

TEDx BigSky

x = independently
organized TED event

Event Program

January 28, 2017

5:30-9:00 p.m.

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center



BIG IDEAS
UNDER THE
BIG SKY

Linda Wortman

Beating the Odds: Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro with One Lung

Andrew Crawford

Reaching Escape Velocity: Professional Snowboarder to Rocket Scientist

Ann Herrmann-Nehdi

Think Like Your Future Depends on it, Because it Does

Scott Wyatt

Designing a Better Future

Lukas Nelson

Musical Performance

Parisa Khosravi

The Power of Finding Your Voice

'Ideas worth spreading'

TEDx brings big ideas to Big Sky

BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR
EBS EDITOR

BIG SKY – What began in 1984 as a conference to share new ideas concerning technology, entertainment and design has become the most renowned speaking series in the world. TED Talks now encompass nearly any conceivable topic, and occur around the globe in more than 100 different languages.

And now an independently organized version of TED, called TEDx, is coming to Big Sky.

On Jan. 28, the first-ever TEDxBigSky will offer six hand-picked speakers at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center to tell their unique and groundbreaking stories related to the 2017 event's theme: "Big Ideas Under the Big Sky."

Outlaw Partners—the media, marketing and events company that also publishes this newspaper—launched the idea to bring a TEDx event to Big Sky when its Media and Events Director Ersin Ozer reflected on the journalism and stories coming out of the region.

"I was inspired by our magazine, Mountain Outlaw, to put on this event on a live platform," said Ozer, who chose a group of Big Sky community members to sit on the TEDxBigSky committee and bring the concept to fruition. "Outlaw has mastered the art of storytelling. We tell stories with our media, graphic design, videos, marketing and events, so producing TEDxBigSky brings it all full circle."

Past TED speakers have included Bill Gates, Jane Goodall, Al Gore, Bono, author Elizabeth Gilbert and Sir Richard Branson, among scores of others.

Just like TED event speakers, TEDxBigSky presenters will have up to 18 minutes to deliver their talk to the audience.

In an effort to reflect the spirit of TED's objective to share "ideas worth spreading," the organization in 2009 created TEDx, events that allow independent organizers to put on TED-like talks in their respective communities around the world.

While TED conferences are held annually in Vancouver, Canada, along North America's west coast, numerous TEDx events are underway at any given day and time at multiple locations on Earth. The TEDx concept is to bring big ideas and profound conversation to issues and ideas at local levels. These events use similar formatting to TED events through free licenses provided to successful applicants by TED.

Under these license agreements, TEDx organizers cannot profit from the event. It's all about the speakers' stories and the reflection they inspire. Ozer secured the licensing from TED in January 2016 and the momentum has been building for the Jan. 28 event ever since.

Ozer and the committee have spent the past 12 months planning for TEDxBigSky, searching for speakers that would leave an impact on viewers.

"We networked and researched and found some special people who would tell their stories and share ideas that will leave the audience members inspired and with their jaws to the floor," Ozer said. "People can expect an event that will grow into an annual destination celebration. It's something that I think Big Sky is hungry for."

Visit tedxbigsky.com for more information.



Linda Wortman

Linda Wortman has accomplished more than most – the 23-year Big Sky resident has scaled Mount Kilimanjaro with Conrad Anker, she's run a 5K race in every U.S. state, and is working on running a 10K on every continent. And she's done it with one lung.

Explore Big Sky: *What inspired you to give a TEDxBigSky talk?*

L.W.: Nine years ago I was diagnosed with lung cancer and I never smoked. The shock could have blown me over with a feather. Most people do not know that lung cancer is the No. 1 cancer killer worldwide.

EBS: *Tell me about the instant you were diagnosed with lung cancer. What went through your mind?*

L.W.: I was going to die. The crazy thing is that when you ask about statistics, the numbers haven't changed since the early 1970s. You ask what the survival rate is [and] they give you a 15 percent chance of living one year after diagnosis. The reason is that lung cancer is a silent killer.

EBS: *And they removed one of your lungs?*

L.W.: Most people do not know that you have five lung lobes, and a lot of people do not know you have two lungs, each about the size and shape of a football. Doctors at the Mayo Clinic removed all of my upper left lobe and most of my lower left lobe.

