

# Big Sky

Nov. 6 - Nov. 19, 2020  
Volume 11 // Issue #23

**A historic election and results**

*A significant scenic designation  
for Montana rivers*

**Lady Big Horns advance  
to semi-finals**

*Masked pupil:  
School during a pandemic*

**Local artist works from the  
mountains to Mars**





# OUTLAW

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Nov. 6 - Nov. 19, 2020  
Volume 11, Issue No. 23  
Owned and published in Big Sky, Montana

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## ON THE COVER:

“I Voted” stickers lay on a table awaiting distribution to Gallatin County voters who have cast their vote either by dropping off mail-in ballots or those voting in-person on Nov. 3. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

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## Masked pupil: School during a pandemic

From daily temperature checks, masked faces, frequent hand washing and blue arrows to control foot traffic spacing, attending school is a surreal experience during a pandemic. Lone Peak High School 10th-grader Avery Dickerson is excited for winter skiing, but remaining physically spaced from her schoolmates has been a challenge.

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## A significant scenic designation for Montana rivers

Surrounded by representatives from the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, American Rivers and American Whitewaters, and a crowd of approximately 20, Montana Senator Jon Tester spoke of his intent to introduce new legislation that would protect 336 miles of rivers in the Custer-Gallatin and the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forests, including the Gallatin, Madison and Smith rivers. It would be the most significant wild and scenic designation in nearly 45 years.

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## Local artist works from the mountains to Mars

Bill Arbanas helped build the Mars Rover “Curiosity,” painted murals around the world, taught and produced three-dimensional animation work for more than three decades with his animation work featured on the set of popular TV shows and he even owned one of the first color computers back in the 80s. Arbanas’ favorite thing to do, however, involves a slower pace: time-lapse photography.

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## Lady Big Horns advance to semi-finals

LPHS’s Lady Big Horns have not allowed setbacks from the pandemic to slow them down. The dominating volleyball team earned themselves a five set victory in their divisional tournament matchup against the Seeley-Swan Blackhawks on Nov. 3, sending them to the semi-finals on Nov. 5.

50

## A historic election and results

The 2020 election brought out a historic number of voters—nearly 75 percent of registered Montana voters cast their ballots, and lines around the Gallatin County Courthouse held steady through the day on Nov. 3. EBS has you covered with the full results as of Wednesday, Nov. 4, photos and an election overview.

### Opening Shot



A frozen Ousel Falls pictured on Oct. 26 paused in time as ice and snow coated the landscape after a weather front in the days prior brought with it cooler temperatures and deposited a healthy dose of snow. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

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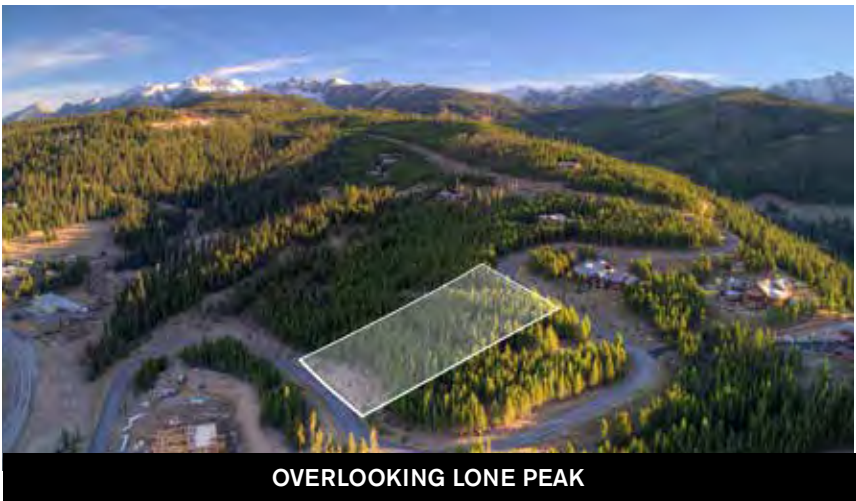
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# Veterans Day is Nov. 11.

## How do you honor the veterans in your life?



**Soren Solari**  
*Big Sky, MT*

“My father fought in World War II [in] the Battle of the Bulge so I grew up with lots of stories about what war actually is. The most important thing is to at least honor the sacrifices that people have made, and the families have made around them. I think [about] the atrocities that those battles and wars ... incur upon our society and Americans and the world at large. And I think the more we can work toward a world where we don’t have to fight those, the better.”



**Heather Porlier**  
*Bozeman, MT*

“Well this week it was to vote. And, yeah, just honor all the things and all the sacrifices made. My granddad was a colonel in the army for 40 years, so we always have like a big dinner and then my father-in-law was a counselor and maybe for 30 years ... we just all get together and it’s a pretty huge part of our family.”



**Joy Wadleigh**  
*Seal Beach, CA*

“I live in a beach town [that] has a ... Navy base there so we do Veteran’s Day activities at the school. There’s 800 kids in the school and there’s 120 that are military children. They bring out the Hummer on the playground and they’ll have speeches on campus, and so Veterans Day is usually celebrated at some point during the week on campus.”



**Blair Mohn**  
*Big Sky, MT*

“I have just one veteran in my life who was my father who was in the Korean War. And in terms of his service every year on Veterans Day, I thank him for it. But I can’t say that I think of that more often with him than on Veterans Day. I call dad and say, ‘thanks for your service.’”

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

## RE: ‘Resort towns feel strain from J-1, other visa restrictions’ (EBS - Oct. 22, 2020)

To the Editor:

There are actually two temporary foreign worker programs in use in the Big Sky area and nationally. The second is the H2B seasonal visa program. I reviewed data from both programs from previous years which listed 444 temporary workers in the Big Sky Resort District. The majority of the wages were below \$12 per hour.

I must take issue with a primary claim in your story that use of these low-wage workers are necessary to maintain services, et al. Economic studies in other locations have found low-wage rates to be the primary drivers of J1 and H2B workers. The largest such study was conducted in 2016 in southern Florida by Harvard economist George Borjas. This study found that entry-level and lesser-skilled wage rates declined by about 25 percent when the labor force expanded by just 8 percent through a foreign worker program.

**My conclusions are:**

- 1) There might be an adjustment period for local businesses to attract a more permanent work force, but Big Sky will not be materially harmed.
- 2) There could be a silver lining to the ending of these programs in the form of a stronger community from a work force that lives here and cares about the long-term health of the area. I suspect that businesses that don’t pay their staff a “living wage” don’t deserve them.

Richard Schwalbe  
*Big Sky*



### DID YOU KNOW?

- 100 colonies estimated in 2015 in Yellowstone National Park
- One colony may support 2–14 beavers that are usually related. Six is considered average
- YNP’s beavers escaped most of the trapping that occurred in the 1800s due to the region’s inaccessibility

Unregulated trapping, deforestation, and destruction of dams due to unwanted flooding have continued to affect the beaver population.

## RESPECT.PROTECT.CHERISH.

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# OP-ED:

## Comparisons by contrast

BY BOB HALL

*“To enjoy bodily warmth, some small part of you must be cold, for there is no quality in this world that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself.”*  
– Herman Melville

Nothing like starting an op-ed with a Melville quote and one you have to think about at that! Life is full of contrasts and that’s probably what makes it so meaningful. In Big Sky parlance, a contrast like an 18-inch dump followed by a bluebird day might be the best example. Another: a 22-inch Brownie on a size 20 Royal Wulff or an ice bath for your feet after climbing the Sphinx. Well, I have one for you ... Nine straight months in Big Sky followed by a journey back to our home in New York City.

