

ExploreTM

Special Edition: COVID-19

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Big Sky

Mar. 27 - Apr. 9, 2020
Volume 11 // Issue #7

Covering COVID-19:

- Big Sky's first case
- Resort suspends operations
- EMS response
- Virus Relief fund
- Businesses address pandemic

Plus:

Coping with stress and COVID-19
Q&A with gubernatorial candidate Whitney Williams
Coach Buzz Tatum: Sports more than a game



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PUBLISHER

Eric Ladd | eric@theoutlawpartners.com

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, VP MEDIA

Joseph T. O'Connor | joe@theoutlawpartners.com

DIRECTOR OF NEW MEDIA, LEAD PRODUCER

Michael Somerby | michael@theoutlawpartners.com

LOCAL EDITOR, DISTRIBUTION DIRECTOR

Brandon Walker

ENVIRONMENTAL & OUTDOORS EDITOR

Jessianne Castle | media@theoutlawpartners.com

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Mira Brody

DISTRIBUTION COORDINATOR, SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTANT

Kirby Grubaugh

CREATIVE

LEAD DESIGNER

Marisa Opheim

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

ME Brown

SALES AND OPERATIONS

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Megan Paulson | megan@theoutlawpartners.com

VP, SALES AND MARKETING

EJ Daws | ej@theoutlawpartners.com

VP OF EVENTS

Ennion Williams | ennion@theoutlawpartners.com

MEDIA AND EVENTS DIRECTOR

Ersin Ozer | ersin@theoutlawpartners.com

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LEAD

Sam Brooks | sam@theoutlawpartners.com

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Blythe Beaubien | blythe@theoutlawpartners.com

CONTROLLER

Treston Wold

CONTRIBUTORS

Linda Arnold, Kathy Bouchard, Al Bublitz, Kelsey Dzintars, Ted Kooser, Scott Mechura, Michael J. Ober, Jonathan Thompson, Todd Wilkinson

ON THE COVER:

A powerful illustration relating to the COVID-19 pandemic featuring Lone Peak in the semblance of a face mask as the community and nation combats the virus. ILLUSTRATION BY KELSEY DZINTARS

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Covering COVID-19

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Big Sky's first case

On March 18, Big Sky experienced the confirmation of its first positive case of COVID-19 within the community. The individual is a California resident in his 60s, currently quarantining at his home.

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Resort suspends operations

March 15 brought the announcement that Big Sky Resort would suspend operations on March 16, following the move of numerous other ski resorts across the nation amid the growing COVID-19 pandemic.

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EMS response

In the ever-changing landscape of COVID-19, emergency personnel in Big Sky and the greater Gallatin Valley have adjusted their daily routines to stem the spread of the virus in the community while continuing to service the area.

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Virus Relief fund

The Big Sky Resort Area District tax board sparked a relief fund effort to help the Big Sky Medical Center combat the COVID-19 coronavirus. BSRAD's \$1 million initial contribution was matched by three local foundations.

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Businesses address pandemic

As local businesses had to close shop due to orders surrounding the virus, many are adapting and finding ways to help serve the Big Sky community in a modified fashion, while preventing the spread.

Plus: Coping with stress and COVID-19, Q&A with gubernatorial candidate Whitney Williams, and Coach Buzz Tatum: Sports more than a game

Opening Shot



A powerful message featured on the marquee of the Gallatin Gateway School, more relevant today than ever. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

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P.O. Box 160250, Big Sky, MT 59716 (406) 995-2055 • media@outlaw.partners

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Martha Johnson
VP OF SALES
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear friends and neighbors,

A dear friend recently sent me this quote: “For all that we speak, as a culture and a people, of victory and defeat, of good and evil, of hero and coward, it is none of it quite true. The truth is that the greatest victory is to endure with grace and humor, to stay in the game, to achieve humility.”

Novelist, poet and editor Brian Doyle wrote these words in his collection of essays, “One Long River of Song.” And they have never rung more true.

We remain locked in battle with an unseen force. It’s stopped humanity in its tracks, affecting every element of our lives the world over. The COVID-19 coronavirus is taking lives. It has upended the world economy and nearly every other facet of life.

In our small community, we’re seeing the toll as well. Big Sky Resort closed a month early over mounting concerns of the virus’s spread, and many of our restaurants and small businesses have been forced to close or adapt. And fast.

At Explore Big Sky, we’ve had our cages rattled along with all of you. In the face of COVID-19, we are working from home, tightening our belts with the rest of the community. And we’re rising to the challenge alongside each of you. In an effort to adapt to this temporary new normal, we’re ramping up our reporting both in the print edition of EBS and on our digital fronts to bring you the information you simply need to know.

From our website to social media, from the “Town Crier” e-newsletter to video and podcasts, my team is stepping up to the challenge as community journalists. And our greater Outlaw Partners team is stepping up as well for our clients and advertisers, and creating new ways to help our local and regional business partners. We are here for you, our audience, as well.

This commemorative cover was designed by our close friend and colleague Kelsey Dzintars, and this special edition of EBS is meant to represent a moment in time, one we hope you’ll keep and share with future generations. It’s a moment when we came together as a community.

These are times that try our will and threaten our livelihood. But we live not in fear. We live in Big Sky. We are neighbors and friends. We are ski partners and hiking pals. Thank you for your continued support during these unsettling times. Remember to reach out to each other and remain connected. Show patience and humility. Grace and humor. And stay in the game.

#BigSkyStrong,

Joseph T. O’Connor, *Editor-in-Chief*

Town Hall video conference

On Monday, March 30 at 5 p.m. MST, Outlaw Partners and Explore Big Sky are hosting a virtual Town Hall featuring a variety of speakers addressing the current Covid-19 pandemic. This online video conference call will include speakers from the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, Big Sky Resort Tax, the recently created Big Sky Relief Fund, school district, local small-business representatives and regional experts.

EBS Publisher Eric Ladd and Editor-in-Chief Joseph T. O’Connor will moderate the Town Hall, which will allow the audience to submit questions to the speakers. Conference links will be published on March 30 and shared on all the Outlaw Partners/EBS media platforms, and will also be hosted live on the Explore Big Sky Facebook page.

Stay tuned to explorebigsky.com for additional details.



LETTERS

Vote for the 1 percent resort tax increase

To the Editor,

When my husband and I purchased property in Big Sky more than 18 years ago, I was impressed with the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District investment in our community, namely the large holding ponds that we drove by. Now I live here fulltime, and I attend the monthly Big Sky County Water and Sewer District meetings as my schedule permits. I've read the numerous articles in community newspapers and heard the discussion at the meetings on the need to upgrade and expand the wastewater treatment plant. I am heartened that the BSCWSD has partnered with the Big Sky Resort Area Tax District to help fund, at least partially, the upgrade and expansion project through the 1 percent increase in the resort tax for infrastructural projects.

The BSCWSD expansion of the current wastewater treatment plant will serve community growth via planned development and workforce housing, and the upgrade in the treatment technique will better protect the Gallatin River watershed.

If the 1 percent increase is not approved by the voters, the folks living within the boundaries of the district will likely see their rates for services doubled. The wastewater plant upgrade and expansion must happen as the existing plant is not able to keep up with treatment demands. This is our community's opportunity to have tourists and visitors to our fair community help us fund this critical piece of our infrastructure. I urge all BSCWSD rate payers to vote responsibly for this needed funding stream as it will benefit our community for many years to come.

Mary Ann Comstock
Big Sky, Montana

Save the Big Sky Ski Education license plate

To the Editor,

Recent changes to legislative regulations surrounding the specialty license plates have put the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation license plate at risk.

Although we have received conflicting information from the Motor Vehicle Department about the regulations, the bottom line is that we need to have 400 registered license plates by July 1, 2020 (and each successive year) in order to continue receiving the revenue from our license plates. We currently have around 350 plates, give or take.

The annual revenue to BSSEF fluctuates slightly, but has totaled as much as \$8,000. In light of the current situation regarding the coronavirus, resort closure and canceled events, we are anticipating a significant net revenue shortfall that will affect our operations.

We are hoping that this is a way to help our organization while doing something you would otherwise need to do anyway in registering your vehicles.

Please consider registering your cars with a BSSEF plate before July 1, 2020, and spread the word to any of your friends so we can save our license plate.

Callie Pecunies, BSSEF Executive Project Director
Big Sky, Montana



What are you doing as a Big Sky restaurant in the era of COVID-19 for your customers and employees? How are you adapting to stay open during this tumultuous time?



Kara Blodgett
The Rocks

"I am thankful for people that are social distancing themselves and I'm fearful for people that aren't. I think that the majority of us are taking it seriously, and I'm super sad that there are people that aren't taking it seriously. We're all doing what we need to do. We're all trying to take care of each other, we're all trying to keep each other in the loop, but we're all social distancing, too. I think we're doing a really good job up here in Big Sky of doing that—that's in the restaurant, that's everywhere.



Twist Thompson
Blue Buddha Sushi Lounge

"We have opted to stay open to the best of our abilities for the entirety of this thing. Our goal is to just do to-gos. We've got a pretty nifty little window on our patio...and it's actually really worked out well as a to-go window. We do that plus delivery. We try to keep all of our delivery fees super low, just enough to take care of our staff. We're using the time to do a bunch of cleaning projects and maintenance stuff, so I just invited the entire staff to come in and help with any of that stuff if they want hours...The community has been really supportive, and a lot of good folks are coming in and grabbing some sushi."



Alberto and Brenda Godoy
Alberto's

"I have laid off my employees to keep them safe. Since it is take-out only there are only two people in the building working. I have removed all furniture from the bar so no one can hang out or touch [anything and] blocked off dining. We are sanitizing every minute, wearing gloves, taking payments over the phone and taking food to the curb. We will remain open as long as we are allowed. It has definitely changed, but we will stay positive and do our best to keep everyone safe."



Jen Kettleridge
Ousel and Spur

"Ousel and Spur will do our very best to stay open for carry-out orders at this time in an effort to provide food for the community and keep a few locals employed. We are exceeding all health department, county and state mandates for our industry to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We will keep [the public] updated on our hours and operations via Facebook and our website."



Montana long-haul truckers work overtime to keep food on shelves

COVID-19 threatens supply chain

EBS STAFF

According to Barry “Spook” Stang, the executive director of Motor Carriers of Montana—an industry group representing over 300 Treasure State trucking interests—there’s been a shift in the rules of the road for long-haul truckers; the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the highest-ranking oversight body for the entire trucking industry, has recently raised hourly driving restrictions to help allow the supply chain meet growing demands of consumers frenzied by COVID-19 fears.

“This is the first time in my 20 years here that I’ve seen a nationwide relaxation of these rules to try to get food on the shelves,” Stang told Montana Public Radio.

While this may raise concern for some, it’s for good reason:

“If something happens to the trucking industry it doesn’t take long for your grocery stores to have empty shelves,” Stang said.

The industry forms a silent but critical piece of infrastructure that’s only now on the collective conscious. According to Montana Public Radio, supply chains are currently uninterrupted and food supplies are in good order, but already industry groups are joining voices to call for truck stops to remain open, despite the fact that other restaurants and eateries nationwide are closing—the designated places for truckers to find food and rest may prove vital in keeping people fed.

Many of those truck stops are now serving their food curbside to account for the closures, but according to The Wall Street Journal a handful of shippers and receivers now demand drivers sign affidavits saying they aren’t sick.

BSSD implements online learning format

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – On March 17, at a regularly scheduled Big Sky School District School Board meeting, the School Board announced the implementation of their online learning format, which launched on March 18. Students in grades third through twelfth will begin utilizing Google platforms such as, Google Meet and Google Classroom to connect and receive instruction from their teachers.

Schedules for class times are flexible and are determined by each individual teacher, however some may abide by their regularly scheduled classroom time. Attendance will be taken and instruction sessions will be recorded so that any students that cannot log in during the allotted time period can access the lesson at a later time. The next BSSD school board meeting will take place on March 26.

40th annual Big Sky PTO Pie Auction a success

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – The 40th annual Big Sky Parent Teacher Organization Pie Auction went off without a hitch despite shifting to a completely online format for the first time in the event’s lengthy history, due to the COVID-19 virus. Traditionally the event is an in-person gathering in which pies, cakes, and various items are auctioned off through a silent auction bidding process by phone, accompanied by a raffle drawing for more prizes.

“I feel really fortunate that the community was supportive. I mean, we raised over \$20,000 just through the silent auction,” said Big Sky PTO Chairman, Mitch Immenschuh. The pie auction, which is the main fundraiser for Big Sky PTO, wrapped up on March 15 with the conclusion of the online silent auction.

Big Sky PTO has yet to draw the four raffle ticket winners and Immenschuh said the drawing date hadn’t been determined. The four raffle ticket prizes are a Big Sky Resort Gold pass for next season, an Ousel and Spur pizza-a-month for the next year, a \$500 Conoco Travel Shoppe gift card and a \$250 Roxy’s Market & Cafe gift card.

ACBS, BSCO launch drawing challenge contest

Winners work featured on Big Sky utility boxes

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – A contest hosted by the Arts Council of Big Sky and the Big Sky Community Organization, dubbed the “Environmental Sustainability Drawing Challenge,” is open to all third, fourth and fifth graders across the state, and is an opportunity for area youngsters to flex some creative muscles while also showing an appreciation for the natural environments around them.

The rules are simple.

Start with a prompt: “Draw yourself doing your favorite outdoor activity”; “Draw a Montana animal in its natural habitat”; “Why are natural resources important? Draw your answer”; “Illustrate one way humans can help protect the environment”; or “Draw your favorite place in nature.”

Next, get creative and think critically about the selected prompt, incorporating favorite drawing mediums, glitter, paint and other add-ons. Every material and stroke must be original.

Finally, submit the piece (without folding it) to the ACBS, with a separate sheet of paper indicating the artist’s full name, grade, school, teacher, parent’s name, mailing address, phone number and parent’s signature. Their address is P.O. Box 160308, Big Sky, MT 59716.

As an offshoot project of ACBS’s Intern Madison Strauss’s “Creativity, Action, Service” project to Promote Environmental Sustainability through Public Art, the challenge comes with a solid, similar prize—the drawings will be featured permanently on Big Sky utility boxes, celebrating the artists, their work and the environment for years to come.

The winning artists will then be pooled for a grand prize nod, in which a qualifying student, selected at random, will get free admission (a \$180 value) to the Big Sky Community Organization’s Explorer’s Adventure Camp in Big Sky, which runs from June 29 to July 2.

A full version of this story is available on ExploreBigSky.com. Artwork must be received by April 17 for consideration. Visit bigskyarts.org for additional information.

EBS lands exclusive audio interview with Gary Rieschel

Leading healthcare venture capitalist talks COVID-19 impacts in Big Sky, around the globe

EBS STAFF

Head to explorebigsky.com for an audio recording of an exclusive interview EBS landed with Gary Rieschel, a leading healthcare industry venture capitalist with a storied career in supporting and seeding some of the globe’s most-prominent private sector players.

In that conversation, Rieschel broke down the latest on COVID-19, how it will affect Big Sky and its area businesses, the development of vaccines and the reception of the virus and care in China.

A brief blurb from a bio featured on Qiming Venture Partner’s, which he helped found:

“Over the last 20 years as a venture capitalist, Gary led investments in 13 companies in the U.S. and China, which grew to over \$1B in market capitalization. Gary aided in the creation of the venture capital industry in China through sponsoring and founding several of China’s leading VC firms including Softbank China Ventures, SAIF Partners (2001), Ceyuan Ventures (2004), and Qiming Venture Partners (2006). Gary is a Founding Managing Partner of Qiming, one of China’s most preeminent VC firms with over \$4 billion under management.”

As people seek expert opinion and information related to the pandemic, this interview is one of many efforts EBS is taking to provide only premium content related to COVID-19 to our audience.

