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Big Sky

Feb. 1-14, 2019
Volume 10 // Issue #3

**Horse-drawn sleigh rides
at Lone Mountain Ranch**

*Big Sky Ideas Festival
takes center stage*

Q&A with Chance Lenay

Skijoring gallops through Town Center

*Big Sky public
water in the works*

Plus: Real Estate Guide



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February 1 – 14, 2019
Volume 10, Issue No. 3

Owned and published in Big Sky, Montana

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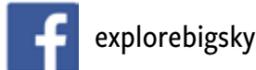
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ON THE COVER: Stephanie Lynn skate skis on Lone Mountain Ranch's Boomerang trail on Jan. 15. The ranch grooms 85 kilometers of Nordic track and was voted the No. 1 Cross-Country Ski Resort in North America in a 2002 poll conducted by Cross Country Skier Magazine. Read about LMR's sleigh ride dinner on p. 44. PHOTO BY JENNINGS BARMORE

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Members of the Big Sky Ski Team in Red Lodge. Read more about this week's race results on page 24. PHOTO BY LUKE KIRCHMAYR

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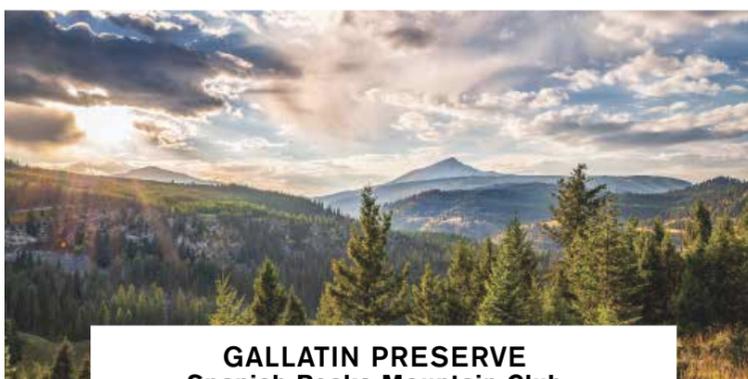
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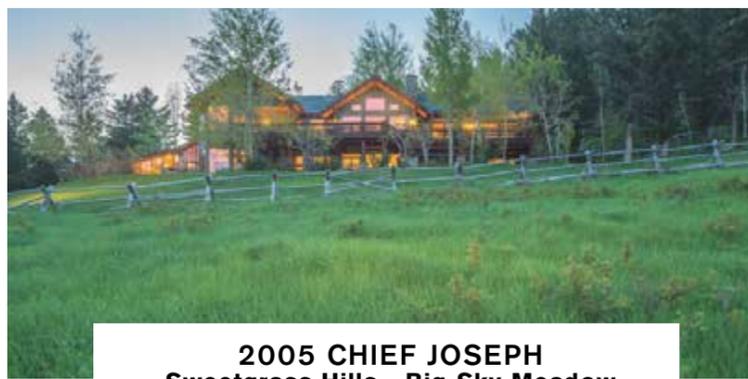
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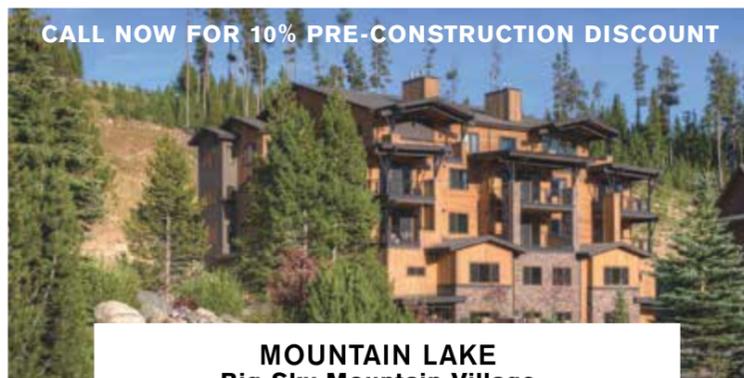
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Big Sky workforce housing lawsuit settled

EBS STAFF

In a 2-1 decision, county commissioners voted Tuesday to settle a lawsuit with developer A2LD that claimed the county illegally denied development of a housing project off Highway 64 in Big Sky.

In November 2017, development of the Powder Light subdivision near Ace Hardware came to a halt following concerns over an increase in potentially hazardous traffic without ample turning lanes.

The controversial development faced criticism from county commissioners, despite more than 30 letters from Big Sky residents, developers and business owners in favor of the construction to support the burgeoning Big Sky workforce needs.

A 2014 housing study found that 83 percent of Big Sky's workforce commutes daily from other Gallatin County communities, and the proposed construction of between 40 and 46 lofts took aim at the housing deficit at the root of that statistic.

"It's been a long journey, but we're delighted by the willingness of the county commissioners to work with us to the benefit of everyone," said Scott Johnson, a partner at A2LD. "And a big acknowledgement and kudos to Congress for approving the TIGER grant last March."

The TIGER grant in reference awarded Big Sky \$10.3 million dollars in federal grant money to improve Highway 64.

A2LD is already underway installing infrastructure to transition from a preliminary plat to a final plat.

FWP monitors 'concerning' wolf situation in Cooke City

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

In recent weeks, Fish Wildlife and Parks has frequently witnessed wolves originating from Yellowstone National Park in and around the Cooke City and Silver Gate communities.

Two weeks ago, wolves killed a domestic dog outside a home in Cooke City, but Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has not fielded reports of wolves approaching humans.

Their proximity to human development increases their likelihood of killing another pet, and potentially escalates habituation, such as being fed. But the wolves' behavior is concerning.

"When we see wild animals approaching people, there is concern for human safety. We don't like to have to kill wildlife, but sometimes we don't have any other choice," said Mark Deleray, FWP regional supervisor in Bozeman. "We will continue to assess the situation."

If a wolf is on private property and poses a threat to humans, livestock or dogs, a landowner may kill without a license. On public or private land, a wolf that is in the act of attacking, killing or threatening a person or livestock, or attacking or killing a domestic dog may be killed. All incidents must be reported to FWP.

Pet owners in Cooke City and Silver Gate are encouraged to keep dogs indoors at night, and leashed when outdoors.

MSU recognized for commitment to bees

MSU NEWS SERVICE

In an effort to support healthy populations of bees and other pollinators, Montana State University has joined a nationwide initiative certifying the university's pollinator-friendly practices and programs.

In Nov. 2018, MSU was designated a Bee Campus USA by the international nonprofit Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, becoming the first Montana campus to qualify and enroll. The program includes 58 other campuses nationwide.

Bee Campuses are required to have pollinator-friendly habitat that includes native plants, engage in outreach programs, and teach courses related to pollinators, among other things.

"Becoming a Bee Campus builds upon, and unifies, ongoing research and outreach efforts aimed at promoting pollinator health at MSU and supports student and community member involvement," said Michelle Flenniken, assistant professor in the Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology in MSU's College of Agriculture.

MSU's pollinator education and outreach offerings currently include nine undergraduate courses, several outreach activities for local youth, and the Pollinator Symposium where MSU graduate students and faculty present their research on honey bees, bumblebees and other pollinating insects in an open, public forum.

Flenniken, who first organized the symposium in 2017, said the Bee Campus designation could inspire additional offerings and opportunities for MSU students to learn about bees and the important role they play in pollinating numerous important plant species, including crop plants, in addition to producing honey.

Ophir Elementary takes The Great Kindness Challenge

BIG SKY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ophir Elementary encourages parents, businesses and community members to participate in The Great Kindness Challenge, a proactive bullying prevention initiative reaching millions of students late January through early February each year. Prescribed activities include spirit days, a kindness tunnel, and a guiding list of acts of kindness to take place around the community.

Community members are invited to assemble in front of the school on Monday, Feb. 4, to form a "Kindness Tunnel" for arriving students, followed by a kick-off pep rally with kindness skits and encouraging cheering from 8:45-9 a.m.

"This national program is a terrific way to give a hands-on experience to our students learning about caring, empathy and tolerance in the month of January and February through our International Baccalaureate program," said Erika Frounfer, Ophir Elementary school counselor.

The Great Kindness Challenge was created by Kids for Peace to provide schools with tools for creating positive school environments. In 2018, there were over 10 million students that participated in the kindness challenge, and more than 19,000 schools in over 100 countries.

Typically celebrated during the last week of January, Ophir Elementary elected to host the challenge the following week to accommodate ski days. Events conclude on Feb. 8.

For more information on Kids for Peace or The Great Kindness Challenge, visit kidsforpeaceglobal.org and greatkindnesschallenge.org.

Toll of government shutdown still being tallied at national parks

MONTANA FREE PRESS

Federal employees have returned to work at public lands throughout the nation, but the cost of keeping national parks open during the record partial government shutdown remains unknown.

With only skeleton crews available to staff the parks, trash piled up and some natural features were destroyed. In response, acting Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt directed the National Park Service to tap fee reserves to support law enforcement, sanitation, safety and emergency services.

Those reserves come from revenue generated by entrance and campground fees, and are allocated to stay within the park system for visitor experience enhancement projects under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. They are mostly used to benefit visitors by installing signs, restoring habitat, creating interpretive programs and chipping away at a multi-billion dollar maintenance backlog.

Fees weren't collected during the 35-day shutdown, but FLREA dollars were siphoned to keep the parks operating. There appears to be no plan to replenish them.

"Many people who I've spoken to think that probably won't happen," said Phil Francis, retired superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway and a former deputy superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



The Big Sky resort tax board is seeking the ability to increase resort tax by 1 percent in the 2019 legislative session as a possible funding tool for Big Sky's growth and infrastructure. Would you support a petition to increase the resort tax by 1 percent if this made it through the legislature?



Kevin Daily
Big Sky, Montana

"Yes, I would. That money would be used for much-needed infrastructure projects and workforce housing. 'Workforce' being a keyword there. It might not be a tax at a state level, but it would need to be approved on the state level."



Brad Johnson
Big Sky, Montana

"Yeah, I would support the increase if the right parties were taxed appropriately and the resulting funds were dispersed in a transparent fashion. The membership dues to private clubs should not be exempt from the resort tax seeing as how their continued rapid expansion is what puts stress on our infrastructure in the first place."



Jahnel Knippling
Big Sky, Montana

"A penny? A penny? I can handle that. That's not a problem for me. Pocket change, really. I want nice things. Give me some affordable housing. We needed that yesterday."



Michael Alexander
Bozeman, Montana

"Yes. They do need to increase their tax base to develop infrastructure and affordable housing. That has been clear for a while."



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Op-ed:

The next conservation leap forward for Gallatin Range

BY BOB EKEY, EVA PATTEN, MICHAEL SCOTT AND ED LEWIS

The Gallatin Range's gently rolling crestline may not be as formidable as the neighboring Absaroka or Madison Ranges. But after four decades, charting a path for the range's management remains challenging.

Luckily, the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan Revision presents us an opportunity, working together, to shape the future of this much-loved mountain range with a proposal that deserves everyone's support: the Gallatin Forest Partnership's agreement.

The Gallatin Range is the only mountain range adjacent to Yellowstone National Park without a permanent designation to protect significant wildlife and wilderness values, including habitat for elk, bighorn sheep, grizzly bears and mountain goats. The range provides almost 80 percent of Bozeman's drinking water and a wide array of recreational opportunities that permanent protection would enhance.

For decades, citizens have worked to remove barriers to achieving permanent protection.

Initially, significant checkerboarded public and private lands throughout the Gallatin Range, including the wildlife-rich Porcupine and Buffalo Horn drainages, was a barrier. Plum Creek Timber Company, owner of the private lands, planned to log the area, but instead sold to Tim Blixseth. Suddenly, real estate development eclipsed logging as a major threat.

Conservationists, hunting groups and neighbors worked with these landowners, the U.S. Forest Service and Congressional delegation on complicated land exchanges to eliminate the checkerboard and bring the entire Gallatin Range into public ownership. Focusing on solutions, this cleared the way for permanent protection.

Growing recreation pressure throughout the Gallatin Range has also been a barrier. After Congress designated the heart of the range as a Wilderness Study Area in 1977, the Forest Service allowed motorized recreation to expand throughout the range, in conflict with Congress' direction to maintain the wild character that existed in 1977. After years of litigation, the Forest Service implemented the current travel management plan for the WSA 10 years ago, creating the system of access for motorized and non-motorized recreation that we experience today.

Since then, many have tried to reach agreement on the future of the Gallatin Range. One effort—the Gallatin Forest Partnership—developed a proposal supported by hikers, wilderness advocates, mountain bike groups, backcountry horsemen and many others.

We proudly join in supporting the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement.

The Partnership proposes 250,000 acres of protective designations in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges to conserve the area's wild backcountry, irreplaceable wildlife habitat and clean water. Specifically, the agreement recommends:

- New Wilderness designations from the boundary of Yellowstone Park, north to Hyalite Peak as well as two additions to the Lee Metcalf Wilderness.
- A wildlife management area in the Porcupine-Buffalo Horn area that maintains existing recreation access while preventing new road building and development activities.
- A watershed protection and recreation area encompassing Hyalite, Sourdough and South Cottonwood drainages, that also maintains existing recreation access and focuses new trail development in lower Hyalite outside of the WSA.
- A second wildlife management area in the northeast corner of the range that limits development and provides new mountain bike access near Livingston in a non-motorized area.

This proposal advances conservation in the Gallatin Range. When adopted, the agreement prohibits development and new road building in all designated areas while limiting the overall human footprint, including new trails, to what's on the ground today. By limiting future development, the agreement prevents habitat fragmentation and protects important wildlife corridors for animals moving beyond Yellowstone.

Many people, including us, envision wilderness designation for the heart of the Gallatin Range. The partnership's agreement delivers. It recommends 102,000 acres of wilderness, including lower elevation habitats in Big Creek, Rock Creek, and Tom Miner, all of which provide important grizzly bear habitat.

The GFP agreement builds on decades of work to safeguard a wild Gallatin Range for future generations and is our best opportunity to permanently protect the range.

Join us in supporting the Gallatin Forest Partnership by endorsing the agreement at gallatinpartners.org.

Bob Ekey, Eva Patten, Ed Lewis and Michael Scott are all long time Montana conservation leaders, having worked with many area conservation groups as staff, boards of directors and members including The Wilderness Society, Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Montana Wilderness Association.



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BSCO sets 2019 plan of action

BY BAY STEPHENS
EBS STAFF WRITER

BIG SKY – The board of the Big Sky Community Organization, the local nonprofit responsible for building and maintaining much of Big Sky’s growing trail and park systems, recently approved a strategic plan that included short- and long-term goals for the next five years.

The BSCO board approved the plan, which also discussed hiring a program director, obtaining a steady revenue stream and improving programming, at its Jan. 17 meeting. The board drafted an early version of the strategic plan in February 2018 and shared it with community leaders to ask for input prior to adoption. The board received some advice.

“Make sure you stay focused,” said BSCO Executive Director Ciara Wolfe of the feedback she’d read. “Don’t go too broad to where you can’t do what you’re doing well.”

Feedback had also encouraged BSCO to not emphasize marketing, but to continue doing the work they do—such as project completion and program development—all of which will organically build the organization’s reputation.

“The other advice that I heard that I took very seriously was, ‘Make sure you don’t slip,’” Wolfe said.

Community members had commended BSCO on the quality and breadth of their work and urged them to safeguard what the organization had worked to build over the past several years. After three years of extraordinary growth, Wolfe said the organization will need to slow down in order to dial in and integrate existing systems, programs and assets before taking on more growth.

From 2015-2018, BSCO more than doubled its revenue, expenses, users and servicing, according to Wolfe. Assets, parkland and trail mileage have also grown each of the past three years while the organization has recorded a 30 percent growth in trail users and an 18 percent growth in parkland users between 2017 and 2018.

Looking ahead, Wolfe said, the organization’s strategic plan focuses on continuing to encourage volunteerism, pursuing strategic partnerships with other Big Sky organizations, as well as expanding the trail system in key areas and developing a dependable revenue model through a mix of program fees, public revenue from resort tax funding, and annual fundraising and endowment programs.

BSCO Board Director Warren Cook pointed to the importance of volunteers as BSCO grows in the way of paid staff.

“It’s really a balancing act because we really do need to maintain that community volunteer ethic as we grow and as our budget gets bigger because we don’t want everybody to just say, ‘Well, leave it to paid hands.’”

During the Jan. 17 meeting, the board also discussed program development and the potential hiring of a program director. According to board members, this role would help build needed structure for existing programs, better support volunteers and allow BSCO to step into the many programming opportunities being requested by the public.

The organization already runs a summer camp for kids, softball league and free guided summer hikes, while coordinating trail ambassadors and running a trail maintenance program, all of which rely heavily on volunteers. Yet BSCO is hearing requests for programs such as a volleyball league and more, Wolfe said.

Much of the organization’s efforts lately have focused on fundraising to realize a community center in the Big Sky Town Center Park. BSCO purchased the 3.27-acre parcel in the heart of Town Center on Dec. 21, thanks to financial support from Len Hill Charitable Trust and in-kind support of the Simkins family as well as 15 additional donors, according to the BSCO website.

The organization will go public with the project and construction timeline once it has reached specific fundraising goals, Wolfe said.

SIDEBAR:

BSCO Growth: From 2017-2018

- Trail users grew by 30%
- With approx. 146,000 users
- Park users grew by 18%
- with 173,500 vehicles within the parks system

From 2015-2019:

- Revenue has increased 190%
- Contributions and fundraised dollars (outside of resort tax funding) increased 225%
- Parkland acreage has grown 15%
- Trail mileage has grown 20%

Looking ahead:

- 19 miles of trail under easement and construction
- 65 additional miles planned over next 10 years
- 2.5 acres of parkland expansion planned
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Pressed by developers and conservationists, BSWSD continues upgrade pursuit

BY BAY STEPHENS
EBS STAFF WRITER

BIG SKY – Amid litigation threats from developers and conservation groups, the Big Sky Water and Sewer District is pressing ahead with more engineering work to better hone the final cost of a treatment plant upgrade to meet the district's growing flow and load demands.

During the Jan. 22 board meeting at the district office, BSWSD representatives shared plans to put \$671,580 toward further engineering work by Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services (AE2S) of Bozeman. The firm will design 50 percent of the plant to refine and narrow the final cost by the end of May. The preliminary cost estimate when the district unveiled the upgrade in November was \$21.7 million.

Upgrade plans received criticism from several Bozeman conservation groups concerned with the health of the Gallatin River. A letter drafted by representatives from Montana Trout Unlimited, American Rivers, and Upper Missouri Waterkeeper urged the district to gather a wider scope of information, and to consider a timeframe closer to 40 years in terms of technology and thinking in order to safeguard the Gallatin.

Scott Bosse, the Northern Rockies director for American Rivers, said at the meeting that Big Sky needs to be a "model mountain community," as was outlined in the Big Sky Sustainable Water Solutions Forum completed early in 2018, which involved 36 stakeholders from organizations throughout the community to determine how to steward the health of the Gallatin while allowing Big Sky to grow and thrive as a community.

Guy Alsentzer, the Executive Director of Upper Missouri Waterkeeper, explained in a Jan. 24 interview that the decisions the district makes today will have a disproportionate effect on local waterway health, emphasizing the importance of getting the whole picture before making any decision.

"The true golden goose for this community are our healthy landscapes and healthy waterways, and we need to keep them that way," Alsentzer said. "Any decision upgrading the largest provider of wastewater [treatment] in Big Sky needs to prioritize the health of the environment over the bottom line."

Although opinions seemed divergent at the outset of the meeting, the objectives of the upgrade appeared to align with major goals of the conservation groups.