I imagine you have images in your head of what New York typically looks like: Traffic, tourists, Ubers and cabs, busy sidewalks and crowded restaurants. Those things represent a big contrast to Big Sky! Sadly, in a COVID-19 world, New York City is not that busy. The restaurants have moved outside, the streets and sidewalks are much less crowded. I guess all the tourists came West this summer. People are nicer in Montana, but if you peel back New Yorkers’ steely façades, you’ll find they can be very engaging.

Let me give you a couple of observations on COVID’s influence in New York.

Last week I went to Central Park for my early evening workout. I had every intention to do multiple burpees, a bunch of ab work and gut out a few pushups. As I energetically entered the park, I became overwhelmed. There was a circle of men and women engaged in a yoga class.

Over my left shoulder was a boxer and her trainer. As I moved a bit further, I saw kids playing soccer, old guys in a roller hockey game and a fitness class going through an ab rotation! You might ask, why didn’t you join in? Well, frankly I was mesmerized by the four-man Dixie Land Jazz band, the French Horn Quartet and the dude rapping Shakespeare Sonnets!

Feeling a sensory overload, I headed back to our apartment, passing several outdoor restaurants along the way. It’s a bit odd walking down the sidewalk and in essence traipsing through the center of a dining room. The diners have the newfound benefit of plexiglass to stop the wind and floor heaters to ward off the cold.

I saw a dog grab an enticing roll out of a breadbasket! The dining is less formal and more fun. There were busy stores (mostly coffee shops and bodegas), and very empty stores (mostly high-end fashion boutiques). I didn’t see many police and very little evidence of destruction from protests. The city looks OK.

As I think about contrasts, perhaps there are more similarities between Big Sky and New York City than differences. Both towns are full of people who spend a lot of time outside. I realize that walking to work is not quite like tackling Beehive Basin, yet in both instances people are outside exercising. Both towns have an appreciation for weather and love to talk about it.

A New Yorker might be quick to say, “You don’t want to go to that bagel shop, go here!” Perhaps someone in Big Sky will say, “You don’t want to ski Lenin, Marx is much better!” In most instances, these suggestions are well intentioned.

I think Melville might have had it right: There is no quality that is not what it is merely by contrast. COVID has a way of locking us into routines and perhaps making us a bit less curious. There’s nothing like observing contrasts and how they affect our lives. New York vs. Big Sky is one, but there are so many more.

Our day will come when we can again get out and observe these things, first-hand. In the meantime, southwest Montana is a damn good place to ride out this storm. Big Sky, we got this!

*Bob Hall has been a Wall Street executive, fashion industry investor, philanthropist, outdoorsman and dad, all while skiing 100 days a season. He’s lived in Big Sky part time for 20 years.*



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## Big Sky Bridge Decks Project sees completion

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BIG SKY – Some locals remember traveling on newly constructed roads and bridges to attend Big Sky Resort’s opening day in 1973. Critical infrastructure has not only faithfully carried skiers year after year to their destination, it has also withstood heavy equipment as Big Sky grew. Now, nearly 50 years later, drivers once again can enjoy traveling over smooth bridges. The Montana Department of Transportation’s Big Sky Bridge Decks project completed work today on three bridges in the Big Sky area.

Dick Anderson Construction crews began work in late May with repairs to the bridge by the intersection of MT 64 and U.S. 191. They also started work on the bridge by Little Coyote Road. That structure had a longer construction schedule as it was a full reconstruction of the bridge deck. The Little Coyote Road crews had to rebuild the bridge deck from the bottom layers up. Once the bridge by MT Route 64 and US 191 was complete, crews worked on a bridge on U.S. 191, two miles north of the turn to Big Sky.

## Black Diamond to open a new store in Big Sky

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Black Diamond, an outdoor gear powerhouse will open their sixth United States retail location on Nov.12 at 10 a.m. in Big Sky, Montana. BD specializes in climbing and backcountry skiing equipment and their retail locations are usually near key markets close to the rocks and snow where their gear performs best. Of the other five locations, four are spread across Utah where they are based and there is one in Colorado.

The opening in Big Sky will follow COVID-19 safety guidelines and for now nothing big is planned so as not to draw too much of a crowd. According to the company’s Facebook event, there may be a surprise visit from BD athlete Parkin Costain. Costain is currently based in Big Sky, Montana and last year he won the Kings and Queens of Corbet’s competition at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort.

## The Montana Transportation Commission approves a new underpass on Jackrabbit Lane

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BELGRADE – Commuting on Jackrabbit Lane is expected to become easier in the coming years. The Montana Department of Transportation announced today that the Montana Transportation Commission recently approved a change in scope for the Jackrabbit – Madison to Main project. This change will add an underpass on Jackrabbit Lane at the railroad crossing near Main Street. Once built, vehicles will be able to pass beneath the train tracks, limiting congestion.

The next step involves assigning the project design to a consultant in order to develop engineering plans for the revised project. MDT anticipates selecting a consultant engineering firm in the coming months.

The original Jackrabbit – Madison to Main project called for expanding Jackrabbit Lane to a five-lane roadway, from Madison Avenue to Main Street, which is still included in the plans. This project was expected to undergo construction around 2023, but with the addition of the railroad underpass, work has been delayed in order to complete the comprehensive design process and identify funding sources. Based on these factors, construction could be considered as soon as 2026 however, funding and the development schedule will ultimately dictate when construction begins.

With the addition of the underpass, the Jackrabbit – Madison to Main project is estimated to cost as much as \$25 million. MDT will work closely with multiple partners in order to identify available funding. The vast majority (80 to 90 percent) is expected to come from federal dollars.

## Gov. Bullock is COVID free after a member of his staff tested positive

MONTANA ASSOCIATED PRESS

HELENA – A staff member in Montana Gov. Steve Bullock’s office tested positive for COVID-19, a spokesperson for the governor said Wednesday, but Bullock and Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney have tested negative for the respiratory virus.

Bullock and Cooney were not considered close contacts of the infected staffer, who has not been in the office this week, spokesperson Erin Loranger said.

Bullock will not quarantine under advice from the state’s chief medical officer Dr. Greg Holzman. He will continue to be regularly tested over the next few days, Loranger said.

The staff member tested positive for the coronavirus after experiencing symptoms, Loranger said. Four additional staff members in the governor’s office are considered close contacts and will remain in quarantine for 14 days.

Masks are worn in the governor’s office and all staff members’ temperatures are checked each morning, according to Loranger.

The announcement comes as the COVID-19 case count and hospitalizations in Montana continues to rise.

## BSSHA & BSCO announce rink schedule and programming for winter season

BIG SKY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND BIG SKY SKATING & HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

BIG SKY—The Big Sky Skating & Hockey Association and Big Sky Community Organization have announced the schedule and programming for the ice rink this winter. The rink will be open from Dec. 1 - March 21, 2021 with a variety of programs for kids and adults. The rink will be located in the same area as in the past, but access will now be through the north side while construction continues on BASE. Parking will be in the lot behind the Lone Peak Movie Theater.