Visit explorebigsky.com/audio-eps-interviews-gary-rieschel-leading-healthcare-venture-capitalist-on-covid-19 to hear the whole interview.

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Gallatin health department addresses first COVID-19 case

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – The Gallatin County Health Department held a press conference on March 14 to update the public on a presumptively confirmed COVID-19 case in Gallatin County late Friday night, March 13. At the time, a total of six cases had been confirmed statewide after two additional residents in Missoula tested positive for the virus.

As of EBS press time on March 25, a total of 24 cases were confirmed in Gallatin County—one in Big Sky that we know of—and a total of 65 throughout the state of Montana.

Matt Kelley, Health Officer with Gallatin City-County Health Department and Cindi Spinelli, GCCHD's Communicable Disease Specialist, were on hand at the press conference to answer questions.

The first individual who tested positive for the coronavirus in Gallatin County was a male in his 40s who returned from Europe on Wednesday March 12, was tested March 13, and confirmed positive by Friday evening. He and his family were cooperative, according to Kelley, who said they had all been home since their arrival and had no contact with "sensitive places" such as long-term care facilities, schools or large public events in the interim.

Kelley said the individual's diligence to stay home while he was symptomatic prevented exposure to the public and resulted in no identified local contacts of concern related to this case. Health department staff will continue working with the individual and his family to ensure they remain under quarantine in their home.



In light of rising COVID-19 cases in Gallatin Valley and the state, theaters and events centers in the community, including the Rialto in Downtown Bozeman, have shuttered their doors. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

and coronavirus at the same time. Kelley believes Gallatin County will see more cases soon, but that most people will only experience mild symptoms and recover on their own.

"There's no magic pill, there's no vaccine that you're missing out on," Kelley said. "If you have mild symptoms surely contact your healthcare provider, but have some patience and know that they are working really hard to make sure they we are serving everybody."

Testing, at the time of the press conference, did require symptoms and involved a health care professional ruling out influenza and other respiratory illness. If COVID-19 is suspected, medical professionals send swabs to the Public Health Lab in Helena to determine whether or not it is a positive case.

It is unclear how the pandemic will affect our economy this early on, but local businesses are adapting as they can, many allowing employees to work remotely or enacting a relaxed sick leave policy.

"We're trying to stay vigilant, getting people their money back or shows rebooked if at all possible," said Michal Madeline, general manager at Cactus Records in downtown Bozeman, which serves as a box office for local entertainment venues. "It's something that's changing hour by hour. We just want people to be happy and healthy."

EBS COVID-19 TIMELINE: MARCH 12-25

3/12 Montana Gov. Steve Bullock declares state of emergency

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services worked with the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport to get the individual's flight number and contact the people who were in his immediate radius during the flight. Extra precautions were taken at the healthcare facility where he was treated to prevent the spread of the virus to the point that the health department currently has no contacts of concern. Even with high-profile cases such as the coronavirus, the county uses existing, effective protocols to mitigate communicable diseases, Kelley said.

"Presumptively confirmed" means the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has yet to officially confirm the case, however from a local level Kelley said they do not wait for CDC confirmation to act, and are treating it as if the word presumptive wasn't there.

At this time, health officials are not disclosing the individual's name, the country in Europe from where he traveled, or where in Gallatin County he lives, according to Kelley. As of March 14, they had no further information on the three other presumptively confirmed cases in the state, which are being handled their own county procedures.

Kelley stressed four key points everyone can follow moving forward: stay home if you're sick; wash your hands frequently; focus on your physical health by eating healthy foods, staying hydrated and getting plenty of sleep; and finally—be kind and compassionate to one another.

"We are likely to see more cases and more people with mild symptoms isolating at home. They may be our neighbors, our friends or colleagues," Kelley said. "If so, reach out to them via text email or phone call."

COVID-19 is a new virus but not a strong one, Kelley said, and can be killed with everyday cleaning products and washing your hands with soap and warm water. Spinelli noted that the virus does not seem to survive long when airborne and an individual is unlikely to contract both the flu

3/13 First four positive COVID-19 cases in Montana

Gallatin County shut all restaurants and bars on March 16 for a week then Gov. Steve Bullock extended the closures until at least April 10. Health officials suggest that to be proactive the community should stay home to reduce exposure.

"I can't emphasize the importance enough of staying home if you are sick," Kelley said. "Our first case in Gallatin County followed this advice and likely saved many from exposure to the disease. Ask yourself: Do you want to be the person to expose hundreds or dozens of people to COVID-19, or do you want to be the person who stays home and helps us bend the curve of this pandemic by preventing new cases?"

Kelley said the best thing we can do to keep our community healthy is to take care of ourselves and despite any building anxiety or frustration, to understand that our healthcare workers are working hard to serve everyone, and to provide them with patience and grace during this time.

This story was updated to reflect the most current information available at press time, March 25.

Big Sky Resort suspends operations

Mounting concern over COVID-19 forces early closure

BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

BIG SKY – It was a day no one will soon forget.

At 4 p.m. on March 15, the Big Sky Resort chairlifts came to a halt more than a month prematurely as the lifeblood of the community joined a nationwide wave of private- and public-sector efforts to curb the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

Many took to the slopes, thanking the snow gods for one last powder day to mark the occasion, and laughing with friends over midday beers and stories of a great season. Others cruised down the slopes in solitude and silence, the soft conditions a mere cushion for thoughts heavy with uncertainty.

The decision came on the morning of March 15 after several days of meetings at the highest level of the Boyne Resorts. It was an unprecedented move, but one that nearly all ski resorts in the country felt compelled to do in the face of the virus: close early.

“COVID is real,” said Taylor Middleton, the resort’s president and chief operating officer, in an early afternoon interview on the day the resort suspended operations. “Reviewing

time. “As always, our top priority has been the health and wellbeing of our guests, team members, and community, and this is undoubtedly the right decision given the current situation,” the statement said.

Big Sky Resort joined the rest of Boyne’s resort holdings in suspending operations, and Middleton is urging his employees to take care of themselves and each other during this time of duress and uncertainty. “We’re telling them to do what they need to do to get home and we’re doing everything we can to help them work through this situation,” he said. All resort employees will receive pay through March 22, according to the statement.

As for the Big Sky community, Middleton apologized for any inconvenience said his heart goes out to everyone affected. “This is hard. It doesn’t matter if you’re a big business or a medium-sized business or a small business, this is something that nobody ever anticipated and it’s as hard as it gets.”

Middleton added that he hopes the resort can find a way to reopen before the end of the season but that safety is his No. 1 concern.

“Everybody in this community is about skiing and all of the businesses are about being open and we hope [reopening] is a possibility,” he said. “We don’t want to call it for the season just yet, but we don’t have enough information at this time to know what it’s going to look like.”

Skiers with April passes that haven’t been used can get a refund or put the credit to another offering next season, but the future is uncertain and resort officials have not yet decided what measures may or may not be made for pass holders this year.

“We sincerely apologize to all guests currently at Big Sky, or planning to come for a ski trip,” the statement said. “Given the short notice, we have relaxed our cancellation and refund policy.”

Middleton said he and his team are working to provide any information they can and to help alleviate any pressure on the community.

“We’re really focusing on doing the right thing and taking care of all of our guests and all of our season pass holders and all of our employees in the best way we can,” Middleton said.

Visit the [bigskyresort.com](https://www.bigskyresort.com) for a list of cancellations, refunds and other coronavirus-related information.

3/15 Big Sky Resort suspends operations

all the facts we had at the time we decided that, absolutely, the hardest decision we could make and the best decision we could make was closing skiing as of this afternoon.”

Boyne’s senior team weighed news and international reaction over the week preceding the resort shuttering its doors, and based its decision on three main factors: “Smoothing the curve of contagion is important and we want to do our part to help with that,” Middleton said. “Number two, the Switzerland and Austria ski industries closed. And number three, the governor of Colorado shut down the Colorado ski industry [on Saturday] afternoon.”

A March 15 statement from the resort stressed the importance of safety in this uncertain



In unknown waters, glimmers of hope

Big Sky businesses, organizations provide for community

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

BIG SKY – As Gallatin County announces local orders to limit social gatherings and promote social distancing by cancelling large events and closing restaurants and bars, the Big Sky community sets sail in unknown waters. However, while many businesses and nonprofits are seeking ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and encourage social distancing, they're looking to provide for the community.

"We've had a lot of independent businesses and organizations step up," said Big Sky Chamber of Commerce CEO Candace Carr Strauss. The Chamber has compiled a list of community resources that is available online and includes information about food and medical assistance.

Prepared meals

Gallatin City-County Health Officer Matt Kelley issued the closure of restaurants and bars on March 16 to limit public congregation and the potential spread of coronavirus, however grocery stores, convenience stores and take-out and delivery services may continue to operate.

Alex Omania, owner of Lotus Pad in Big Sky Town Center, was worried after hearing the news, but is transitioning with her employees to offer meal delivery in order to keep servers employed and provide food to Big Sky. Lotus Pad will deliver meals for a fee based on location, and the fee goes directly to the driver. Additionally, Lotus Pad is offering discounted pick-up meals. Omania also said Lotus Pad is stocked with toilet paper and they will throw in a roll for free on any order.

"Nobody knows what's going to happen," she said. "This is like a Hail Mary. I'm really worried about people and how they're going to pay their bills. We're just trying to keep people employed."

"People are scared and worried," she added. "A nice meal is always a good thing to comfort you when you're worried."

3/15 Gov. Bullock orders closure of all K-12 public schools

Omania said she's most concerned about how COVID-19 will impact the Big Sky workforce and how laid-off workers will be able to pay their bills if businesses continue to close. On top of that, she added that March is usually one of Lotus Pad's busiest months and she doesn't know what the repercussions of this pandemic will be.

Shortly after receiving the closure notice on March 16, Omania was told a member of the Yellowstone Club had purchased \$2,500 worth of Lotus Pad gift cards in \$100 increments and the undisclosed person was going to give the gift cards to those in need. "It made me cry," she said, adding that the purchase is a demonstration of support for local businesses and community members.

Groceries

The Country Market, Hungry Moose Market and Deli, and Roxy's Market are continuing to offer regular delivery services, but have made specific adjustments to meet Big Sky's changing needs.

The Country Market is waiving all delivery fees and will either drop groceries at residences between 5 and 7 p.m. daily, or deliver them to cars waiting in the parking lot. Additionally, owner Lynne Anderson said the grocery store is trying to meet product demand by buying items in bulk and repackaging when possible.

On March 23, the Hungry Moose Market and Deli closed its doors to customer foot traffic but is open for business online—shoppers can visit the Moose's website and shop from a complete list of items, add them to

a cart and either pick up their order from the market or have the groceries delivered.

The Hungry Moose is waiving delivery fees for grocery orders under \$50 and is coordinating with customers to either put groceries inside the home or leave them outside of a residence if a person is feeling ill.

While this coordination is important for keeping delivery drivers healthy, Hungry Moose said on a March 16 Facebook post that it is still important to be bear-safe in Big Sky and we need to be proactive to prevent bears from getting into grocery orders left on doorsteps.

"We want to make sure everyone is able to get their food if they are unable or don't feel comfortable leaving their homes," Hungry Moose wrote in the post.

3/16 Gallatin County health officials restrict food, bar service

Roxy's Market has also adjusted its regular delivery service and is waiving delivery fees to anyone over the age of 65. "We're just trying to help the community," said Roxy's Manager Josh Treasure. "I don't think you can find any one person who hasn't been affected. We're just trying to help take that burden off the community."

He added that rather than see those who are at highest risk of complications from COVID-19 come into the store and risk exposure, he'd rather offer free grocery delivery.

Additionally, Treasure said Roxy's is working hard to keep shelves stocked and the only item the store was sold out of at noon on March 17 was hand sanitizer, though he expected a resupply of the product on Friday, March 20. "We're utilizing every resource we have," he said. "Manufacturers have plenty of product but are struggling to get it out fast enough."

Food assistance

The Big Sky Community Food Bank is also responding to COVID-19 and has expanded its hours. The food bank is now open 3-7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays. Food is available via a drive-through service and on Fridays, those who are ill or in quarantine can request delivery of a food box. Food boxes for delivery or pick-up are available twice a month and are pre-packed with a week's supply of food.

Anderson, of the Country Market, is a founding member of the food bank and has been working with local restaurants that are shuttering their doors in order to prevent food spoilage. To date, she's repurposed food from the Corral and Michaelangelo's for distribution at the Big Sky Community Food Bank.

In a statement released online, the food bank staff expressed its gratefulness to area residents. "We have been so very thankful for the outpouring of support already seen from the Big Sky community," the statement said. "We have all confidence that we'll be able to meet the needs of our friends and neighbors in Big Sky."

While the Big Sky School District has closed the school's facilities and is transitioning to online learning, it is continuing to provide lunches to students in the school's lunch program, as well as anyone else that needs a meal. Food will be available for pickup 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday at the door of the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center.

Visit bigskychamber.com/communityupdates for more information, community updates and a list of additional food and medical resources.

Big Sky sees first confirmed COVID-19 case

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY AND JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

BIG SKY – Officials with Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center confirmed the first case of COVID-19 coronavirus in Big Sky late yesterday, Wednesday, March 18, when the results of the patient's testing became available.

The individual, the fourth confirmed case in Gallatin County on March 18, is a male in his 60s from California. As of EBS press time on March 25, Gallatin County has reported 19 confirmed cases of the virus.

After learning of potential exposure while he was en route to Big Sky for a ski trip, the individual checked into Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center and is recovering in isolation in his Big Sky home. All individuals who came in contact with the patient are in self-isolation, said Lori Christenson, public information officer for Gallatin City-County Health Department, at March 19 afternoon press conference regarding the new case.

According to Christenson, the airplane on which the patient flew to Montana is under a contact investigation—a manifest for the flight has been acquired and individuals who may have been exposed have been contacted.

3/18 First confirmed COVID-19 case in Big Sky

3/17 Second Gallatin County COVID-19 case confirmed

health, including regular hand washing, social distancing and getting outside in the fresh air.

“We want to make sure people are taking care of themselves and their own wellbeing,” Christenson said. “This is a lot for our community to handle.”

Due to HIPAA law, the Gallatin City-County Health Department is no longer identifying where in the county individuals have tested positive for COVID-19, according Tracy Knoedler, human resources director for the health department.

“[HIPAA] protects any information that can identify them,” Knoedler said.

“We’re notifying individuals that they need to quarantine and then be tested if they develop symptoms,” she added. “Right now, each individual who is diagnosed with COVID, we are contacting, conducting a case investigation, and then reaching out to their close contacts.”

Visit the Gallatin City-County Health Department website at healthygallatin.org for more information and to learn about volunteer opportunities to assist the health department in its efforts with the COVID-19 coronavirus.

While the news is the latest blow for the southwest Montana county amid COVID-19 developments, Christenson is urging residents to pursue a semblance of normalcy and practice good emotional, spiritual and physical



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BSRAD launches Big Sky Relief Fund

\$2M raised through community foundations' pledge

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – At a time when a community must come together or be driven apart, Big Sky is doing what it takes to combat a novel type of challenge: the COVID-19 strain of coronavirus.

3/19 Four more cases confirmed in Montana

3/20 Gov. Bullock orders closure of all dine-in food and bar service

3/22 Total number of Montana cases reaches 31

On March 20, the Big Sky Resort Area District tax board met in a call-in format for an impromptu open board meeting to discuss several financial initiatives designed to take aim at growing community pressures as a result of the pandemic.

Most notably, the BSRAD committed \$1 million to help “assist the Big Sky Medical Center manage the COVID-19 pandemic in Big Sky and mitigate social and economic impacts,” according to a press release.

Those critical needs include volunteers, supplies, eight ventilators for the Bozeman Deaconess system and Big Sky Medical Center, COVID-19 testing equipment and facility improvements.

The commitment was swiftly met with a combined \$1 million pledge from the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, the Moonlight Community Foundation and the Spanish Peaks Community Foundation, bringing total relief funds to \$2 million.