"Phase one of what we're working on is in line with the environmental groups and it does meet the recommendations of the sustainable solutions forum," said BSWD General Manager Ron Edwards in a Jan. 24 phone interview; he, along with the representatives from each conservation group present at the meeting, participated in the Big Sky Sustainable Water Solutions Forum.

"And cost does matter, the sky isn't the limit on these kinds of projects," Edwards said. "What we're proposing is an expensive upgrade."

Phase one of the upgrade would approximately double the treatment capacity of the facility, employing a treatment technology known as membrane bioreactor (MBR) technology—which is both high-tech and compact, maximizing capacity within the small footprint of land the district owns—and would raise the quality of effluent to an A-1 DEQ classification, according to AE2S engineer Scott Buecker.

This elevated quality would make way for a diverse set of

effluent disposal options during the second phase of the upgrade, which could include snowmaking, subsurface discharge that replenishes the aquifers from which drinking water is currently drawn, and direct discharge to the main stem of the Gallatin River in emergency scenarios.

"I think that just is a slam dunk and if we can move on from that and separate phase one from all this other discussion, that would be beneficial for everyone," Buecker said at the meeting.

The conservation parties and the district were in agreement that MBR treatment technology was the best next step. The board created a subcommittee to talk through options with the conservation groups going forward, but made it clear that the aggressive increases of Big Sky's flow and load demands require continuing with the current upgrade plan.

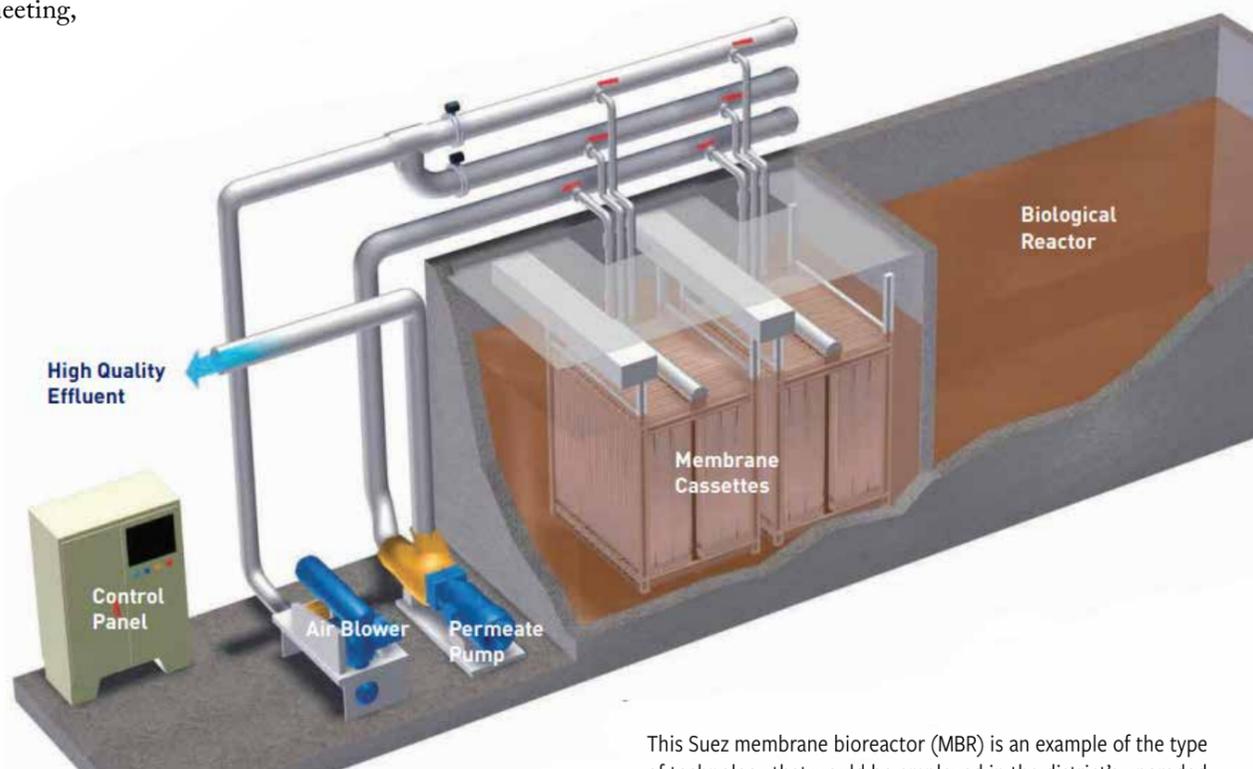
Another topic of discussion at the meeting was a December letter with a thinly veiled litigation threat that Spanish Peaks Mountain Club wrote requesting more water and sewer capacity than their current allotment, which would potentially increase the club's development capacity.

In 2001, the district allotted Spanish Peaks 1,000 SFEs and up to 42 million gallons of flow per year, the latter of which would be binding, according to Edwards. In November, the club requested additional SFEs to further expand development plans, though they have not fully built out their current allotment. At the club's current flow per SFE, Spanish Peaks expects to maintain flows below the 42-million-gallon limit even with the additional SFEs. The board was hesitant, not wanting to overbook their flow capacity.

As has been the case in the past several BSWD board meetings, resort tax members also pushed the district to factor into their expansion providing water and sewer services to Gallatin Canyon. The board maintained that their responsibility is to ratepayers within the district boundaries. The treatment plant upgrade does not factor in the canyon, Edwards said.

However, the following day, stakeholders met to discuss water resources in the canyon. Read about the Jan. 23 meeting on page 11.

In other news, the 10-year lease for the Big Sky Search and Rescue building—which is on BSWSD property—is also up. As the board discussed renewing the lease for another decade, they considered adding a provision that would require the building to connect to sewer on Search and Rescue's dime in the next 3-5 years; a holding tank currently serves the building.



This Suez membrane bioreactor (MBR) is an example of the type of technology that would be employed in the district's upgraded wastewater treatment plant. It is both high-tech and compact, suiting the challenges the district faces. RENDERING COURTESY OF SUEZ



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Canyon takes hard look at water and sewer solutions

Gallatin Gateway may provide a model

BY BAY STEPHENS
EBS STAFF WRITER

BIG SKY – Residents of Gallatin Canyon and members of various local organizations met at Buck's T-4 Lodge on Jan. 23 to dialogue about water resources in the Gallatin Canyon and to gauge interest in collaborative solutions.

David O'Connor, a Buck's T-4 owner and resident of Ramshorn View Estates in the canyon, opened the meeting, noting that it acted as the first instance of canyon stakeholders gathering to discuss water and sewer challenges.

"There are a tremendous [number] of things to think about if the canyon is to look at water in a holistic kind of way," O'Connor said. "Keep an open mind. This is the beginning of what could be a very long process."

Kristin Gardner, executive director of the Gallatin River Task Force and a Ramshorn resident, said addressing the multitude of Big Sky septic systems—which don't treat wastewater to as high a quality as public wastewater treatment systems, contributing to nutrient loading in the river—was a core driver for calling the meeting. It was also a high priority of the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Stewardship Plan because nutrient loading can lead to algal blooms such as those the Gallatin weathered in 2018.

Representatives from the Gallatin Local Water Quality District, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Gallatin Health Department, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and Gallatin Planning Department also presented at the meeting, most attending virtually from Bozeman on account of the day's heavy snowfall.

Among other information, the presentations revealed that little regulation on individual wastewater treatment systems and private domestic wells leave water supply and the river vulnerable to unconscious contamination by nitrates, posing environmental and health threats as development in Big Sky continues. Public water and sewer treatment systems, which are stringently regulated, were a favored alternative.

Resort tax board Vice Chair Steve Johnson was the first to air a potential course of action concerning centralized wastewater management in the canyon.

"As a first step here in the canyon, you could build a sewer trunk and a healthy lift station and pump it up to [BSWSD's] expanded plant for treatment for a while," Johnson said. "Ultimately, you might need to build a secondary treatment facility down here, but as development proceeds."

BSWSD General Manager Ron Edwards said that connecting to the district would not necessarily require the canyon becoming part of the district.

The district conducted a feasibility study in 2008 to determine the cost of potentially "sewering" the canyon. According to Edwards and based on the zoning in the canyon, at full build out approximately 1 million gallons per day of wastewater load would be pumped uphill to the district, costing about \$20 million in 2008, \$23.1 million in 2019 currency after inflation.

Edwards said a logical outcome for the issue at hand mirrored that of Gallatin Gateway, which became its own county water and sewer district a decade ago.

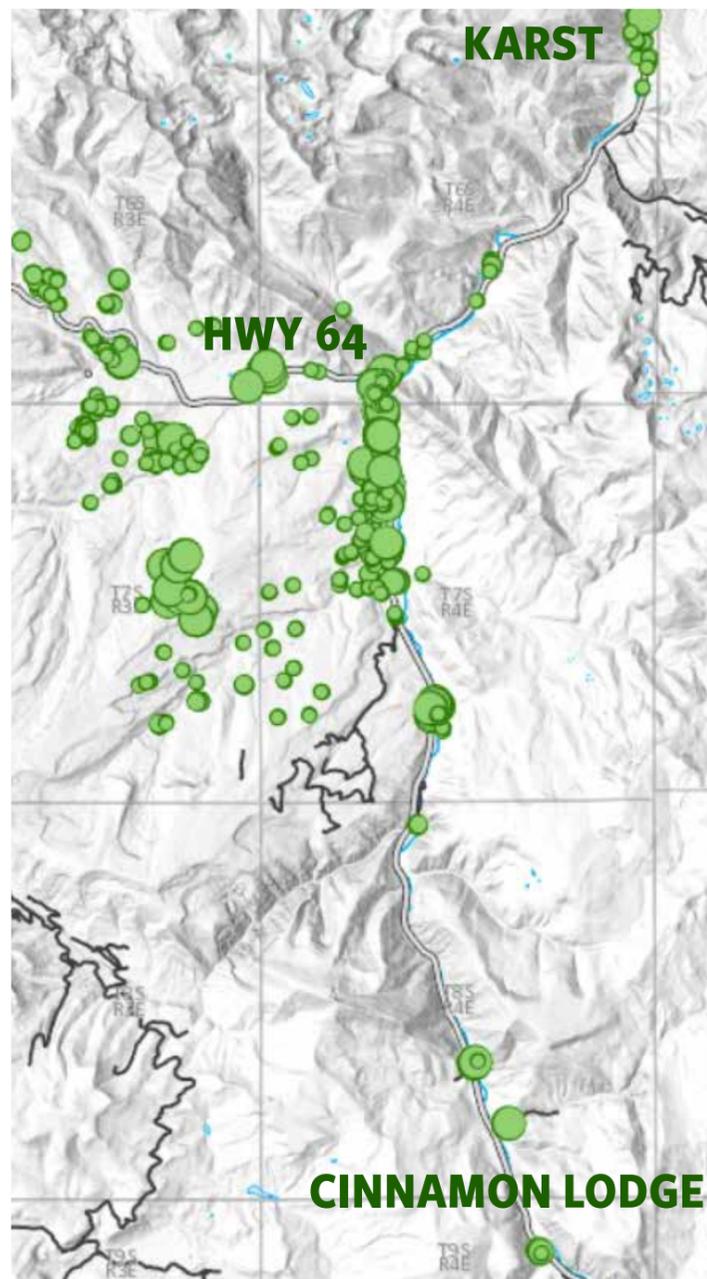
Like the canyon, Gallatin Gateway residents operated on private wells and septic systems but were dealing with water contamination, according to Edwards. Gallatin Gateway Water and Sewer District was born in 2009 and, although the process was lengthy, eventually connected to the Four Corners Water and Sewer system through an interlocal agreement.

"It was a huge process, but I would argue that the end result has been really good for Gateway," said Ashley Kroon of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. "This has greatly improved not only environmental quality—we're right next to the Gallatin River—but also the drinking water quality."

Edwards said that the petition-driven process of becoming a water and sewer district is cheap and, once completed, afforded many powers such as bonding and eminent domain capabilities. The process can get complicated because those with significant capital investment in their septic systems will be less inclined to vote for a bond to connect to a central sewer system, Edwards said, adding that a treatment plant won't pay for itself unless nearly everyone within the district boundaries connects to it.

"If we continue with the status quo, and as development occurs with what zoning conditions are like in the canyon, I'm guessing that public water supply nitrate values are going to continue to increase over time," said Tammy Swinney, a representative with Gallatin Local Water Quality District, a county entity focused on water resources education and water quality monitoring.

Those attending the meeting concluded that next steps include gathering neighbors and other stakeholders for a follow-up meeting sometime in March to determine wider interest.



WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

- PUBLIC WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM
- INDIVIDUAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

Wastewater treatment systems throughout the Gallatin Canyon can pose threats to the river and public water supply, especially individual septic systems that are not maintained well. This screenshot comes from a searchable map on the Gallatin City-County Environmental Health Services website and is not exhaustive.

Mountain clinic takes name as b2 UrgentCare

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – This winter, the Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center completed renovations of the former Medical Clinic of Big Sky after acquiring the private practice last year. In addition to the fresh coat of paint and a clean, modern interior that was completed in November, the practice at the mountain has been renamed to reflect the changes, now operating under the flag of b2 UrgentCare.

As an urgent care, the clinic is staffed by patient care technicians and nurse practitioners, with a team of five full-time employees. The office is open daily and provides immediate medical assistance for complaints including fevers, sore throats, infections, allergies and sprains. With in-house X-ray and lab processing, b2 UrgentCare is able to offer convenient, immediate healthcare at the ski resort.

Upfront, menu-based pricing is available for self-pay patients, delivering transparency and the ability to know exactly what a visit to the urgent care may cost, even before the patient arrives for their appointment. b2 also accepts most major insurance, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Still located at Big Sky Resort in the ski patrol building, b2 UrgentCare is an iteration of a practice that has been serving Big Sky for more than two decades. Dr. Jeff Daniels operated the Medical Clinic of Big Sky for 24 years prior to its incorporation with Bozeman Health last year and it is currently the only urgent care facility in Big Sky.

Lauren Brendel, the Bozeman Health system director for marketing and communications, said the clinic is the on-mountain resource for residents and vacationers alike, whether it's a cold or a ski fall. "Big Sky Resort is a great partner of Bozeman Health and we are happy to provide medical service to the Big Sky community for both fulltime residents and those coming to enjoy the great outdoors," she said.



Open daily and located in the ski patrol building, b2 UrgentCare has a staff of nurse practitioners and patient care technicians that provides convenient, immediate healthcare at Big Sky Resort. PHOTO BY DOUG HARE

Patients may schedule online or receive care by simply walking in.

The update and rebranding for the mountain clinic is a part of Bozeman Health's overall effort to bring fast, convenient medical care to southwest Montana. Last January, Bozeman Health opened their first convenience care clinic, b2 MicroCare, in Bozeman, located on the corner of Oak Street and 19th Avenue.

b2 UrgentCare is located in Big Sky at 100 Beaverhead Dr. and is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visit b2cares.com to learn more or to schedule an appointment.



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New faces at Task Force work to conserve Gallatin River

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – In January, nonprofit Gallatin River Task Force welcomed two new staff members to their ranks. Valerie Bednarski and Brandy Moses Straub will assist the task force with water stewardship projects.

Bednarski, a graduate of the marine science program at the University of California, Berkeley, came to Big Sky from Southern California as a part of the Big Sky Watershed Corps, which is an AmeriCorps program that connects young professionals to Montana’s watershed communities.

Having conducted research on coastal waters, including the turquoise currents of Tahiti, the warmer flows of the Outer Banks, and the kelp forests off of California, she said she’ll be glad to learn about the Gallatin’s freshwater. “I like winter sports and snowboarding, but I look forward to when it’s warm enough for us to go out and really examine the waterways and learn more about this watershed,” she said.

Bednarski was first attracted to Montana after taking a course at UC Berkley, taught by Arthur Middleton, who researches elk migrations in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. “I just saw how beautiful Montana was,” she said. “And I was excited to live in a place with so many outdoor activities.”

Working for the task force, Bednarski will assist with data analysis and river monitoring, preparing the information in a way that can be used by the public. Currently, she is assisting with the analysis of water samples and data collected during the algae bloom that occurred late last summer.

Brandy Straub, who has lived in Gallatin Gateway for about 10 years, is stepping in as the new conservation project manager, and will help lead restoration and conservation projects pertaining to water quality and quantity.

She said over the next year, the task force hopes to begin work at the Deer Creek bridge, approximately 3.5 miles north of Lone Mountain Trail on



LEFT: Valerie Bednarski, Gallatin River Task Force’s new Big Sky Watershed Corps member, at Pebble Beach near Monterey, California. PHOTO COURTESY OF VALERIE BEDNARSKI

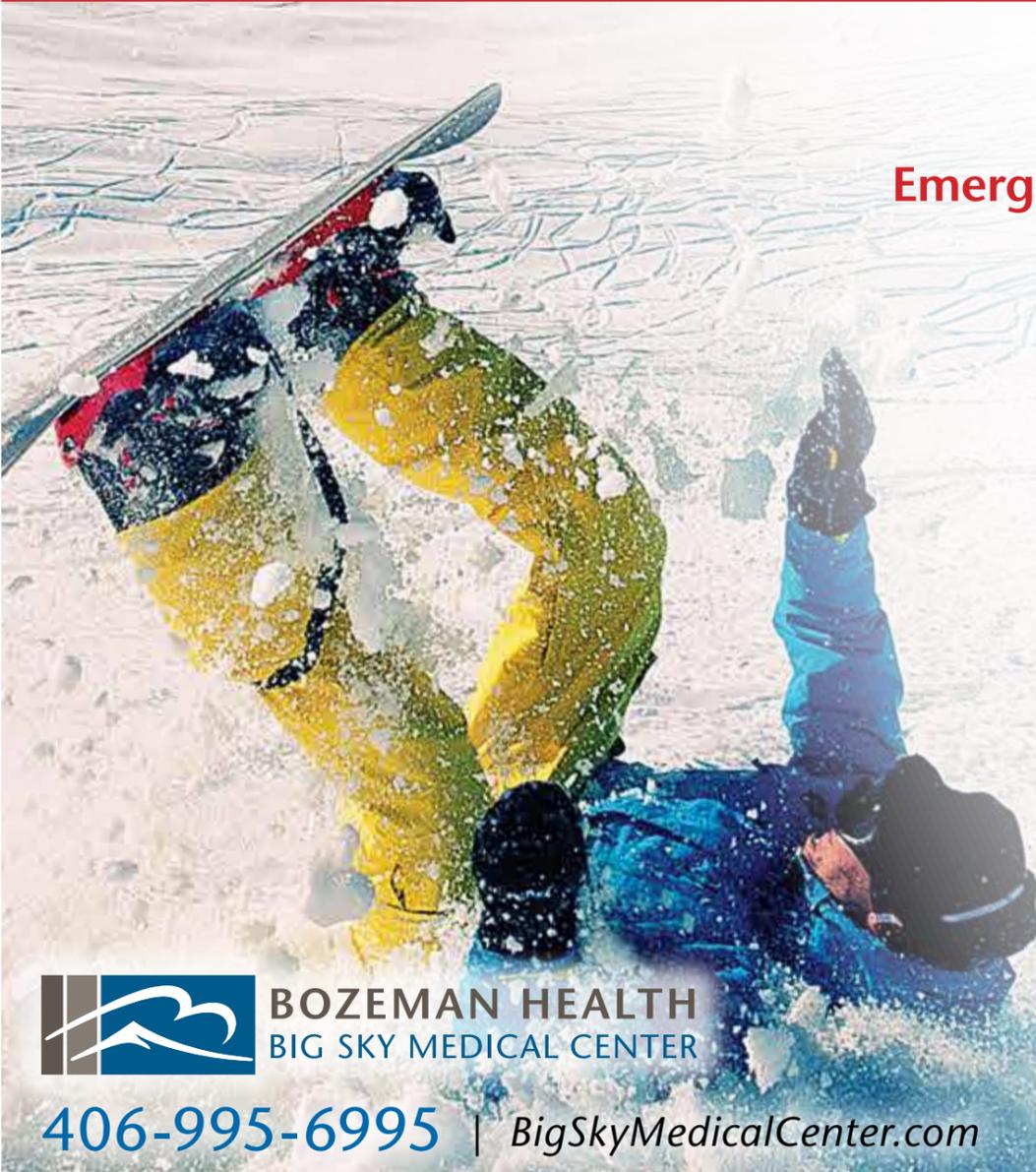
RIGHT: Brandy Moses Straub and her daughter Adela on the Taylor Fork south of Big Sky. As the new conservation project manager, she will oversee stream restoration and water conservation projects for the Task Force. PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDY STRAUB

Highway 191. In a similar fashion to their restoration work at Moose Creek Flat Campground, Straub will help arrange for parking lot improvements and restoration of the stream bank. This work is anticipated to begin in the fall.