SCHEDULE

Monday

12pm - 5:00pm

Open Skating

5:30pm - 7:00pm

Kids Hockey Clinic (Dec. 7 – March 18)

7:00pm - 11:00pm

Open Skate

Tuesday

12:00pm - 5:00pm

Open Skate

5:30pm - 9:00pm

3 on 3 Hockey League (Dec. 8 – March 9)

9:00pm - 11:00pm

Open Skate

Wednesday

12:00pm - 5:00pm

Open Skate

5:30pm - 6:30pm

Kids Hockey Clinic (Dec. 9 – March 17)

6:30pm - 11:00pm

Open Skate

Thursday

12:00pm - 5:00pm

Open Skate

5:30pm - 7:00pm

Kids Hockey Clinic (Dec. 7 – March 18)

7:30pm - 9:00pm

Drop in Hockey

9:00pm - 11:00pm

Open Skate

Friday

12:00pm - 4:00pm

Open Skate

5:30pm - 11:00pm

Curling (Jan. 8 – March 20)

Saturday

12:00pm - 11:00pm

Open Skating

Sunday

12:00pm - 5:30pm

Open Skating

6:00pm - 9:30 pm

Broomball (Dec. 13 – March 21)

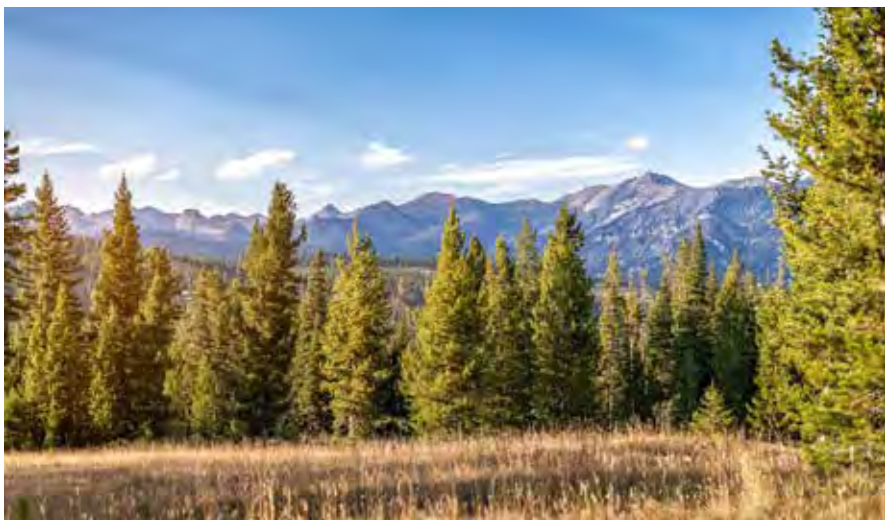
Get Your Team Together

Anyone interested in the kids hockey league, or getting a team together for the 3 on 3 hockey, curling or broomball leagues, please email bigskyice@gmail.com Spots are filling up, act soon.



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# LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

We're pleased to support the publication of a provider letter that has been published in other papers throughout the state. In recognition that we are facing increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases within Southwest Montana, which is resulting in increasing stress on our local health system, many of your local healthcare providers have added their names to the list of initial signatures. Your local healthcare providers are republishing the following letter because it is directly applicable to our community.

**Dear Neighbor,**

Earlier this year, some of us wrote to ask for your help. Because of the hard work and sacrifices you made then, we flattened Montana's curve and saved lives. Thank you—we know it wasn't easy. You helped buy time for the hard-working nurses, doctors, and other healthcare workers of your community to fight back against COVID-19 with treatments, tests, safety protocols, and more space in our hospitals. We are more ready than we have ever been. We are here for you now and **WILL** be there for you no matter what, but we still need your help. We need it now more than ever.

COVID-19 is surging in our community and in Montana. The situation is more serious than it has ever been in our state. New case counts and hospitalizations are hitting record highs nearly every day and tragically more and more Montanans are losing their lives to this disease.

Our healthcare systems here and around the region are being strained under this pressure. COVID-19 can impact everyone—young, old, healthy, or chronically ill. It can cause heart damage in young athletes, it can increase the risk of pre-term delivery in pregnant mothers, it can steal the lives of our loved ones from us too soon, particularly our elders.

Reducing the spread of disease is the most powerful tool our community has to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the best way to keep our children safely in school, to keep our economy open, and to keep our friends, family, and neighbors alive. Other communities and states have been overwhelmed by this virus. We are not immune, and the risk of that happening here has never been higher. We are working every day to prevent this, but will not be successful without your help.

We need you to prioritize doing these things **EVERY** day:

1. **Wear a mask whenever you are outside your home or around other people.**
2. **If you are exposed to someone with COVID-19, quarantine at home for 14 days.**
3. **If you are sick, get tested, self-quarantine, and follow public health advice.**
4. **If your children are sick, keep them home from school or daycare and follow return to school guidelines.**
5. **Wash your hands regularly.**
6. **Keep at least 6-feet away from others.**
7. **Avoid gatherings of more than 10 people.**
8. **Support our economy by patronizing businesses that prioritize your and our community's health and safety by following public health orders and best practices.**

As a community we flattened the curve once before. We must do it again.

Sincerely,

**Healthcare providers in your community**

Paid for by Bozeman Health in support of our healthcare community.



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# A Day in the life: Attending school during a pandemic

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Walking into school the morning of Nov. 2 is an experience to say the least: staff and students don costumes for a belated Halloween celebration, and the faculty is holding a mock presidential election for the students.



Avery Dickerson works on an outline for an essay on “Lord of the Flies” in English class.  
PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

But the most notable part of the day is how utterly different the experience of attending school is now from when I attended Lone Peak High School. This is school during a global pandemic.

I walk through the familiar front doors and sanitize my hands while my temperature is checked via a no contact camera system. Everyone in the building wears masks, though some have gotten creative and incorporated the masks into their costumes.

I sign in with the front office and get my trusty visitor’s badge. It is strange having to sign in as a guest to a building where I spent the better part of my formative years. I also miss LaDawn LeGrande who greeted me every morning and recently retired from her role as executive secretary this year.

The secondary school principal, Dr. Marlo Mitchem greets me and introduces me to my guide for the day, Avery Dickerson, a 10th-grader at LPHS.

She greets me excitedly and we start chatting about her classes, her interests and she asks me about my time at the school.

Dr. Mitchem explains that five or six kids occupy each classroom at once, while the rest tune in from home, adhering to the 50-50 hybrid education plan the school is following.

On the way down the hall, we follow arrows taped on the floor guiding the flow of traffic to maintain distancing. Walking down this hall was unsettling as I pass one particular blank stretch of wall that used to sport a collaborative painting my class created in first grade. Now, the walls feel empty, displaying a few class projects and literature promoting COVID-safe behaviors.

Avery brings me to her first class of the day, Spanish, with Señorita Marielle Walker, sporting two braids and a great galaxy mask. Señorita Walker teaches me how she runs the class: six students sit in desks six feet apart making up the “cohort” for today. The rest of the class attends via Zoom. Tomorrow, the groups will switch.

In the classroom, everyone wears masks and the students change rooms on a staggered schedule to minimize the amount of people in the hallways. At the end of first period, the students pack up, grabbing bottles of sanitizing solution and spraying down the desks and chairs. It took me a second to catch on and Avery was nice enough to sanitize my desk for me as I stood there watching others clean and marveling at the practiced efficiency. To sit alone at a table in class and sanitize with every room change seems to be the norm for students now, but it felt weird and regimented to me.

Avery’s next class is gym. She tells me wistfully that they can sometimes remove their masks in this class.

Gym class is a little different. The students can no longer go in the weight room together and all activities are tailored towards keeping the students distanced and outside when possible.

James Miranda, the health education teacher, had the students walk laps around the gym then up and down the bleacher steps. At one point, they step outside for some fresh air and get a chance to remove their masks for a short time.