Additionally, local organizations stepped up and will tentatively give back a measure of the money they had been allocated by the BSRAD for their various fiscal year 2020 operating needs, an exercise in community care totaling some \$330,000. The decision may come to form the backbone of efforts of relief initiatives related to COVID-19, a consolidated community effort comprised of numerous community leaders now under the title of the Big Sky Relief Fund.

Big Sky Relief Fund holds first meeting

On Tuesday, March 24, the Big Sky Resort Area District hosted a Big Sky Relief Fund Operational Partners Coordination meeting, the first of more virtual biweekly meetings that seek to consolidate public updates as well as identify and coordinate needs, according to a BSRAD press release.

BSRAD chairperson Kevin Germain opened the meeting and invited spokespeople from various community organizations to present on their current status as related to the COVID-19 crisis.

Taylor Rose, director of clinical services and operations at Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center shared that BHBSMC began construction on shell space to accommodate four more rooms, a project slated for completion in roughly four to six weeks. Rose also said that BHBSMC will be receiving one of Bozeman Health’s three COVID-19 test analyzers after a 30-60 day delay, as well as three additional ventilators within two weeks.

Rose said BHBSMC is confident in its ability to meet demands and address patient’s needs adequately.

Reports from the Gallatin County Sheriff’s Office as well as the Big Sky Fire Department stated that both departments are prepared to meet the community’s needs and are taking the necessary steps to address the fluid situation.

Sara Gaither, program coordinator for the Big Sky Community Food Bank reported that BSCFB is experiencing nearly double the demand typical of offseason, distributing nearly 90 food boxes per week via their drive-up service, which will operate four days a

week now to meet growing needs. Gaither said that a new clientele that haven’t required BSCFB services continues to expand. The food bank is in need of funding to support food orders with increased costs and to support staffing requirements.

Women in Action, a primary avenue for mental health services in Big Sky, announced that its mental health practitioners are no longer taking new clients. WIA is seeking additional mental health resources to deliver support via digital channels. The organization is encouraging community members to bring forth ideas for alternative mental health programs.

Both Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks are facing indefinite closures, according to CEO of Big Sky Chamber of Commerce Candace Carr Strauss, a decision that is expected to impact local businesses during the shoulder season.

Locally, Ciara Wolfe, CEO of the Big Sky Community Organization reported that all BSCO parks and trails are open, but facilities are closed. Wolfe also said that the Big Sky Post Office is developing a program for at-risk individuals to pick up their mail separately from the rest of the population.

The meeting’s final presenter, Dustin Shipman, superintendent of the Big Sky School District reported that the school is preparing for the governor’s mandated extension of distant learning from March 27 to April 10. Thus far, BSSD has engaged 95 percent of its students through online platforms.

Visit bigskyrelief.org to access more information on the fund and to view the meeting minutes.

“I’m continuously impressed with the Big Sky community,” said BSRAD Chairperson Kevin Germain at the Friday meeting, commending the decisive and cooperative efforts to protect the people of Big Sky in an unprecedented situation in Big Sky and the world over.

“We applaud those organizations who have presented opportunities to contribute to the Big Sky Relief Fund,” echoed Executive Director Daniel Bierschwale. “And I applaud our board for their leadership.”

At present, the BSRAD has \$4.36 million available from collections to divert to emergency community needs and allocations, in addition the aforementioned monies.

At current projections, that sum will jump to around \$6.5 million by the end of the collection period on June 30.

Despite the impressive sum available, the work is far from over.

“It’s an impressive amount of money we have to use in this time,” said BSRAD Vice Chair Steve Johnson, “but making sure the money is used in right place will take an ongoing effort.”

The combined areas of focus for such a fund include volunteer coordination through Big Sky Community Organization efforts; food relief via the Big Sky Community Food Bank and the Big Sky School District; grocery and delivery services through the SPCF, BSCFB, Roxy’s Market, Country Market and Hungry Moose; mental health services through Women in Action; day care and educational services provided by the BSSD, Morningstar Learning Center and Big Sky Discovery Academy; and business relief and economic recovery measures spearheaded by the BSCC and VBS.

Additionally, members of the board approved \$15,000 to be, “committed over the next two months to support increasing information available as it pertains to the Big Sky Relief Fund,” Bierschwale said.

Gallatin County confirms
3/23 16 cases of COVID-19, highest in state

“Our community has a long history of coming together during a time of need and this is no exception,” Germain said in the release. “The coordination of key partners will help ensure Big Sky is poised to ‘weather this storm’ and come out on the other side stronger than ever.”

As Big Sky braces for COVID-19, with one individual confirmed in the small mountain town on March 19, there is solace in knowing the community and persons at the virtual helm are rapidly mobilizing.

Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center COVID-19 preparedness

Health System Incident Command Activated February 10, 2020

BOZEMAN HEALTH BIG SKY MEDICAL CENTER

BOZEMAN, MT — Bozeman Health is actively coordinating their communication, preparedness, and response activities for COVID-19 and formally activated their health system Incident Command structure on February 10, 2020. Bozeman Health's System Incident Command remains active to scale their response due to increasing global spread of COVID-19.

Over the last several weeks, the Bozeman Health COVID-19 Response Team, led by Kallie Kujawa, System Director of Quality and Safety, Dr. Mark Winton (Infectious Disease and Travel Medicine Specialist), Dr. Eric Lowe (Emergency Medicine), and the Infection Prevention Specialists has prepared the health system, including Big Sky Medical Center and b2 UrgentCare Big Sky for a possible sustained community transmission of COVID-19, with the assistance of others in the Incident Command team, including Dr. Kathryn Bertany, president of Deaconess Hospital and Big Sky Medical Center.

Birgen Knoff, System Director of Clinical Practice and Emergency Operations Manager, has been partnering with the COVID-19 Response Team to continue to build a systemwide structure to coordinate entity activities as well as coordinate with the Montana State Healthcare Coalitions, EMS, and city and county agencies, including Gallatin City-County Health Department. The many other critical members of the COVID-19 Response Team have been and continue to be incorporated into the Incident Command structure, with operational and clinical support from every Bozeman Health care site.

3/24 Gov. Bullock extends school closures through April 10

Formal situational reports, daily status emails, and on-demand communication (including emails, phone calls, meetings, etc.) are regularly being shared with Big Sky Medical Center and b2 UrgentCare employees and medical staff to keep all employees and medical staff providers throughout the health system informed about the rapidly changing environment.

Big Sky Medical Center Current Status

Big Sky Medical Center is prepared for and has the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to collect specimens to send to the state lab in Helena for COVID-19 testing. Specimen collection, and subsequent COVID-19 testing, is based on individual evaluations of persons who come to Big Sky Medical Center and that evaluation is based on the guidelines from the local and state health departments and the CDC and includes review of symptoms, medical history, and travel history. It is important to note that the current COVID-19 test is not reliable when specimens are collected from people who do not have any symptoms.

Medical supply monitoring and management information is being shared daily throughout the health system to ensure each care site has the supplies needed to care for their patient populations.

Enhanced visitor restrictions for Big Sky Medical Center are in effect due to the influenza virus and COVID-19 precautions:

- People with symptoms of respiratory illness/infection (cough, runny or stuffed nose) or fever are prohibited from visiting patients that are hospitalized.

- Persons of any age who are sick should only come to the hospitals to seek care for themselves.
- Hospitalized patients are permitted one healthy, asymptomatic visitor at a time as medically necessary. Visitors or companions under the age of 18 are not allowed.
- Patients in the emergency departments are only allowed one medically-necessary companion; no other visitors are permitted.
- Any patient who is confirmed positive or is under active investigation as an inpatient or in the emergency department at either Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital or Big Sky Medical Center for COVID-19 will not be permitted visitors.

For persons visiting their Bozeman Health medical provider, a clinic, b2 UrgentCare or b2 MicroCare:

- If you are sick (fever, cough, or sore throat), please do not visit or accompany a patient to their visit unless the patient is a minor, and do not enter the care site or clinic except to seek care for yourself.
- Only one visitor or companion of a patient may accompany the patient if medically necessary.

Bozeman Health General Emergency Preparedness

Bozeman Health provides expert, quality care to patients each and every day. Emergency preparedness is an important component of our daily operations to assure we are able to provide optimal care to both patients and staff in any situation.

Bozeman Health has an emergency preparedness plan that was developed using best practice materials from FEMA, along with an emergency preparedness team that regularly meets and conducts emergency response drills at entities throughout the health system.

An important component of Bozeman Health's emergency preparedness plan is a close working relationship with Gallatin City-County Health Department, Gallatin County Emergency Preparedness, and other partners including Montana State University, which Bozeman Health maintains through active participation in the All-Hazards All Disciplines (AHAD) quarterly meeting held by Gallatin County Emergency Preparedness. Participation in AHAD includes training classes, conducting drills and tabletop exercises and collaboration on process and procedure for handling incidents or emergency situations as a larger community.

More than 20 Bozeman Health leaders and clinical team members, including three Big Sky Medical Center employees, have completed comprehensive training in Healthcare Leadership in Mass-Casualty Incidents at FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama in the past year as part of continuous emergency preparedness training and development efforts. Much of the work required for emergency preparedness is done behind the scenes but is a critical component of Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center's day-to-day operations.

A full version of the story is available on explorebigksy.com

3/24

Gallatin County reaches 19 COVID-19 cases

Emergency responders ready for duty during pandemic

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY—Among the slew of public services altered by the novel COVID-19 virus, the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office as well as the Big Sky Fire Department are reacting and adjusting to adhere to recommended guidelines of the ever-changing global pandemic.

Gallatin County Sheriff Brian Gootkin and Big Sky Fire Department Interim-Chief Greg Megaard are both overseeing in-house as well as procedural adjustments within their departments to ensure continued public safety as well as the health of their own employees.

Both administrators stressed the importance of keeping their staffs as well as the public informed with timely and accurate information. The sheriff's office is striving to remain up to date with regular trainings from in-house health professionals so that deputies are aware of necessary precautions such as wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) like face masks and gloves when necessary.

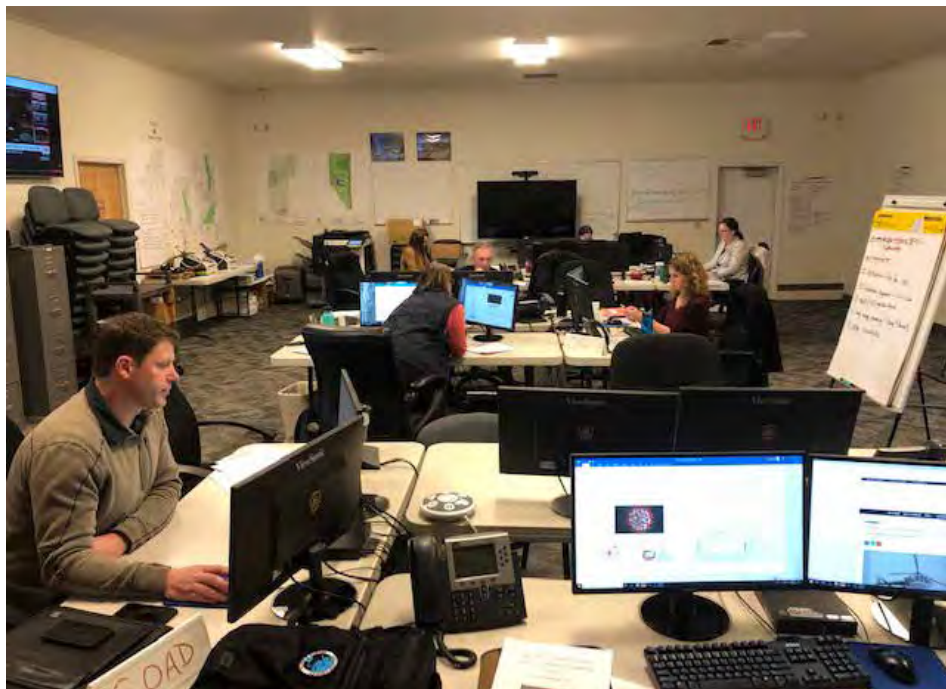
In addition to the trainings, Sheriff Gootkin has also encouraged his staff to employ common sense. For instance, patrol deputies may keep a further distance from vehicles while conducting traffic stops, rather than leaning in—while also taking stock of any potential dangers within the vehicle. Sheriff Gootkin is also grateful for external sources of information that are readily available to him and his officers so that they are always prepared to make the most informed decisions.

"We have one of our retired captains hooked at the hip with the health department, so that way if we have any questions or issues, we have an immediate source. . .to ask the experts and get answers from them," Sheriff Gootkin said.

Chief Megaard is relying heavily on the frequently updated streams of information coming from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the Gallatin County Health Department.

"Big Sky Fire [Department] is doing everything to be prepared to respond to the community's needs, to support them not only from an [emergency medical service] standpoint but anywhere they can help," Chief Megaard said. Tacking on additional precautions to education and equipment preparations, the fire department shut down public tours, ride-alongs and any other activities that required the public to enter their facilities.

While internal work to adjust to the far-reaching consequences and threats of the virus have kept the departments busy, Sheriff Gootkin was pleased to report that the sheriff's office has experienced little trouble while out on the job.



Employees of the Emergency Operations Center prepare for COVID-19-related conflicts while carrying out daily work. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHERIFF BRIAN GOOTKIN

"Things have really been quiet. People have been very cooperative; people have been very nice," Sheriff Gootkin said.

However, with a struggling economy and many people out of work, the sheriff fears what may be coming down the pike. "People getting desperate, that's our major concern now as law enforcement."

Sheriff Gootkin referenced comparable catastrophic events in history, such as the Great Depression, where many people's response to the national struggle was to seek reprieve by means of criminal activity.



The Big Sky Fire Department is refreshing COVID-19 in-house prevention and emergency response protocol in accordance with the Center for Disease Control and the Gallatin County Health Department. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY FIRE DEPARTMENT

"The sheriff's office always plans for the worst and expects the best, and we don't panic," he said, confident in the office's preparation in cooperation with the Emergency Operations Center for such a trend.

In the spirit of prevention, Sheriff Gootkin stressed to his deputies a cite and release protocol for misdemeanors like trespassing and shoplifting in order to avoid the spread of the virus behind bars.

"We want to try and limit exposure in the jail," Sheriff Gootkin said. "The jail is a very difficult place because it has one ventilation system, so if we get a sickness or a virus, the problem is there is no place for anyone to go."

For offenses that infringe on public safety, such as assault or driving under the influence, perpetrators will still be taken to the jail.

Another concern for both Chief Megaard and Sheriff Gootkin is the protection of their employees.

"It is imperative to make sure we are protecting ourselves through the proper PPE," Chief Megaard said. "If we have one member or multiple members [of the department] test positive, that would impact our staffing significantly." Chief Megaard said that while a staffing shortage due to viral infection would tax the department, the community would see no difference in response.

Sheriff Gootkin echoed Chief Megaard's promise to the public. "We are public safety, No. 1, and we will continue to operate regardless. . .we have to continue to work to make sure people are safe."

Nationally, proactive measures are being taken to ensure that EMS professionals are well stocked and such a shortage doesn't occur. The National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians is continuing testing in order to certify emergency medical technician candidates. A provisional EMT certificate is also being offered to candidates who complete a required educational program as well as pass the cognitive exam, while the psychomotor examination is currently suspended.

Chief Megaard added that as a 24-hour operation, the fire department is a consistent resource for concerned citizens to reach out to with questions.

Sheriff Gootkin also extended the sheriff's office phone line to the public, encouraging those with questions or concerns to reach out. The sheriff has proudly witnessed a community of people willing to come together in times of need, and he is glad to be a part of it.

"Every time we see the worst things happen. . .we see the best in people. Especially in this community, in this county, it's amazing how we sort of rally and support each other. It's good for the soul to see how people react and come together."

