

HOLIDAY BAKING RECIPES • ZEBULON PIKE • BOULDER'S CELESTIAL SEASONINGS

# Colorado Life

MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015 • \$5.95  
COLORADOLIFEMAGAZINE.COM

Catch the Yampa curse

**STEAMBOAT  
SPRINGS**

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*Photographing*  
**Colorado**  
*Red*

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✦ Hickenlooper's pub days, Mrs. Fezziwig, chain-saw artist,  
Colorado Quiz, Koshare dancers and Paonia's Killer Bees.







# COLORADO CREATORS

WRITERS, MUSICIANS & ARTISTS



Artist Tsogo Mijid's mountain-filled painting of his native Mongolia resembles his new home in Denver, where he created a sculpture for the Mile High City's Ulaanbaatar Park to celebrate the Mongolian capital's sister city status.

## Art celebrates Colorado's *Mongolian connection*

THE WATERCOLOR PAINTINGS depict strangely familiar landscapes. Vibrant, cloudless blue skies, textured mountains casting long shadows and indigo streams trickling through the terrain look like a Colorado mountain valley. However, the reflective white gers, nomadic dwellings resembling tiny mountaintops, give away the location: Mongolia. The artist, Tsogtsaikhan Mijid, who goes by Tsogo, painted them in his native Mongolia in the 1980s, before he had even heard of Colorado.

Tsogo and his actress wife, Baja, moved to Colorado in the late 1990s, encouraged by his nephew, already in Colorado, who told him to come to Denver – “it’s just like Mongolia.”

After a visit, Tsogo agreed, so he and his family joined the burgeoning population of Mongolian immigrants in Denver. He is part of state’s strong Mongolian connection. What began with three Mongolian engineering students arriving at the Colorado School of Mines in 1989 has become roughly 2,500 Mongolians and Mongolian-Americans living in the Denver metro area. The Mile High City now is home to one of the largest Mongolian populations outside of Mongolia. Denver and Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia’s own mile-high capital, became official sister cities in 2001. Colorado is popular in Mongolia: The U.S. embassy in Ulaanbaatar is located on Denver Street, and the Mongolian





Courtesy of the artist

capital has a bustling sports bar named The Colorado Club.

To celebrate the bond between Colorado and Mongolia, Tsogo designed a 20-foot stainless steel sculpture that rises from the open grassy field in City of Ulaanbaatar Park in Denver's Lowry neighborhood. The gleaming "Tulga" sculpture symbolizes the importance of the relationship between Colorado and Mongolia. A tulga is a traditional Mongolian portable fireplace. Tsogo, who is president of the Mongolian Community Association of Colorado, chose the tulga for his design because it signifies community and peace. With its standard location in the center of a ger, the tulga represents Colorado's central role as the heart of the Mongolian community in this country.

Tsogo thanks the Centennial State for launching his American art career from scratch. After he and his family arrived in Colorado, Tsogo set out on foot, taking his artwork door-to-door around Denver in search of a gallery to show his work. He couldn't understand the maps, so he went wherever his feet took him. With no car, no studio and very little money or knowledge of English, Tsogo persisted. Finally, a gallery in Cherry Creek took notice of his art, which ranges from Mongolian papier-mache Tsam masks to swirling abstract expressionist paintings. Five months later, on Sept. 9, 1999, the gallery hosted Tsogo's first art show in the United States. It was especially significant because the date was 9/9/99. "Nine is a very lucky number in Mongolia," Tsogo explained.

Since then, Tsogo's work has been featured in Colorado at the Denver Art Museum, as well his annual shows at Denver's Pirate Contemporary Art Gallery, where he is a longstanding artist. From his earliest days in Colorado, even as he was taking in the atmosphere of that first Cherry Creek show, Tsogo has felt grateful for the opportunity to pursue his art in Denver. "I look around [at his inaugural exhibition] and I breathe newly," he said. "I'm flying. I'm going to be an artist now. It's given me new life." — Steph Glaser

## Paonia's Hive spawns Killer Bees

WHOEVER SAID YOU shouldn't mix work and play must have had a boring job. When Paonia-based musician Brodie Kinder set out to form a rock band, he looked no further than his small town's co-working space.

Kinder, a seasoned performer who might be familiar to viewers of *American Idol* (he was the one who could make cricket and howler monkey sounds), was working in Denver as a trainer for Apple when he heard of an idyllic town on the Western Slope full of artists, digital nomads and free thinkers — Paonia. Upon relocating, he joined Paonia's innovative shared workspace, The Hive, as its resident "Mac guy." He soon learned The Hive had several closet rockers in its midst.

Kinder enlisted Hive members Melanie Williams, Chris Faison, Dakin Henderson and Chris King, and before they knew it, their band had booked its first gig. The new friends from The Hive pondered a catchy name. "Immediately someone shouted out 'The Killer Bees!' and we all knew that was it," Kinder said.

The Killer Bees held their first show at Paonia's Blue Sage Center for the Arts. The locals danced to their "intentional soul funk rock," and after an hour-long set, the band came down into the crowd to perform their encore. Coal miners, farmers, hippies and young families — a microcosm of the town itself — encircled the band, some holding hands, some quietly singing along. In spite of the divisions that sometimes accompany small-town living, on this night, all barriers were stripped away.

The Killer Bees perform everywhere, from Western Slope orchards to Front Range theaters. Keep an ear out for the buzz.

— Davina van Buren