Inside the gym the mock 2020 presidential election is taking place. Students file in one by one, pick one of the four booths set up, and cast their ballots. They are able to finish quickly since it is only the presidential candidates on their ballots, though some students made use of the write-in option. After casting their votes, students exited through the hallway adjacent to the gym and grab an “I voted” sticker on their way out.

Throughout the day, MS/HS Social Studies teacher Tony Coppola brings students in small groups to the gym where they sign in with Kim Dickerson, Avery’s mother, who volunteered to help run the mock election.

The rest of the school day flows in much the same way. I follow Avery to her English class and her Tech Design class where the same sanitizing and distancing procedures are being followed.

At lunchtime, students eat in their fourth period classrooms, unless the weather is warm enough to eat outside. No longer can students cram together at lunch tables in the cafeteria, sharing food and generally being boisterous. Now, they must remain at their own appropriately spaced desk or hope the weather allows them the opportunity for a slightly more communal lunchtime.

While the experience is strange, the students and staff seem to operate naturally under the new protocols. But to me the school doesn’t feel normal. And neither does it feel normal for the students who are now divided into small cohorts.

“I went from seeing everyone every day to hardly at all,” Avery tells me. But she adds that sports are a saving grace. She is a defender on the LPHS girls’ varsity soccer team and practice is now the best chance she has for some social time with friends.

“That’s what I like about sports,” she says. “I see my good friend at soccer even though I don’t see her in school.”

Avery’s family moved to Montana from Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2013 and then to Big Sky in 2016 when she was in sixth grade.



At each main entrance to the building is a sanitizing station with masks and a temperature check. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER



Avery’s mom Kim explains that they wanted to raise Avery and her brother Mason in a mountain town.

“It was the winters that brought us out here [along with] the endless possibilities,” Kim said.

School has required her to adapt this year, but Avery is making good use of the winters and is excited for the snow to fly. She’s a ski instructor at the Yellowstone Club and this year is aiming to get her Professional Ski Instructors of America level one certification. Next summer will be her third as a counselor at Camp Moonlight.

The 2020-21 school year has posed its fair share of challenges for students and educators alike. I admire the efforts of everyone in Big Sky School District #72 and the resilience they display in keeping the school open. Attending school right now is tough, I went for one day and was continually surprised by the differences and adjustments made by students and staff.

“I am very proud of our school community,” said Mitchem. “Everyone has adapted to the 50-50 hybrid learning model. Learning has been continuous, despite this challenging context. It is not always easy, but by working together, the community has remained focused on our school mission—to cultivate, engage, and empower our students.”



Avery’s cohort all sit in class at their appropriately spaced desks while Patty Hamblin moves around the room and helps the students. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER



There are many posters up around the school reminding students to maintain distancing, wash their hands and wear their masks. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

# 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BEST OF BIG SKY AWARDS

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# Great Pumpkin Giveaway brings in nearly 900 pounds of food

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – It was freezing cold and snowy on Oct. 24, but that didn’t stop Laine Hegness, operations assistant with the Big Sky Community Food Bank from spreading cheer in her pumpkin costume.

The occasion was the Great Pumpkin Giveaway, a food drive for the food bank where community members make a canned food donation, selecting a pumpkin of their choosing in return. Last year, the event raised approximately 500 pounds in food donations for the food bank. This year, the event raised 897.5 pounds of food.

Event operations were modified this year to ensure that it was COVID-safe. All donations were made via curbside pickup stations along Lone Peak Drive around Fire Pit Park. Afterwards, families were able to peruse the bins of pumpkins in the center of the park and pick out their prize pumpkin.

“The event is a huge food drive for the Big sky Community Food Bank. I think it’s one of the largest food drives of their year. And it comes at a time when Big Sky locals and families are really in need,” Erik Morrison, the marketing and events manager of the Town Center Owner’s Association, said.

Participants in the giveaway are encouraged to post their carved pumpkins to the 2020 Pumpkin King & Queen Carving Competition Facebook Event.

This year, all of the pumpkins were donated by Roxy’s Market and Café.

“Roxy’s Market is honored to sponsor an event in collaboration with the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce,” said Roxy’s Market and Café General Manager Josh Treasure. “None of these events would be possible without the determination from our dedicated Big Sky volunteers and Big Sky Landscaping for lending a forklift. We must cherish the times that bring our beautiful Big Sky Community together!”

In addition to Roxy’s Market, the event was sponsored by, Visit Big Sky, Big Sky Community Organization, Big Sky Real Estate Co., and the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce.



Laine Hegness, operations assistant at the Big Sky Community Food Bank, attended the Great Pumpkin Giveaway in her pumpkin costume and greeted families as they picked out their pumpkins. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

“The Big Sky Chamber never hesitates to support this local event because it speaks to community and helps bring us together,” said Candace Carr Strauss, CEO of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce. “Now more than ever we need to hang on to our traditions, although they may look different, as ways to keep us all connected.”

The Great Pumpkin Giveaway became part of the Haunted Peaks Festival three years ago and this was the fourth year that it occurred in its current format.

Before that, according to Sarah Gaither Bivins, operations manager at the Big Sky Community Food Bank, the event was part of the Fall Festival that took place in the Big Sky Community Park. The food bank operated a tent in the tradition of a farmer’s market.

Scott and Sally Fisher, who started Lone Peak Cinema in 2011, played a large role in helping the event evolve to its current format. The first year the giveaway happened, according to Bivins, Sally worked tirelessly, starting at 7 am to set all the pumpkins in the field to emulate a pumpkin patch.

The giveaway was the first food drive held by the food bank this year due to COVID-19. Echoing Morrison, Gaither Bivins noted that the event, “is coming at a really great time. We’re getting ready to go into our busy time, fall is always much busier for us at the food bank. People are in their off seasons, so they’re not getting paid. It’s a perfect time to help us stock up for the fall rush.”

The next planned food drive will take place at Lone Peak High School. The LPHS chapter of the National Honor Society will hold a Thanksgiving food drive for the food bank in November. This drive will be held specifically to collect food that will go in the Thanksgiving boxes handed out by the food bank.

Bivins expressed her gratitude to the partners sponsoring the giveaway and to the community for supporting the food bank.

“We’re really just happy to have these partnerships and have people think about creative ways to, you know, feed the community so yeah we’re very thankful for the coordination and help of others” Bivins said.

# Local firefighters raise awareness for Cystic Fibrosis

## What you can do to support the cause

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – The strange mechanical clicking and labored breathing of four firefighters creates an unfamiliar cacophony of noises as they rush by.

No, they are not fighting a fire.

These firefighters are running a 5K in full turnout gear to raise awareness about Cystic Fibrosis. CF is a progressive genetic disease that affects the lungs and, over time, limits the patient’s ability to breathe.

“We run a 5K in our structural firefighting gear with our air tanks to symbolize the struggle with breathing that CF patients sometimes experience,” said Shane Farmer, a firefighter with the Big Sky Fire Department. “Our thought is that if we can be uncomfortable for 30 minutes to raise some money then it’s a small price to pay.”

Farmer founded the annual run, which he calls Fighting 4 Every Breath, 13 years ago when Chris Denison and Stacy Van Gorp, close family friends, had twins, Berne and



Berne Denison poses in front of Big Sky Fire Department Station #1 with the firefighters running a 5K to raise money for Cystic Fibrosis. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

Maren Denison, who were both diagnosed with CF. This year marks the second year that Farmer has done the run in Big Sky after moving here with his family from Iowa and it raises funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, specifically the Rocky Mountain chapter.