To reach the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office, call (406)-582-2100. To reach the Big Sky Fire Department, call (406)-995-2100.

3/25

A total of 65 statewide cases confirmed in Montana

Numbers accurate as of EBS press time.

OUTLAW

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

'Town Crier' hits stride E-newsletter covers COVID-19, other area news five days a week

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

In town centers around medieval England, one would hear the ancient cry, "Hear ye, hear ye!" and run toward it.

In those days the ability to read was a luxury, so the responsibility of dissemination, professionally speaking, fell on the shoulders of a celebrated individual: the town crier.

His job was to gather a crowd, sometimes with the assistance of a gong or bell, and yell breaking news to onlookers.

Several centuries later, in March 2019, Explore Big Sky launched our "Town Crier" e-newsletter, the latest rollout in an ongoing effort to enhance digital engagement and stay current with emerging digital trends.

The newsletter has been popular for months, but EBS has witnessed tremendous growth in the "Town Crier" audience over the last eight weeks.

The reason is plain to see.

Events of today ironically parallel some of those of medieval times, notably the spread of a pestilence. While the COVID-19 pandemic pales in comparison to

the terror rendered by the Black Death, which claimed roughly 95 percent of people infected by some estimates, folks in both periods searched for answers, information and updates from their local news provider.

And nothing is more direct than straight-to-inbox delivery format, aside, of course, from standing beneath a town crier's soapbox to hear his words.

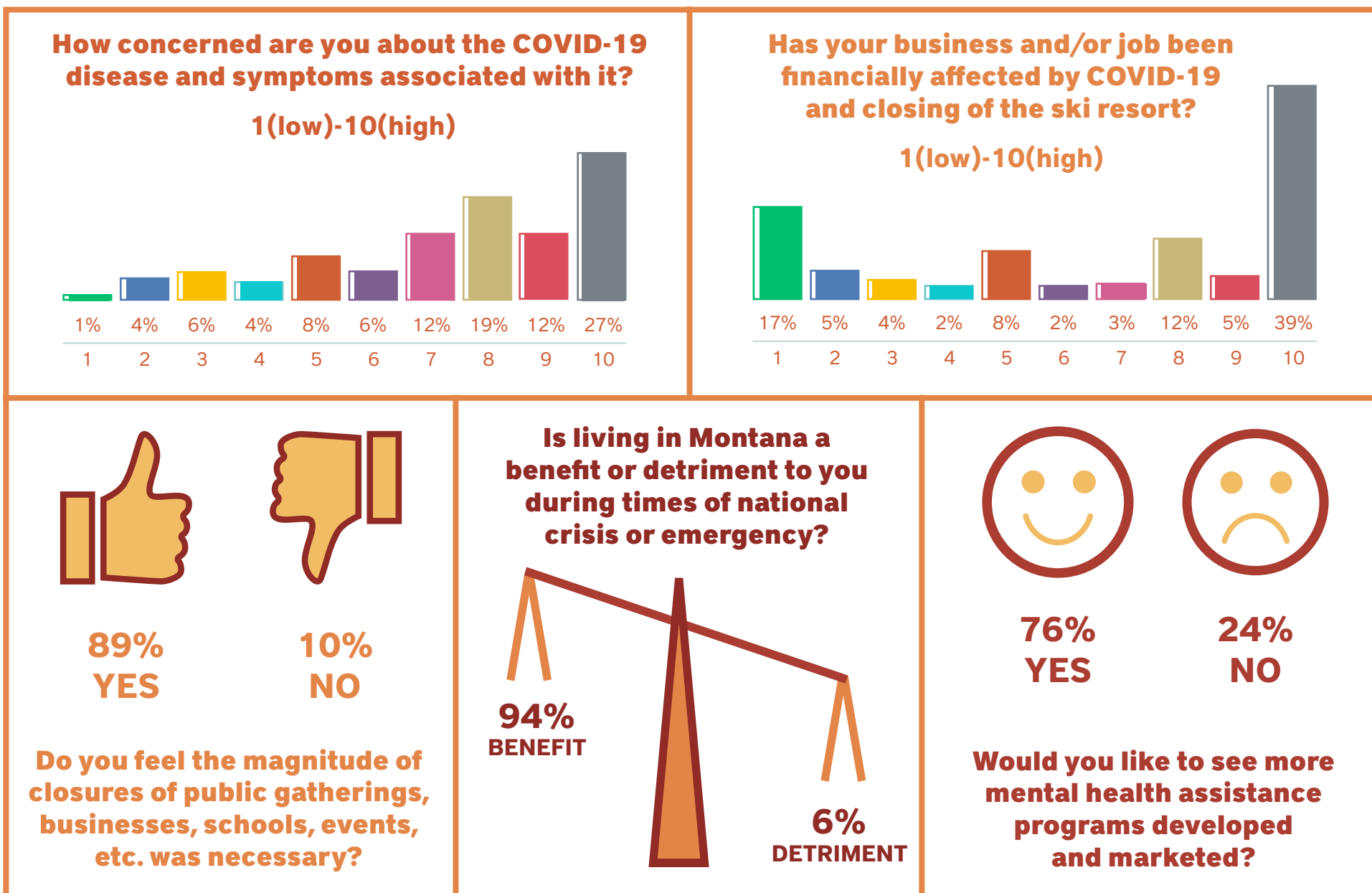
Now, more than a year after the 2019 launch, that "Town Crier" newsletter model has evolved into a five-times-a-week dynamo, boasting more than 16,000 dedicated subscribers eager for local and regional news along with great music, stimulating quotes, timely videos and incredible photography—entirely hand-picked by the EBS staff and delivered to your inbox each day.

We aim to provide subscribers with an informative and entertaining platform where you can gather your bearings in the news cycle. Never before has a regular missive, chock-full of the content people need to navigate this temporary new normal rendered by COVID-19, been more relevant and appreciated.

For "EBS: Town Crier" seekers, a subscribe function has been added to the explorebigsky.com homepage. Visit bit.ly/2Uh1Ob9 for a direct link to the free subscription form.

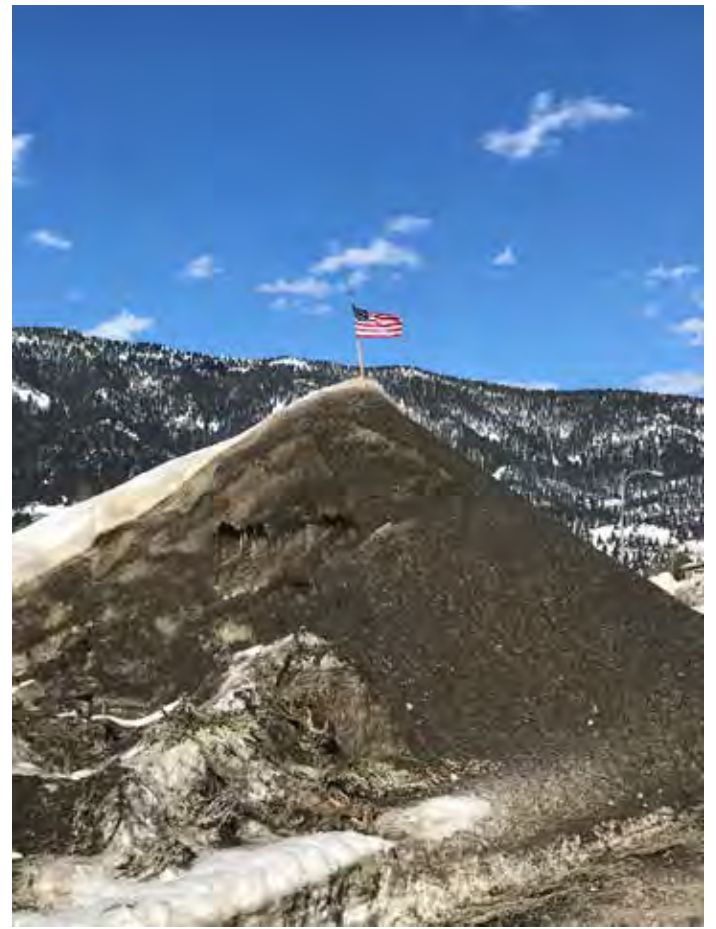
COVID-19: A community survey

EBS surveyed the community about how the recent COVID-19 coronavirus has affected them and the services they would like to see, along with the virus's affect on local businesses and the overall current state of the union in Big Sky. We received a flood of responses and are sharing a few with you here. [Visit surveymonkey.com/r/PKT96R9](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PKT96R9) to take the survey. - *The Editors*



IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

The EBS staff took to the streets to document the shift in Big Sky since March 15. Late winter is normally full of visitors, the restaurants and bars brimming with patrons. Here's a look at the past two weeks in photos. -- *The Editors*



SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS



Backcountry hazards heightened pg. 21



Grizzly Council prepares for tough talks pg. 27



Coronavirus and climate change pg. 31

Q&A with Whitney Williams

Gubernatorial candidate seeks to support Montanans both in crisis and moving forward

BY BELLA BUTLER

MISSOULA – Montana gubernatorial candidate Whitney Williams retains a devout belief that Montanans are more alike than they are different. During a time when the national paradigm of polarization fissures a rift between the left and the right, and in the midst of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, the sixth-generation Montanan believes Montana abides by a different set of values.

“There is not a great divide in Montana,” Williams said in a recent interview with Explore Big Sky. “We like our neighbors, we still wave at each other, we still pull each other out of a ditch, and at the end of the day we will take care of each other.”

It’s this vision of her home state that propelled Williams to run in the 2020 Montana gubernatorial election atop a platform of issues that she identifies as core concerns for all Montanans—on both sides of the political aisle.

During her recent 56-county tour, countless conversations with residents have strengthened her passion for her campaign’s focuses, pre-kindergarten education, pharmaceutical justice and protecting public lands, as well as bolstered her platform with additional points of interest such as renewable energy expansion and providing mental health services.

Williams grew up indoctrinated with a duty to serve the public. Having been raised by Pat Williams, Montana’s longest-serving congressman, and Carol Williams, Montana’s first female majority leader, Williams has a deep appreciation for the role government plays in the lives of many, but much of her life has been spent serving the public through her company, williamsworks, which seeks to advise Fortune 500 companies and private citizens to come together to address global challenges.

In the rough social and economic waters stirred by the COVID-19 global pandemic, Williams has practiced her self-described problem-solving skills, adjusting her communication with voters to virtual platforms.

On June 2, Williams will vie her opponent, Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney on the Montana primary election ballot to represent the Democratic Party in the 2020 general election.

EBS: *Both you and Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney have deep roots in Montana politics. How have your experiences especially prepared you for this role?*

WW: I think it’s private sector experience. Though I care deeply about government and I do believe government has a very important role in people’s lives, I just happen to have done my change-making and my service outside of government, and I think that that asset of having been a private sector person who cares about people is a real strength and a real contrast.



Gubernatorial candidate Whitney Williams has been on a 56-county tour of Montana, spreading the word about her campaign and gearing up for the primary election, where she will face her well-known opponent, Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney. PHOTOS COURTESY OF WHITNEY FOR MONTANA

Explore Big Sky: *While urban areas in Montana have experienced rapid growth in recent years, much of Montana is still considered rural. How do you plan to balance the interests of an expanding urban population and established rural population?*

Whitney Williams: I feel that rural Montana and small towns are struggling. Not to say that these bigger counties aren’t, because we’ve all got our own sets of issues ... but I want to be a governor for all of Montana, not just some of Montana. There are 2,000 appointments that the governor gets to make to boards and commissions across the state. It’s a really important way to elevate voices and to elevate talent from across the state. I think we can do that with rural Montana and small towns to make sure that they have a seat at the table when we are having conversations about how to move their communities forward. I think that’s a thing we could all do a little more of in this state and in this country is listen to each other.

EBS: *According to the University of Montana’s Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, Gallatin County ranked No. 1 in non-resident spending in 2017, with the majority of tourism based in outdoor recreation opportunities. How do you plan to support this region’s tourism economy as well as residents’ interests as they relate to public lands?*

WW: Not just in that part of Montana, but this whole state relies on tourism and the sort of outdoor economy. Seven billion dollars in spending last year and 70,000 jobs are dependent on the outdoor economy in Montana. So first of all ... we are going to keep public lands in public hands. We are not going to let the Trump administration transfer them back to the states, which is nothing more than trying to get developers and make it into a personal playground.

EBS: *How do you hope to balance these efforts with private development interests?*

WW: Everyone is welcome. We are Montana; we are a welcoming place. I would start with that and then say that we need to be sure that some of our wealthy out-of-state pals who are coming and making Montana their personal playground, we just need to make sure that they are paying for that privilege. I think currently, that is not the case. We need to take a look at that and see what more we can do across the largest landowners and make sure that we keep Montana Montana by keeping public access.

EBS: *How did you come to identify education, specifically access to pre-K and holding pharmaceutical companies accountable as your other primary campaign platforms?*

WW: I am a product of public schools. Good, high-quality public education is guaranteed to us in our constitution in Montana, and we need to make sure that we start a little bit earlier. We are one of only 12 states that doesn't educate our 4-year-olds ... For little brains and little learners, we know that in investing in them and getting them into public education ... the data is in. We know how much better kids do. [Another reason] is an economic issue, particularly for woman, who have a harder time working outside the home when they've got a little one and our economy depends on our ability to have people be in the workplace when they want to be in the workplace.

[P]harmaceutical companies, for decades, have been taking advantage of Americans, and it's immoral. We need to protect ourselves in Montana. The federal government is not solving the problem and we need a governor who is going to be tough enough to stand up to pharma, to do what we can in the legislature, to negotiate better drug prices on behalf of folks in the state. We need to bring transparency to what pharmaceuticals cost, and if we need to take them to court than we take them to court.

EBS: *Big Sky is one of 10 resort communities in Montana. How do you plan to support issues unique to these communities, such as workforce housing shortages?*

WW: We have a gigantic problem with affordable housing in this state, and we need to do more about it. One thing I think a state can do is make available more state tax credits to developers to incentivize them to build, because it is not the easiest thing to do, and they need incentives, and we need to make it so that people are willing to build in communities, and one of the ways is through state tax credits, which we just don't offer enough of. We have to incentivize the private sector to be able to do the work that we need to do to take care of Montana's workers—and currently, we're not doing that.

EBS: *How do the circumstances of the current COVID-19 crisis change how you plan to lead as the governor of Montana?*

WW: When it comes to my leadership as Montana's next governor, this pandemic has certainly presented a new set of challenges. Right now, our first priority is to protect the health and safety of Montanans. Afterward, we will need to help our families, friends, neighbors, workers and businesses rebuild our economy, restore jobs and businesses and adapt to a new reality. That takes experienced leadership. Fortunately, I've made a career out of solving tough problems and bringing people together. I've helped folks across the world recover from catastrophe, and I plan to bring folks of all sorts together to tackle the new



Williams, a native Montanan, still remembers catching her first of many trout in Georgetown Lake. Formative moments in the outdoors propel the gubernatorial candidate to fight for public lands, one of her primary platforms.

challenges ahead of our great state. It won't be easy, but Montana is full of fighters, and I'm proud to be one of them.

EBS: *What advice can you offer for small businesses during this tumultuous and uncertain time?*

WW: First off, as a small-business owner myself, my heart goes out to the small-business owners and workers affected by this pandemic. The amount of grit and determination that it takes to succeed as a small business owner in Montana is immense [and] the spread of a pandemic only makes this success harder to achieve. With an unprecedented shift in consumer behavior, small businesses and nonprofits are hurting, and it's our job as consumers to do all that we can to support our local businesses.

We've seen creative solutions all across the nation ranging from "dining bonds" to online sales, and all of those are great ideas. Even more important is that our state and federal government do all that it can to support small businesses struggling to make payroll. This is an uncertain and difficult time, and I would encourage small businesses to take advantage of all state and federal assistance, as well as explore local options from organizations seeking to help local businesses.

