaction in business as a conversation rather than a transaction."

"I immediately fell in love with it," he said, "not even the shooting itself but the working with the people."

Trying to keep on task with all his activities is a job in itself. Morgan keeps thick to-do lists for each of his jobs, right down to his personal and family time.

When asked how he manages his time, Morgan laughed and said, "Poorly."

But he wouldn't trade any of it, especially his outdoor time with Fiona and Cuddie.

"I feel much more like a local now than I ever have, even though I've lived here in town for a long time," he said.