With over a decade of experience working for Tetra Tech, an environmental consulting and engineering firm based in California, Straub said she looks forward to applying her skillset in Big Sky and on the Gallatin River, where her daughters each caught their first fish on a fly and where her husband, Patrick, operates his fly-fishing business, Gallatin River Guides.

“For me, it was just about being able to use my professional skills and background in a very local environment,” she said. “I’m most excited about the water conservation possibilities and all the collaborative effort that seems to be happening around Big Sky.”

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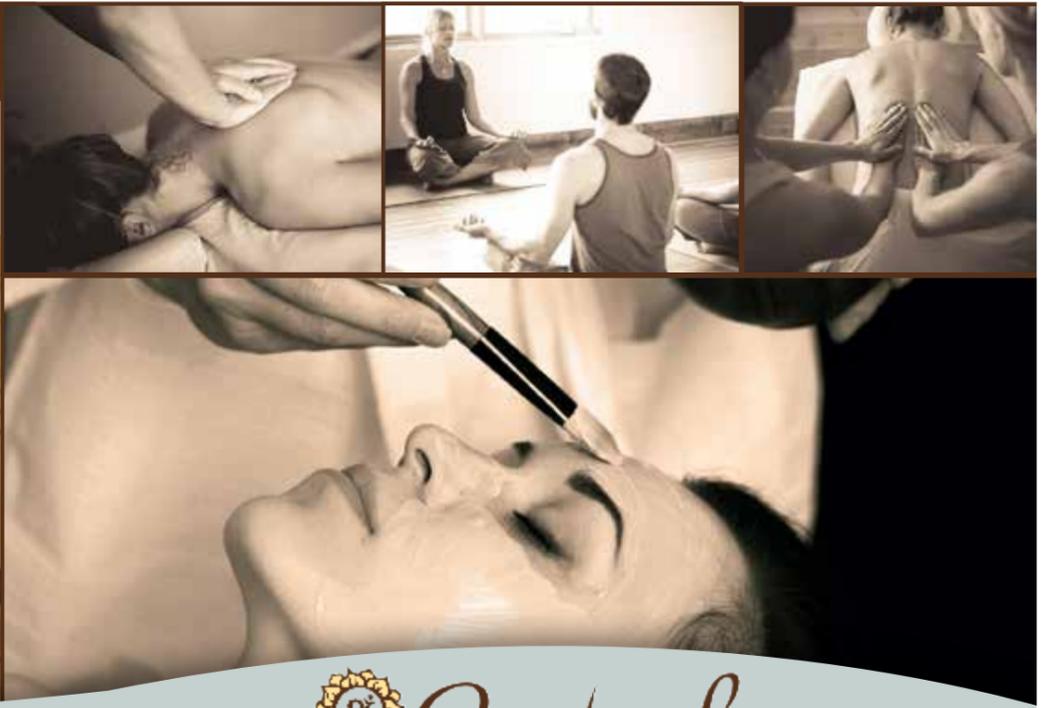
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4:15-5:15pm
Gentle Apres
Ski Yoga

5:45-7:00pm
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TUESDAY

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All Levels Yoga

9:00-10:00am
All Levels Yoga

5:45-7:00pm
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7:30-8:30am
&
9:00-10:15
All Levels Yoga

11:00-12:30pm
The Practice (Level 2-3
Yoga)

4:15-5:15pm
Apres Ski Yoga

7:00-8:00pm
Awareness Wednesday

THURSDAY

7:30-8:30am
Core Focused Yoga

9:00-10:00am
All Levels Yoga

5:45-6:45pm
Heated Flow

FRIDAY

9:00-10:15am
All Levels Yoga

12:00-1:00pm
Heated Flow

SATURDAY

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All Levels Yoga

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TEDxBigSky anchors first Big Sky Ideas Festival weekend

BY DOUG HARE

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – The evening of Jan. 26 was an intellectually stimulating, emotionally uplifting evening for those in the audience at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center during the third annual TEDxBigSky.

“TEDx got at the soul of our relationships with ourselves, our environment and the spirit it takes to embrace it all,” said Lander Bachert, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Gallatin Valley. “The presenters were at once emotional, funny and heartfelt.”

“In just three years we have had over 20 amazing people share the stage—global thought leaders, innovators, producers, musicians, activists—it is incredibly humbling,” said Ersin Ozer, curator of the event since its inception. “They come from across the world but their stories hit home at a local level.”

Eight speakers from eclectic backgrounds gave wide-ranging talks centered around the concept of “flow”—the state of consciousness when a person is so consumed by an activity that they lose track of time and self-awareness.

Longtime Senior Wildlife Biologist in Yellowstone National Park, Doug Smith, spoke about the history of wolves in the park and the dangers of commodifying nature from an overly anthropomorphic vantage point. Lynne Dale, a decorated journalist, recounted how her daughter’s cancer diagnosis and subsequent chemotherapy were catalysts for her daughter’s discover that selflessness and altruism are the true key to happiness.



Cord McCoy delivering a TEDx talk that traces his upbringing as a rancher, his career as a professional bull rider, and traveling around the world on a popular CBS game show and how faith has been essential to his journey.

The neuroscientist Jay Sanguinetti discussed how non-invasive brain stimulation might provide a “technoboost” for more effective meditation, opening up new frontiers for helping those with depression or chronic pain. Big Sky’s Twila Moon took a sober look at the ramifications of climate change and how we can all do our own part to mitigate the negative effects.

The multi-talented Daryl Davis spoke about how he confronts racism head on, even befriending Ku Klux Klan members along the way even as an African American activist. Cord McCoy talked about how much he learned traveling the world as a three-time contestant on CBS’s hit reality show “The Amazing Race,” after a long career as a rodeo star and rancher from middle America.

TEDxBigSky came closed with the storytelling and musical performance by Jamie McLean that had the crowd clapping in unison. “It was an honor for me to be asked to give a TEDx talk. I really consider it a highlight of my career,” McLean said. “I was definitely out of my comfort zone, but in the best possible way. I like pushing myself and I could feel the crowd get into the flow with me when I started playing. Big Sky always brings it.”

For the first time, TEDxBigSky was bookended with ancillary events around town that marked the first ever Big Sky Ideas Festival. On Thursday, Jan. 24, Bozeman-based writer Todd Wilkinson kicked off the event with a fireside presentation at Lone Mountain Ranch that delved into the life of celebrated grizzly bear 399 and how her life offers deep insight in the ecology of Greater Yellowstone region.



Guitarist Jamie McLean performing to a raucous crowd at Moonlight Lodge, the night before he performed solo to close out the third annual TEDxBigSky event. PHOTOS BY JENNINGS BARMORE

The next night, the Jamie McLean Band put on a concert in the Moonlight Lodge as stuffed mountain goats watched from their perches on the chimney and revelers danced to New Orleans-soul-inspired rock ‘n’ roll.

On Sunday, Jay Sanguinetti allowed attendees at Santosha Wellness Center to try his low-level light stimulation device while meditating. That evening saw Ulla Suokko, a world-renowned flutist, who also spoke during the TEDx event, closed out the Big Sky Ideas Festival with an evening of music, stories and poetry at WMPAC called “The Flute of the Infinite.”

“I think the time and effort the speakers put into creating and practicing their talks really showed and led to success on the stage,” said Lori Addicks, a speaker coach for the event. “There was a nice variety to their talks, yet all were aligned to the theme of ‘flow.’”

“I am grateful for all of the sponsors who helped underwrite this year’s event as well as our team of organizers and Outlaws who flowed together to make the 2019 TEDxBigSky event a success,” Ozer said. “I look forward to next year already.”



Jay Sanguinetti discusses how he was influenced by the Dalai Lama to pursue a noninvasive brain stimulation to enhance meditative abilities and increase their resulting benefits in practitioners.



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SECTION 2: MONTANA, ENVIRONMENT, & SPORTS



Q&A with Chance Lenay pg. 22



Lone Peak Playbook pg. 26



Best in the West Showdown pg. 27

The New West:

Montana Sen. Mike Phillips plans to draft bill to outlaw predator derbies



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Is it ethical to chase down wildlife with snowmobiles and ATVs, running animals to the point of exhaustion? If you pursued a big game animal—an elk, moose, deer or pronghorn—you could face arrest or fine.

In Wyoming, across the entire state, you can even run over coyotes with your machines. In four-fifths of the state, you can do it with wolves, too. Legally.

That's because Wyoming classifies coyotes and wolves as "predators" and it allows for their taking, especially if you are on private land, any time of day, by any means, and for no reason. They don't even have to have been suspected of killing livestock or accused of taking a toll on big game animals.

It's part of a mentality toward these canids that reaches into the earliest days of the 19th century frontier.

Across all of the West, including Montana, it's open season on coyotes. In recent years, events called "coyote derbies" have proliferated. Essentially, the events reward hunters who kill the most predators, the largest, and sometimes for the most pounds, of animals killed. Such tournaments reward participants with cash prizes and trophies such as belt buckles.

Not long ago, for a story that appeared in *Mountain Journal*, I interviewed the former and active chairs of three state wildlife commissions, as well as an authority on ethical hunting and a spokesman from the Missoula-based Boone and Crockett Club. To a person, and they all hunt, they said that using vehicles to aggressively stalk wildlife violates ethical fair chase principles. And they said that predator derbies are not in concert with the principles of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Most of all, they say such behavior is giving hunting a bad reputation. Gary Wolfe, a former wildlife commissioner in Montana, said that as hunter numbers decline nationally, bad personal conduct on the part of some individuals can turn a non-hunter into becoming an anti-hunter.

State Sen. Mike Phillips of Bozeman, also a hunter and carnivore biologist, plans to introduce a bill in the 2019 session of the Montana legislature that would outlaw predator-killing derbies. And he is thinking of drafting a companion bill that would prohibit people from being able to chase animals on public land with vehicles.

While some reading this might claim that such activity does not occur, social media and platforms such as YouTube, have videos and photographs of people using vehicles to chase animals. Phillips says that coyotes, the wild canids native only to North America, are intelligent,

iconic animals worthy of reverence and professional management, the same as any other creature.

He isn't opposed to hunting or trapping of coyotes, but Phillips says all wildlife, which is held in the public trust, is worthy of being treated in a humane way.

"If you are going to remove wolves or coyotes because there are identifiable problems, OK, do it if it's necessary, but be strategic. Predator killing contests turn that on its head. When is needless, thoughtless killing ever justified?" Phillips said.

"I find its rationalization by those who claim to support professional wildlife management most curious," he continued. "I would suppose that most of the people who participate in these contests of slaughter would consider themselves to be people of faith. What God worth worshipping would find it acceptable for His or Her followers to kill Her creation needlessly, senselessly and often out of hatred? Are these contests indicative of the values we want to be emulating for our kids?"

Phillips says he's "old school" when it comes to hunting and finds the rise of popularity in varmint hunting, and making a spectacle of it on social media, to be disgusting.

"If you want to celebrate your prowess as an expert marksman shooting from several hundred yards, then set up dummy targets; don't use live animals," he said.

He doubts that few prairie dog gunners realize that the animals, along with bison, are keystone species, the foundations for more than 140 different animals important to biodiversity on the American prairie. "They have no idea what they are destroying, and they don't care," Phillips said. "To them, it's just target practice."

Looking south, Phillips said the least Wyoming could do with wolves is make them a game species across the entire state, sell licenses to support scientific research into animal populations the same way it does with elk, deer, pronghorn and other species.

"Most of these guys—and most of them are guys, I would imagine—who ride snowmobiles to kill these animals, or shoot prairie dogs to see the blood spray, go to church on Sunday," Phillips said. "My lord, do they want to be a person standing at the pearly gates seeking their entrance and having to argue with God about their decision to treat these animals with such cruelty and no rational justification to back it up?"

Todd Wilkinson is founder of Bozeman-based Mountain Journal (mountainjournal.org) and a correspondent for National Geographic. He also is author of "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek" about famous Jackson Hole grizzly bear 399 featuring 150 photographs by Tom Mangelsen, available only at mangelsen.com/grizzly.

Opposition strong against bill to change wildlife management

BY ROB CHANEY
MISSOULIAN

MISSOULA (AP) – House Majority Leader Brad Tschida said he never expected to be called “the great unifier” for his proposal to eliminate social science from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

But the Missoula Republican did earn that moniker in two hours of public comment opposed to his House Bill 161 “establishing requirements for decision-making” at FWP, the Missoulian reported.

The bill would prohibit the FWP director, staff and commission from using “social science, human dimensions, or people’s attitudes, opinions, or preferences in decision-making processes related to fish and wildlife.” It also struck every reference to “human enjoyment” of wildlife, including the policy of welcoming out-of-state hunters “to enjoy the state’s public wildlife resources.” It limited the policy of managing non-game wildlife to “scientific purposes,” striking “for human enjoyment.”

Instead, Tschida’s bill would require that FWP “may only use facts and science when making decisions.”

He insisted he did not intend to remove public comment from the process. “I want additional input from anyone who experiences the outdoors,” Tschida said in an interview. “But at end of the day we want to use science, not emotion, to determine what the best outcomes are. They need to listen to what people say, but citizen input should not override the science.”

Tschida’s approach prompted a unified response.

“I cannot recall a bill more misguided and mis-intended than House Bill 161,” former FWP deputy director Chris Smith told the House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee on Jan. 22. “I want to make it clear this bill is an attack on key elements of FWP information gathering.”

Eighty-two professors and researchers from throughout the country agreed with Smith in a letter on Jan. 22 objecting to the bill. They charged it both eroded public ownership of wildlife and sabotaged scientific wildlife management.

Tschida said the bill had one prime purpose: “to eliminate a position whose job, it appears to be, is to solicit ‘feelings’ people have about hunting, trapping and fishing.”

During the hearing, he quoted questions from a 2014 FWP survey that asked people’s opinions on a sliding scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” He objected to questions that asked if animals should have the same rights as certain humans, if hunting respected the rights of animals and if the rights of wolves are more important than human interests.

“I don’t think animals are other people,” Tschida said during the hearing. “At the end of the day, I believe it’s an absolute necessity to base decisions on sound, fundamental science that benefits animals and their habitat. FWP should use science and not emotions to make those decisions.”

The position Tschida wanted eliminated was FWP’s human dimensions supervisor, currently held by Michael Lewis. FWP Chief of Staff Paul Sihler said Lewis was working on 150 projects related to public opinions and values, at the request of FWP’s fisheries, wildlife, law enforcement, education and citizen advisory departments. It was also conducting surveys at the behest of the Legislature, including one to determine if hunters and anglers supported spending \$1 million on improving boat ramps in state parks.

The only person to support Tschida’s bill was Rep. Kerry White, R-Bozeman. He said he was concerned that FWP was failing to manage elk overpopulation, and recounted a conversation with an FWP biologist he would not name.

“I asked why can’t you get these populations of elk into target numbers so there would be less property damage,” White told the committee. “He told me we have to manage based on what is socially acceptable. This supervisor said we cannot manage based on science.”

Wolves of the Rockies representative Mark Cooke said White’s argument would have unintended consequences if FWP depended strictly on biological science.

“For the last eight years I’ve been coming here, fighting for wolves,” Cooke told the committee. “Now I have a bill that will do that for me. There could be 5,000 wolves if you base it on prey base and what the state habitat could handle. The other half of the state would be filled with wolves. This would have saved me a bunch of time.”

Smith added that no part of Montana currently exceeded the biological carrying capacity of elk, but herds in some areas have surpassed the social acceptance of landowners. FWP depended on social science methods to balance those landowner opinions with the biologists’ analyses.

Retired Arizona Game and Fish Department research program manager Denny Haywood pointed out that understanding public attitudes has a big impact on how hunting can be used as a tool for wildlife management. That matters in a society where the numbers of people who hunt have shrunk to 10 percent or less of the population.

“It’s difficult to recruit new hunters. You need to know what’s their motivation and how do we reach them?” Haywood said. “Public opinion surveys are critical to every wildlife management agency.”

Other opponents ranged from the Montana Chapter of the Audubon Society and Montana Conservation Voters standing alongside the Montana Bowhunters Association and Montana Sportsman’s Alliance. National Wildlife Federation representative Ben Lamb said it was the first time in 16 years he’d seen Defenders of Wildlife and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation aligned on an issue.

“I want to thank you for bringing us all together,” Chris Marchion of the Anaconda Sportsmen’s Club said of the packed room of opponents. “I can’t remember in 34 years I’ve ever seen all these groups aligned in the same way.” The committee took no action on Tschida’s bill, but may vote on its fate soon.

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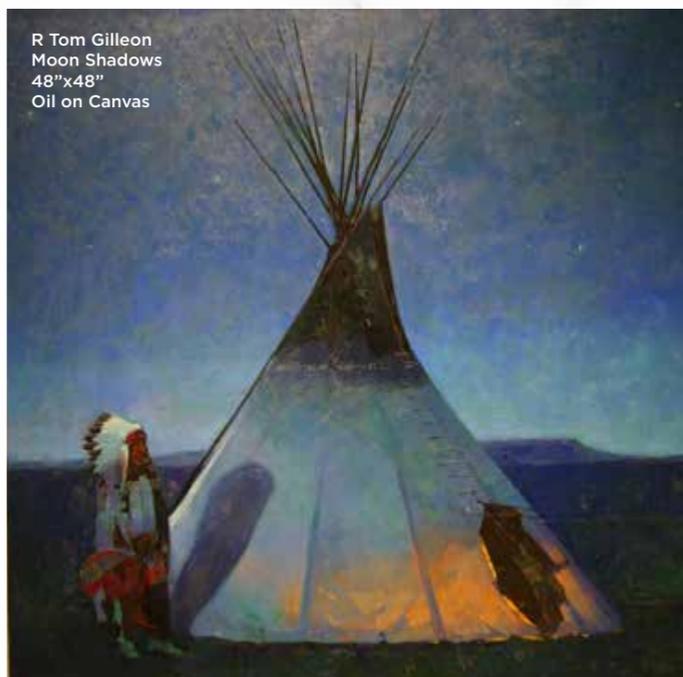
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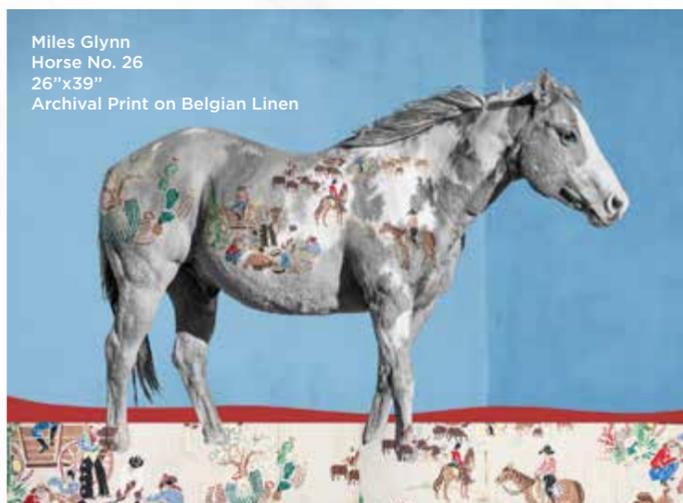
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WATER WISDOM

Presented by the Gallatin River Task Force and its partners, this recurring series highlights the conservation work done and environmental concerns found in our local watersheds.