EBS: *What advice can you offer Montanans as the state as well as the globe cope with current and future social and economic impacts as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?*

WW: In Montana we help our neighbors. That should not, and cannot stop, because of an obstacle. There are fantastic organizations, new and old, in Montana and around the nation, that are finding ways to help people affected by the crisis. A lot of folks have some extra time on their hands, and I would ask them to chip in. We're all affected by the spread of coronavirus, but we need to look beyond ourselves and figure out how we can do our part.

Of course, we need to follow CDC and DPHHS guidelines, but we can't let this pandemic disconnect us. Call your family, call your friends and find ways to stay in touch with those that you hold dear. We may have to stay six feet apart, but the only way that we get through this is together.

Visit explorebigsky.com to read the full interview with Whitney Williams.



THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

We are a country, society and region unaccustomed to dealing with involuntary pause.

We've been caught up in the race of progress and keep telling ourselves there's no convenient time to take a breather. We put it off, waiting for the moment that always seems too elusive. Now one has arrived, a break in the action, imposed upon us against our will.

We in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem are familiar with high adrenaline, the brisk pace set by economic boomtimes of late. At the northern tier of our realm, we have Bozeman, fastest-growing micropolitan city in the United States; we have Gallatin County which is the fastest growing county in Montana; and we have the Bozeman airport that year after year continues to smash records for the number of people flying in and out.

In the tarrying frenzy there has been no vision articulated or championed by elected officials for laying out where the area will be in another human generation. One reason offered up as an excuse? City and county officials have claimed they are overworked, understaffed and underfunded. simply trying to keep up.

Down U.S. Highway 191 is the ski resort "town" of Big Sky where billions of dollars in recent years have been invested in real estate development, fueling a speculative fever that has the same devil-may-care atmosphere of a 19th century gold rush town, replete with a manic and largely disorganized approach to planning and zoning. No civic or business leader in Big Sky wants to be quoted publicly acknowledging this fact, but privately, "off the record," many people there admit that development has been out of control. The mindset is no different than what one finds in Bozeman.

So thoughtless and non-anticipatory has the approach been that the local Big Sky sewer system has been brimmed to capacity for a while and various kinds of malfunctions have caused spills with some effluent reaching the liquid gem of Gallatin Canyon: the Gallatin River, one of Montana's legendary fly-fishing streams.

Along with the construction frenzy in Big Sky, traffic levels on winding 191 have made it one of the most treacherous roads to drive in the Northern Rockies; moreover, the valley that holds Big Sky and which cul-de-sacs at the base of Lone Mountain has no real backdoor escape route in the event of a summer wildfire blazing through from the east. It is a disaster waiting to happen.

Down in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, there's Teton County—the richest per capita county in all of the United States where the part-time elite dwell in 10,000 square foot neo-West baronial castles, some that cost \$30 million to build while grunt laborers and working class professionals are unable to find or afford rentals. Some of the seasonal help lives in tents. Paradise to those living at opposite ends of the spectrum has different connotations.

Further south of Jackson Hole, in the Upper Green River Valley, the footprint of oil and gas development continues to balloon, overtaking critical habitat for migratory pronghorn and mule deer—one herd already has suffered a 40-percent loss in numbers from industrial impacts. The creep is continuing on public land deemed critical for greater sage grouse, which the state of Wyoming absolutely, positively promised it would protect in order to prevent federal listing of the imperiled bird under the Endangered Species Act.

Meanwhile, in the core of Greater Yellowstone, visitation to Yellowstone National Park has increased nearly every year for a decade and large numbers continue to pack neighboring Grand Teton which is also dealing with a high influx of airline travelers flying into the park. Those crown jewel parks in summer are hardly places that yield quiet interludes with nature and any talk of limits is treated as taboo.

In 2019, statisticians with the U.S. Geological Survey reported that tourism to Yellowstone generates nearly \$650 million annually in economic benefits and visitor spending supports 7,089 jobs for the local economy. Nearby, Grand Teton anchored \$792 million in economic activity in and around the southern half of the ecosystem, with visitor spending supporting 8,620 jobs. Combined, just for those parks, that's \$1.5 billion annually and 15,500 jobs.

Nationally, for every \$1 invested in national parks it returns \$10 in economic value, a ratio that is much, much larger in Greater Yellowstone. In addition, there are hundreds of millions of dollars generated annually through the downhill skiing, fly fishing, dude ranch, hunting and outdoor recreation economies.

Across Montana, outdoor recreation accounts for \$7.1 billion in consumer spending and 71,000 jobs—the second largest sector in the state economy. In Wyoming, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, outdoor recreation generated \$1.6 billion in economic activity.

When things come to a standstill, it is time to take stock of what we have

Even as Wyoming's once-strapping coal industry has staggered like a pummeled prize fighter on the ropes, nature-based tourism, which is really what outdoor recreation is, remained a reliable engine, insulating towns in the northwest corner of the state from the ill-effects befalling communities in the distant Powder River Basin.

Outdoor recreation has become its own form of an extraction industry, no different from that of real estate. Like every industry its health is measured according to traditional metrics—rising revenue, recruitment of more customers, more users, more ways of monetizing a finite resource.

There has been no vision for Greater Yellowstone championed by government civil servants, notably from leaders of the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; at least none that lays out where this public-land rich region will be in another human generation. It hasn't happened for a number of reasons that go beyond the short-term tenures of those in charge.

Leaders often claim they are overworked, understaffed and underfunded. Privately, they are afraid to act boldly because it might threaten their job security. They're too afraid to craft the very vision that citizens who pay their salaries expect of them.

Now fears of coronavirus have ground everything to a standstill. The unimaginable is here and we don't know how long it will last. We have moved into Instant Deep Recession with the economic lifeblood activities of Greater Yellowstone suddenly foisted, along with everywhere else in the country, into suspended animation.

If COVID-19 doesn't kill people, the inescapable painful strategy to contain the virus, by prohibiting travel, is certain to devastate many of the businesses and jobs associated with all of the above. Livelihoods of our neighbors and fellow citizens are on the line and if we know anything it is that the less-off among us suffer disproportionately more than those with means.

No one welcomed this forced moment of pause, hardship and potential loss of loved ones. Yet it is here. It is a reminder that, in the end, no matter how much hubris we possess during boomtimes, including our blithe ignorance or denial of science, nature holds the trump card with regard to the future of our species. We have ignored this fact at our own peril.

Can this lead to an awakening?

Conspicuously absent during these soaring years of sprawling human footprint in Greater Yellowstone has been any meaningful reflection on just how special the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is—not just in the West, or the U.S., but globally. Getting the region highlighted in a special edition of "National Geographic," as occurred in May 2016, doesn't cut it.

There's no other ecosystem quite like it. As you read this on your laptop or cell phone now, or when you sit down for a meal with your family, test your own ecological literacy and knowledge. Ask this question: name five extraordinary aspects of Greater Yellowstone that set it apart but which have nothing to do with it being a fine place to play outdoors.

Is the value of Greater Yellowstone, its incomparable concentration of wildlife and its unfragmented wildlands, only measured by the ability of the private sector to turn its assets into legal tender? And if that's your answer, then how does that square with protecting and preserving the five things on your list?

Greater Yellowstone faces serious issues. As we all hunker, this space will be dedicated to sharing reflections on how we emerge from this crisis smarter and better prepared to protect it in a way that has never managed to happen in any other part of the Lower 48.

In contrast to the shop-worn idiom "time's a-wastin'," what can we do now to make sure this isn't wasted time for pondering possibilities we otherwise wouldn't? Until now, the most valued and yet scarce asset in our lives has been the moments that allow us to take stock of things only visible during a pause.

Churches are closed but nothing should stop us from deeper consideration of our spiritual connection to nature and each other.

If you don't understand what this means, spend some time conversing with a vulnerable elder or a terminally ill friend. Ask them what they think is important. Ask them what they've cherished most about community, family and being able to live in or visit a region like ours. Most will provide an answer that has nothing to do with money or status. Most have greater appreciation for the future they may never see—a world as it ought to be, than we do in our race to get ahead.

Todd Wilkinson is the founder of Bozeman-based "Mountain Journal" and is a correspondent for "National Geographic." He's also the author of "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek" about famous Jackson Hole grizzly bear 399.

INSIDE YELLOWSTONE



Yellowstone and Grand Teton close to visitors

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks are announcing modifications to operations at the request of local county health officers from Park County, Wyoming, Park County, Montana, Teton County, Wyoming, and Gallatin County, Montana. The health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers and partners is our number one priority. The National Park Service is working with federal, state and local authorities to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic.

Effective March 24, Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks are closed to all park visitors until further notice. There will be no visitor access permitted to either park. State highways and/or roads that transcend park/state boundaries and facilities that support life safety and commerce will remain open. Both parks will cooperate on the implementation of the closures. We will notify the public when we resume full operations and provide updates on our website and social media channels.

“The National Park Service listened to the concerns from our local partners and, based on current health guidance, temporarily closed the parks,” said Yellowstone Superintendent Cam Sholly and Grand Teton Acting Superintendent Gopaul Noojibail. “We are committed to continued close coordination with our state and local partners as we progress through this closure period and are prepared when the timing is right to reopen as quickly and safely as possible.”

The parks encourage people to take advantage of various digital tools available to learn about Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks.

Visit nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia for digital resources on Yellowstone and nps.gov/grte/learn/photosmultimedia for resources on Grand Teton.



Yellowstone National Park announced an immediate closure to visitors on March 24 in response to COVID-19. NPS PHOTO

Updates about NPS operations will be posted on nps.gov/coronavirus. Please check with nps.gov/yell and nps.gov/grte for specific details about park operations.

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Backcountry hazards heightened with spring temps and heavy traffic

BY BELLA BUTLER

After the recent closures of Bridger Bowl and Big Sky Resort due to COVID-19 concerns, many skiers and boarders weren't ready to relinquish turns yet to be had in the still-snowy mountains of southwest Montana.

With lifts retired for the season, skiers, boarders and snowmobilers have taken to the backcountry in pursuit of the tail-end of a season cut short. Recreating outside can offer invaluable benefits during trying times such as mood-boosting elevated serotonin and endorphin levels. However, those getting out in the backcountry are no longer in controlled terrain and are more vulnerable to a number of hazards.

To Doug Chabot, director of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center, more traffic in the backcountry means more triggers. According to the National Avalanche Center, over 90 percent of avalanche accidents were triggered by the victim or someone in the victim's party. With people being the predominant initiators of avalanches, greater numbers of people amount to increased risk.

Chabot warns that in busier locations, such as Bridger Bowl and Beehive Basin, people should consider not only the threat they pose to themselves but also to those around them. "The danger exists not only for the people that would trigger and get caught, but if it's crowded, we're now putting other people at risk because there might be people underneath us."



Fresh turns are just one of the allures of skiing and riding in the backcountry. During trying times, recreating in the outdoors can have tremendous benefits on both mental and physical health.



The skin track at popular backcountry locations such as Beehive Basin show signs of frequent use, especially since traffic from closed ski resorts has moved into the backcountry.

This time of year, it is especially critical to take necessary precautions in the backcountry as the snowpack transitions from winter to spring conditions, a trend GNFAC forecasters are already taking note of. Chabot says that a wet snowpack is a weak snowpack, a reality that grows more prevalent as the sun rises higher in the sky and reaches the surface of the snow in greater concentration.

"We are seeing some smaller wet avalanches, but we are warning people that as the temperatures get warmer, if they are sinking into wet snow, it's time to go elsewhere," Chabot said.

Other threats particularly partial to the warming season are cornices. While the big overhangs of snow are dangerous throughout the entire year, they reach an ominous phase in the spring after building up all season and weakening with the warming temperatures. According to Chabot, new backcountry travelers have a tendency to underestimate how far back a cornice's breaking point extends. This is a hazard that demands acute attention and consideration so as not to send a bomb-like cascade of snow down on others, Chabot said.

Spring conditions play a mentally deceiving game, as well. "We tend to equate snow stability with our feelings. It feels good, it's such a beautiful day," Chabot said, having observed the pattern of eager snow sportsmen and woman each year. "Well, the snowpack doesn't care."



Backcountry skiers dig a snow pit and test snowpack stability on a west-facing aspect at Beehive Basin. Doug Chabot, director of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center advises backcountry travelers to continue to take necessary precautions, even as sunny spring days offer a false sense of security.



A backcountry skier breaks trail through fresh snow at Beehive Basin.

During this time of changing conditions and heavier backcountry traffic, it remains as essential as ever to retain best practices when moving through uncontrolled terrain. Chabot emphasizes the continued importance of reading the advisory, carrying rescue gear, going with partners and using the GNFAC as a resource.

"We're here to help [backcountry travelers] make good decisions," Chabot said.

For more information and to check the avalanche advisory, visit mtavalanche.com or call the advisory phone at (406)-587-6981.

REFLECTIONS

Thoughts for sustainable living



Navigating a global reset

BY KATHY BOUCHARD
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

I'm thinking drums. Recalling the young heroine of Disney's "Moana," when she grasps the sticks and a thunderous "ba-BOOM" heralds her quest to restore the balance of Nature, what musical instrument could be more empowering to two little girls? In the second day of home-schooling, their dad and I are trying to think of ways to keep them busy without resorting to the television. They finished their e-learning assignment in about 30 minutes, can't play with the neighbor kids, visit the library, or have a treat at the cute little chocolaterie in town. While I raked through the flower beds, they spent hours creating a "fairy garden" near the sprouting day lilies. But there's rain in the forecast. Wouldn't it be fun to learn a musical instrument?

The call came March 12 from a harried son, who had obviously given up against "I think we should call your mother," and his agitated wife who just knew the twins and their 5-month-old sister all home together weren't going to respect her boundaries while she tried to work from home. She correctly anticipated closure of daycare and schools, wondering if I'd be able to even get there at all. I left Montana 36 hours later and drove back through time.

I've never done it in less than 23 hours, and that was maximum speed with other drivers taking shifts. Given the freezing fog and slippery conditions, there was so much time to watch the country slowly go by. Many small towns are even smaller and more run down, others, dramatically thriving with large hotels and fueling stations where you can buy home decor, shower or gain 5 pounds admiring their homemade fudge. On the road, from the mountains, through the broken hills of the Custer Battlefield, under a desolate brooding sky, I thought about what has changed since my earliest road trips.

Family size is one. Seven unbelted kids sprawled throughout the station wagon, mostly behaving, and forlornly staring at the billboard promises of goodies to be had at convenient roadside attractions. Forlorn because my parents didn't stop at "tourist traps," not once.

Second most notable change is the lack of trash along the highways. Before the stunningly successful anti-litter campaigns of the 1960s, our nation's highways were strewn with refuse tossed from car windows. Much of it related to cigarettes; foil wrappers, cartons, butts, but also garbage of every description. It defiled the pastures and farmland, and inundated otherwise charming small-town streets. It was the norm of the time, but things changed for the better.

But other changes may be more subtle. Cornstalks left from the harvest have weathered the winter, rather than being plowed under. Wetlands have reappeared where they always should have been as their importance to filtering water, preventing floods and sustaining wildlife is more clearly understood. Old bridges continue to rust, maintenance forgotten as budgets tighten and tax bases shrink.

Well into my second day of the drive came high wooded bluffs and the Mississippi, magnificent in its breadth, burgeoning with the waters drained from the upper Midwest. My memories failed to give it justice, and I noted signs advertising historic river trails. It's at the top of my bucket list of things to do after. After this global reset.

It turns out the twins will learn the ukulele, which their father has already taken up. It's going to be a long haul and I'm already really tired, but I can rock that baby! Stay safe.

Kathy Bouchard is a member of the Rotary Club of Big Sky's Sustainability Committee. She has been a Montana resident for 20 years and is inspired to work for sustainability on behalf of her grandchildren.