EBS: *You and your husband Jerry started the Wortman Lung Cancer Foundation two years ago, you've climbed Mount Kilimanjaro with Conrad Anker and run a 5K race in every U.S. state. Do you feel like you have something to prove to yourself or to others?*

L.W.: Yes, I want to create awareness about lung cancer. If you catch it in time you're going to have a great quality of life and you can come run with me. And with [our] foundation, when we have our races, the medals say, "Race plus Research equals Results." And our logo is a right lung and a running shoe. I tell people that the Mayo Clinic took out my left lung and put in a running shoe. And that began my lifelong passion for spreading education and awareness for this disease.

EBS: *What has your experience with lung cancer taught you about bravery and resilience in the face of adversity?*

L.W.: Lung cancer has become my blessing. At the Mayo Clinic, they gave me an opportunity to accept cancer. How many people or doctors do that and say it's OK to have cancer? Their research includes every continent in the world, and they have doctors at the Mayo Clinic from all over the world. That creates a mindful atmosphere for doctors and patients.

When I became mindful and was given permission from this medical team to learn how to take time out and to accept cancer, I was able to take time with meditation and visualization of the disease to better fight it. You can do anything, and I wanted to share this with other people. –J.T.O.



Parisa Khosravi

Parisa Khosravi reported for CNN from nearly every major world event in the last three decades. She and her family immigrated to the U.S. from Iran in 1979, working her way up from an entry-level position to senior vice president for Ted Turner at the world's first 24-hour news network. Khosravi, who won numerous distinguished awards for her journalism, now owns a consulting company and speaks to audiences about a variety of topics from Iran and Cuba to women in leadership roles, journalism and team building.

Explore Big Sky: *Over your 28-year journalism career, you covered Tiananmen Square, the Rwandan Genocide, both Iraq wars, Hurricane Katrina and the end of apartheid, among many others. What stands out to you when you look back on your years at CNN?*

Parisa Khosravi: I feel truly privileged to have been in the front-row seat of so many historical events. It's really humbling and the responsibility was truly awesome and sobering. I've seen the [media] business change so much in the past few decades... The flow of information and the access we have to information is unprecedented. But at the same time, I question whether we're more informed.

EBS: *In what ways during your time at CNN did you come across issues we're seeing today where people are having trouble discerning between fact and fiction in the news?*

P.K.: I think the world of Ted [Turner], and his vision in creating CNN. Part of his motivation was to better inform the world and through

information bring about more understanding and compassion for one another. Education is a huge part of it. From young ages we should be teaching critical thinking and questioning, and how to be able to distinguish between credible and invalid news sources.

EBS: *You were senior vice president in charge of global relations for CNN Worldwide, and the network's first ambassador. How did these positions inform your ability to communicate more effectively?*

P.K.: All of us are so vulnerable, no matter where we are and who we are. That's the reality of life and is so important to keep us humble and grounded. Our reporters were reporting across the globe, to the globe. You have to connect on a human level and that is the most effective communication no matter where you are.

My perspective and mindset has certainly evolved throughout the years as an immigrant, as a journalist and as a mother. Each has had its challenges and opportunities. I've taken the lessons from all of them and thought of them as gifts.

EBS: *Tell me why you feel your voice at TEDxBigSky is an important one.*

P.K.: This story I'm going to talk about I've never spoken about. It's very private and personal to me. It's about my son and his voice. I'm telling his story and he cares so deeply about what he has to say that I feel it's my duty to become his voice. My whole background... I feel like all of that was to prepare me to be his mom, to be part of telling my son's story and making sure his message is heard.
-J.T.O.



Andrew Crawford

Andrew Crawford's story sounds like fiction the first time you hear it. The Montana native was a symphony violinist and spent a decade as a professional snowboarder. Crawford then began an academic journey at Flathead Valley Community College, earned a mechanical engineering degree with a minor in aerospace from Montana State University, and interned at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Crawford then was offered a job at X, Google's "moonshot factory," working as a program manager on Google's self-driving cars—that program has now become its own company called Waymo, owned by Google's parent company Alphabet.

Explore Big Sky: *I understand you spent time as a symphony violinist. Do you still play?*

Andrew Crawford: I was raised on the classical violin and played with orchestras and symphonies all through high school. I played in the Central Oregon Symphony in Bend, Oregon, and now I just play for fun—I love the violin but it was hard to travel with it snowboarding.