Winter hazards affect summer trout populations

BY STEPHANIE LYNN
GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

Montana winters are not for the faint of heart. And for trout living in local rivers and streams, cold weather can be particularly perilous.

According to Pat Byorth, director for the Trout Unlimited Montana Water Project, "Trout suffer three primary risks during the winter: physiology, ice and oxygen."

Cold-blooded westslope cutthroat trout thrive when the water temperature falls between 50- and 63-degrees F. However, average winter conditions on the Gallatin River drop below this ideal range, forcing fish to enter torpor, a sluggish state, to survive. In this condition, trout require less food due to reduced metabolism, but lack the energy to escape predators.

To complicate matters, ice constricts habitat at a time when rivers are already low. Anchor ice growing from the streambed covers hiding spots and can entomb young trout while frazil, or slush ice forming on the surface of rapidly cooling rivers, causes damage to gills. Finally, collapsing ice dams can trap or crush unwitting fish.

Although oxygen levels are typically high in cold rivers and streams, including the Gallatin, ice and snow can limit aeration in shallow ponds with decaying vegetation. On occasion, low oxygen levels cause winter fish kills.

To endure these threats, trout move from summer feeding lanes to winter habitat when the snow flies. Juveniles hide between streambed boulders and large woody debris while adults hunker down in large, deep pools to await the return of spring. Pools and pockets, in particular, are sensitive to human impacts, such as water use that lowers stream levels, barriers that alter connectivity, and sedimentation that fills hiding holes.

Dave Moser, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks fisheries biologist, said, "The limiting factor for many Rocky Mountain trout populations is overwintering habitat, particularly adequate pool depth in high elevation streams. If fish can't make it through the winter, or, in the case of fall spawners, if their eggs don't make it to hatch, that can limit numbers of fish and extent of occupied habitat."

Despite these challenges, trout are adapted to survive winter in the Big Sky area. And for those willing to weather the cold, the fishing can be extremely rewarding. Josh Berry, a fly-fishing guide with Gallatin River Guides, said, "From my perspective, I like guiding in the winter more, there's more open water, fewer people, and the fish are still eating."

Berry explained that catch-and-release anglers should follow summer fishing best practices to avoid harming fish. "It's even more important in the winter to keep fish in the water because their gills could freeze," Berry said.

During the next high pressure system, when it's 35 degrees and sunny, take a break from the ski hill and try winter fishing. Just remember to handle fish with care.



Kelly Nicholson fishes the Gallatin River on a winter day. PHOTO BY RICH ADDICKS

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Slay like Lenay: Q&A with local snowboarder Chance Lenay

BY DOUG HARE
EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Seattle native and Big Sky local, Chance Lenay, continues to accrue sponsors, fans, and podium spots on his quest to qualify for the Freeride World Tour, the world's most competitive freeride circuit. After finishing last season as the No. 1 ranked male snowboarder in North America on the Freeride World Qualifying Tour, he narrowly missed being selected to the top tier of the sport but remains hopeful for good things to come.

Explore Big Sky: *You finished fifth at Revelstoke in the first competition of the year. What did you take away from that competition?*

Chance Lenay: One big change to the competition format this year is that we are only competing one day—one run instead of two days with a qualifying day—which is how the Freeride World Tour is ran. So, it's much less strategy and it's more about throwing down as hard as possible on your one run—which is something I enjoy much more.

EBS: *Since finishing first last season among male snowboarders in North America on the FWQT, you have acquired a few more sponsors. Can you tell me more about those opportunities?*

C.L.: I have definitely had more local support since last season. Small local businesses like Caliber Coffee and Big Sky Trout have been a huge help with travel costs.

EBS: *For those who have never watched a freeride competition, can you give a rundown of a typical competition weekend and how the athletes are judged?*

C.L.: The athletes are given a certain venue, usually very steep terrain with cliffs and chutes. There is one start gate at the top and every athlete drops one at a time with the judges at the bottom of the venue with binoculars and score sheets. You are judged on five different categories: technique, control, fluidity, air and style, and overall impression.

EBS: *What are the next competitions you plan on competing this year?*

C.L.: I am heading to Crested Butte on Feb. 9, then onto Taos, Kicking Horse, and Crystal Mountain ... the championship event will be at Kirkwood in California. I will also be competing in the Big Sky 2-Star Freeride [Competition] on the 29th of March.

EBS: *Your goal is to make it on the Freeride World Tour to compete against the most elite snowboarders in the world. How can you accomplish that this season?*



Chance Lenay demonstrates a stylish tail grab while soaring around Big Sky Resort—where he honed his snowboarding skills on his down time as a tram operator. PHOTO BY SKYLAB MEDIA HOUSE



In his first freeride competition of the season, the Revelstoke FWQ 4*, Chance Lenay (far right) took fifth place. Another Big Sky rider, Holden Samuels (second to right) placed third and continues to make waves in his rookie season competing as an adult. PHOTO COURTESY OF REVELSTOKE MOUNTAIN RESORT

C.L.: Out of the six 4-Star events, they only take your top three finishes and apply points depending on what place you finished. They add up the points and give you a ranking. I have to be the No. 1 snowboarder in "The Americas" region. Last season I was first in North America and second in "The Americas"—one spot away from my goal of competing on the FWT.

EBS: *You had never ridden a snowboard before you moved out to Big Sky in 2007 when you were 19 years old. How were you able to pick up the sport at that age so quickly?*

C.L.: I had snowboarded maybe five times in Washington before moving to Big Sky at the age of 19. I did a lot of skateboarding growing up and that definitely helped transition into snowboarding. Another huge factor was operating the tram at Big Sky Resort. Having the access to Lone Peak on an everyday basis helped exponentially.

EBS: *Do you have a coach? Someone that you rely on for advice?*

C.L.: Erik Morrison has been a huge help in getting me on the Venture Snowboards team and I always go to him when I need advice on the business side of snowboarding and sponsors. Not to mention he is a phenomenal snowboarder. I always learn something just sitting back and watching him ride. He is also an awesome role model and he always tries to motivate me as much as possible. Huge thanks to you Erik!

EBS: *You've had the chance to compete against Holden Samuels, who after numerous successful results on the Freeride World Junior Tour, is now making waves on the adult qualifying circuit. What do you think the future holds for Holden?*

C.L.: The future is definitely bright for Holden. The rookies on the FWQT are stepping up the game big time which is making the rest of us not ride as conservative and send it. Having Holden next to me on the podium at Revelstoke was pretty awesome. Big Sky represented big time in Revy.

EBS: *If you could compete on any venue in the world, which would you pick and why?*

C.L.: The Bec des Rosses in Verbier, Switzerland, would be my top pick. Not only because it showcases the gnarliest big mountain riding in the world, but the Freeride World Tour Championship is held there.

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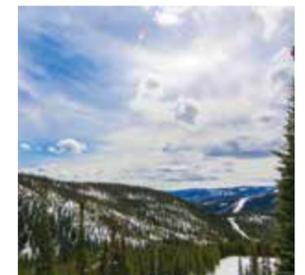
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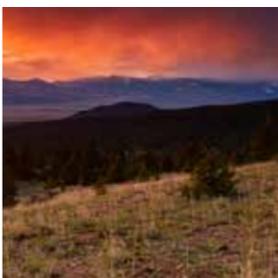


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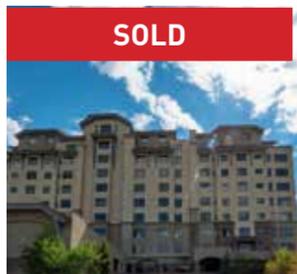
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THE LONE PEAK PLAYBOOK



Ophir Lady Miners on a roll

BY DOUG HARE
EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – As of EBS press time on Jan. 30, the Ophir Lady Miners seventh and eighth grade basketball team was still undefeated, with a 10-0 record under their belts nearly halfway through the season. After winning the Monforton Middle School basketball tournament Jan. 26, the team is looking ahead to the West Yellowstone tournament Feb. 2.

“I’m lucky to have a group of hard-working, coachable young ladies,” said head coach Loren Bough. “We put in a lot of offseason work on fundamentals and that is paying dividends.” Bough also credited his team’s tenacious defense and the emotional leadership of captains Jessica Bough and Maddie Cone for the team’s early success.

With 11 eighth graders on the squad, Bough is confident that Lone Peak High School varsity coach Ausha Cole will be getting some well-rounded basketball players next year. “It would be great to go undefeated the whole season, but sometimes a loss can be a good thing—there are teachable moments,” Bough said.

“The girls have been working extremely hard in the offseason and a lot of credit goes to their coach [Loren Bough] for putting in the time to work with them,” said Athletic Director John Hannahs.

The fifth and sixth grade Lady Miners basketball team has a 5-8 record so far this year but has been showing steady signs of improvement. Coached by Heather Morris and Jenny Wilczynski, the younger Lady Miners squad has 20 players on the roster.

“I am proud of our girls. We are starting to gel on the court,” Morris said. “For some of our fifth graders it is the first time that they are wearing Ophir jerseys, but I can see them learning the foundations of basketball and how to play as a team.



LEFT: Leading scorer for the Ophir Lady Miners this season, captain Jessica Bough demonstrates proper jump-shooting technique. PHOTOS BY RICH ADDICKS

RIGHT: Kate King drives the lane and makes a left-handed layup look easy

The fifth/sixth grade team will also head down to West Yellowstone on Feb. 2 and they are set to play St. Mary’s at home on Feb. 5.

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Cowboys, skiers unite in skijor event Feb. 9-10

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – An amalgam of cowboy grit and ski town stoke, the sport of skijoring returns to Big Sky Town Center on Feb. 9 and 10 with wild, Western fun. The second annual Best in the West Showdown pits teams of horse, rider and skier against each other in a timed race across 800 feet of snow, complete with jumps, banked turns and adrenaline-pumping speed.

As a part of the national Skijoring America league and hosted by the Big Sky Skijoring Association, event organizers expect to see competitors from around the country, with the inaugural competition last year drawing 80 teams.

“Running on a horse gives you a feeling of freedom that you can’t get anywhere else and the skier gets that adrenaline rush by not really being able to control their own speed. Communication is huge,” said Audrey Williams, a horseback competitor and board member of Skijoring America.



Brother and sister Haley and Zane Downey make a skijoring run during the 2018 youth competition.

Williams, who will compete in Big Sky during her fourth season touring the Montana circuit, said she loves that skijoring puts cowboys and skiers together. “Big Sky is so unique because we have some of the greatest skiing and we also have a lot of dude ranches and old-West feel,” she added. Williams lived in the Big Sky area for six years before moving to the Bitterroot just over a year ago.

With cash prizes for the top winners and categories that include open, novice, snowboard and youth, there’s opportunity to skijor competitively or try it out for the first time. According to Big Sky resident Justa Adams, a former competitor and member of BSSA, anyone can show up at registration and give it a try, whether they go slow or fast. Often, she said individuals can find a team member at registration as well.

The course, built the week before, will run along Simkins Drive at the intersection of Aspen Leaf Drive in Big Sky Town Center.

“We’re very excited about the snow we’re getting,” Adams said, adding that three competitions earlier in the Skijoring America series had to be canceled due to minimal snow. For other events, organizers might truck snow in, but Adams said they will be able to use the snow piles plowed by the Big Sky Community Organization to help build the Big Sky course.

RJ Klotz, the director of membership sales for the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and a member of Skijoring America, has developed the course design to ensure safety and good viewing opportunities.



Melissa Ostrander, on horseback, and skier Glen Hutchinson make their winning run during the inaugural Best in the West Showdown skijoring competition in Big Sky last year. Ostrander and Hutchinson were last year’s national champions of the sport division for Skijoring America. PHOTOS BY MARK LAROWE

“It’s another opportunity for a family friendly event that’s community focused,” he said on behalf of the chamber. “The event also brings people from all over the western states to compete and spectate. Skijoring is a unique sport that draws a lot of people to our destination.”

While the BSSA event is gaining traction, skijoring certainly isn’t new to Big Sky. Historically, the 320 Guest Ranch held their own skijoring event, though it wasn’t a sanctioned Skijoring America race. Rather than hold two events this year, the 320 is working with BSSA. “We thought it was a good time to hand the torch over to them. At the same time, we still want to support it,” said 320 hotel manager Carla Rey. “And now it’s all the rage.”

Overall, Adams said momentum from last year’s event has brought the community together in support of the skijoring competition. “It’s really been a community event where people have really stepped up to help,” she said. This year’s gold sponsors include the 320 Guest Ranch, First Security Bank and the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation.

Adams also said volunteers play a key role in setting up for the event and helping watch for course accuracy on race day.

For those wishing to help with this year’s skijoring, contact Adams at justa@bigskysir.com or (406) 600-1316.

SCHEDULE

Friday, Feb. 8

Registration at Choppers Grub and Pub, 6-9 p.m.

Live music by Montana Rose at Gallatin Riverhouse Grill

Saturday, Feb. 9

Skijoring Competition, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Calcutta auction at Gallatin Riverhouse Grill, 7 p.m.,
music by Bottom of the Barrel

Sunday, Feb. 10

Skijoring Competition, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Awards following competition at Choppers

An action-packed two weeks for the Big Sky Ski Team

BY LUKE KIRCHMAYR

EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Alpine

It was a busy but exciting couple of weeks for the Big Sky Ski Team between Jan. 18 and 29. There were eight races held between Terry Peak, South Dakota; Red Lodge, Montana; and Whitefish, Montana.

The U14 team had the first regional qualifier at Terry Peak, Jan. 18-21. The team did very well as the girls won every race and the boys podiumed at most races. The event was open to all competitors under 14 years of age. Our younger racers did an exceptional job, winning almost all their races.

The U14 team returned to Big Sky for a few days, then returned to the road for another regional qualifier in Whitefish, Jan. 26-29. The U14 girls dominated the weekend by winning all three races; the boys were less lucky with some unfortunate crashes while leading the pack.

The U16 team had a regional qualifier in Red Lodge, Jan. 25-27. The race is known as one of the toughest in the state, with an infamous steep and icy pitch. On Friday, the boys' slalom was canceled because of technical difficulties, but the girls' race went well for the Big Sky team, despite a few tough crashes while racing toward winning runs. The team came back strong on Saturday with many podiums and a win on the challenging course. Sunday races were cancelled due to high winds.

Next up is the Lone Peak Speed Series at Big Sky Resort, which will host two super-Gs. These two races will take place on Hangman's, featuring two jumps in the course. The race is open to U14 and U16 racers.

Nordic

The Big Sky Nordic team also had a few races in Big Sky and West Yellowstone. The Big Sky 5@5 Race was the first of three town races featuring both a 3- and 5-kilometer track. The West Yellowstone competition was a sprint biathlon.

The sprint race at West Yellowstone involved skiing three 1.5-kilometer laps, shooting five targets after the first and second lap then skiing to the finish after the third lap. For each missed target, a 100-meter penalty lap is skied. Big Sky athletes had a strong showing and in the men's novice division, Rob McRae skied to first place, Jonah Adams took third after shooting a clean round. In the novice U13 category, Tobin Ide skied to first place and shot two clean rounds.

The 5@5 Race is a citizens' race in Big Sky organized by Big Sky Ski and Education Foundation Nordic with proceeds going toward program scholarships. This was the first in a series of three races this winter. The races are open to all with 1-, 3- and 5-kilometer events. The next 5@5 will be Feb. 26 with registration at 4 p.m., and race start at 5 p.m.

If you would like to learn more about the Big Sky Ski Team visit bssef.com.

BIG SKY SKI TEAM RESULTS

Terry Peak alpine results U8-14:

Giant Slalom, Jan. 18

U10 Girls

- Cook, Adaline (2:31:57)
- Wenger, Payton (2:34:68)
- Olsson, Violet (2:44:45)
- Paige, Schreiner (3:13:86)

U12 Girls

- Davis, Sophia (2:01:04)
- Olsson, Piper (2:10:38)
- Manka, Dylan (2:10:85)
- Skogan, Cecelia (2:20:85)
- Cook, Alice (2:24:08)

U14 Girls

- Brown, Lili (1:50:81)
- Manka, Skylar (1:51:99)
- Brown, Brook (1:52:82)
- Unger, Chloe (1:55:44)
- Klug, Carson (1:55:68)
- Davis, Margaret (1:56:19)
- Hoover, Myla (2:05:42)

U8 Boys

- Klug, Gus (3:01:53)
- Schreiner, Michael (3:33:41)

U10 Boys

- Ditullio, Dominic (2:18:84)

U12 Boys

- Pecunies, Ian (2:02:24)
- Bourret, Cooper (2:02:41)
- Wenger, Ryan (2:04:99)
- Torsleff, Connor (2:06:63)
- Brown, Walter (2:12:18)
- Ditullio, Anthony (2:12:32)
- Ueland, Dane (2:38:99)

U14 Boys

- Ueland, Cameron (2:02:26)
- Pecunies, Cameron (2:02:33)

Slalom January 19

Girls U10

- Cook, Adeline (1:58:76)
- Wenger, Payton (2:00:33)
- Schreiner, Paige (2:09:92)
- Olsson, Violet (2:11:37)

Girls U12

- Davis, Sophia (1:29:98)
- Manka, Dylan (1:42:59)
- Skogen, Cecelia (1:50:44)

Girls U14

- Brown, Lili (1:21:16)
- Manka, Skylar (1:23:87)
- Ditullio, Drew (1:23:98)
- Unger, Chloe (1:25:27)
- Hoover, Myla (1:31:60)
- Schreiner, Gracen (1:33:35)
- Johnson, Allene (1:33:60)
- Klug, Carson (1:36:74)

Boys U8

- Klug, Gus (2:07:55)

Boys U10

- Ditullio, Dominic (1:37:79)

Boys U12

- Klug, Finn (1:29:38)
- Torsleff, Connor (1:29:46)
- Pecunies, Ian (1:31:49)
- Ditullio, Anthony (1:32:17)
- Bourret, Cooper (1:32:47)
- Wenger, Ryan (1:35:48)
- Brown, Walter (1:44:15)
- Ueland, Dane (1:47:60)

Boys U14

- Ueland, Cameron (1:19:37)

Slalom, Jan. 20

Girls U10

- Wenger, Payton (1:51:33)
- Cook, Adaline (1:56:87)
- Schreiner, Paige (2:05:35)
- Olsson, Violet (2:06:94)

Girls U12

- Davis, Sophia (1:27:17)
- Manka, Dylan (1:38:68)
- Olsson, Piper (1:41:49)
- Cook, Alice (1:43:61)
- Skogen, Cecelia (1:46:29)