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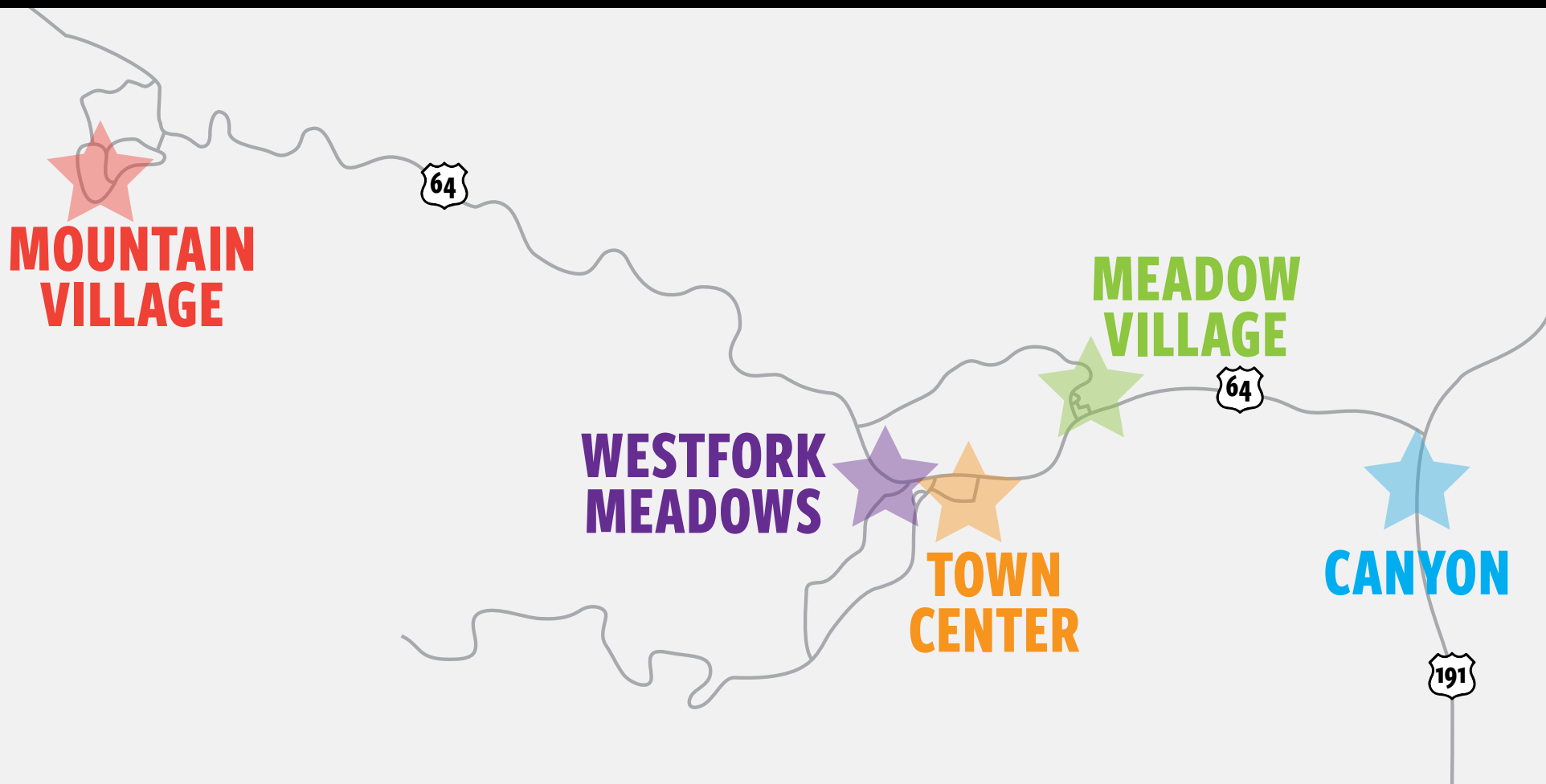
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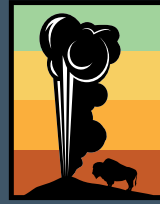


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Grizzly council prepares for tough talks, adjusts to coronavirus

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

LIVINGSTON – Despite frenzied health and economic concerns as COVID-19 makes waves in Montana, the Governor’s Grizzly Bear Advisory Council has reaffirmed its commitment to finding solutions for coexisting with grizzly bears.

The council was slated to meet in Browning on March 18 and in Choteau on March 19-20, but in light of the fluid coronavirus situation, the council elected to hold a video conference March 19-20 instead. The morning sessions were available to watch live via YouTube and on the council’s website.

The 18-member panel was selected by Gov. Steve Bullock last summer from a pool of more than 150 applicants and is tasked with providing recommendations to the governor and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks on how the Montana public would like to see grizzly bears managed. Bullock has asked the council to submit recommendations by August after the course of eight meetings scheduled between October 2019 and July 2020.

“What we’re really dealing with is bears are moving beyond the areas where we have policies,” said FWP grizzly bear research biologist Cecily Costello. “We actually have to create some new policy regarding these areas in between. The reality of what is in between makes things a little more difficult ... We’re running into more people.”

Costello added that the council is intended as a first step in the public engagement process for creating new policy about situations such as if, when or where a bear should be relocated and what are acceptable, effective ways of reducing conflicts.

During the March meeting, the council continued to discuss in smaller groups a list of more than 100 emerging ideas and began integrating smaller group work into a shared document the entire council can discuss. While the emerging ideas have not been announced publicly—they were generated through an informal brainstorm session and do not yet represent a consensus opinion from the council—the ideas are tangible, applicable suggestions related to human safety, healthy bear populations, conflict response and mitigation, information and education, as well as governmental, interagency and tribal coordination.

The council elected to start these conversations in smaller groups as a first step for tackling potentially controversial ideas and many members said they felt the groups were ready to have a full-group discussion.

Jonathan Bowler, a resident of Swan Valley near Condon, said having these hard conversations requires honesty and trust from every person on the council and now is the time to find common ground.

“We have a really great foundation and a personal respect and a value for each other’s ideas,” Bowler said. “We need to lean back on that now and understand that we’re going to have some dissenting ideas.”

Specifically, council members said they are ready to talk in upcoming meetings about where bears should be in Montana, whether it’s in every corner of the state or in identified locations in the western half; what, if any, role hunting might play in the future; and how to improve conflict response to livestock depredation.

“I think we’re really going to have to have that discussion and figure out where we all stand and then find middle ground and see where we can go from there,” said council member Trina Jo Bradley, a rancher in Valier.

To support these large-group discussions, the council has asked to hear from experts in Alaska and Canada about the opportunities and challenges around hunting, as well as George Edwards with the Montana Livestock Loss Board about rancher compensation when livestock is



A grizzly cub of the year stands in Grand Teton National Park. NPS PHOTO

killed by grizzly bears. The panel has previously heard from state and federal biologists, as well as nonprofit staff about grizzly bear connectivity, distribution and the current efforts to support coexistence.

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to discussing the council’s process, the impacts of COVID-19, and how to make these larger group discussions accessible to the public.

The council was created as an initial public process, and in order to represent views from across Montana, the council determined to meet at various locations in the western half of the state and dedicate time to hear from each community. So far, the council has met in East Helena, Bozeman, Missoula, Polson and Libby and was scheduled to meet in Browning, Choteau, Red Lodge and Dillon.

With uncertainty around the full impacts of coronavirus, the group grappled with how best to proceed while continuing to engage the rest of the Montana public. Council members were eager to continue their work via teleconference over the next few weeks, but also noted the importance of face-to-face time and the ability to visit communities that are impacted by grizzly bears.

Multiple council members expressed interest in rescheduling meetings so that they can visit communities in person once issues surrounding the virus have been resolved. The council also requested the possibility of extending its deadline to submit recommendations.

Charlie Sperry, responsive management supervisor for FWP and one of nearly a dozen state and federal support staff aiding the council, thanked the council members for their continued dedication to grizzly bears despite trying times.

“We’ve known for a long time this is a special group,” Sperry said. “It just shows what an incredibly passionate group you are. From the bottom of my heart and everybody at FWP, thank you very much.”

While a final decision on rescheduling or setting a time for the next teleconference had not been made as of EBS press time on March 25, facilitators Heather Stokes and Shawn Johnson of the University of Montana were coordinating with council members about how to proceed and a new schedule will be forthcoming.

Council members said they will continue to accept online comments or questions from the public through a submission form online, and for now this will stand in place of public comment during meetings. During the March meeting, facilitator Stokes reported the council has received 300 comments.

Visit fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbac.html for more information about the Governor’s Grizzly Bear Advisor Council, to view meeting minutes and to submit individual comments.

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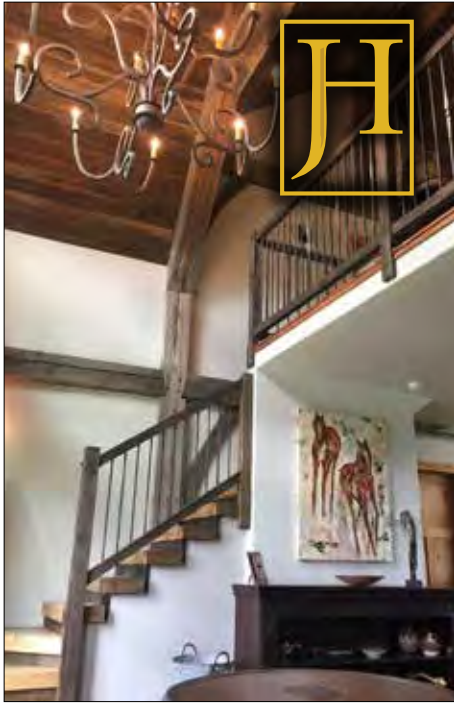
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What the coronavirus teaches us about climate change



A mountainous view near Telluride, Colorado. CC PHOTO

BY JONATHAN THOMPSON

In the time of coronavirus, I headed to southern Utah's remote canyon country to do some extreme social distancing.

All I knew when I emerged a few days later in western Colorado was that the world was confusing. I half-expected to find empty highways and shuttered businesses. What I witnessed was an armada of black SUVs, loaded down with passengers and skis, all headed to the resort town of Telluride. This was mid-March.

Clearly, a lot of folks were determined not to let a deadly pandemic get in the way of their ski vacation. It occurred to me then that perhaps things weren't so bad, after all. If that many people were still headed for the slopes, the crowded restaurants, bars and supersized petri dishes—er, hot tubs—then surely the danger of the virus had passed, right? Wrong.

What I was witnessing was just one instance of an ad hoc, failed response to a crisis. It resembled a magnified version of the global response to climate change in which half the population is in panic mode, while the other half insists on life as usual.

I saw this play out in even starker relief in the supermarket in Montrose, which serves as a supply town for mountain towns to the south, including Telluride. The parking lot was packed, and at first glance things inside seemed fairly typical for a ski season Saturday. The avocados and bell peppers were stacked high in the produce section, and the fancy cheese bin was overflowing. Then I noticed the potatoes were all gone.

I hurried back to the rice and beans aisle only to find what I ascertained to be high-risk folks—older, frail-looking—staring at empty shelves. It was the same with the dried pasta section, where all that remained were a few boxes of gluten-free stuff. I grabbed them and anything else that would give me sustenance for the next week or so while I lived and worked out of my car.

Back out in the parking lot a massive Cadillac Escalade and a handful of Chevy Suburbans were lined up in front of the liquor store. One woman told her companion to move the car closer because “we’ve got way too much to carry.”

Then it felt like a cascade: Meetings were cancelled, my kids were being ordered to vacate their college dorms immediately, giving them little choice but to get on planes and fly across the ocean back to Bulgaria, where I live. Restaurants were shutting down. Meanwhile, the ski vacationers were stocking up on booze. Did they think they were immune? Or did they believe President Trump when he first downplayed the virus, even calling it a hoax?

It's tempting simply to roll one's eyes: They'll get what they deserve, while those who hole up in their houses and try to do their part to mitigate the virus's spread will stay healthy.

Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. By continuing on with their lives, the vacationers could negate the efforts of the conscientious crowd, and likely spread the virus to the people working in the restaurants, hotels and shops.

Climate change is no different. It does little good for one person to reduce their carbon footprint if all around them everyone else—with the encouragement of the federal government—drills for oil, burns natural gas or coal and consumes without limits, as if the climate catastrophe were just another media fixation.

What we need to battle both this virus and climate change is a coordinated, society-wide response. We need leaders who aren't afraid of taking bold, decisive action, regardless of how it might impact the stock market or the bottom line of political donors. It truly is a matter of life and death.

That same day, March 14, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis took decisive action: He ordered every ski area in the state to shut down and then imposed restrictions on public gathering places. San Juan County, home of Telluride, went farther: mandatory lock down, shelter in place, all tourists and non-residents must leave, and mandatory testing of the entire population by a private company.

Now we just need the same kind of resolve to tackle the climate crisis.

Jonathan Thompson is a contributor to Writers on the Range.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about Western issues. He is a freelance writer and author of the forthcoming novel, “Behind the Slickrock Curtain.”



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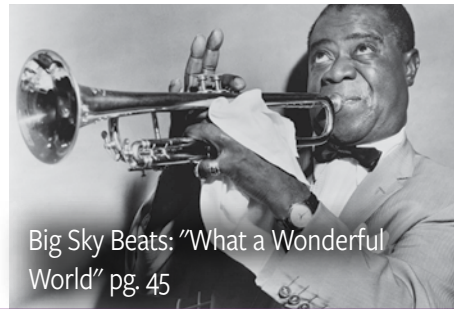
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SECTION 3: HEALTH, SPORTS, BUSINESS & FUN



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Big Sky Beats: "What a Wonderful World" pg. 45



Back 40: The Icemen pg. 46

Therapist addresses COVID-19-related mental health concerns

BY BELLA BUTLER



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLY WOLD

BIG SKY—With the paramount danger of the contagious COVID-19 virus dictating the societal day-to-day, another threat lurks in the background. While physical health is a prominent concern, mental health may also be at risk in the midst of extreme uncertainty spurred by the global pandemic.

Ally Wold, a licensed marriage and family therapist, suspects that fear of the virus paired with economic strife and other tangential concerns may instigate a rise in mental health challenges, namely anxiety and depression.

“I think when we get out of our routines [and] we’re asked to do things differently, I think that can kind of get anybody on edge,” Wold said during a March 24 phone interview.

Wold also recognized that while these are challenging circumstances for many, some people may be more vulnerable to emotional struggles than others. Individuals who have a history with anxiety or depression, Wold said, are more likely to experience symptoms during this unusual period. “We can all have some sort of spectrum of anxiety or depression; we all have moods that we can feel ... but some people are going to be more prone to the extremes of that.”

For many, though, dealing with a pandemic of this scale is likely unprecedented, and everyone will assume their own sets of challenges. Luckily, Wold believes there are varying degrees of efforts that can combat discomforts.

Wold sees the less populated Big Sky area as a treasured opportunity to get outside without the worry of being closely surrounded by others. “We do have a lot of options here which is really nice for people to still be able to do those things, feel a little bit more normal, get a little space from the people that you’re stuck with in your house and still have some sense of relief,” the therapist said.

For the time that must be spent working, in many current cases from home, Wold suggests that it’s best to try and maintain a normal routine and identify how best to transition to “work mode.” Wold said to attempt channeling an inner child and “find your homework spot,” a place where interruptions will be few and far between and frustrations can be best avoided.

An additional source of heightened stress for many is a constant influx of information from sources that don’t always agree and often exaggerate, according to Wold. It’s best to limit media time, she said, especially for those already feeling some level of anxiety. She suggests identifying a credible source that offers facts and recommendations, nothing more, and choosing a brief daily window to consume this information.

When do you know that your anxiety or depression is reaching a level of concern? Wold offers a simple tool to answer this question. Identify your own feelings of anxiousness or melancholy on a scale of one to five. If necessary, enlist someone close to you and ask them to gauge your behavior for you.