EBS: *You were also a professional snowboarder, interned with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and are now working on self-driving cars. What has been the most challenging experience of your life?*

A.C.: I think school was the most challenging, but was also the most rewarding because it showed me that I was capable of much more than I thought. As you go through a degree like mechanical engineering there are lots of different areas of expertise that you can think about. And for me, I just gravitated toward space.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would intern with NASA—twice with the Jet

Propulsion Lab, once at NASA Ames [Research Center]—and meet with astronauts and work on spacecraft. While I was at MSU, I worked at the Space Science and Engineering Laboratory... and helped build and launch MSU's (and Montana's) first satellite in space [called] HRBE, and that was a darn good feeling.

E.B.S.: *What inspired you to speak at TEDxBigSky?*

A.C.: I'm a huge advocate of education. I'm a non-traditional student and went back to school when I was 31—I started at the lowest level algebra class. Over the years I've just really grown to appreciate how important education is, and if I can help promote that I feel it's my civic duty. And because I got my degree from MSU, it's wonderful [that TEDxBigSky] is in a place near my alma mater.

E.B.S.: *What would you tell a young person in Montana who dreams of becoming an engineer?*

A.C.: To absolutely go for it. And that they have what it takes. Some of the smartest people I've ever met are from Montana, including my professors and classmates. If I can go back to school at 31, anyone can do it. I wasn't a straight-A student. I had to work really hard to get B's and A's. Montana provides the environment to really learn, primarily because of the people.

E.B.S.: *How long will it be before we start seeing self-driving cars on Montana's roads?*

A.C.: I hope very soon. I would love that and it's really, really neat to see them on the roads here in California. It would be a dream of mine to see them in Montana someday. - Tyler Allen



Scott Wyatt

As a partner at NBBJ—the tech industry’s architecture firm of choice according to Wired and Popular Science magazines—Scott Wyatt oversees the talents, accomplishments and business strategies of the company’s corporate workplace design practice. Wyatt is recognized for highly functional, sophisticated designs that translate a client’s vision, purpose and culture into an elegant expression of interiors, structure and landscape. These designs foster inspiring environments for businesses, employees and the community at large. Wyatt has led the creation of new global headquarters for some of the world’s foremost corporations including Google, Boeing, Samsung, Amazon and Microsoft, among many others.

Explore Big Sky: *Do you remember the moment you fell in love with architecture and design?*

Scott Wyatt: I fell in love with New York in 1966 when I flew into JFK [airport’s] TWA terminal—I had never experienced such a powerfully expressive building—its glass and concrete form made me want to fly...it was incredibly moving. It was all of New York that inspired me toward a career in design—the streets, avenues and parks—some of the great places in the world.

EBS: *Can you provide an example of a time when you witnessed the positive effects your innovative designs had on a company and its employees?*

S.W.: The Reebok headquarters, south of Boston is one. [Founder and CEO] Paul Fireman’s vision was to construct a new headquarters that would be a key ingredient in turning his failing company back toward success. He believed that the right design could inspire better product design and higher company performance. We won that commission and the company had a spectacular turnaround in the

two years after completion. Paul credited the new headquarters as the key to that turnaround.

EBS: *The Big Sky community is currently undergoing a boom in development. Your projects are predominantly urban, but how might your design philosophy be applied to a small, remote area whose growth impinges on the natural surroundings that make it so desirable?*

S.W.: It is very hard to get things right during boom times—I recommend looking at, and learning from, other successful communities. I am impressed with Boulder, Colorado’s green belt that limits sprawl. Consider higher density development, less suburban sprawl, preserving more untouched land. Denser communities can enhance social interaction and create more meaningful lives.

EBS: *You talk about “biophilia”—the idea that humans innately seek connections with nature—a theory that has been applied to architecture and design. What kind of cues do you take from nature?*

S.W.: Biomimicry, or form inspired by nature, can generate positive human responses, as well as innovative structural solutions. The “cue” for me is to do everything I can to conserve nature, as well as integrate it in all of my work.

EBS: *Where do you see the future of architectural design heading?*

S.W.: The future of design will be figuring out how we (animals and plants) can thrive on our planet with a population of 10 billion people. Most of us will be living in large, dense cities. They must be inspiring cities, not frightening, dangerous places. The difference is design. – Sarah Gianelli



Ann Herrmann-Nehdi

Ann Herrmann-Nehdi travels the world as a speaker, author and thought leader helping people, teams and organizations apply what we know about the brain to improve personal and business performance. As CEO of Herrmann International, she continues to build on the pioneering research of her father, whose studies revealed four patterns in how the brain perceives and processes information. This led to the development of a system to understand one’s preferred mode of thinking and maximize the use of one’s entire brain to improve performance and results.