Girls U14

- Brown, Brooke (1:17:00)
- Brown, Lili (1:20:52)
- Manka, Skylar (1:21:37)
- Klug, Carson (1:23:29)
- Unger, Chloe (1:23:57)
- Davis, Margaret (1:24:26)
- Johnson, Allene (1:27:94)
- Hoover, Myla (1:28:31)
- Schreiner, Graycen (1:29:34)

Boys U8

- Klug, Gus (1:59:39)
- Schreiner, Michael (2:29:88)

Boys U10

- Ditullio, Dominic (1:34:64)

Boys U12

- Pecunies, Ian (1:27:54)
- Klug, Fin (1:28:48)
- Bourret, Cooper (1:29:88)
- Wenger, Ryan (1:30:28)
- Ditullio, Anthony (1:31:56)
- Brown, Walter (1:42:29)
- Ueland, Dane (1:42:80)

Boys U14

- Ueland, Cameron (1:19:90)
- Pecunies, Cameron (1:24:37)

Whitefish alpine results U14

Slalom Jan. 26

Girls U14

- Brown, Lili (1:41:82)
- Manka, Skylar (1:42:93)
- Ditullio, Drew (1:43:56)
- Unger, Chloe (1:45:38)
- Klug, Carson (1:47:41)

- Vap, Morgane (1:47:51)
- Davis, Margaret (1:47:56)
- Schreiner, Graycen (1:50:71)
- Hoover, Mila (1:52:40)
- Trebesch, Inga (1:58:25)

Boys U14

- Pecunies, Cameron (1:57:08)

Giant Slalom, Jan. 27

Girls U14

- Brown, Brooke (1:52:28)
- Unger, Chloe (1:56:79)
- Manka, Skylar (1:56:81)
- Mcelandowney, Cameron (1:57:56)
- Vap, Morgane (1:58:16)
- Klug, Carson (1:58:84)
- Hoover, Mila (2:01:26)
- Brown, Lili (2:01:42)
- Schreiner, Graycen (2:02:05)
- Davis, Margaret (2:04:46)
- Ditullio, Drew (2:05:82)
- Trebesch, Inga (2:10:12)

Boys U14

- Ueland, Cameron (1:58:65)
- Pecunies, Cameron (2:04:97)

Giant Slalom, Jan. 28

Girls U14

- Brown, Brook (2:00:69)
- Unger, Chloe (2:05:70)
- Klug, Carson (2:06:23)
- Vap, Morgane (2:06:89)
- Brown, Lili (2:07:61)
- Mcelandowney, Cameron (2:09:35)
- Schreiner, Graycen (2:09:76)
- Hoover, Myla (2:10:28)
- Davis, Margaret (2:10:57)
- Ditullio, Drew (2:10:62)
- Trebesch, Inga (2:19:42)

Boys U14

- Ueland, Cameron (2:05:98)
- Pecunies, Cameron (2:10:29)

Red Lodge alpine results U16-19:

Slalom, Jan. 25

Girls U16

- Carisch, Gracie (1:51:42)

Girls U19

- Winters, Madison (1:48:92)
- Winters, Mackenzie (1:50:79)
- Jarrett, Emma (2:16:29)

Giant Slalom, Jan. 26

Girls U16

- Davis, Hilary (1:25:94)
- Johnson, Winter (1:26:30)
- Jarrett, Gracie (2:23:59)

Girls U19

- St.Cyr, Maci (1:23:93)
- Winters, Madison (1:25:39)
- Winters, Mackenzie (1:25:56)
- Schreiner, Mazie (1:26:55)
- Jarrett, Emma (1:48:68)

Boys U16

- Kirchmayr, Luke (1:26:85)
- Hassman, Kjetil (1:28:55)
- Hoover, Miles (1:31:48)

Boys U19

- Johnson, Sam (1:24:34)

Nordic Results

US Biathlon Western Championship Sprint in West Yellowstone results:

Novice men's 4.5-kilometer sprint

- Jonah, Adams

Novice U13 boys' 4.5-kilometer sprint

- Ide, Tobin
- Mittelstaedt, Ty
- Burke, Jetty
- Davis, Dudley
- Davis, Thaddeus

Novice U13 girls' 4.5-kilometer sprint

- Hana, Thaddeus

5@5 Town Race

1-kilometer race

- Barth, Ursala
- Morris, Lola
- Hurlbut, Sabrina
- Bartoszek, Natalia
- Loomis, Reed
- Bartoszek, Grace
- Morris, Peyton

3-kilometer race

- Sonen, Bella
- Moms, Sidney
- McRae, Maeve
- Hurlbut, Ario
- Stratford, Lilly
- Mittelstaedt, Ty
- Burke, Jetty
- Barker, Logan
- Harder, Elijah
- Sheil, Collen

5-kilometer race

- Lynn, Stephanie
- McRae, Rob
- Weiner, Bridget
- Ide, Tobin
- McRae, Finn
- Adams, Jonah
- Mittelstaedt, Hana
- Littman, Wats
- Gardner, Kristin



Big Sky Town Series race results, Jan. 30

Big Sky Resort, in partnership with Outlaw Partners (publisher of EBS), hosted the second of seven Big Sky Town Series race days on Jan. 30. The Jan. 23 race was canceled due to five inches of fresh snow. Locals and businesses assembled teams of four to six racers to go toe to toe on the resort's NASTAR course where Big Sky's fastest bunch will be determined.

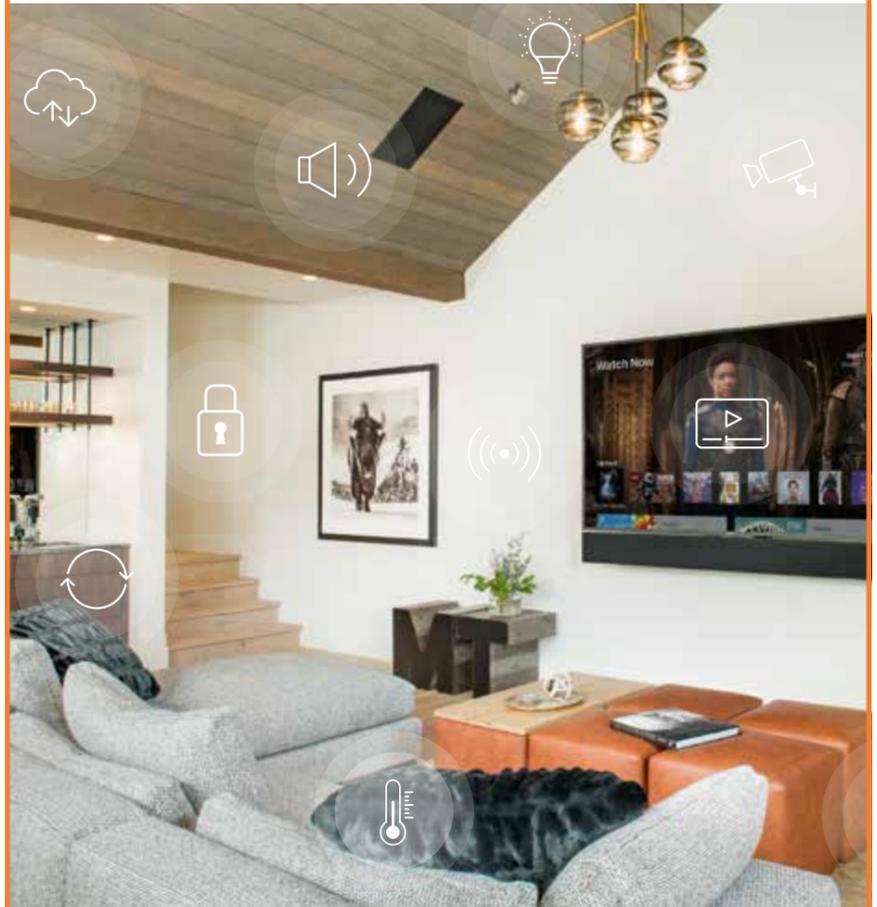
PLACE	TEAM	SCORE	RANK
1	Ambulance Chasers	16.497	1
2	Big Sky Sotheby's	16.455	2
3	Alpine Water	14.510	3
4	VerMontanans	11.975	4
5	Scissorbill's	10.932	5
6	Extras Extras	10.203	6
7	Lone Mtn. Sports	9.957	7
8	Big Sky Mountain Sports	9.820	8
9	Lone Mountain Legends	8.732	9
10	Outlaw Rippers	2.493	10

The next two races will take place Feb. 6 and 13 at Big Sky Resort.



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Ski Tips: The judgment-free skiing zone

BY DAN EGAN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Skiing is a Zen sport. The essence of the experience is to escape from the mundane routine of life and step into the adventure of the now. Gliding on, over and through snow provides us with the opportunity to experience, observe and express the emotion of being wrapped in a winter day.

It is important to remember what you think about your skiing is none of your business. Simply put, don't let performance ruin a good day of skiing. Our job as skiers and snowboarders is to complement the mountain and add the exclamation mark to nature's beauty. From our choices in clothing, to the style and flare in which we descend the slope, we leave our mark in time and space on the mountain.

However, to obtain this level of understanding and expression, one has to be free of self-judgment which includes the elimination of constant evaluation of one's ability.

Freeing yourself of critical thinking in the sport of skiing is one of the most important steps you can take to improve your overall experience on the mountain. If you're in search of the perfect turn or attempting to feel entirely in control during the entire run, there is a strong chance you will feel frustrated throughout the day.

So many people begin each ski day with some sort of judgment and usually it starts with the weather. Is it a beautiful day out? And the answer ultimately depends on your perspective. The next common critical question is what are the conditions? That answer also wholly depends on your perspective. Both of these questions are typically asked before leaving your home, condo or the lodge.

Often people will comment to me that the snow is bad today, and I always answer, "How can snow be bad?" The snow might be firm, soft, slick or windblown, but bad? It's never bad. By never judging the snow I'm able to stay free of judgment that might affect my mood or emotions.

When you move into the judgment-free zone, it's better to observe the weather and conditions. Maybe its windy, or cloudy or sunny. When we raise our awareness of our surroundings, we are embracing rather than judging.



Don't be critical of your skiing technique and you'll enjoy every day spent in the mountains with your skis on. PHOTO COURTESY OF DEGAN MEDIA



Skiing is a Zen sport and with the right attitude you don't need deep powder and sunny skies, like Dan Egan finds here. PHOTO BY JEN BENNETT

The majority of people that ski with me always talk about their mistakes. It amazes me that on a lovely day on the mountain people choose to focus on a negative rather than a positive. As ski guide and coach, I like to observe what skiers do correctly. And as soon as I point out what went right, they counter with their negative or self-judgment and the net result is a reinforcement of the negative rather than the positive.

There are so many aspects of skiing that should be prioritized over performance and becoming aware of this moves us closer to judgment-free zone.

Turning off the critical mind is a constant struggle. First, become aware of how the analytical mind is making judgments about the day and your performance, and once you notice this, quickly change your focus—preferably to something beautiful, a snowy tree, the clouds moving across the sky, or a friend or loved one. This small slight reprieve from the critical will create space for the positive.

Practice this while you are skiing: if a critical thought comes into your mind, replace it instantly by observing something in your immediate surroundings. It takes practice.

On top of the mountain when I start to ski, I breath deeply and with purpose. As the speed builds, I feel the wind on my face, and as my skis begin to turn, I focus on the ski biting into the snow and I allow my eyes to search down the slope. Entering into the next turn, I smile and embrace the excitement of being in the judgment-free ski zone.

Extreme skiing pioneer Dan Egan teaches clinics and guides trips at locations around the world including Big Sky, where he's been teaching this season (contact Big Sky Mountain Sports for availability). Find more information on his camps and clinics at skiclinics.com. Also, don't miss Dan Egan's Mountain Odyssey presentation, an evening of adventure, ski films and stories of his exploits to the most remote regions of the world skiing for Warren Miller, at the Yellowstone Conference Center Amphitheater at Big Sky Resort on March 9 at 7 pm.



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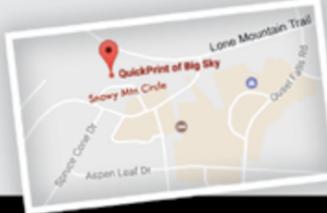


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An Election of two trustees for the Big Sky Fire District Board of Trustees will be held on May 7, 2019.

Declaration of Candidacy forms for the election are available at the Big Sky Fire Department, Station #1 - Westfork Meadows, 650 Rainbow Trout Run, Big Sky, Montana and the Gallatin County Election Department, Gallatin County Courthouse, 311 W. Main Street Room 210, Bozeman, Montana.

Original Declaration of Candidacy forms must be filed with the Gallatin County Election Department no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 11, 2019.

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SECTION 3: OUTDOORS, BUSINESS, HEALTH & DINING



The tradition of 'ski days' pg. 34



On the trail pg. 36



Making it in Big Sky pg. 38

Big Sky Freeride team starts season off strong

BY WALLACE CASPER
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

The Big Sky Freeride team is officially in competition season and it started off in late January at Snowbird Nationals in Utah, perhaps the highest caliber IFSA event in the United States. Watching how much the level of competition has increased over the past few years is amazing. With all the developing freeride teams in the U.S., there is more and more progression within the sport as well as an overall higher standard for judging.

Qualifying runs were held on Jan. 19 and 20 on the Silver Fox venue under the top of the Snowbird tram. Big Sky Freeride represented Montana with some impressive skiing. Nehalem Manka took a fifth place in the 15-18 female ski category. She had the highest line score out of all the female competitors, sending a 15-foot cliff drop at the top and a technical straight-line double drop at the bottom.

Flynn Kabisch took home sixth place in the 12-14 female ski division—a very impressive finish considering this was Kabisch's first national competition and she had terrible visibility during her run. Kabisch is a good "Jedi" skier and still managed to fluidly ski through a rocky pinch into a 5-foot drop. Luuk Mackenzie skied a big line and placed 31st in 15-18 male ski. He had a tiny bobble at the bottom of the venue which made him possibly lose a full point. This shows how competitive this category is.

Finals were scheduled for Jan. 21, but the most intense snowstorm that Snowbird has experienced in the last seven years dropped nearly 2 feet of snow on the mountain in five hours and forced cancellation of the final runs. Results from the qualifying runs served as the final results and the Big Sky athletes and coaches were treated to some of the best powder skiing imaginable as they got face shots and launched large cliff drops into bottomless snow all morning long.



Dawson Raden goes big off a natural feature and earns style points during a freeride competition at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort where he ended up with a fifth place finish in the competitive 15-18 male ski division. PHOTOS BY COOPER RAASCH

After getting back from Snowbird, 17 Big Sky athletes went to Jackson Hole Mountain Resort for the IFSA regional competition. Jackson had a lot of new snow throughout the previous week and conditions were solid. This is a very competitive event because only a certain number of athletes from the IFSA Northern Region—Wyoming, Idaho and Montana—will be selected for the IFSA North American championships.

Big Sky Freeride placed many athletes on the podium, including Elijah Singer's third place in U12 male snowboard; a third place for Blaise Ballantyne in U12 male ski; Isaac Singer's first place in 12-14 male snowboard; first place for Duncan Gentry in 15-18 male snowboard; Flynn Kabisch's second place in 12-14 female ski; Riley Becker's second in 15-18 female ski; and Dawson Raden's fifth place in 15-18 male ski. Jacob Smith got the Bryce Newcomb spirit award for his incredible feat of skiing the venue flawlessly as a nearly completely blind athlete!

Next up for the Big Sky Freeride team is the Grand Targhee IFSA Regional on Feb. 9-10. The team is also looking forward to hosting the IFSA Junior Headwaters Regional competition March 9-10, as well as the IFSA Freeride World Qualifying adult competition March 30-31. Local adult competitors are highly encouraged to participate in the FWQ event and registration opens Feb. 15 at 5 p.m.

This event is expected to be filled within the first few minutes of registration, so be prompt and check freeskiers.org or contact coach Wallace Casper with the Big Sky Freeride team at wallacecasper21@gmail.com for more information.



Elijah Singer, the reigning champion in the U12 IFSA North American male snowboard division, navigates some rocky terrain near the top of the venue at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. Singer ended up on the podium with a third place finish.



RESORT ROUNDUP

Your guide to events, activities and news at Big Sky Resort

The tradition of ‘Ski Days’

BY MYLES WILSON
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – When someone asks what makes Big Sky School District unique, I always bring up “Ski Days.” The title alone may suggest permission to skip school for a recreational sport, but it is more than that. It currently encompasses a school-wide, K-12 multi-week endeavor to not only learn how to slide on snow, but to also have fun skiing and snowboarding.

Before Lone Peak High School opened in 2009 in Big Sky, Ophir Elementary School was small enough that all of the students could go to Big Sky Resort for six Friday afternoons throughout the season. Even when the high school was finalized and included, it was still a small student body. More recently, however, Ski Days have changed slightly. Nowadays, each grade range goes up on alternate days, the whole day is set aside, and each participant goes up to the resort three times a season.

What a student does on Ski Days is highly dependent on what grade they are in. Kindergarten through fifth graders learn how to ski; sixth through eighth graders learn how to snowboard; and ninth through twelfth graders have a freeski day. In addition, students in kindergarten through eighth grade receive free Gold Season Passes—with all access and no blackout dates—to ski at the resort any day they like.



The author poses for a photo with his instructor when he was in first grade in 2008.
PHOTO BY COLLEEN MONTGOMERY

For the high schoolers, if a student is deemed to be academically successful, they receive the “M-BAR-T” discount for a cheaper Gold, Sapphire or Garnet season pass. The M-BAR-T discount isn’t exclusive to Lone Peak High School, but we are one of the few regions in Montana where it’s offered.

There is something for everyone during Ski Days, even for those who have never skied or snowboarded before. Students are placed in a group with others who are at a similar skills level. There is no pressure to ski black diamond runs when your level is the same as a beginner on the magic carpet. Even if you end up hating skiing, for example, I’ve found that my friends who absolutely despise skiing ended up really enjoying snowboarding in middle school.

By far the most fun Ski Days are the ones for high school students. Participants receive a free all-mountain pass for the day and aren’t required to take ski or snowboard lessons; and as long as you check in when you are supposed to, you can go anywhere on the mountain you want to with your friends.

As a senior at Lone Peak High School, I have been to nearly every single Ski Day offered, and every single one has been fantastic. It’s a time to not only hang out with friends, but also to learn new skills that you may use for the rest of your life—and winter sports are also a great form of exercise. Ski Days are an embodiment of what makes our school special, and also makes growing up in Big Sky even better.



Big Sky students prepare to participate in “Ski Days” at Big Sky Resort. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY SCHOOL DISTRICT #72

Storms pound Lone Peak to close out January

BY DOUG HARE
EBS STAFF

Sixteen feet of snow has fallen so far at Big Sky Resort this season with late January snowstorms that brought over 4 feet of fresh powder in the last 12 days of January—including seven days in a row with snow accumulation.

Big Sky Resort recently announced the return of the popular April Pass featuring 21 days of spring skiing for \$221. Passes can be purchased at aprilpass.com before Feb. 11 and tram access is included. This year, the April Pass will also include lodging discounts and other exclusive offers.