“If you’re running at a four or five all the time, something needs to be done, probably, to help you calm down,” Wold said. Solutions to de-stress could include talking to a friend, reading, journaling or spending time outside. But, she says, only the individual can truly discern when their feelings and behaviors warrant professional help.

For those less concerned about their own mental health and worried instead about someone else in close proximity, Wold advises that the cultural fear of discussing unpleasant topics be set aside in the interest of compassion.

“If you’re coming from a loving place, I think most people have a pretty good response to a caring suggestion or even just a caring question.”

Ally Wold’s Mental Health Resources



Podcast:

The Happiness Lab with Dr. Laurie Santos



Literature:

“The Chemistry of Calm” and “The Chemistry of Joy” by Henry Emmons



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Life 101

How's your "new normal" working out?



BY LINDA ARNOLD
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Our worlds have been rocked.

As swift changes have been thrust upon us, we've all had to do a lot of adjusting. While we're continuing to learn about the physical effects of the COVID-19 virus, what about the mental and emotional effects?

Freedoms take a back seat

As Americans, we're not used to having our freedoms restricted. Or being told where we can and cannot go.

Jobs are changing. Incomes are affected. The stock market is plunging. Schools are closed. Childcare challenges abound. Restaurants, gyms and many businesses are closed. Travel is prohibited. Events are being canceled, right and left.

Fear and anxiety are running rampant. You've had a couple of weeks to get used to this "new normal," at least for the coming weeks or months.

Out of control

First and foremost, we're driven at a basic level by the need for safety and security, and to be in control of our lives.

That's all going out the window with this public health threat. To help deal with this uncertainty, author Anne Lonsdorf has some simple strategies:

- Examine and identify your fears.
- Turn "what if" thoughts into "what is" statements.
- Be aware you can choose your thoughts (which result in your feelings).
- Focus on what's going right in your life.

Go for the W.I.N.

A handy technique is WIN. Stop to ask yourself, "What's Important Now?" This brings you into the present and helps you focus on what you can control.

If you're working remotely—and the kids or grandkids are out of school—interruptions will persist. Share the load and assign household tasks to avoid resentment.

Getting organized also helps you feel in control. Catch up on home projects or cue up that YouTube exercise video. Make a dent in that stack of books on your nightstand.

Social distancing can even inspire other modes of connecting: long-neglected phone calls or handwritten notes. Indulge in things that give you peace of mind like inspirational reading, a hot bath, soothing music or a walk in nature.

Are we there yet?

We all know this is going to take time. And we don't know how long that will be. So, be gentle with yourself.

Crisis situations can bring out the best—and the worst—in us. Folks may feel threatened and hoard supplies. On the other hand, there's an outpouring of support from volunteers.

This crisis is still pretty new. As we settle into the next few weeks, we'll be able to see more predictability in our daily lives.

Your self-discovery channel

Too often our inner voices get drowned out by all the noise in our outer worlds. Take the opportunity to go within during this social distancing period. You may even stumble onto your own "Self-Discovery Channel."

By reflecting on what matters most, you'll be able to look at your priorities, redefine your values and focus on what you really want to create in your life. Journaling, meditation and prayer are helpful practices.

I'd like to close with this alternative greeting I learned from artist Amy Zerner as an option to the "elbow bump" for a safe and spiritual greeting.

Place your hands in the prayer position and hold to your heart (yogi style). Rather than the traditional "namaste" greeting, say, "nama-stay-away-from-me."

Linda Arnold is a syndicated columnist, psychological counselor and founder of a multistate marketing company. Reader comments are welcome at linda@lindaarnold.org or visit lindaarnold.org for information on her books.



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A coach's lesson

Local Buzz Tatom: Sports more than simply a game

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Athletics have played a large role in Buzz Tatom's life. The Dallas, Texas native racked up numerous accolades—top 100 recruit, captain, and all-state honors among others—throughout his fantastic high school and collegiate football career. But all of his accomplishments aside, it is a lesson that his high school football coach taught him that has stuck with him to this day.

"I by no means think I'm an expert on coaches, but I've been around a lot of good ones and I've been around a lot of bad ones," Tatom said. "...Realistically, they can change a kid's life, which is what my high school coach kind of did. They can be somebody that you say 'hello' to and you have memories about and then the third aspect is the guy that you try to forget. I don't know [that] even coaches realize how much impact they have on kids."

A resident of Big Sky for nearly a decade, Tatom's story began at Richardson High School in Richardson, Texas. It was there that he met the man who would impact his life forever: Winston Duke. Duke was the coach of the Eagles high school football program when Tatom joined the team.

Tatom, the youngest of three siblings growing up, was an undersized football player by his own account, struggling to gain and maintain weight during his adolescence. Tatom took to the weight room to reshape his lean stature, working out constantly to stem the tide, but to no avail. As a ninth-grade student—considered junior high in Tatom's school district at the time—he was picked to join the high school team.

Tatom came to be an Eagle of Richardson high school; the rival school of his junior high school. Not knowing anyone, the tight end and outside linebacker had to grapple with being the youngest athlete on the team. He also remembers being late to practices as he was provided transportation by bus every day.



Tatom (red jersey) hauls in a reception in front of a defender for a touchdown during his playing days at Texas Tech. PHOTO COURTESY OF BUZZ TATOM



Tatom's high school coach, Winston Duke (left), addresses one of his athletes at practice. PHOTO COURTESY OF BUZZ TATOM

Tatom entered a talented, senior laden squad. He didn't receive much playing time early in the season and recalls enduring punishing practices as the seniors roughed up the underclassmen. "The poor bus driver got to the point to where you know he'd give me a hug every day when I got off the bus because he knew I was fixing to take a beating," Tatom said. "...I finally had to tell him you've got to stop giving me a hug because A, people see it, but B it doesn't put me in the right frame of mind when I'm walking into this situation."

In Tatom's opinion, the team was underperforming as the season progressed. Lacking a sense of camaraderie and 'team' atmosphere, instead they were dealing with a clear divide between the upper classmen and lower classmen.

The seventh game of the year sparked a moment that would result in a decision from his coach that would influence Tatom's life forever. He had finally earned a larger role and was seeing an increase in playing time. He vividly recalls a play in which he made a key block to free up one of his senior teammates to run for an 80-yard touchdown. As all of his teammates were celebrating the score in the endzone, Tatom unenthusiastically walked to the sideline. "If I went down there to give a high five, I doubt anybody would've given me a high five," he said.

Initially the action went unnoticed. It wasn't until the Eagles' film session the following day, when the play was replayed countless times, that his teammates and even coach Duke took notice. Tatom described his teammates finding enjoyment in his actions, even laughing at the replay as he strode off the field. After the film session ended, Duke approached the freshman.

"The coach walked over and sat down next to me and says, 'Can I ask you a question?' and I said 'Sure' and he said, 'Why did you just walk off the field?' I said 'Well, I don't really feel like...any of us young guys are really a part of the team,'" Tatom said describing the interaction with his coach.

At the following practice Tatom learned the result of the brief conversation. "He benched those five guys. Which, if you can imagine, you're benching five guys that end up playing Division I football...and so it was a big to do," Tatom said.

He recalls that Duke cited a lack of leadership as the reason for benching the five seniors. “We were playing our rival team that week and he said, ‘We may get beat, but you’re going to help your teammate up if he gets knocked down...we are going to support each other this week.’” The Eagles, minus their five seniors, went on to defeat their rival high school handily.

“From then on [Duke] was kind of known for having teams that very much, from the old guys to the young guys, had a team atmosphere that they support each other and were just all about doing whatever they need to do to make everybody on the team as successful as they could be,” Tatom said.

Tatom, a two-way player and three-year starter in high school, went on to play Division I collegiate football himself. He became a Red Raider of Texas Tech University from 1981 to 1984 starting three of his four years, but above all it was that lesson of leadership and the importance of valuing team members that he cherishes most.

“It taught me how to be a leader and that it’s not about you, it’s about the team,” he said. “... I ran a pretty good-sized business in Dallas. I would’ve never been able to grow it, I would’ve never been able to lead a team, employee wise or sports wise, without that experience. It just had such a huge impact on my life.”

Tatom recalls that Duke always led by example and never used foul language in front of his athletes. Tatom remained in contact with his high school coach throughout the years, especially in his 20s and 30s, and Duke even attended some of Tatom’s collegiate games. Duke



Tatom (85) celebrates a touchdown reception during one of his games as a Texas Tech University Red Raider. PHOTO COURTESY OF BUZZ TATOM

passed away recently and Tatom said over 400 of the coach’s former athletes attended his funeral.

Tatom, now a coach himself of the Ophir Miners seventh- and eighth-grade girls basketball team, encourages people to reach out to individuals who have impacted their life in a similar fashion. “The thing that I hope for all kids is that they get the experience of having somebody in their life like that guy,” he said. “[Duke] was a head football coach for a high school for close to 25 or 30 years and all he did was impact people’s lives and that’s pretty special.”

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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.

Paper or plastic? How about both?



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

The other day, I decided to try and play a little game in my head. I was going to try to see how long I could go without hearing the words Coronavirus, or COVID-19.

The plan was simple; I would go about my daily routine (as routine as any of us are these days), but at the same time, make an effort to not get involved in any conversations that might mention either of those two names, aiming to steer clear if I

knew it might come up. Let's call it verbal distancing.

I was defeated pretty early in the day.

Absolutely everyone is being impacted by this current social challenge. Even if you are one of the select few who are positively benefiting, you are still impacted in some manner.

Other than the hospital and health worker overload, there is one area that is feeling the effects more than almost anyone else.

Hospitality.

So many individuals and industries are being impacted by this shut down, but few, if any, are more impacted than hotels, restaurants and bars.

And the irony is that, for once in this valley, this shut down is more suited for Big Sky to come out on top rather than Bozeman.

For much of Big Sky, this was merely a premature ending to the inevitable closure we all face. That doesn't lessen the effects, but it's easier to work with than the many restaurants, bars and hotels that the rest of valley wouldn't otherwise face.

Much of the bar and restaurant industry operates on the commercial version of living paycheck to paycheck. That is to say, they function on very low margins, and are seldom able to earn, let alone hold on to, enough money for a rainy day.

By now you're wondering about the title of this article and what it has to do with all of this.

Well, here is one of the most effective solutions to helping the devastated hospitality industry.

Paper and plastic; take your cash, but any money will do, and buy gift cards to all your favorite eatery's and watering holes.

The beauty of gift cards for our cooking, serving and hotel brethren is that it's money in the business today. Many establishments' incomes have been slowed to a drip or been turned off altogether. It's a great way for them to have, as minimal as it may seem, operating capital to either sustain some measure of low take out business now or increase their ability to re-open later.

In conjunction with purchasing these gift cards from your favorite establishments, is the request to be patient if they re-open. And it IS if for many of them.

When that day comes when this industry is allowed to commence business, it will be an uphill battle to produce the funds necessary for payroll and purchasing product. Give them some time to get back in the game and acquire the foot traffic required to then absorb the meal you essentially already paid for but will bring them no monetary sale for, the day you dine or drink there.

From the friends and colleagues I have talked to, they will be more thankful than you can imagine.

Whether this closure is helpful or harmful, a necessary and painful step, or panic stricken over reaction, remains to be seen and hardly matters now. The damage is already done for many.

I will be headed out today to purchase a few gift cards from some of my friends and favorites, and I encourage you to do the same.

Because in the end, it comes down to this: it won't really matter if the glass is half empty or half full if there isn't anyone around to fill it.

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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Shoshone Hotel 1987 | \$548,000 | MLS# 341800

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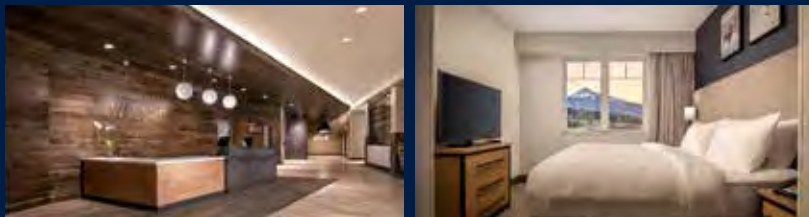
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Visit Big Sky

Now through **April 10th**, Big Sky is under a Gallatin County-mandated closure of all bars, breweries, wineries, distilleries with public tasting rooms, and casinos.

However, our restaurants and retailers are still Open for Business.

Here is a list of Big Sky restaurants offering take-out service:

- **Alberto's Mexican Cuisine**
4 – 8pm | 406.995.2326
- **Blue Moon Bakery**
7am – 8pm | 406.995.2305
- **Blue Buddha Sushi Lounge**
5 – 9pm | 406.993.2583 | Closed Mon-Tues | Delivery
- **By W.O.M.**
12 – 7pm | Closed Sat-Sun 406.995.2992
Online Ordering and Delivery
- **Cafe 191**
7am – 5pm | 406.995.3232
- **Caliber Coffee**
7am – 3pm; Sun 7am – 1pm 406.995.7311
- **China Cafe**
5 – 9pm | Closed Wed-Thurs 406.995.4488
- **Copper Whiskey Bar**
4 – 7pm | 406.995.2233
Family Style Take Out
- **Cosmic Cafe Bus**
8am – 5pm | 406.599.7269
- **Country Market**
6:30am – 8pm | 406.995.4636
For those needing extra assistance, the Country Market will be offering a delivery service. If interested, call 406.995.4636 or 406.581.5360. Orders can be placed over the phone or via email at bigskygrocery@gmail.com, with door delivery offered between 5 – 7pm Mon-Fri.
- **Gourmet Gals**
406.995.7300 | Online Ordering
- **Hungry Moose**
7am – 7pm | Both locations have closed to in-store foot traffic effective Monday 3/23
Town Center: 406.995.3045
Mountain – 406.995.3075
FREE Delivery (Orders of \$35 or more) | FREE Online Ordering for Curbside Pick-up
- **Lotus Pad**
5:30 – 9pm | Closed Mon-Tues 406.995.2728
Delivery (payments go directly to drivers)
- **Lone Peak Brewery**
11am – 10pm | 406.995.3939
- **Mi Pueblito Taco Bus**
9am – 7pm | 406.223.6421
- **Ousel & Spur**
4 – 8pm | 406.995.7175
- **Pinky G's Pizzeria**
12 – 3pm, 5 – 8pm Mon-Thurs, Sun and Fri – Sat 12 – 9pm
406.995.7492 | Delivery Fri-Sun only
- **Roxy's Market**
7am – 9pm | 406.995.7427
FREE Delivery and FREE Online Ordering for Curbside Pick-up
- **Slider's Deli in the Conoco**
6am – 3pm M-F; 7am – 2pm S-S 406.995.4275
- **Steele Pressed Juice**
9am – 1pm | Closed Wed-Thurs 406.489.2900
- **The Cave**
11am – 7pm | 406.995.4343
Closed Sun | Offering Curbside Pick-up
- **The Rocks**
11am – 8pm | Liquor Store is Open | 406.995.2066

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Buying Local - Having Food/Groceries Delivered
Dining "Out" by Ordering Take-out - Tipping Your Delivery Driver
Buying Gift Cards - Being Grateful for Small Businesses that Give Back

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#SHOP SMALL
#DINE (OUT) SMALL

For those in need of food assistance:

- **Big Sky Community Food Bank** is working tirelessly to help those in need with pre-packed food boxes, expanded hours, home delivery Fridays and vouchers to be used at local grocery stores. Find more information at bigskyfoodbank.org
- **Big Sky School District** is offering FREE boxed lunches for pick up between 11:00am - 1:00pm Monday-Friday to anyone who may need this service. Please email lhurlbut@bssd72.org with your name, quantity of boxes needed and if it is for an adult or child

For up to the minute changes, please visit bigskychamber.com/lovelocalrestaurants/



In 2017, MT received nearly \$3 billion in federal funds because of Census data. That's 40% of the state's budget.