Explore Big Sky: *Why is it more important than ever for people to unlock and utilize their full brain potential?*

Ann Herrmann-Nehdi: Our world today is so demanding of our brains—we are asking so much more of [them]—so the more we can unlock, the better our lives are.

EBS: *How have you expanded on the brain research initiated in the 1970s by your father, Ned Herrmann, as head of management development for General Electric, to remain relevant in our rapidly changing society?*

A.H.: There have been many “aha’s” along the way. One of the most impactful has been the understanding that our brains are malleable—that we can change our thinking and how we process and see the world. It is not a casual change, but I believe that once understood, it is a message of hope and gives us a roadmap for the learning we all need to pursue throughout our lives.

EBS: *How can individuals apply “Whole Brain Thinking” concepts and tools—typically employed by*

businesses to encourage productivity, effectiveness and innovation—to their personal lives?

A.H.: Individuals can apply “Whole Brain Thinking” to almost every aspect of their lives: improving relationships at home with partners or family by better understanding how they may think differently; [and] making better decisions, solving problems more creatively or getting more out of their “brain time” every day—becoming more productive.

EBS: *You lived abroad for 15 years, predominantly in France. Did that experience, and travel in general, have an effect on your ability to be a flexible thinker?*

A.H.: Absolutely! It required [that] I learn to think and understand the world in very different ways. I studied several languages—Russian, French and even Arabic—and found that each time I was stepping into a mindset and view of the world that was unique and different. Travel is a great way to stretch your thinking, but you can also become more flexible by shifting your interests to an area that may be out of your natural comfort zone. For some people that might be art, for others writing code, mentoring someone or embracing a highly disciplined fitness plan.

EBS: *What are some simple exercises people can practice throughout their day to get out of “rut thinking”?*

A.H.: A great brain hack to break thinking patterns is to appeal to the brain’s natural appeal for novelty. I recommend getting up, ideally once every hour or so, and taking a brief walk outside to literally change your perspective. Research has shown that will shift your thinking and increase your creativity. – S.G.



Lukas Nelson

It's all but impossible to talk about Lukas Nelson without mentioning that the 28-year-old musician is the son of legendary country rocker Willie Nelson. He and his band Promise of the Real have also toured as the back-up band for another living legend, Neil Young, but the "cowboy hippie surf rockers," as they've dubbed their sound, have chops in their own right. In this interview with EBS, Nelson speaks about his father's influence and what it means to fulfill "the promise of the real."

Explore Big Sky: *In previous interviews you've talked a lot about integrity and the importance of being true to yourself. Your band's name "Promise of the Real"—a nod to lyrics in the Neil Young song "Walk On"—also suggests the importance of living with authenticity. What does that mean to you personally, and collectively as a band?*

Lukas Nelson: My mom always used to say, "Who you are is what you do when no one's looking." Everybody makes mistakes ... we're constantly fighting our temptations and desires in life. The Promise of the Real, the band name, is like a mantra, really. We're able to look at that, and say, no matter what we do, even if we make a decision that other people might not like, or even if we're not proud of it, we own it. I don't trust anybody who doesn't recognize they're a bit of a rascal. There's a bit of a rascal in all of us.

EBS: *How do these thoughts and beliefs come through in your music?*

L.N.: It comes out in the writing, I imagine. I definitely don't write as if I'm perfect; I write about my flaws, about the epiphanies I've had, [and] my perspective on life. Or I can try to put myself in somebody else's shoes, and write from their perspective on life too. It's all about perspective with art.

EBS: *Many of your ballads—the heart wrenching "Sound of Your Memory," for example—are filled with such longing and poetry that they provide hope that romanticism may not be dead after all. What are your thoughts about romanticism in this day and age?*

L.N.: My dad's a pretty romantic guy I guess. He's definitely a poet. And he's 83 years old now. I think I grew up with and [was] raised with an older sense of relationship to the world, and a sense of who I am. I feel like there is a sense of losing, really, the poetry of life with the saturation of social media. It's not necessarily nostalgia because it still exists; it's still out there, it just seems increasingly rare.