By the numbers, Jan. 30

Mid-mountain base: 50”

High alpine base: 77”

Andesite base: 45”

Lifts open: 36/36

Trails open: 295/321

Inbounds acreage: 5,705/5,800

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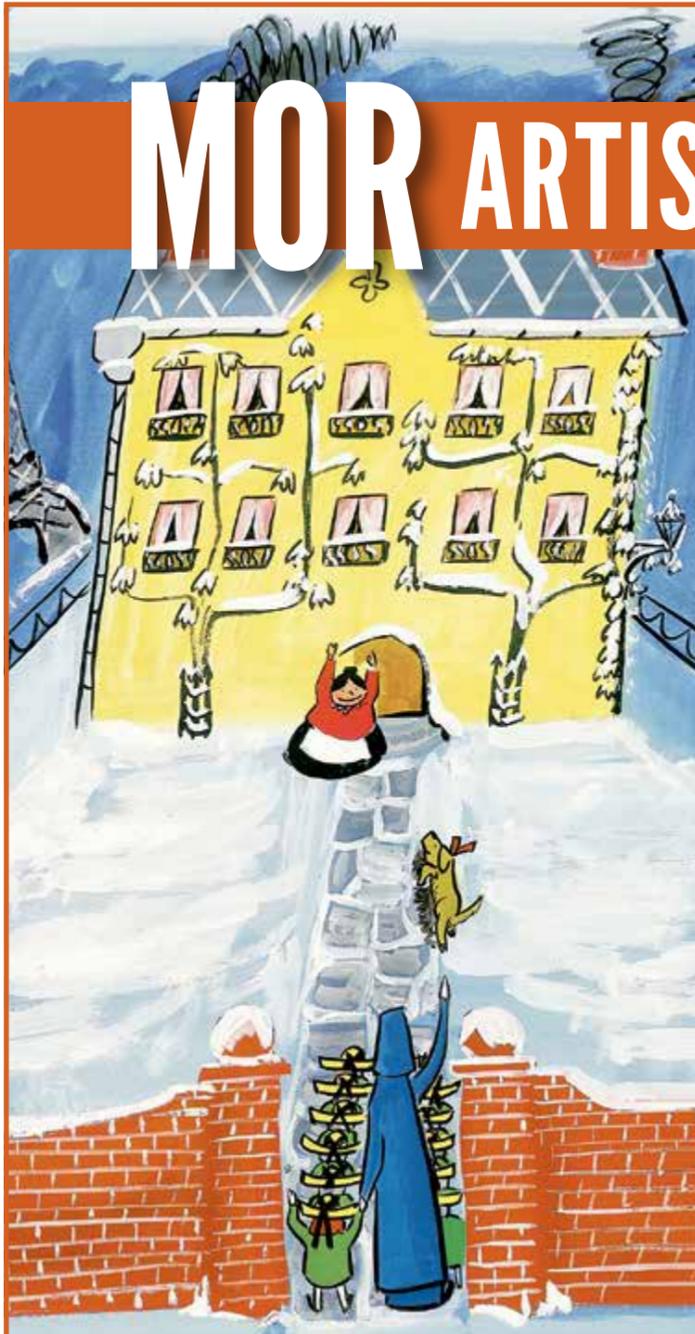
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On the Trail: Winter biking 101

Explore local hiking, biking and equestrian trails with Big Sky Community Organization's trail series.

BY SARA MARINO

BSCO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Take a look around the trails of Big Sky, and you'll see that you don't need to put your bike away just because the snow starts flying. Winter biking, or fat biking, is a growing sport and you don't need to be a hardcore rider or invest in all new gear to try it out. I spoke with local biking enthusiast and Big Sky Community Organization winter grooming volunteer, Matt Jennings, to get some tips on how to get started.

Layer up

Even though it's cold outside, fat biking is a workout like cross-country skiing. Dress in breathable layers to keep warm and comfortable without overheating. Put on warm socks and winter boots and you'll be set if you find yourself off the trail.

Take it slow

Riding on snow will be slower than what you're used to when riding on dirt. Be aware of conditions on the trail changing from packed snow, to ice, to soft snow. When riding downhill, stay in control and light on the brakes to avoid skidding off the trail. Keeping your weight to the back of the saddle and your body relaxed also helps.

What to ride

A fat bike comes equipped with tires 4-5 inches wide compared to a typical mountain bike tire that would max out around 2.5 inches. And whereas the



The Hummocks Trail in Big Sky Town Center offers a great location for intermediate fat biking. PHOTO BY MATT JENNINGS

tire pressure in a mountain bike is kept around 28-30 pounds per square inch, fat bike tires are kept at about 6 psi. This allows the tire to flatten out across the snow, creating a stable surface and flotation. If your bike leaves deep ruts in the snow, let some air out of the tires.

Where to go

If you're new to fat biking, a good place to start will be the groomed community trails in Big Sky Town Center and the Big Sky Community Park. The trails are wide and mostly flat to give you a good feel for the bike. Once you've mastered that, the Hummocks trail is a local favorite to try. This trail is packed down by users, so try to stay on the packed trail or you will find yourself quickly sinking in the snow.

If you're looking to get out of town, consider Harriman State Park, located south of Island Park, Idaho, about a 1.5-hour drive from Big Sky. The park features 24 miles of groomed multi-use trails, and yurts for an overnight stay. Fat biking is a great way to extend your biking season, stay in shape, and just have fun. Fat bikes can be rented at Gallatin Alpine Sports in Big Sky.

For more information about Big Sky's parks, trails and recreation programs, visit bscomt.org. The Big Sky Community Organization engages and leads people to recreational and enrichment opportunities through thoughtful development of partnerships, programs and places.

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INSIDE YELLOWSTONE

Yellowstone to offer summer workshops for teachers

BY CHRISTINE GIANAS WEINHEIMER
YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

Are you a teacher, or do you know of a teacher, who would like to get students excited about learning from the outdoors? Educators play an increasingly critical role in connecting young people to parks and wild places, and those living near Yellowstone National Park have one of the nation's premier outdoor classrooms in their backyard.

In order to help teachers draw from this wonderful source of learning and inspiration, the park offers popular workshops especially for educators, taught collaboratively by the National Park Service and Yellowstone Forever. These workshops are designed to aid teachers in discovering innovative ways to incorporate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) into their classrooms.

The Yellowstone STEAM Teacher Workshop will take place two times this year: June 17-21 and July 15-19. In Yellowstone, participants will learn how to use both traditional and innovative methods to incorporate art into STEM lessons for middle school and high school students. Throughout the workshop, the group will explore new ideas and strategies while networking with other educators on best practices for cross-curricular design.

The first day will include an evening orientation with Yellowstone Forever and NPS staff. The following three days will be spent immersed in Yellowstone's natural wonders, introducing hands-on activities that participants can use with students. Each day will include a mix of classroom lessons and field activities, followed by evening sessions with guest experts to further integrate art with STEM and give participants tools to engage



Hikers walk among wildflowers in Lamar Valley. NPS PHOTO

a variety of learning styles in the classroom. The final morning will be devoted to discussing ways to incorporate Yellowstone STEAM into the classroom and creating individual action plans.

In addition to STEAM workshops, Yellowstone will offer a Yellowstone Spark Teacher Workshop this summer from July 29 to Aug. 2. With Yellowstone as their classroom, teachers will explore STEAM and other interdisciplinary activities that will enliven learning for students in grades four through eight. This active workshop incorporates field hikes and is designed especially for teachers who want to use Yellowstone to excite students, whether in the classroom or when they bring students to the park.

"Yellowstone National Park is the perfect backdrop and laboratory for teachers to immerse themselves in experiential place-based learning," said Amanda Hagerty, assistant director of Institute Programming at Yellowstone Forever. "The information and skillsets gained through these workshops can be transformed across a variety of educational disciplines and locations."

To participate in one of the STEAM Teacher Workshops, interested teachers must fill out an application, which is available at Yellowstone.org. A registration fee including meals and lodging is required for those selected to attend. Programs are based in Gardiner, Montana, at Yellowstone Forever's Overlook Field Campus. Teacher workshop applications are due Feb. 28 and selected teachers will be contacted by April 1. To register for a Yellowstone Spark Teacher Workshop, visit yellowstone.org/teacher. Financial aid is available.

Yellowstone Forever is the official nonprofit partner of Yellowstone National Park.



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Making it in Big Sky: Shelly Bermont Fine Jewelry

BY BAY STEPHENS
EBS STAFF WRITER

After working as a flight attendant, realtor, caterer, baker chef and full-time mom, Shelly Bermont's midlife crisis led to making her own jewelry. She began redesigning jewelry given to her, making it less ostentatious, more comfortable for everyday wear. Then her friends began asking her to redesign their jewelry.

While still living part time in Miami, Florida, Bermont began learning how to smith her own jewelry studying under Bozeman goldsmiths while at a second home in Big Sky during the summers. She discovered a passion for pearls—which gleam in many of her store's showcases—and earned a Geologist Institute of America certification.

She had been coming to Big Sky for 25 years before deciding the area had grown enough to support a high-end jewelry store. Shelly Bermont Fine Jewelry opened in August of 2017 in the Meadow Village Center next to OZsage Therapeutic Massage and Skin Care. She employs four women, all of whom have GIA certifications that ensure an understanding of gemstones and diamonds.

As part of this ongoing series, Bermont shared her thoughts on what it takes to make it as a small business owner in Big Sky.

Explore Big Sky: *What has been the key to your success?*

Shelly Bermont: I think that I stay very true to myself. I design jewelry that speaks to me, that I love, and I wear. And I'm very passionate about that. None of my girls are on commission because I don't want hard sells. ... I've always said I don't want anyone selling anything to [a customer] that's not right for them.

For us, jewelry is not a necessity in life. If you're buying, you want it to be something you put on and it makes you feel pretty, and you wear it, and you enjoy it.

EBS: *Do you remember your first customer or sale?*

S.B.: Oh yes. I was making jewelry for myself ... and one of my friends asked me how much I'd sell it for. ... She wanted a pair of the earrings and I think I sold them for \$35 or something. But the fact that somebody wanted something I'd made, [I thought,] "Oh, this could go somewhere."

EBS: *What are the biggest obstacles to operating a small business in Big Sky?*

S.B.: I think because we don't have a very clear distinction between the



From left to right, Emily Melton, Connie Lunt, Shelly Bermont, Josie Erickson and Savannah Everhardt model part of Shelly Bermont Fine Jewelry's collection of pearls and diamonds. Each of the five are Geologist Institute of America-certified. PHOTO BY BAY STEPHENS

Meadow Village versus the Town Center, people think that Town Center's the only place that has stores. ... Kate Tompkins, who owns [The] Trove [West] said once, "We should call [Meadow Village] the Old Village and [Town Center] the new village so that people would know [the difference]." ... We don't get walk-in traffic. I advertise so people find me.

EBS: *What are some challenges of operating a jewelry business of which most people aren't aware?*

S.B.: Well, the setup every day. Every piece of jewelry goes in a 5,200-pound safe [at night]. So, every night we take everything out of the cases and lock it up. ... [In the morning] it's 45 minutes of several people working to get the cases set up.

[Also] the insurance I have to carry—I have seven [facial recognition] cameras that were extremely expensive.

EBS: *What does your process for sourcing raw materials look like?*

S.B.: I buy from vendors that guarantee me what I'm buying. If I say, "I'm looking for conflict-free stones"—and that's all I buy—they will [show those stones to me]. Just about everyone now is sourcing conflict-free, because it's become a big issue ... I don't want slave labor in mines producing stones [I buy].

EBS: *What's the best piece of business advice you've received?*

S.B.: Don't overspend. When starting a jewelry business, it's very easy to overspend on inventory. You don't want to put yourself in a position where you owe money and have to produce x amount of dollars.

EBS: *What advice would you give to small business owners just starting out in Big Sky?*

S.B.: Know your market, know what you need. I knew that I did not need foot traffic, that people looking for fine jewelry would find me [but] if you were selling cupcakes, you need foot traffic. So, you need to understand what you need, and your location is important.

EBS: *As a business owner and resident, what do you see as the area that deserves the most focus in order for Big Sky to successfully grow?*

S.B.: Affordable housing. I'm very fortunate because all four of my employees live here in Big Sky. I think a lot of businesses here have issues with getting and keeping employees because of the lack of affordable housing. We really have to get a handle on affordable housing so that people who work in Big Sky can live in Big Sky.

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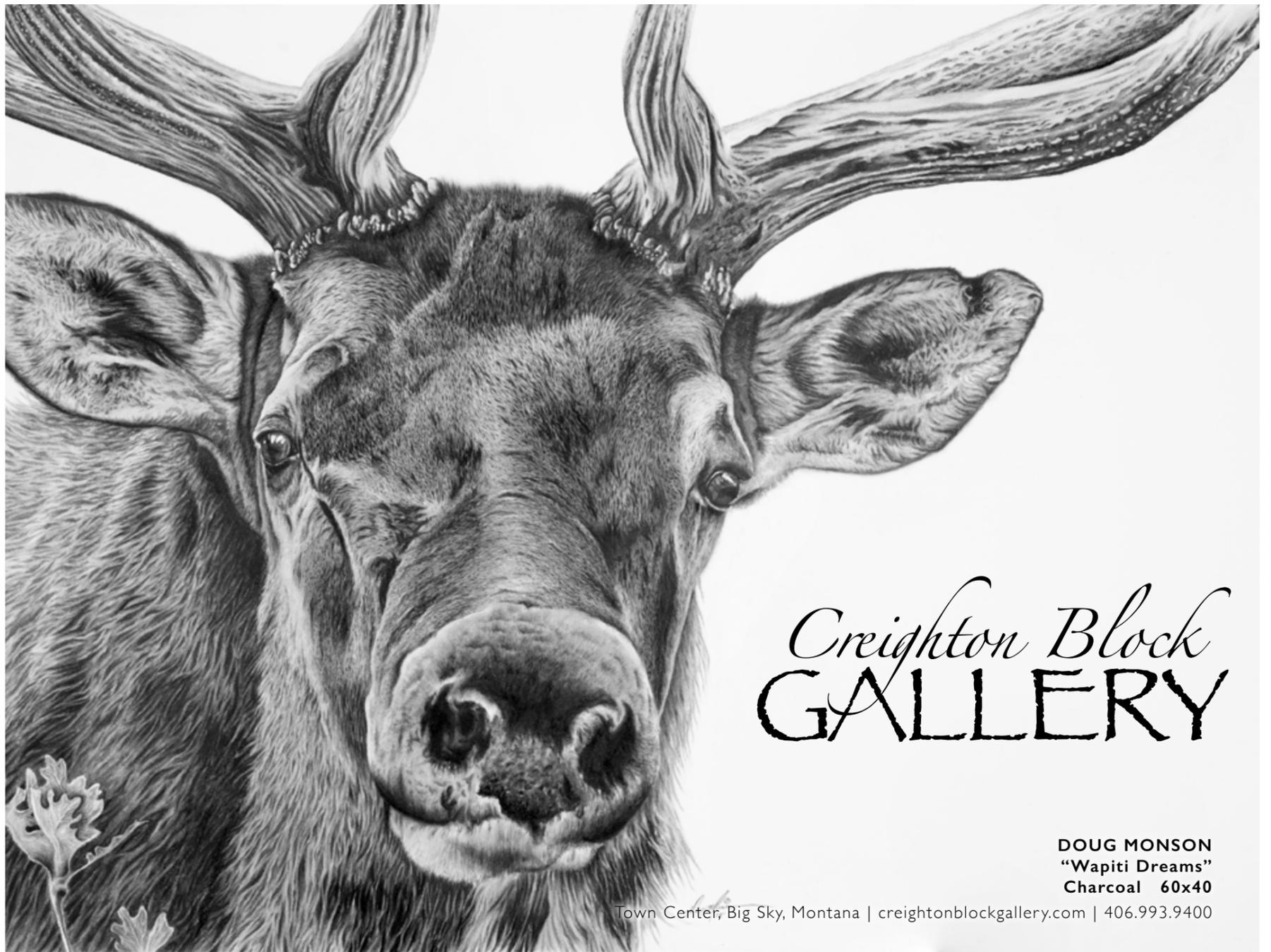


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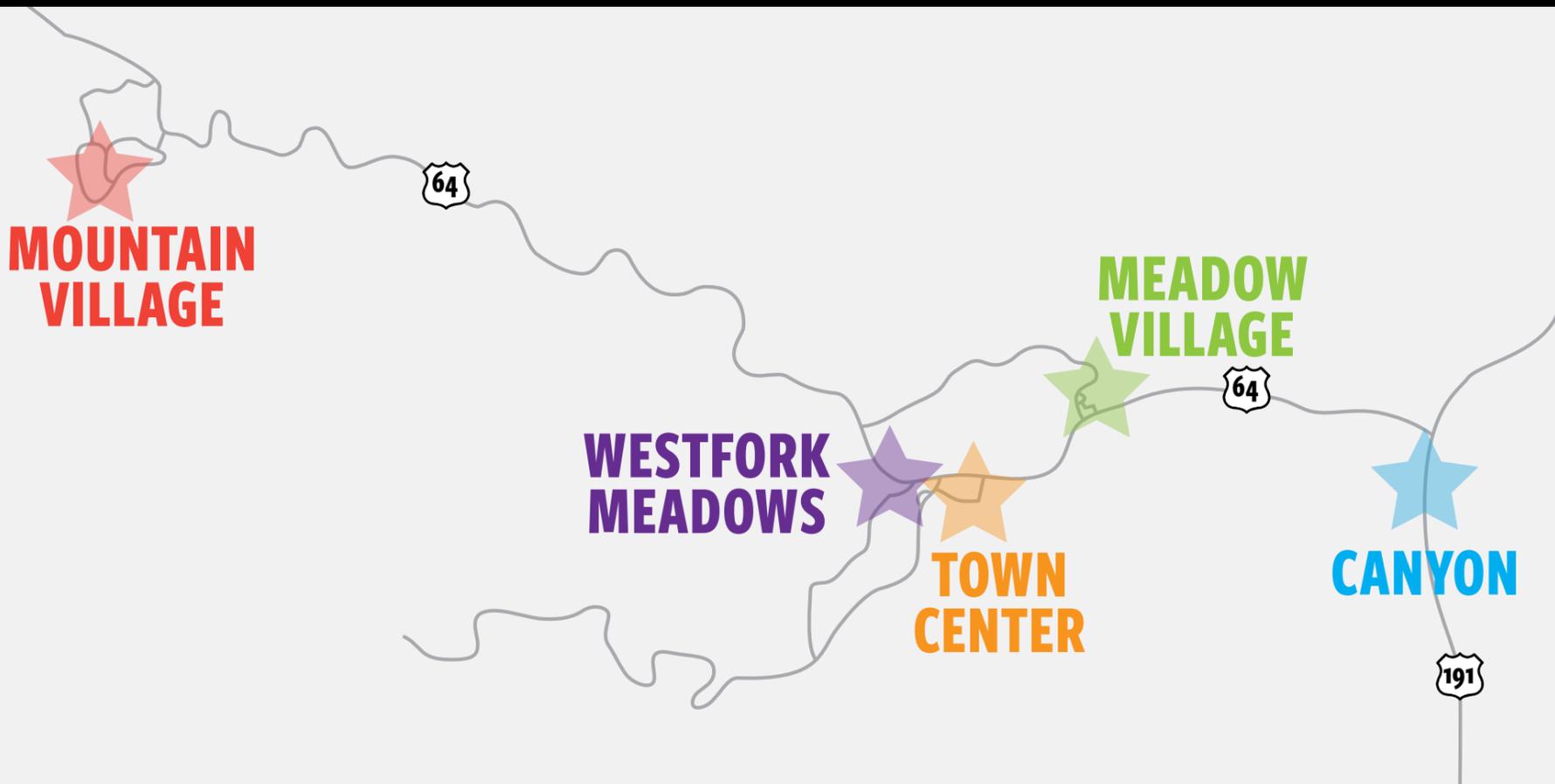
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Yours in health The importance of sleep



BY DR. ANDREA WICK
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

One-third of the population has suffered from insomnia at some point in their lives. No matter how well you eat or how healthy you are, if you are not sleeping it is nearly impossible to be well.