Getting a complete and accurate census count is critically important for Montana and OUR COMMUNITY

1. Federal, state, and local **governments use census data to determine how tax dollars are spent** on social programming like school lunches, plans for highways, support for firefighters, and families in need
2. For each person counted, Montana receives nearly **\$20,000 per person** over the course of a decade
3. The data collected shows geographic areas that are underserved, which **informs nonprofit service delivery and grant proposals**
4. If all of us are counted, Montana could **gain another congressperson**
5. Taking part in the Census is our **civic duty**

The Census takes just 10 minutes to answer 9 simple questions that **will shape Montana for the next 10 years**. It's vital we all do our part to get out the count

Should you count Big Sky as your residence if you are a seasonal employee, college student or foreign citizen?
YES – count your residence wherever you sleep and live on April 1st.

Who to Count – Everyone who is living in your home as of April 1 including roommates, young children, newborns, and anyone who is renting space in your home.

You can respond ONLINE at 2020Census.Gov or by phone at **1-844-330-2020** or by mail. Just be sure to do it

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

For more information visit census.mt.gov/

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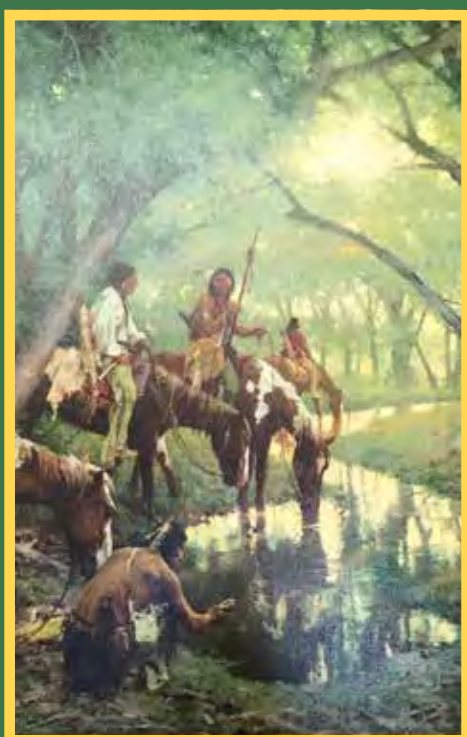
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NOTICE

NOTICE OF ELECTION FOR INCREASE TO RESORT TAX FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

In accordance with Section 7-6-1504, MCA, the Gallatin County election administrator shall place on the ballot at the next election on May 5, 2020, a ballot issue whereby the electors of the Big Sky Resort Tax Area District shall vote FOR or AGAINST the question of whether the District's resort tax should be increased by 1% for infrastructure projects as described herein.

The exact rate of the additional resort tax for infrastructure referred to the electorate shall be one percent (1%), which shall be in addition to the current resort tax rate of three percent (3%). The effective date of the additional one percent (1%) resort tax for infrastructure, if passed by the electorate, shall be July 1, 2020.

The duration of the additional one percent (1%) resort tax for infrastructure referred to the electorate shall be for the period of time it takes for the specified infrastructure debts and project costs to be paid. Pursuant to Section 7-6-1504(4)(d), as soon as the debts and project costs are paid in full, the additional one percent (1%) resort tax for infrastructure levy shall immediately terminate. However, under no circumstances shall the additional one percent (1%) resort tax for infrastructure continue beyond the expiration of the current term of the District on June 1, 2032, unless the term of the District is extended by the electorate and the infrastructure projects previously approved by the voters have not yet been paid in full.

In accordance with Section 7-6-1501(2), MCA, if approved by the electorate, the additional one percent (1%) infrastructure tax revenue shall be pledged for the following infrastructure projects in the District:

- a. Funding approximately 60% (but not to exceed \$27,000,000) of the total project costs for the Big Sky County Water & Sewer District No. 363's Water Resource Recovery Facility Expansion and Upgrade project.
- b. Funding in an amount not to exceed \$12,000,000 for the Big Sky County Water & Sewer District No. 363's Canyon Area Lift Station and Forcemain and Reuse Pipeline project.

In accordance with Section 7-6-1504(6), MCA the District has established a list of goods and services that will be subject to the additional one percent (1%) resort tax for infrastructure, which list is found in District Ordinance No. 98-01.

If the above identified projects shall not be approved by the electorate, the District shall not be permitted to increase the existing resort tax, and the additional one percent (1%) resort tax for infrastructure shall not be levied.

Dated this 22nd day of March, 2020.

Eric Semerad, Gallatin County Clerk & Recorder

SERVICES

Big Sky Natural Health is working hard to help the community feel supported an empowered when it comes to their immune health.

We have reduced our Immune Boost IV to \$99 (usually \$129) in an effort to reach more of the community and families. If businesses are looking to support their employees (Discovery Academy did this), we are also waiving the travel fee for home/office calls. We are spacing appointments at the clinic to avoid contact among staff and patients as well as doing house calls. We encourage those who may not be feeling well to please call us before coming in- we have many means to help everyone (including those who are not feeling well) and we want to do so safely and effectively.

CORONAVIRUS HELPFUL TIPS FROM THE CDC



clean your hands

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

To learn more, visit www.cdc.gov.



American Life in Poetry: Column 780

BY TED KOOSER
U.S. POET LAUREATE

That sage curse, “May you live in interesting times,” has been upon us for the past few years, but here a Kentucky poet, Jonathan Greene, offers us some reassurance that there is order in the world. Greene has a special talent for, and love of, short poems, and this is a good example of his work. This poem is from his most recent book, *Afloat*, published by Broadstone Books.

The Return

We are heartened
when each year
the barn swallows
return.

They find their old nests,
teach their young to fly,
lining up on the barn roof
for their first flight.

They remind us,
for now, some rituals
of this good earth
continue.

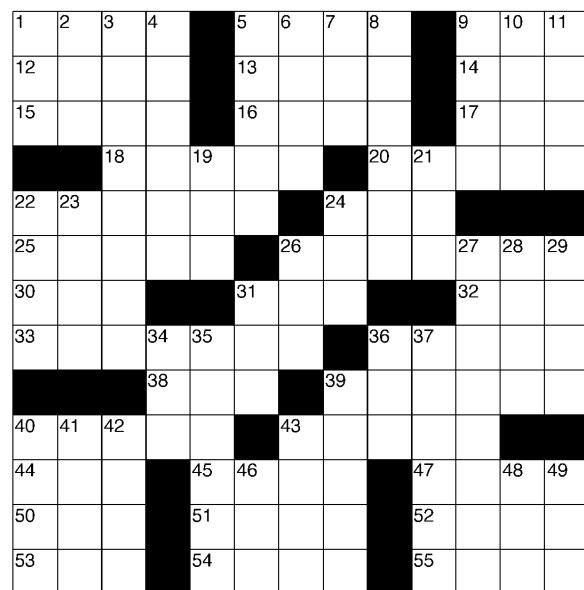
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Rom. date
 - 5 Sin
 - 9 Boulder
 - 12 Sixth: music
 - 13 Fat (pref.)
 - 14 River (Sp.)
 - 15 Olive genus
 - 16 Instrument (suf.)
 - 17 Jap. vegetable
 - 18 The real thing
 - 20 Same (Lat.)
 - 22 Egypt. language
 - 24 Babism founder
 - 25 Laces’ tip
 - 26 Sea green
 - 30 Nat’l Endowment for the Arts (abbr.)
 - 31 New flower
 - 32 Woman: obs.
 - 33 Breed of dog
 - 36 Sour milk drink
 - 38 Before common era (abbr.)
 - 39 Fr. historical provinces
 - 40 Water wheel
 - 43 Murderer of Siegfried
 - 44 Oriental potentate
 - 45 Erect
 - 47 Sodium chloride
 - 50 Female
 - 51 Mesopotamian city
 - 52 Haw. honeycreeper
 - 53 Soul or spirit (Fr.)
 - 54 Egypt. evil god
 - 55 Cleaving tool
- DOWN**
- 1 Equal (pref.)
 - 2 Delaware (abbr.)
 - 3 Model
 - 4 Incense ingredient
 - 5 Medieval sword
 - 6 Extra
 - 7 Kwa language
 - 8 Direct
 - 9 Caked deposit
 - 10 Second
 - 11 Gingerbread tree
 - 19 Citizen (abbr.)
 - 21 Amer. Basketball Assn. (abbr.)
 - 22 Inclination
 - 23 Molding
 - 24 Sleeping location
 - 26 Dog
 - 27 Jaunty
 - 28 Buddhist sacred mountain
 - 29 Haw. goose
 - 31 Insect
 - 34 Slugger’s stat
 - 35 Son of Daedalus
 - 36 Delay
 - 37 Though (2 words)
 - 39 Wife of Abraham
 - 40 Indo-Chin. language
 - 41 Irish writing
 - 42 Chest sound
 - 43 Hilt of a sword
 - 46 Poetic contraction
 - 48 Chief Warrant Officer (abbr.)
 - 49 Recline

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

T	V	A		A	B	E	L		S	A	L
B	I	B		T	O	L	A		P	L	O
S	A	U	R		T	H	I	N	N	A	I
				N	I	T	E	R		C	O
D	U	E	E	N		T	E	N			
I	T	A		N	U	D	I		E	D	E
C	A	N	C		A	E	T		S	I	D
E	S	T	H		T	A	I		S	E	I
				A	S	E		L	E	V	A
A	N	U	R	A		A	L	L	E	S	
S	A	R	D	I	N	I	A		A	T	A
C	C	A		L	I	L	T		L	E	A
I	L	L		S	K	Y	E		R	A	Y



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A117

Corner Quote

“It is really wonderful how much resilience there is in human nature. Let any obstructing cause, no matter what, be removed in any way, even by death, and we fly back to first principles of hope and enjoyment.”

- Bram Stoker, “Dracula”

BIG SKY BEATS



“What A Wonderful World” – Louis Armstrong

With perhaps the most recognizable voice of the 20th century, few recordings by jazz legend Louis Armstrong reached the levels of fame enjoyed by “What A Wonderful World,” recorded and released in 1967.

“Satchmo,” as he was known, came to prominence in the 1920s in his hometown New Orleans and in Chicago, profoundly shifting the sounds of jazz from a collective ensemble to an emphasis on solo musicians, ultimately bringing those triumphs to New York’s jazz scene. His inventive trumpet and cornet stylings were perfectly balanced by a deep, rich voice that helped to popularize scat singing, a unique form of vocals that are both nonsensical and charming.

“What A Wonderful World” peaked at No. 1 on pop and singles charts in the U.K. in ’67, and was ultimately inducted into the Grammy Awards Hall of Fame in 1999; it has been featured in no less than 20 Hollywood films and 30 prominent television shows.

And for good reason.

With lyrics that promote an appreciation for the simple beauties of the natural world and human spirit, the tune is proving to be timeless yet again as folks around the globe slow down, appreciate the little things and reacquaint themselves with nature and introspective thinking in these uncertain times.



BACK40

For Explore Big Sky, the Back 40 is a resource: a place where we can delve into subjects and ask experts to share their knowledge. Here, we highlight stories from our flagship sister publication Mountain Outlaw magazine.

Noun: wild or rough terrain adjacent to a developed area **Origin:** shortened form of “back 40 acres”

The Icemen

A glimpse into an extinct Montana industry

BY MICHAEL J. OBER

To my grandmother, Opie, it was always called “the icebox.” As my brother and I unpacked her groceries looking for tasty goodies, we learned to read by identifying words on the labels of the boxes and cartons in the brown sacks from the market.

“Oh, just put that’n in the icebox,” she would say when we found something that needed to be refrigerated. We always knew that she meant the giant humming Kelvinator refrigerator in the corner of the kitchen, but as a carryover from her era in rural Montana, food items meant to be kept cold belonged in the icebox.

It was one thing to have a root cellar for onions and potatoes but quite another to have an icebox to chill meat, eggs, butter, milk and cheese, and no well-appointed household would be without one. It was a mark of prosperity.

In the early part of the 19th century many homes had iceboxes and the cottage industry of ice harvesters occupied the workforce alongside wheelwrights, teamsters, harness makers and livery managers—now-forgotten working classes.

All across Canada and northern states—anywhere there was water and cold winters—humans gathered ice to cool their food.

The early 19th century ice trade industry flourished, generating nearly \$700 million in today’s value. It dramatically altered the way fishing and meat packing businesses marketed their products. Most of Montana’s ice harvesting was done on the local level with small commercial markets, and the ice box became a common household appliance.

Eventually, electricity replaced them with bulky refrigerator units, some with freezer compartments. But for decades, households relied on Sears Roebuck catalogs to select that ideal kitchen implement to keep things cool, with a block of ice resting on a grill inside an insulated, tin-wrapped box.

Obtaining the ice required more ingenuity than real skill. Just about every harvesting method that could be thought of was used. Early on, lengthy hand saws with dual handles sliced through river and lake ice blocks of all sizes. Later, harvesters employed gas-powered saws and conveyer belts to increase productivity. Skilled farmers used their tractors, modified with powered belts to drive circular saw blades with special teeth for ice chipping.

Most ranchers in Montana had stock ponds for their animals and with homemade devices like these they could not only secure ice for their home, but could also keep the ponds open as a winter water source for their herds.



Ice harvesters employed gas-powered saws and conveyer belts to increase their productivity. PHOTO COURTESY OF STUMPTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In town, small businesses emerged to deliver ice, on regular schedules, to households in the same way that milk, mail and newspapers arrived at doorsteps. The ice, after all, was free to the harvesters and tidy profits awaited entrepreneurial souls.

Today, many small communities in Montana have a museum with an antique icebox on display, relics of the 19th century trade. The icehouse in Somers, Montana, just a short stroll from Del's Bar, is an industrial artifact of the state's past that looms large over the town. A paved bike path has replaced the old railroad bed adjacent to the three-story, faded wooden structure with its 3-foot-thick walls lined with sawdust and its louvered venting tower. Ice harvested from Flathead Lake was stored there, awaiting shipment on Great Northern Railway "cooler cars" to cities and towns along its northern routes.

As a young girl in Helena, Opie recalled her mother using a cheese grater to shave the last melting chunks of ice from the bottom of the tray to fill glasses with ice chips. Over that she would pour Kool-Aid or lemonade—the original snow cone.

"Our chore was to check the drip pan daily and empty it on the vegetable garden," Opie told me. "If it overflowed onto the kitchen floor we always got a scolding."

In the Helena Valley, the winter delivery of ice almost always came from blocks carved out of Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Most of it arrived on wagons, or by sledges in heavy snow seasons. As time went on, Ford Model T trucks with insulated bunkers brought the ice, and a numbered card in the window would tell the deliverymen how many blocks to deposit.



This photo from the 1950s depicts the annual ice harvest in Montana for Western Fruit Express, which began in 1904 and peaked in the middle of the 20th century. PHOTO COURTESY OF STUMPTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"They would sometimes leave the block on the boulevard in front of the house and it was the job for us kids to get it into the house before it melted. They were God-awful heavy!" Opie recalled. "We would use our little wagons to get them to the back steps of the kitchen."

Opie lived to be 101, long enough to see modern refrigerators feature automatic ice makers and dispensers. I'm not sure how she felt about all that, but I do know that, to her last days, it was always "the icebox."

A version of this story first appeared in the winter 2019 edition of Mountain Outlaw Magazine

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THANK YOU.

In a time where our community has had to come together in an unprecedented manner, the Bozeman Health board of directors and executive team extends our gratitude to our Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center employees, physicians and advanced care practitioners who have responded to the current COVID-19 pandemic with exceptional dedication and service.

Each employee's individual commitment to our mission, to each other, and to our community speaks to their selflessness and the level of expert, quality care that we diligently work to provide to each patient.

We hope you, our community, will join us in thanking the healthcare worker in your life, whether they are on the front lines of direct patient care or those in supporting roles. Each one is your family member, friend, professional colleague, or acquaintance.

It is our honor to care for each other and to care for our community.