“The good thing about us raising the money as part of the Rocky Mountain chapter is that that money stays local in our area which is pretty special,” Farmer said.

He estimates that his run has raised about \$40,000 dollars over 13 years for the foundation. Each year, the fundraising goal is set at \$3,000 which is usually reached. Currently, Farmer has raised \$2,550 of his \$3,000-dollar goal for this year.

“When we first started, the life expectancy for someone with CF was in their 30s, now it’s into their 50s and 60s,” Farmer said. “This is a disease where there are cures and there is a lot of hope for people that have it to live normal lives and participate in normal activities because of all the donations.”

Chris and Berne Denison were present at the beginning of the run in Big Sky and Chris offered some motivational words to the firefighters by expressing his gratitude for their efforts and sharing some of the realities he and his children face every day as they live with CF.

Berne showed off his enzyme pills which help with GI tract complications due to CF. Chris described how every day the twins complete a treatment wherein they don a vest that vibrates and helps to loosen the excess mucus in their chests.

The family has been “highly involved for 15 years” through a variety of events with fundraising for the CFF according to Chris. He estimated that about \$50,000 dollars a year is raised for the foundation.

The Denison family has seen concrete results made possible by the fundraising. Chris’ daughter Maren was fortunate to be chosen for a new drug trial and her Pulmonary Function Tests, which measure lung functionality, improved from the 60s back up to 99 with the help of the drug.

In the U.S., more than 30,000 people live with Cystic Fibrosis and around 1,000 people are diagnosed each year, according to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Patient Registry. In Montana, there are 120 people currently living with this disease.

If you would like to donate, please visit the CFF website to make your contribution.



# The first annual Big Sky Coat Drive is underway

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Bundle up Big Sky! Temperatures are dropping, snow is falling, and winter is almost upon us. For those who lack the proper clothing to bundle up, the Big Sky Coat Drive has your back.

Organized by Big Sky local Kelsey French, this is the inaugural year of the Big Sky Coat Drive. After growing up in the community, French wanted to give back and this year, she was finally able to make the coat drive a reality.

"I grew up in Big Sky, born and raised. Through the many different jobs that I've had throughout living here, my whole life I've seen the J-1s come in, and they're not prepared for negative 14 degree weather," French said, referring to the hundreds of international workers who join the local workforce annually through work visa programs. "I see people that aren't as well off as others that are wearing torn jackets. They're just not ready for the type of weather that we have here."

The drive is made possible by French's employers, Lone Mountain Land Company and Big Sky Real Estate Co., who are sponsoring the event alongside a partnership with Big Sky Town Center.

Donation bins were distributed on Oct. 22 and the cutoff to donate is on Nov. 12 in order to give French time to get all the coats dry cleaned for the coat pick up on Nov. 24 and 25. Persnickety Cleaners in Big Sky has agreed to clean the first 100 items donated and Big Sky Real Estate Co. has agreed to foot the remaining dry-cleaning bill.

The donation bins are located at a few different businesses around Town Center. There is a bin behind the Big Sky Real Estate Co., one between Acre and Montana Supply and one at the Wilson Hotel. There will also be a bin in each school: Lone Peak High School, Ophir Elementary, Big Sky Discovery Academy and Morningstar Learning Center.

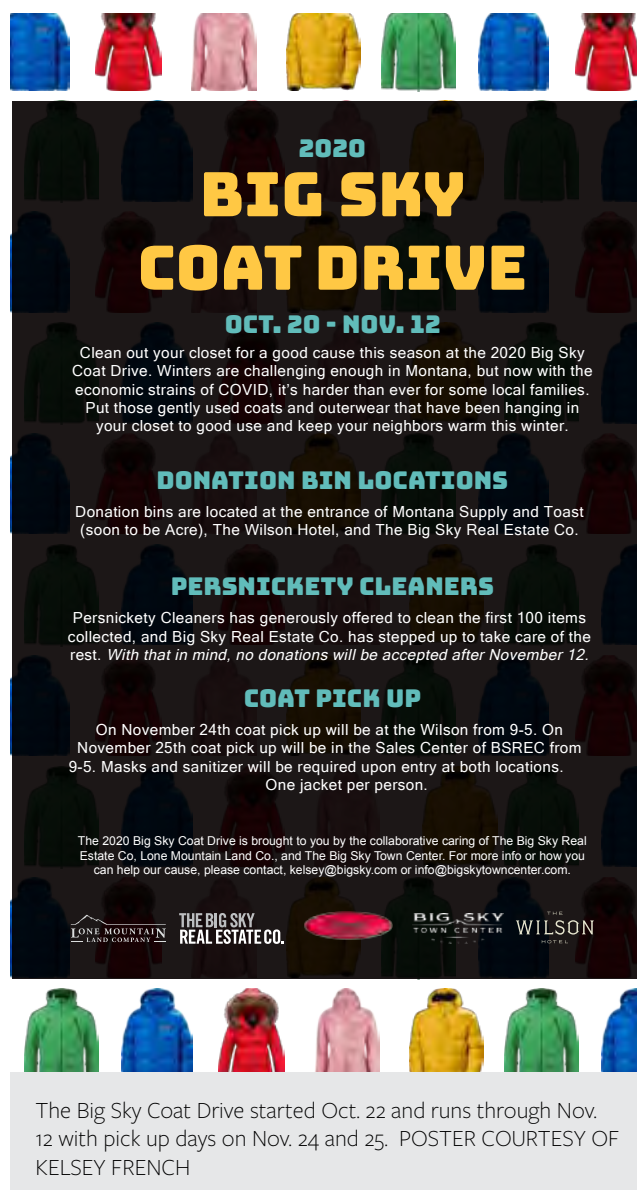
Donations should be gently used without holes. If you don't have any extra coats hiding in your closet but still wish to donate, newly purchased coats are also welcome. So far, the whole operation is run by French who will make frequent trips to empty the donation bins and bring items to the dry cleaners.

On the days of the coat pick up, French hopes to have volunteers sign up for time slots to help out. On Nov. 24, the pick-up will be at the Wilson Hotel from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Nov. 25 it will be in the Big Sky Real Estate sales center from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Each person is allowed to pick out one coat. Unfortunately, in order to keep all the coats clean, they will not be allowed to try the coats on, but French explained that she will have each coat in a plastic sleeve labeled with a size, and she will be on-deck to help distribute the coats.

French hopes to continue this event and make it an annual thing.

"I love this community," she said. "I grew up here. I've seen all the change and everything. And finally, you know, working for a company that has the ability to give back. And it's allowing me to kind of take it and run with it how I want to, which is amazing."



## Habitat for Humanity unveils new affordable housing unit for BSSD

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – On Friday Oct. 30, teachers, community partners and Habitat for Humanity volunteers gathered to cut the ribbon on Unit A of the newly built affordable housing for the staff at Lone Peak High School and Ophir Elementary. It was a project two years in the making and a true community collaboration.

The Big Sky School District Teacher Housing Project began in October of 2018 as an idea presented by Habitat for Humanity of Gallatin Valley Executive Director David Magistrelli. Magistrelli presented his vision to BSSD Superintendent Dustin Shipman. Serious discussions with the school board ensued and construction began in the summer of 2019.