According to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, insomnia leads to a higher chance of work-related accidents, increased health care costs and a decrease in overall quality of life.

The Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Healthcare in Cologne, Germany, recommends that adults need about seven hours of sleep per night, whereas children need nine hours of sleep.

Research has found that insomnia triggers include anxiety and stress, alcohol and drugs use, pain, needing to urinate at night, hot flashes, hormonal changes, menstruation, sleep walking, sleep apnea, grinding your teeth, the need for drugs such as anti-depressants, shift work and noise.

Epidemiological studies find that diets consisting of high sugar and carbohydrate intake cause an increased risk of insomnia. In relation to alcohol, some people can fall asleep easily after drinking, however it interrupts the natural rapid eye movement (REM) cycle causing sleep to be less restful.

There are many different holistic treatments for insomnia and sleeplessness. Having a consistent sleep routine or “sleep hygiene” is a good first start. Take a hot bath before bed with essential oils such as lavender. The Journal of Science and Healing found that college students who used lavender oil at bedtime had better performance, vibrancy and the ability to sleep. Exercising first thing in the morning has a positive effect on falling asleep faster at night. Also, avoid eating large meals

right before bedtime, and don't consume coffee or caffeine past noon.

Keep electronics out of the bedroom and avoid watching television before bed. Sleep.org states that 71 percent of Americans sleep with their phone in hand, phone next to their nightstand or have their phone in bed with them. Nomophobia is the fear of being without a smart phone and research is showing the negative impact of electronics on sleep hygiene. Blue light is emitted from electronics such as televisions, laptops and phones. Blue light tricks the brain into thinking it's daylight. This blue light stops the production of melatonin which is an important hormone that aids in sleep.

Supplementation is a natural approach to insomnia. I usually recommend valerian, melatonin, passionflower, magnesium or Gamma-Amino Butyric acid depending on the patient's symptoms. Valerian and passionflower are herbs that help create a calm state in the body. Magnesium citrate is a viable option in helping the nervous system relax at nighttime. GABA is a neurotransmitter in the brain and when there is a GABA deficiency, symptoms such as anxiety, depression, worry and insomnia may occur.

Lastly, cognitive therapy techniques such as meditation help improve sleep patterns. JAMA Internal Medicine concluded that mindfulness meditation improved sleep outcomes, and decreased depression and fatigue. Mindfulness meditation involves focusing on the breath and bringing the mind's attention to the present without drifting into concerns or anxieties about the past or future. It helps you break the cycle of chronic everyday thoughts to activate a relaxation response, using a specific meditation technique that feels right for you.

Dr. Andrea Wick is a chiropractor and applied kinesiologist. She graduated from Life University in Marietta, Georgia, and now practices in Big Sky. She has a passion for holistic health care and being active in the outdoors. Her practice, Healing Hands Chiropractic, is located in the Meadow Village Center. Visit drandreawick.com to learn more.



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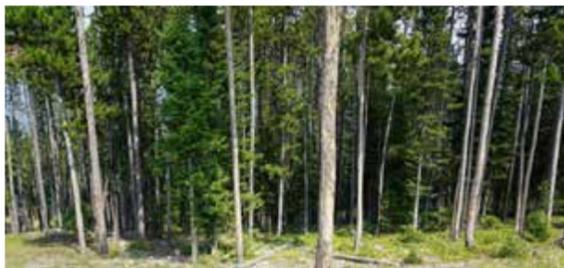


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AMUSE-BOUCHE

Amuse-bouche refers to an appetizer, and by French translation means, “to entertain the mouth.” It offers a glimpse into what you should expect from a meal. Also it’s free, compliments of the chef.

The original food truck



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

One night, after a conversation with a chef friend, I started thinking about the origins of the food truck. So, I began to dig to see what I could stir up.

It turns out, in 1974, a man by the name of Raul Martinez made some modifications to an old ice cream truck and turned it into a mobile taco truck in East L.A. While Los Angeles was indeed at the forefront of the modern food truck, with Austin tight on its heels, that still wasn’t the true origin of mobile cuisine.

Then I remembered my first night visiting my best friend in 1997 in Liege, Belgium, when I had fries from a van at 2 a.m.—and my share of waffles from various trailers and vans on that same trip. This was long before we experienced any mobile food as we know it today. Again, perhaps you could find one in Austin or Los Angeles, but those weren’t the first either.

But one night, I was watching an old Western on television. I can’t remember which one, but there was scene where all the cowboys were sitting around a campfire eating, with an old ornery cook in the background, and it suddenly occurred to me.

After the American Civil War, the beef market began expanding, especially in Texas. Cattle herds were getting mobile and many of those new drives included routes and/or destinations that were not in proximity to railroads.

So, in 1866, a Texan by the name of Charles Goodnight saw a solution to feeding the men for weeks on end on cattle drives.

Charles made some modifications to a Studebaker wagon, which were, at the time, surplus wagons used by the U.S. Army. He added a large box with drawers and compartments, a water barrel, and a canvas hammock for transporting firewood.

The chuck wagon, or “field kitchen,” was born. It quickly became the only real way to feed cowboys on the range. And in many respects, was as integral to the success of the drive as a cowboy’s pair of boots.

But the food coming from these wagons was far from the street tacos, doughnuts, and hamburgers you see from today’s mobile units. Most commonly, it was items that were hearty yet easy to prepare and keep, such as beans, cured meats, coffee and sourdough biscuits, as well as the occasional animal that was shot along the way.

And when you were in the area of the chuck wagon, you were in the cook’s domain—and they were the boss. Even the head cattleman didn’t dare cross “Cookie” at meal time. It seems even then that the chef was possessive of his kitchen. But to be fair, most of the men on those cattle drives were teenage boys, whereas the cook was generally old enough to be their father, and often acted as such, giving them advice or reprimanding them when they were not acting like men.

The chuck wagon didn’t have a combustible engine or require a parking permit or food service license, but in my mind, it was the original food truck.

Scott Mechura has spent a life in the hospitality industry. He is a former certified beer judge and currently the executive chef at Buck’s T-4 Lodge in Big Sky.



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An evening at LMR's sleigh ride dinner

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY
EBS DIGITAL EDITOR

BIG SKY – Tucked away among stands of Douglas fir and lodgepole pine on the gentle slopes of Lone Mountain Ranch sits the humble North Fork cabin. The unassuming log structure, oil-lamp lit and warmed by a roughly 100-year-old railroad cook stove, conjures images of an old West, a brief epoch ushered in by the westward expansion that defined 19th-century America.

Patrons of the ranch don't venture up the pass to the cabin by foot—nay, they ride there atop wooden sleighs with seats for up to 16 adult passengers, pulled by comparably massive draft horses. As the snow falls, guests ride with wool blankets across their laps, discussing what patiently awaits their arrival: an epic feast.

It's a tradition spanning 35 years since the cabin's construction concluded in 1983.



Draft horses of several breeds pull guest-laden sleighs to the legendary North Fork cabin. PHOTOS COURTESY OF LONE MOUNTAIN RANCH



Lone Mountain Ranch staff prepares the intimate dining experience found at the North Fork cabin.

The culinary traditions of that storied era, those of a nascent Montana, are honored within the walls of the North Fork cabin where lucky diners enjoy a meal cooked by executive chef Eric Gruber.

Gruber, who has worked in this role with LMR for three years, and his team serve a mouth-watering menu: freshly-baked herbed popovers, potato leek soup with smoked garlic oil and chives, and cast iron turkey pot pie open for the main act featuring a succulent prime rib roast with mashed potatoes and a roasted vegetable medley sides.

“Our team makes this traditional prime rib and we work to always source excellent, local beef,” said Michael Jacquard, manager at the Horn and Cantele, Lone Mountain Ranch's primary restaurant that acts as a home-base kitchen for the cabin. “The cook stove in the cabin finishes the dishes for serving.”

An apple and huckleberry cobbler à la mode accompanied by “cowboy coffee,” a rich brew made from direct contact of equal parts water and grinds cooked for several hours over open flame, takes home the four-course menu.

As food is served family style, a vibrant shuffle of arms plating and passing food characterizes each of the six tables, inspiring a sense of diner camaraderie rarely found in out-of-home eateries. Such was the case at my table at the North Fork cabin the other night; it was all smiles.

Complementing the food, Helena native Bruce Anfinson played original numbers such as, “Homegrown Tomatoes,” and, “The Ballad of Minnie and Pearl,” on a guitar worn with time and use. The latter, named after two of Anfinson's favorite draft horses, underscores his cowboy roots—another supporting piece of the old school, western aura found at the North Fork.

“It was a sleigh ride in a snow globe, to a beautifully crafted cabin, where I was then delighted with scrumptious food and live entertainment,” said Big Sky resident Natalie Osborne. “[It was] straight out of a Hallmark movie; truly memorable.”

Climbing back into the sleigh at the close of the meal, I dusted a light snowfall from my wool blanket. Filled with delicious food and nostalgic spirit, I looked back and watched as the cabin slowly disappeared from view, hidden from 2019 by the sentinel fir and pine. I knew my comrades were equally struck, as they laughed and sang broken lyrics from Anfinson's songs to the rhythm of the swaying sleigh. Some stared upward, in silence, at the evolving canopy lines.

With a trained steadiness of pace, the horses guided our sleigh down those slopes delivering us back into our world, one very distant from that of the North Fork.

Visit lonemountainranch.com for booking details and more information about LMR's sleigh-ride dinner.



Diners at the North Fork cabin enjoy their meals to the warm light of candles and hanging oil lamps.

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Big Sky Resort plates third annual Guild of Sommelier dinner

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY
EBS STAFF WRITER

BIG SKY – For those interested in the fine art of food and wine pairings, the third annual Guild of Sommelier Dinner at the Summit Hotel's Peaks Restaurant is just around the corner. It's a winter continuation of the resort's popular Vine and Dine Festival.

On Feb. 9 at 6 p.m., enthusiasts of this celebrated culinary tradition of pairing food with complimentary wines will have the opportunity to indulge in the works of decorated chef Scott Giambastiani and esteemed Master Sommelier Jay Fletcher.

Giambastiani, a Bay Area native, has worked at renowned restaurants such as The Dining Room at the Ritz Carlton San Francisco, The Lark Creek Inn, and Viognier under top chefs including Bradley Ogden, Gary Danko and Sylvain Portay. In 2006, Giambastiani joined Google as executive chef, and now serves as global program chef and operations manager for the company.

Fletcher, executive director of fine wine and master sommelier for Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits of Colorado, boasts a diversified presence in wine and restaurant industries, facilitating fine wine sales, appraising and managing cellars, holding lectures on the craft, training fine dining restaurant staff, planning specialty events, and devising selective wine lists.

This single seating, intimate dinner experience sports an impressive menu designed by chef Giambastiani: baby vegetable tartlet, deviled eggs, and a duck-bacon "BLT" inspired dish with foie gras mousse on brioche set the evening's sophisticated palate. Main dinner courses include a pumpkin risotto and black truffle dish, followed by bison short ribs with a gremolata crust. Finally, a selection of local Montana cheeses and deserts—hazelnut cream, coffee sponge cake, chocolate crumble, and white meringue—close the meal.

Carefully selected wines sourced from the distinguished Guide of Sommelier cellars complement each menu item. Patrons can expect rare and old vintages from California and French vineyards.

Combining their impressive, veteran knowledge of the world of fine dining, Giambastiani and Fletcher know it is as much about the experience and ambiance as it is about the food—attendees can expect superb service along with educational discussion on the cuisine and wines.

"These are obviously two very talented individuals," said Stacie Mesuda, public relations manager for Big Sky Resort. "It's going to be a great evening; very memorable."

Visit bigskyresort.com/events for details.

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American Life in Poetry: Column 717

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE

Ryler Dustin of Bellingham, Washington, is a graduate student in our creative writing program at the University of Nebraska, and this lovely poem is from the manuscript of a book for which he's hoping to find a publisher.

To Make Color By Ryler Dustin

Every morning, my grandmother cleaned the Fischer stove in the back of the trailer, lifted ash in a shovel, careful

not to spill the white-gray dust. "Precious," she said, her breath smoking in the cold. "Precious" in winter's first lavender

not-quite-light—and you could smell it, the faintest acrid hint of ash, a crispness calling you from bed. You could watch her

cap it in a chicory coffee can to stack among others, back bent from a long-gone fever. "For the garden in spring," she said.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Clothing
 - 5 Russian news agency
 - 9 Hebrew letter
 - 12 Pain
 - 13 Spore sacs
 - 14 Laconian clan group
 - 15 Moon of Saturn
 - 16 Countersink
 - 17 Compass direction
 - 18 Telegraph signal
 - 20 Large square pattern
 - 22 Soldiers
 - 25 Shellac
 - 27 Exudate plant
 - 28 Fiddler crab genus
 - 29 Cleopatra's attendant
 - 31 Sound (pref.)
 - 34 Head covering
 - 35 Of the throat
 - 37 Eng. cathedral
- DOWN**
- 38 Rosebud, e.g.
 - 40 Wife of Ramachandra
 - 41 Female ruff
 - 42 Air-to-air missile (abbr.)
 - 44 Arabic letter
 - 45 Nocturnal mammal
 - 46 Sauce
 - 49 Indian dance drama
 - 51 Arab. garment
 - 52 First miracle site
 - 54 Mayan year
 - 58 Mother of Hezekiah
 - 59 Warm
 - 60 Berne's river
 - 61 Israelite tribe
 - 62 Gr. wine container
 - 63 Carplike fish

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

O	B	E	S	N	A	A	C	S			
A	L	A	S	T	I	E	R	H	A	A	B
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C	F	S	S	A	P	I	D	T	A	I	D
	A	N	I	S	A	T	I				
C	H	I	D	E	C	A	R	I	O	L	E
P	I	N	D	W	E	N	B	U	O	Y	
R	E	V	E	R	I	E	M	E	S	N	E
	E	R	I	S	W	A	R				
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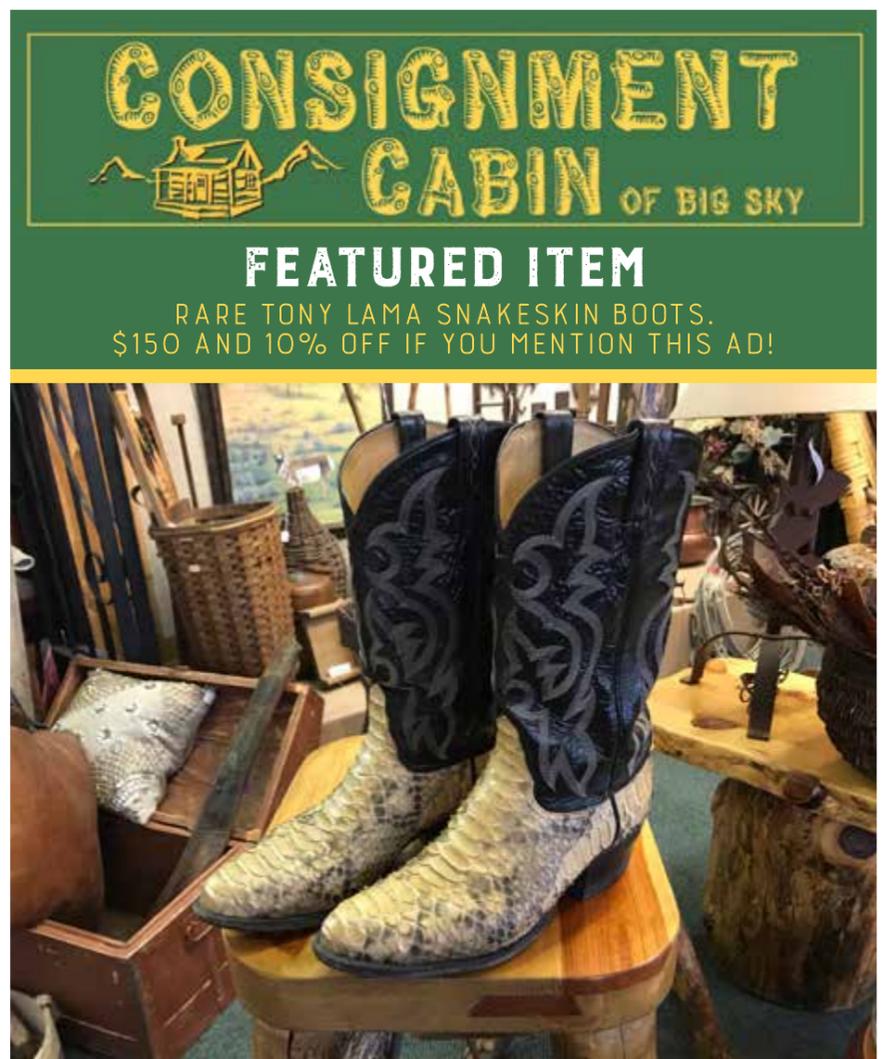
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SECTION 4: ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Auction for the Arts **pg. 50**'The Last Five Years' **pg. 51**39th Annual Pie Auction **pg. 53**

The Well of creativity

Local band sees early success

BY TYLER ALLEN
EBS MANAGING EDITOR

BIG SKY – Dammit Lauren and The Well have been playing together for just over a year, but their collective musical background in Big Sky runs deep. The four band members have left their mark with local outfits such as The Riot Act, Gallatin Grass Project and Bottom of the Barrel, among other solo and collaborative performances throughout the years.

Next month the band will release its debut album of 10 original songs and host a release party on March 22 at Choppers Grub and Pub in Big Sky Town Center.

The group consists of guitarist Brian Stumpf, Lauren Jackson on bass guitar and lead vocals, Ben Macht playing electric mandolin and Shane Stalling on drums. They began performing as The Well but soon found there are a number of bands that share that name, so they added “Dammit Lauren” to create a unique moniker—and to honor a joke they share during practices.

“Because [Lauren] brought so much to the table, we would always blame her for any little flub,” Stumpf said. “I realize it’s a mouthful, but it’s a little sexier.”

Jackson moved here in 2006 after attending the University of Montana in Missoula, and played guitar with country rock band Bottom of the Barrel for five years. The Illinois native says she picked up the instrument when she was around 12 years old and has been singing most of her life.

“I said I’d move to Big Sky for just one winter and that was 13 years ago,” said Jackson, adding that while she and Stumpf have written most of the band’s songs together, she’s impressed by each band members’ interpretation of new material as they polish it into a finished product.

All four artists are quick to point out the creativity they share during the song writing and rehearsal process, as well as performing live. “I’ve been in other bands with weird energy, but the four of us all get along so well,” Macht said. “Our chemistry as a band, I really believe that’s what people see and feel.”

Macht grew up in central Wisconsin and lived in Vail for eight years before moving to Big Sky in 2002. He started playing mandolin in 2004 while working at the Yellowstone Club and considers mandolinist Michael Kang of The String Cheese Incident a major influence.



The band performed during the inaugural Moonlight MusicFest last summer at Moonlight Basin. PHOTO COURTESY OF LOVE STREET MEDIA



Dammit Lauren and the Well performs as the opening act for the Kitchen Dwellers last summer during Big Sky’s Music in the Mountains concert series. PHOTO BY KENE SPERRY

“It’s fun to get loud and play some rock ‘n’ roll with that thing,” Macht said. “I try to do stuff with it that isn’t typically done on a mandolin.” Macht has been the manager of lift maintenance at Big Sky Resort for three years and will end his eight-year tenure in the department after this season. He noted the timing of this band coming together as well as their commitment to music as big reasons why he’s leaving the resort.

