person. But we still keep trying.”

She touched on other labels thrown around in high school — class clown, overachiever, jock, druggy, prep, slacker — and invited her classmates to shed those labels as they move into adulthood where labels still exist but aren’t so ready made.

“You can make up for this freedom, of course, by making more labels — labels of who is worth your time based on class, race, gender, IQ — you can make your own labels, if you want. It’ll be easy to do, and there will always be people who follow the labels you make,” she said. “But you can also choose to give up these labels to judge a person simply as a human.”

It was a difficult decision, because her first instinct upon realizing her orientation was to keep it a secret.

“It wasn’t because I didn’t think my parents would be supportive, but I felt like if I started telling people, I would just keep telling people,” she explained. “I came back and put that aside, except you can’t really put a part of it aside. I started to feel a disconnect.”

Eventually, she approached her English teacher, Krystal Wu, one of the Gay Straight Alliance sponsors at the school.

“She helped me realize that it was an important part of my identity, and I wanted to share it,” Bruell said. “I decided not to talk about it, and then kind of without noticing, I decided to.”

Although she had a strong desire to craft the speech on her own and didn’t even show it to her parents beforehand, Bruell agreed to run it by Principal Drew Adams.

“She was perfect,” Adams said. “To me, it was the right thing to do.”

He also had faith in the school and the town to accept the announcement.

“I didn’t anticipate a standing ovation, but I did anticipate applause,” he said. “I think Carbondale and Roaring Fork High School have build a supportive community for all students to feel safe. I don’t think that’s the case everywhere in America.”

Adams was well aware of the Young’s mixed speech and subsequent outing to his parents May 16.

“I think it was a complete mistake for that administration to prevent that student from making his comments,” he said.

Bruell agreed.

“I think it’s so sad that he reached that point and his community wasn’t ready for him,” she said. “I feel incredibly lucky with the response I got. I would never have expected that. I was so moved and so touched by that gesture of acceptance.”

She wasn’t sure she would get anything of the sort.

“I was really, really excited until 5 o’clock, the morning of my speech, which is when I woke up and was kind of panicking,” she recalled. “It really hit me that I was going to make this private part of myself public.”

Bruell pointed out that many labels are easy to spot and don’t require an announcement to embrace them, but it’s a double-edged sword.

“At least I can hide my label sometimes. A lot of people can’t,” she said.

“Any time we put a label, we sort of write a story about a person, and those can be really inaccurate and really hurtful.”

She chose a deliberately broad label in an effort to make the message about more than just herself.

“It’s important to talk about this,” she said. “One of my main motivations for making this was to put a face to the label.

“I have not had any cause to regret it,” she added. “I feel like coming out has made me so much more comfortable with that aspect of myself. I realized I really don’t care what people who don’t get it think.”

SNOWMASS

From page A1

Gondola starts daily operation.

Winter improvements include the replacement of the High Alpine chairlift, which the Forest Service has approved and the company plans to complete this summer.

Sewell told the council that the company hopes to add a lane to its tubing arena, which had a successful first season this year.

Additionally, an interior remodel of Gwyn’s High Alpine restaurant is billed for next summer.

Skico has worked closely with owners Gwyn Knowlton and George Gordon on the design, led by architect Gus Gustafson, Sewell said. The footprint of the building will remain the same, but the interior will be completely remodelled, the roofline will see some alterations and some windows will be added.

WINTER RECAP

Skier days on Snowmass were down about 3 percent this season, although visits by destination skiers were up.

“We felt that was due to, quite frankly, the static weather and passholders and locals not coming out during those dry periods,” Sewell said. Snowmass’ total snowfall for the season was about 20 percent below its average, Ski CEO Mike Kaplan said.

Skico surveys customers after their visits and calculates what’s called a “net promoter score,” which shows how satisfied guests are with their stay and whether they would recommend Aspen/Snowmass to others. Skico’s four resorts rank above all others in its competitive set of Rocky Mountain ski resorts, but Snowmass’ score dropped a few points from last year, according to data presented by Kaplan.

“Snowmass is down a little bit, and we’d like to see that number come up… I do honestly believe that part of that is we’ve got to complete the bottom of the mountain,” Kaplan said, adding that the council should do whatever it can to facilitate the ongoing review of amended plans to Base Village in time for next construction season.

“Time is ticking again,” he said.

Spotlight on cardiology services at Aspen Valley Hospital

Deborah Breen, President & CEO

Aspen Valley Hospital Foundation

Full-time cardiologists and sophisticated technology offer patients cardiac care close to home.

If you or a loved one had a cardiac event, you would want to know that your hospital was not only staffed with board-certified cardiologists and the latest technology but also had immediate connectivity should more invasive care be needed. With cardiovascular disease remaining the leading cause of death in our nation, our community can rest assured that Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) is appropriately staffed and equipped to handle a cardiac emergency. Gordon Gersen, MD, FACC, and Paul Becker, MD, provide full-time cardiology services through the Aspen Cardiology practice located at AVH. They are supported by a team of skilled health care professionals, as well as the latest technology. Conditions treated at Aspen Cardiology include high blood pressure and cholesterol levels, abnormal heart rhythms, valvular heart disease, heart attacks and heart muscle diseases. Services are provided to monitor implantable cardiac devices as well as anticoagulation levels. Clinic care is centered on prevention, and treating physicians deploy the latest state-of-the-art diagnostic technology available. Emergency cardiac care is available 24/7.

“We are acutely aware of the toll cardiovascular disease takes on people and on families,” said Dr. Gerson. “Our approach is multidisciplinary, addressing every part of the disease and the patient suffering from it. We use every measure available, images and clinical protocols with patients’ family medicine and internal medicine physicians to ensure that they receive the right treatment at the right time.”

Few community hospitals possess the sophisticated cardiac diagnostic technologies available at AVH. In addition to EKG and stress testing capabilities, many physicians utilize a 64-slice CT that can perform calcium scoring and coronary CT angiography, a dedicated nuclear camera for cardiac function studies, echocardiography and a full spectrum of cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation services and nutritional counseling. When the need arises for more advanced cardiac care at a tertiary medical center, patients have immediate access to University of Colorado Hospital in Denver.

More than 85 million Americans cope with some form of heart disease, according to the American Heart Association. The statistics are overwhelming and frightening. However, great advances have been made in the prevention and early detection of heart disease. We have made a commitment to our community to ensure talented physicians and state-of-the-art technologies are standing ready. This gives our patients and their family members great peace of mind that they are in good hands at Aspen Valley Hospital.

The Siemens Symbia 5 at AVH is the latest technology for nuclear medicine scans, which allows physicians to evaluate heart-flow function.

In next week’s Construction Corner, we’ll take a bird’s-eye look at the dramatic construction progress now underway.

This update is brought to you by

ASPEN VALLEY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

For more information on this quality-of-life project or about the Campaign for Aspen Valley Hospital, visit our website:

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