EBS: *Why do you play music?*

L.N.: I don't know, I just do. I grew up with it. It feels like home. I first started because I wanted to be with Dad and he was always gone so I thought it was something I could do to keep us closer together. I started writing songs to make him proud. And then I fell in love with it myself. – S.G.

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What is TEDx?

The TEDx program is designed to help communities, organizations and individuals to spark conversation and connection through local TED-like experiences.

At TEDx events, a screening of TED Talks videos—or a combination of live presenters and TED Talks videos—deepen conversation and spark connections at the local level.

TEDx events are planned and coordinated independently, under a free license granted by TED.



Founded in 2009

TED, the parent series to TEDx, began in 1984 as a conference where technology, entertainment and design converged, and today covers almost all topics—from science and business to global issues—in more than 100 languages. Meanwhile, independently run TEDx events help share ideas in communities around the world.



1,000,000,000+ TEDx event views

The 10 most popular TEDx talks

Tom Thum

“The Orchestra in My Mouth”

Simon Sinek

“How Great Leaders Inspire Action”

Brené Brown

“The Power of Vulnerability”

Shawn Achor

“The Happy Secret to Better Work”

Cameron Russell

“Looks Aren’t Everything. Believe Me, I’m a Model”

Ash Beckham

“We’re All Hiding Something. Let’s Find Courage to Open Up”

Louie Schwartzberg

“Nature. Beauty. Gratitude.”

Larry Smith

“Why You Will Fail to have a Great Career”

Thomas Suarez

“A 12-year-old App Developer”

Colin Stokes

“How Movies Teach Manhood”



15,000+ TEDx events have been held globally



50,000 TEDx talks, and counting, have been given



An average of 17 page views per second on TED.com

“I’ve learned about the poetry and the wisdom and the grace that can be found in the words of people all around us when we simply take the time to listen.” - Dave Isay, “Everyone around you has a story the world needs to hear”

Sources

ted.com/about/our-organization

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The TEDxBigSky Organizing Team



Ersin Ozer *Curator*

As the license holder for TEDxBigSky, Ersin had the fortune of bringing together an amazing team of talented people to produce the inaugural event. A Montana native, Ersin moved to Big Sky in 2009 with the ambition to live the dream as a young professional. Ersin sells advertising and marketing services for Outlaw Partners and is passionate about the well-being and sustainability of his community.



Lori Addicks *Chief Inspirator*

As an executive coach, master facilitator, and consultant, Lori partners with individuals and organizational leaders globally to be the most effective leaders they can be. Lori knows how to inspire people to grow, develop and achieve results, especially during times of ambiguity, uncertainty and change. Lori and her husband, Rich, have been vacationing in Big Sky since 1996, and full-time residents since 2013.



John Zirkle *Chief Venue Operator*

John Zirkle is the founding director of the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center in Big Sky. Since opening the facility in 2013, over 100 performances have gone on stage at WMPAC, including acts like Kronos Quartet, the Moth Mainstage, and Billy Collins. He is also the co-founder and director of Big Sky Broadway, Big Sky's first and only youth theater camp, and he teaches music and performing arts at the Big Sky School District.



Michelle Frederick *Hospitality & Logistics*

Born and raised in Minnesota, like so many Michelle discovered Big Sky and now calls it home. A passion for event management stemmed from her marketing and event manager position at Moonlight Basin for many years. Currently she is the owner services manager for Big Sky Resort. When not on the mountain, you'll find her enjoying the outdoors with her husband, son and dogs, Louie and Murphy.



Sarah Odom *Volunteer Director*

Sarah is the Residential Concierge at the Moonlight Club offering members exceptional hospitality and vacation planning services. Sarah and her husband hailed from Charleston, South Carolina, a year and a half ago and simply love Big Sky! Sarah was on the TEDx execution team in Charleston and is so excited that TEDx is now in Big Sky as well, and to be part of the team.



Ania Bulis *Organizing Team*

Ania moved to Montana more than 20 years ago, choosing mountain tops over rooftops and only rarely second guesses her decision to do so. She lives in Big Sky with her two wonderfully ambitious and active children, who keep her running in all directions. She loves traveling and the arts and spends much of her free time dedicated to both. Ania also works with several nonprofit causes throughout the area and is presently working on a platform leveraging real estate transactions to homeless initiatives.