Macht and Stumpf played together for years in the local bluegrass band Gallatin Grass Project, but that group was losing steam around the same time that Jackson’s Bottom of the Barrel was doing the same. Stumpf and Stalling have been jamming together and performing as The Riot Act since around 2010.

Stumpf grew up in Vermont and in high school studied vocational technology, both in jazz and contemporary music. He attended Penn State University before moving to Big Sky where he has become a fixture in the après ski scene. Stumpf points to the band members’ shared interest in alternative and psychedelic rock that allows them to improvise and create a sound that is uniquely theirs.

Stalling hails from Minneapolis and moved to southwest Montana in 2003. His father is a jazz drummer and while a drum kit lived in his basement growing up, he didn’t learn to play until he and a friend performed Green Day’s “When I Come Around” in a fifth-grade talent show. Stalling enjoys the diverse musical backgrounds each member brings to the band.

“It’s a really big mix of styles that we each have,” Stalling said. “We all have super different personalities and most of the time they mesh together really well.”

Dammit Lauren and The Well has already played some notable shows in its nascent career, including the Pond Skim after-party at Big Sky Resort last April and their recent New Year’s Eve gig at the resort’s Montana Jack.

During live shows, the band focuses on playing originals from the upcoming album, as well as more obscure covers such as The Replacements’ “Can’t Hardly Wait,” a Ween song called “Kim Smoltz” and The Jayhawks’ “I’d Run Away.”

You’ll find Dammit Lauren and The Well performing throughout southwest Montana from the end of February until Big Sky Resort closes in April. This summer the band hopes to ride the momentum of their debut album to play bigger outdoor venues and festivals.

Reception, ‘Paint and Sip’ party added to Auction for the Arts schedule

ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

The Arts Council of Big Sky’s popular Auction for the Arts fundraiser has added some new events this year, making for an even more exciting weekend of arts activities in Big Sky. The auction itself is on Saturday, March 30, at the Moonlight Lodge, but the fun starts on Friday and finishes up on Sunday morning.

The weekend kicks off with an opening reception with artists Terry Cooke Hall and David Mensing at the Big Sky Sotheby’s Town Center office on Friday, March 29, from 5-7 p.m. Both artists are new participants in this year’s quick finish live auction. Bozeman artist Terry Cooke Hall focuses primarily on women of the modern West, painting them with color and flair, adding her own unique touch to these subjects.

Oregon palette knife artist David Mensing’s work is featured in collections and exhibitions across the nation and around the world. Numerous periodicals have highlighted his work with feature articles and cover images, including American Art Collector, Southwest Art and Western Art Collector.

Also new this year is a “Paint and Sip” event at Buck’s T-4 Lodge on Saturday, from 9-11:30 a.m. Co-facilitated by live auction artist Julie Chapman and silent auction artist Megan Buecking, this intimate gathering will feature a mimosa bar and painting sessions with the artists, and all art supplies will be provided. Chapman is a diverse artist working in scratchboard, oil and water media, and her subjects include equine, wildlife and Western riders. Buecking is a local artist and the art teacher at Lone Peak High School in Big Sky. Tickets are limited for this event and are available on the arts council web site.



Montana artist Julie Chapman (right) will be featured at the Paint and Sip event on Saturday, March 30, as part of the Arts Council’s annual Auction for the Arts fundraising gala. PHOTO BY DAVE PECUNIES

Finally, there will be a free “thank you” breakfast for live auction artists and successful live auction bidders, on Sunday from 9-11 a.m. at Buck’s T-4.

For more information about the auction and these additional events, visit bigskyarts.org or call (406) 995-2742.

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‘The Last Five Years’ creative team blends regional, national talent

WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Over the weekend of Feb. 22-24, the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center will welcome the Off-Broadway musical “The Last Five Years” to Big Sky. The musical will feature Big Sky favorite and Broadway star Abby Mueller, who participated in last year’s “Concert for America,” and her recent Broadway co-star Ben Jacoby, as they portray the dissolution of a young couple’s marriage.

Jason McDowell-Green will direct this production of “The Last Five Years.” Speaking about the complexity of directing a musical with such a complex chronology—Jamie, played by Jacoby, tells his version of the story chronologically, while Cathy, played by Mueller, tells her story in reverse—McDowell-Green said, “You have to dig into it like a private eye. Preparing for this work is almost like building a map of the play.”

The audience will only see two actors onstage, but they will take in the hard work and imagination of the entire creative team, all of whom have been working for weeks on the production. “This show might appear simple at first glance, but the amount of preparation and ingenuity a team pours into a show like this is remarkable,” said John Zirkle, executive director of WMPAC. The play will employ separate designers for costume, sound, lighting and the set, in addition to the director, stage manager, music director, and a guitarist and cellist, who will provide the live music for the production.

“We’re obviously thrilled to have Abby’s and Ben’s immense talent on our stage, but there’s so much more artistry to appreciate in addition to the actors,” Zirkle said.

While most members of the large creative team are flying to Big Sky from New York City specifically for this production, a number of them will be local professionals. Reid Loessberg, the sound designer, grew up outside of Bozeman and earned a degree in music technology from Montana State University.

“My job will be to look at how the sound can best support the story,” Loessberg said. “How can we make our band and actors sound full and



“The Last Five Years” will feature Broadway talent performing on the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center stage Feb. 22-24 in Big Sky. PHOTO COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

supported without being overwhelming? The intimacy of WMPAC lends itself perfectly to having delicate performances, as well as delicate sound.”

When asked about what it means to be able to work locally in such a niche field, Loessberg was unequivocal. “I’m thrilled to be able to continue working in Montana,” he said. “Most graduates of theater arts programs have almost no choice but to find work in a large city. To be able to be a part of the thriving theater community in southwestern Montana is a real honor.”

“The Last Five Years” will be performed at Warren Miller Performing Arts Center on Friday Feb. 22 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 24 at 5:30 p.m. Tickets and more information are available at warrenmillerpac.org.

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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1 – THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14

If your event falls between Feb. 15 and Feb. 31, please submit it by Feb. 6 by emailing media@outlaw.partners.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Montana Academy of Dermatology
Big Sky Resort, Jan. 30-Feb. 3

Locals Lowdown: Live music
Rainbow Ranch Lodge, 5 p.m.

Dan and Pam, live music
Choppers Grub and Pub, 5-7 p.m.

Fish Fry
By Word of Mouth, 5-8 p.m.

Spanish Peaks Mountain Club Snowcat
Dinner
Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, 5-8 p.m.

Basketball: LPHS v. Manhattan Christian
Lone Peak High School, 5:30 p.m.

Weekend Painting Workshop: David
Mensing (Day 1)
Buck's T4 Lodge and Restaurant, 6-9 p.m.

Trivia Night
Lone Peak Cinema, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Community Fitness Class
Headwaters Fitness, 8 a.m.

Weekend Painting Workshop: David
Mensing (Day 2)
Buck's T4 Lodge and Restaurant, 9 a.m. to
4 p.m.

Curling League
Town Center Ice Rink, 5 p.m.

Hannah and Zander, live music
Choppers Grub and Pub, 6-8 p.m.

Tig Notaro, standup comedy
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center,
7:30 p.m.

Spanish Peaks Mountain Club Snowcat
Dinner
Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, 5-8 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Big Sky Athletic Training Sports Medicine
Conference
Big Sky Resort, Feb. 3-7

Weekend Painting Workshop: David
Mensing (Day 3)
Buck's T4 Lodge and Restaurant, 9 a.m. to
4 p.m.

Live Music
Compass Café, 11 a.m.

Adult Drop-in Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Tri-State Dental-Medical Conference
Big Sky Resort, Feb. 4-8

Industry Night
Lotus Pad, all evening

Youth Hockey Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Top Shelf Toastmasters
Town Center Sales Office, 12 p.m.

3 on 3 Hockey League
Town Center Ice Rink, 6 p.m.

Big Sky Community Theater Auditions for
Tennessee Williams' "Street Car Named
Desire" Warren Miller Performing Arts
Center, 6 p.m.

Adult Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Rotary Club of Big Sky Meeting
Town Center Conference Room, 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Bridge
Big Sky Water and Sewer District, 10:30
a.m.

Al-Anon Meeting
Big Sky Chapel, 4 p.m.

Youth Hockey Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

Adult Drop-in Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

A.A. Meeting
Big Sky Chapel, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Locals Lowdown: Live music
Rainbow Ranch Lodge, 5 p.m.

Spanish Peaks Mountain Club Snowcat
Dinner
Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, 5-8 p.m.

Trivia Night
Lone Peak Cinema, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Community Fitness Class
Headwaters Fitness, 8 a.m.

Best in the West Showdown, skijoring

Big Sky Town Center, 12-4 p.m.

Tom Marino, live music
Choppers Grub and Pub, 6-8 p.m.

Spanish Peaks Mountain Club Snowcat
Dinner
Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, 5-8 p.m.

Big Sky Resort's Vine and Dine
Peaks Restaurant, 6 p.m.

BSSA Calcutta Auction
Gallatin Riverhouse Grill, 7-11 p.m.

Chakra Sound Bath Meditation

Santosha Wellness Center, 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Live Music
Compass Café, 11 a.m.

Best in the West Showdown, skijoring

Big Sky Town Center, 12-4 p.m.

Adult Drop-in Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Industry Night
Lotus Pad, all evening

Youth Hockey Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Top Shelf Toastmasters
Town Center Sales Office, 12 p.m.

3 on 3 Hockey League
Town Center Ice Rink, 6 p.m.

Adult Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Rotary Club of Big Sky Meeting
Town Center Conference Room, 6 p.m.

Thursday, February 14
Bridge
Big Sky Water and Sewer District, 10:30
a.m.

Al-Anon Meeting
Big Sky Chapel, 4 p.m.

Youth Hockey Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

Adult Drop-in Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

WORTH THE DRIVE



BOZEMAN, MONTANA

MSU Family Science Night

Ballrooms in the Strand Union Building

Thursday, Feb. 7 from 5-7 p.m.

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics will be celebrated during this free event that connects kids and adults with Montana State University research in a fun and easy-to-understand format. Stroll through NanoLand, check out NASA Areokats kites, and visit the many other interactive and hands-on activities from MSU labs and departments. The event is hosted by MSU Academic Technology & Outreach.

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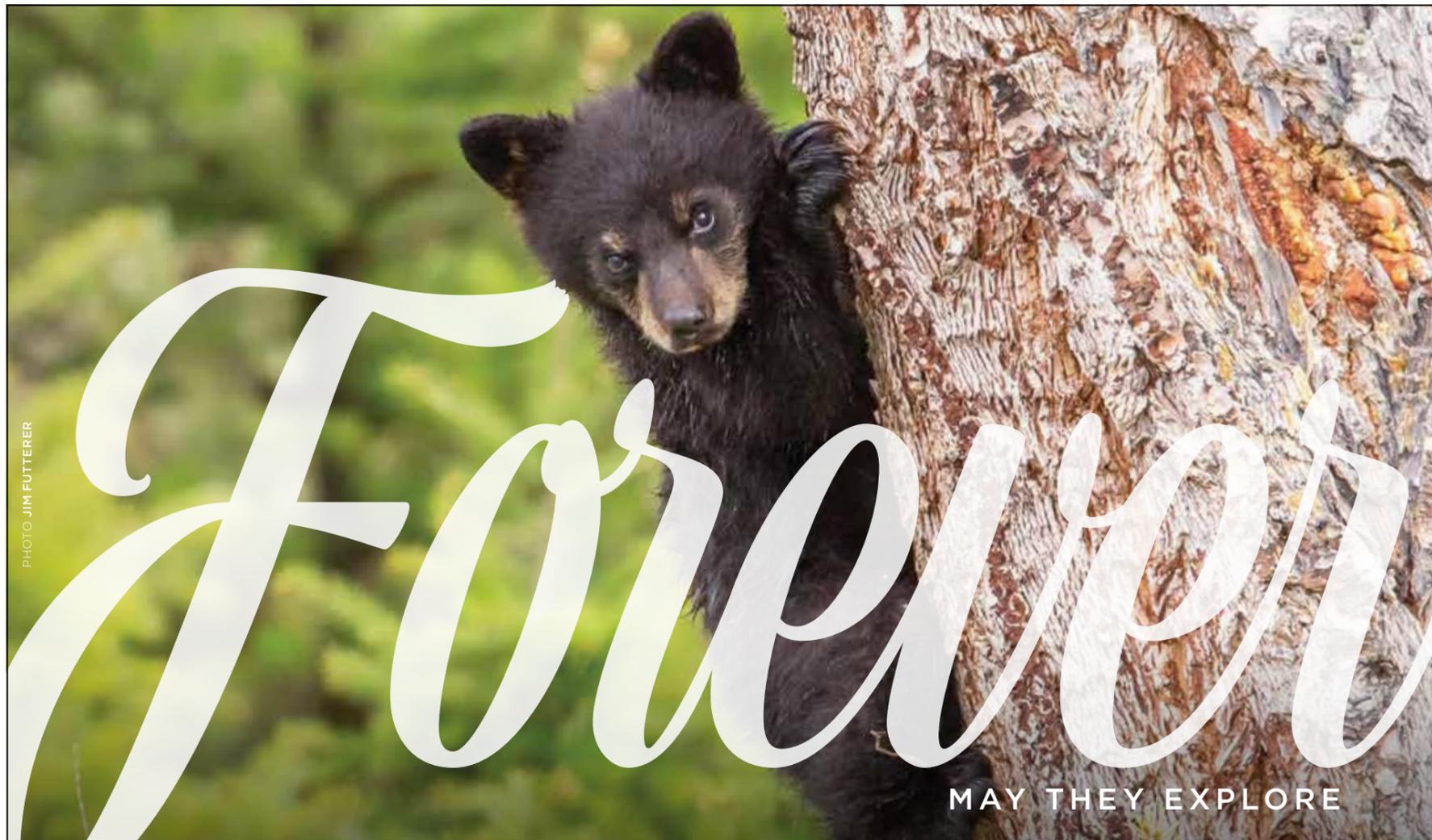


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The 91st Academy Awards

BY ANNA HUSTED
EBS FILM CRITIC

The 91st Academy Award nominations are finally out and there is no shortage of buzz around which films were surprise nominations, and which films have been snubbed.

The biggest surprises of the 2019 Oscars include Bradley Cooper not receiving a nomination for best director and how few nominations his "A Star is Born" received. However, in my opinion, the biggest snub was the feel-good historical documentary "Won't You Be My Neighbor?," a film which landed at No. 15 in my top films of 2018.



"Roma" has been nominated for 10 Academy Awards, including "Best Picture." PHOTO COURTESY OF PARTICIPANT MEDIA

Each year the Oscars add a few more independent films to their nominations, and this year is no different with Mexican-language film "Roma" tied for the most nominations at 10 with Yorgos Lanthimos' "The Favourite," a film that did not have a wide release.

What wasn't planned for this year's Academy Awards is not having a host. Kevin Hart was originally tapped to host the 91st Oscars but stepped down in December. The Academy has yet to replace him and last went without a host in 1989. A host-less Oscars is bound to be short on comedy and long on mistakes, but having multiple people introduce the films might also make for a shorter ceremony than the usual three-plus hours.

One final piece of Oscar information before getting on to my picks is the difference between sound editing and sound mixing. While watching the ceremony at various Oscars parties during the last 15 years someone inevitably asks what the difference is between sound mixing and sound editing. Sound editing is responsible for all the film's sounds, from dialogue to sound effects. Then the sound mixer determines how an audience hears all these sounds in a film, such as when the score should be louder than the sound effects.

The following films are my Oscar picks in each category. To see a full list of nominated films, visit oscar.go.com/nominees.

Best Picture: "Roma"
Actor in a Leading Role: Rami Malek in "Bohemian Rhapsody"
Actress in a Leading Role: Olivia Colman in "The Favourite"
Actor in a Supporting Role: Adam Driver in "Blackkklansman"
Actress in a Supporting Role: Regina King in "If Beale Street Could Talk"
Animated Feature Film: "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse"
Cinematography: "Roma"
Costume Design: "Black Panther"
Directing: Alfonso Cuaron for "Roma"
Documentary Feature: "Free Solo"
Documentary Short: "End Game"
Film Editing: "Vice"
Foreign Language Film: "Roma"
Makeup: "Mary Queen of Scots"
Music Original Score: "Mary Poppins Returns"
Music Original Song: "When a Cowboy Trades His Spurs for Wings" in "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs"
Production Design: "Black Panther"
Sound Editing: "A Quiet Place"
Sound Mixing: "Bohemian Rhapsody"
Visual Effects: "Ready Player One"
Writing Adapted Screenplay: "Blackkklansman"
Writing Original Screenplay: "First Reformed"

Watch the Oscars live on Sunday, Feb. 24 at 6 p.m. on ABC. Catch it at Lone Peak Cinema for a chance to win at Oscar Bingo. Prizes include movie tickets, concessions, drinks and more!

Anna Husted has a master's in film studies from New York University. In Big Sky she can be found up on the hill or at the movies at Lone Peak Cinema. When not gazing at the silver screen or watching her new favorite TV show, she's skiing, fishing or roughhousing with her cat, Indiana Jones.

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39th annual Pie Auction raises funds for school district Feb. 9

BIG SKY PTO

The Big Sky Parent Teacher Organization is excited to announce the 39th annual Pie Auction on Saturday, Feb. 9, at Rainbow Ranch Lodge. Last year's event was one of the PTO's most successful, showcasing a change in venue and an upgrade to all-digital bidding, while raising more than \$106,000 in donations to help fund extended-learning programs in the Big Sky School District.

This year's event will again be auctioneered by the incredibly entertaining Brian Van Eps, and will feature over two dozen pies provided by local Big Sky bakers and business owners. New for this year, the PTO will offer shuttle service to the event from Lone Peak High School beginning at 5:15 p.m. The eighth-grade class will also be providing babysitting services as a fundraiser for their trip to Washington, D.C.

The doors will open at 5:30 p.m., where guests will be greeted with sparkling wine and live music from local musician Brian Stumpf. The bidding will close at 8 p.m. but the music and fun will continue into the night.

The PTO's annual budget is approximately \$100,000, which is spent directly on supporting the children and teachers within the school district—educational experiences that include expeditions into Yellowstone National Park, alpine and cross-country ski days, author visits, and a variety of special programs for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The PTO assists teachers and staff with funding for new curricula, field trips, classroom supplements, and ongoing education. PTO funding also benefits parents, and the community at large, with monetary assistance for the after-school program, a library assistant, the high school musical, and the mobile technology bus.

The PTO would not be able to fund so many important programs without the help of the supportive and loyal Big Sky business owners and volunteers, and their unwavering support over the years.

Visit one.bidpal.net/pieauction2019/ to buy tickets to the event, view and bid on silent auction items, make a donation to the PTO ski program, or purchase raffle tickets.



ABOVE: Auctioneer Brian Van Eps, wearing a signed Tom Brady jersey, one of the featured live auction items during the 2018 Big Sky PTO Pie Auction. PHOTOS BY DAVE PECUNIES



RIGHT: Several of the special confections on display for the live pie auction portion of the 2018 event.

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Lot 64 Goshawk* | \$775K
1.04 ACRES
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Lot 119 Old Barn Road* | \$450K
3.13 ACRES
Private creekside homesite at the end of a cul-de-sac



Lot 113 Crow Point* | \$350K
2.59 ACRES
Great value with beautiful views in Spanish Peaks Mountain Club

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