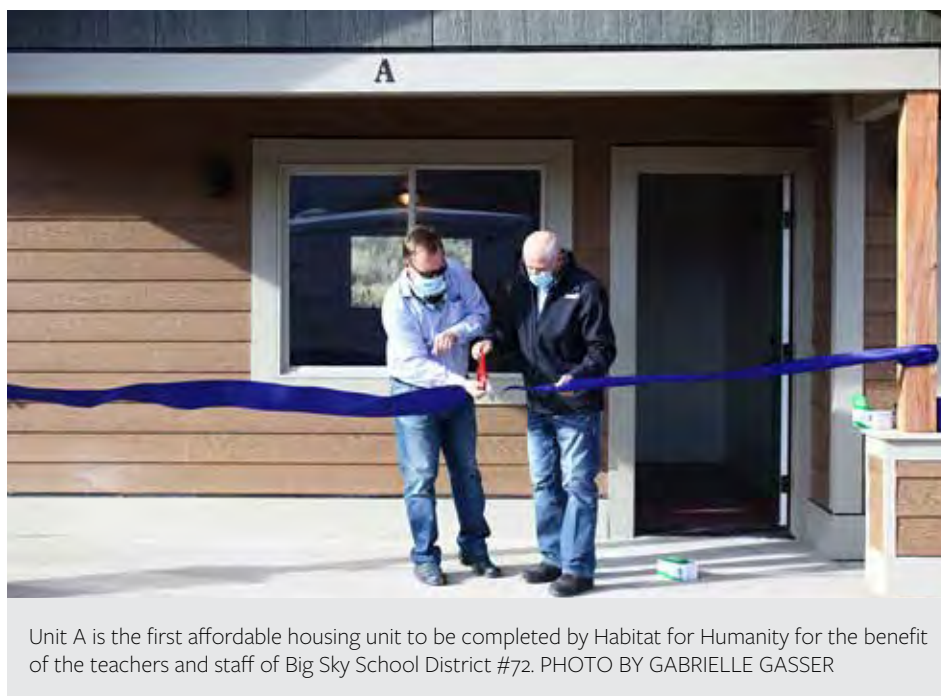
Magistrelli felt that the value of this housing to the community could not be overstated.

“I know from my personal experiences that teachers that are in the community, that live in the community, invest their time in the community have a much stronger commitment, and are dedicated to their students,” Magistrelli said.

The project is a joint venture between BSSD and Habitat for Humanity which will eventually build two triplexes comprised of six units which can house up to 12 individuals. The housing will be owned by BSSD which will act as the de facto landlord. However, the units cannot be sold on the open market by the school unless this action is approved by the community.

Unit A will be occupied by John Hannahs, the athletic director at the school, who says he is already mostly moved in.

Magistrelli said that they are trying to have units B and C of the first triplex completed in time to allow teachers to move into them by the middle to end of November.



Originally, the goal was to have both triplexes completed by August of 2020, but COVID-19 complicated that timeline, limiting the number of volunteers who were able to travel to Big Sky and donate their time. Additionally, supply chains were disrupted meaning that the delivery of materials to the project was delayed.

According to Magistrelli, work will continue on the second triplex through the winter and he estimates that work will be completed on that unit in early to mid-spring of 2021. He is grateful for all the volunteers who have helped on the project and emphasized that this is a community project. Magistrelli said the project's budget is tight and will likely go over the original budget due

to unanticipated costs, in part incurred by materials being more expensive than expected. Thanks to the Big Sky Resort Tax Board and the school, Magistrelli said he believes they will have sufficient funds.

“To me, this is really a community effort,” Magistrelli said. “We’ve had businesses that have helped in a variety of ways, donating time, and material to reduce the cost of labor, to teachers putting in time, students coming up and helping out, parents of the students coming down and helping out. And then, you know, just individuals from the community coming over and volunteering their time to help out.”



# BSRAD to implement surveillance testing in Big Sky

## In partnership with Big Sky Health Bozeman Medical Center

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

**BIG SKY** – One million dollars have been set aside in Big Sky for the purposes of funding a COVID-19 surveillance testing program in the community.

The funds were officially set aside at the Oct. 28 Big Sky Resort Area District board meeting. The board unanimously passed a resolution committing \$750,000 of BSRAD money as well as \$250,000 in CARES Act funds pitched in by Visit Big Sky.

According to Daniel Bierschwale, the executive director of the Resort Area District, funding for the program will come from public, private and philanthropic support. He added that the program is aligned with other efforts from Big Sky Relief partners to respond to COVID-19.

BSRAD has worked closely with community members, businesses in the community, the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, Visit Big Sky, state and local authorities, the Gallatin City-County Health Department, school officials and philanthropic organizations since the beginning of the pandemic to design a surveillance testing program.

A sub-committee was created, which included BSRAD board members Steve Johnson, Kevin Germain and Bierschwale, to reach a decision regarding which laboratory will be chosen to process the results for the surveillance program.

BSRAD will also work with the Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical center. The Big Sky Medical Center will administer the COVID-19 testing program.

The sub-committee hasn't reached a conclusion regarding which laboratory the tests will be processed by. According to Bierschwale, they are carefully considering a few options and weighing each one's capacity, average time for result delivery and cost per test.

During an Oct. 30 press conference, Matt Kelley, the Gallatin County health officer, said that he had been in touch with BSRAD and other resort towns who are interested in surveillance testing programs.

"We have been supportive of that, the health department can't do that ourselves, we are at capacity," he said.

Kelley added that, "We need to make sure that tests are reliable, and we need to make sure that any testing system in place has the capacity to report results to the state health department so that we can do contact tracing."

Ideally, the surveillance testing program will help businesses and residents in Big Sky stay safe and keep Big Sky Resort open, according to Bierschwale.

"By adhering to CDC guidelines and identifying asymptomatic positives we will be able to stay resilient through the unknowns of this winter season. Although the details of the program are being fully developed it's evident that Big Sky is truly committed and – all in," he said.



The Big Sky Resort Area District in partnership with Visit Big Sky will organize and fund a COVID-19 surveillance testing program for the Big Sky community. PHOTO BY MUFID MAJNUN on Unsplash



It's been real and truly our pleasure.  
Thank You, Big Sky  
and farewell.  
-George (in Spirit) and Misty.

# LET'S KEEP FIGHTING COVID-19

We've all got to do our part.

## PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE 406

Wash Hands  
Use Hand Sanitizer

Don't  
Touch Face

Cover Sneezes  
& Coughs

Keep Social  
Distancing

Wear a  
Mask

## IF YOU FEEL SICK

Stay Home from  
Work/School

Call Your  
Medical Provider

Quarantine as  
Instructed

Montanans get it,  
and we've got this.

[dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/covid](https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/covid)



# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19 IN MONTANA

## CASES IN GALLATIN COUNTY

\*as of Tuesday, Nov. 3, reported by the Gallatin City-County Health Department

Current active cases: **271**  
Current hospitalizations: **15**  
Deaths: **9**

## CASES IN MONTANA

\*as of Wednesday, Nov. 4, reported by the MDPHHS

Current active cases: **35,159**  
Current hospitalizations: **389**  
Deaths: **399**

## HOSPITAL CAPACITY

\*as of Friday, Oct. 30 reported by the Gallatin City-County Health Department

Current hospital capacity, (BSMC and BH combined). This number fluctuates on a daily bases based on intakes, releases and transfers.

“When you look at hospital operations you start get worried when you starts to run about 90 percent,” said Taylor Rose, director of operations and clinical services at Big Sky Medical Center. “Above 90 percent is when you really start to feel the pressure and you don’t have places to put patients.”

Critical care beds:

**80%**

Non-critical care beds:

**90%**

## BSMC’s COVID-19 incident command structure:

- ✓ Holding off on elective procedures
- ✓ Partnering with other medical care centers throughout the state
- ✓ Determine where in the hospital patients can be placed if beds fill
- ✓ Alternate care pods to increase capacity, if necessary
- ✓ BSMC has room for 10-12 extra patients in the case of a significant surge
- ✓ Daily stand-up meetings among nursing staff to discuss a plan of action

## RESTRICTIONS ACROSS THE REGION

**OCT. 12**

Yellowstone County implements Health Order limiting capacity of bars, restaurants and casinos to 75 percent and churches to 50 percent. Group gatherings are limited to 25 people.

**OCT. 23**

Cascade County sees an 80 percent increase in COVID-19 cases in a single week, prompting talk of implementing restrictions as critical care beds fill.

**OCT. 29**

After four deaths in one day, Missoula County rolls back COVID-19 restrictions, limiting business capacity to 50 percent, limiting all group sizes to 25 and ordering bars to close at 10 p.m.

“We have been somewhat isolated by the scarcity of the population,” said county Health Officer Matt Kelley at an Oct. 16 press conference. “Maybe it was slower to make it here, but once it gets into the community it can really spread fairly rapidly. Overall you can keep it out for a certain period of time, but the tools that we have are kind like sandbags during a flood, they can hold it off, but only for a while.”

## PARTNERING WITH NEIGHBORING HOSPITALS

“We have transfer agreements with a number of in-state and out-of-state hospitals not specific to the pandemic,” Rose said. “If we have a patient that needs a higher level of care then we can provide, then we have agreement with other hospitals that can provide that care. It’s really nice to be a part of a system where we can rely on Bozeman Health to take the patients that we need.”

## STAY DILIGENT, PREVENT SPREAD

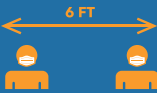
“There’s a little bit of fatigue,” Rose said of the recent surge in cases. “They get this false sense of security, they’ve gone six or seven months without getting it ... we can’t stop doing what we know works.”



Wash hands regularly with soap and water for 30 seconds or more



Wear a face covering when in public and where social distancing is not possible



Practice social distancing—six feet between yourself and others—whenever possible



Be kind and patient with one another



# BIG SKY CHAMBER

## Eggs & Issues

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
IN OUR COMMUNITY**



**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> | 8:30 – 10 AM | VIRTUAL**

**REGISTRATION IS FREE BUT REQUIRED | [BIGSKYCHAMBER.COM/BEHAVIORALHEALTH](https://bigskychamber.com/behavioralhealth)**

*Join Us!* As a catalyst and convener, the Big Sky Chamber has assembled a panel of local care providers to discuss Behavioral Health in Big Sky. In an attempt to understand this critically important topic for our community, our panel will share findings from a number of health needs assessments and research reports, discuss the services currently provided as well as shed light on the innovative collective impact models being looked at to address the community's needs in the future.

**THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS:**



*Elevate Big Sky 2023* | **FACILITATING LOCAL GOVERNANCE**



**Gallatin – Madison  
JOINT COUNTY  
COMMISSION MEETING**

**IMMEDIATELY TO FOLLOW | 10 AM - 12 PM**

Stay tuned in to the webinar link to attend this public meeting which invites our representatives from both counties as well as our local Big Sky Resort Area District Board.


**OUR COMMUNITY. OUR BUSINESS.**

**[BIGSKYCHAMBER.COM](https://bigskychamber.com) | 406.995.3000 | [INFO@BIGSKYCHAMBER.COM](mailto:info@bigskychamber.com)**


*The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce is a 501 (c)(6) nonprofit, membership organization*




SECTION 2:  
ENVIRONMENT &  
OUTDOORS, ARTS &  
ENTERTAINMENT



The future of grizzlies pg. 18



Hitting the road for hit animals pg. 22



Album review: Tom Petty pg. 30

# Tester announces intention to introduce Montana Headwaters Legacy Act

## Legacy Act would protect 336 miles of rivers in Treasure State

BY BRANDON WALKER, GABRIELLE GASSER AND MIRA BRODY

**GALLATIN GATEWAY** – In the Lakota Tribe, the phrase “Mní wíchóni” means “Water is life.” Montana Sen. Jon Tester embraced this quote on Oct. 27 as he introduced the monumental Montana Headwaters Legacy Act from the TroutChasers Lodge & Fly Fishing Outfitters Lodge in Gallatin Gateway on the banks of the Gallatin River.

Surrounded by representatives from the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, American Rivers and American Whitewaters, a crowd of about 20, Tester spoke about the act, a piece of new legislation that would protect 336 river miles in the Custer-Gallatin and the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forests, including the Gallatin, Madison and Smith rivers. It is the most significant wild and scenic designation in nearly 45 years.

“The bottom line is, if you can hear the water running behind us, that’s what it’s all about,” Tester said.

Among the organizations present, all spoke of the unifying power rivers have in Montana culture—they are a place to recreate, seek peace from a fast-paced life, enjoy the company of their family, and pass down to the next generation.

“It’s a real monumental moment and it just makes me proud as a Montanan to see this next step, and also incredibly appreciative of Senator Tester for his vision and his leadership to protect these incredible resources in Montana,” said Charles Drimal, waters program coordinator with the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Drimal noted that protecting Montana’s iconic rivers protect three key components: the economy, enviroment and quality of life.

Kascie Herron, associate director of outreach and communications for the American Rivers Northern Rockies Office, was also pleased with the announcement.

“Today is the biggest day I’ve had since I started working in American Rivers,” Herron said. “It’s like all of our hard work is actually going to pay off.”

The announcement is but the first step in a long and potentially difficult process.

“It’s not going to happen during the lame duck [pre-inauguration] so it’ll happen next Congress,” Tester told EBS of the process ahead. “We’ll try to talk with the [U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources] to have a hearing on it and then we’ll get somebody to testify in favor of it. Somebody will ... testify against it, probably. And then we’re off and running.”

The Montana Headwaters Legacy Act has been in development for the last decade, led by a collaborative effort called Montanans for Healthy Rivers. According to healthyriversmt.org, more than 1,000 businesses and three times that amount of residents support Montanans for Healthy Rivers. If passed, the identified waterways

would receive coveted classification as Wild and Scenic Rivers.

“We’re not to the finish line yet, but this is a crucial milestone and one that we’ve been working toward for a decade,” said Scott Bosse, Northern Rockies director of American Rivers. “So we’re extremely pleased about it and we hope the other members of our congressional delegation will join Senator Tester in this effort.”

More than 50 years ago, the Congress established the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and in March of 2019 the system has already provided conservation protections for more than 225 rivers throughout the U.S.

The effort strives to permanently protect sections of rivers by prohibiting federal support for potentially destructive projects such as the dams or other activities that would harm the river’s free-flowing condition, water quality or outstanding resource values. A Wild and Scenic designation does not, however, affect existing water rights or existing jurisdiction of states and the federal governments, according to healthyriversmt.org.

“The beauty of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is it’s like an insurance policy,” Drimal said. “It basically guarantees you that you are going to have a free-flowing river with existing water quality, today, tomorrow and for years and generations to come.”

Both Bosse and Drimal noted the economic benefits of river conservation acknowledging that recreational activities in Montana are a large driver of the state’s economy. Bosse was impressed by the sheer numbers of Montanans he saw at rivers this summer, many of whom said they were seeking refuge from the anxieties of the pandemic. Rivers, he said, help heal the bodies and minds of veterans after they come back from war and they are where family members take their loved ones, even after they pass away.

“Almost every time I’m at Camp Baker [on the Smith River] ... I see people bring urns onto their rafts,” Bosse said. “People unbearably tell me that they promised their father or their grandfather or their mother or their sister that when they passed away, that they would take them on one last trip on their favorite river.”

It’s these kinds of heartfelt family pilgrimages that these groups and many Montanans hope will be protected by the legislation for generations to come.

“If we don’t do smart things to protect our resources, they won’t be here,” Tester said. “They won’t be here for our kids and they won’t be here for our grandkids.”

He admitted that the process to pass this could at times become difficult, but, in closing, expressed confidence that the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act will reach the finish line.

“If we all stay focused on what we want to accomplish here, we can get her done,” Tester said.



On Tuesday, Oct. 27, Senator John Tester announced that he will sponsor the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act, the culmination of 10 years of work by many different organizations in Montana. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER



## THE NEW WEST

## The future of grizzlies comes down to the choices we make



BY TODD WILKINSON  
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

The confirmed sighting in October of a grizzly in the lower reaches of Bear Canyon just southeast of Bozeman is yet another reminder of how close the big bruins are now living near people—in this case within the exurban outskirts of the fastest-growing micropolitan city in America.

Not only is that considered extraordinary for Westerners entering the third decade of this new millennium, but such a happening was believed unthinkable 45 years ago when the Greater Yellowstone population of grizzlies was given federal protection as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

For decades, the only grizzlies that came close to busy four-lane Interstate 90 connecting Bozeman with Livingston over Bozeman Pass were captive bears residing at a roadside zoo.

But in mid-October, bow hunter Dash Rodman was sitting in a tree when he saw what he believed to be a grizzly strolling beneath his perch high above the ground along the riparian corridor of Bear Creek. Later, Bear Canyon resident Renee Thill posted a short video of the bruin by Rodman and a photo of a paw print in the snow.

Called to investigate, Kevin Frey, a longtime bear management specialist with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, paid a visit to Bear Canyon on Sunday Oct. 18, finding a strand of ursid hair on a fence but no tracks in the mud. Still, upon reviewing Rodman's film, he said, "Yes, definitely a grizzly; it looked to be a subadult. The thing is that if the archery hunter hadn't been there when the bear passed through, the world probably would never have known the bear had come down the creek corridor and then probably went back up into the mountains."

While not surprising to Frey, the sighting created a sensation of speculation on social media. Bear Canyon is a drainage with a road that dead ends and along the way are homes and two busy trailheads leading across state lands and the Custer-Gallatin National Forest. Indeed, this place-name lives up to its moniker.

Seeing a grizzly only a few miles, as the crow flies, from Bozeman's Main Street is a big deal even for old-timers. But Frey says grizzlies, in fact, have been wandering the northern front face of the Gallatin Range where it meets the Gallatin Valley for a few years and most people are unaware.

Many bruin navigations have largely happened without incident because the grizzlies have done a good job of avoiding people, Frey says, though he is concerned that close and potentially dangerous encounters could occur as more outdoor recreationists pour into the Gallatins, venturing off established trails and increasing the likelihood of bumping into a bear.

"As far as bears go, I call it a waltz," Frey said. "They are dancing in a forest full of obstacles and people sometimes behaving like chickens with their heads cut off. The bears are doing their best to avoid us. They are not seeking trouble," Frey says, noting that it's human behavior that will determine if bears have a future there.

Frey is amazed at how growth in the human population of Bozeman and greater Gallatin Valley is quickly affecting (negatively) how wildlife are using landscapes and how they might—or might not—move through them in the future.

Frey says there's no doubt in his mind that the Greater Yellowstone grizzly population is healthy and has met criteria that determines whether it is biologically recovered. He believes the population can be delisted.

From a population that dipped to around 130 grizzlies or fewer in this entire massive ecosystem, equal in size to New England, and with bears mostly clustered 50 years ago only in Yellowstone Park, the regional population today is more than 700. Recovery has happened only because humans changed their lethal behavior and made habitat protection a priority.

While indeed bears are showing up in places where they haven't been in a century or more, they're paradoxically facing shrinking and more fragmented habitat from more development and rises in recreation users, he said.

Bear Canyon represents kind of a microcosm for pondering the challenges of human-wildlife coexistence in Greater Yellowstone, he notes, and thinking about what wildness is. Lots of weedy, highly adaptable species, such as white-tailed deer, coyotes and maybe half-tamed elk and moose can navigate the wildland-urban interface, but having grizzlies is a test of human smarts and responsibility.

Given the inundation of COVID-19 refugees and transplants occurring in Bozeman, as expressed in a recent Washington Post story, it's clear that many in the drove, drawn to what they perceive to be paradise, have little wherewithal when it comes to coexisting with a rare caliber of wildness far beyond anything they had previously known.

Irrational fear about bears and other carnivores like mountain lions is what historically led to a lack of human tolerance for those species and eventually left them rubbed out of the landscape. Can they learn to be "bear wise?" Will even local Bozemanians and residents of Big Sky realize the miracle that it is to have grizzlies present in the city's public lands backyard? Time will tell, Frey says.

*Todd Wilkinson is the founder of Bozeman-based Mountain Journal and is a correspondent for National Geographic. He's also the author of the book "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek," featuring photography by Thomas D. Mangelsen, about famous Jackson Hole grizzly bear 399.*



Painting of a Greater Yellowstone grizzly by Red Lodge artist John Potter. Image used with permission. Visit [johnpotterstudio.com](http://johnpotterstudio.com) to check out more of his work.



# Living with evacuation, smoke, helicopters, fire



BY LAURA PRITCHETT

I live on a county road near the evacuation perimeter of what is now Colorado’s largest wildfire. Yesterday, the sheriff’s deputy was outside, his lights flashing red-blue-red, giving my house a strobe light effect. He was directing traffic as people fled the mountain with trailers filled with cattle and horses and goats and belongings.

The wind was roaring, first one direction and then another, which is why this fire blew up again. The Cameron Peak Fire has been burning for two months—a long two months—leaving me and most of my neighbors with a hacking cough and guts that feel like they’re filled with clay.

When we get the occasional blue sky day, I’m so relieved that I play hooky from work and walk up this county road, getting in exercise while I can, trying to clear my head while I can, obligations be damned. I truly find it hard to care about anything, which is saying something, given my personality. Even work is difficult on smoky days— my brain feels gritty because of ash and helicopters overhead and the grim anxiety in the air. It’s hard to process things, to be productive, to think.

I thought I’d be better at this, more resilient, less fazed. A Colorado native, I’m used to wildfire. Plus, I know that these forests needed to burn. Not like this, sure, but we all knew they were a tinderbox, and it’s just a flat-out, predictable truth that they were going to go. On top of that, we know climate change makes it worse.

All ten of the largest wildfires in Colorado have happened since 2000, this Cameron Peak Fire at 207,000 acres as of this writing, followed by Pine Gulch, Hayman, West Fork Complex Fire, Spring Creek Fire, High Park Fire (which had me evacuated in 2012), Missionary Ridge Fire, 416 Fire, Bridger Fire, and Last Chance Fire. And as I wrote this essay, the Lefthand Canyon Fire, the CalWood Fire, and the frightening East Troublesome Fire sprang up, driving thousands from their homes. Such pretty names, sending remnants of trees into our lungs. No wonder most of my novels written over the past 20 years contain wildfires, because they truly have been part of my lived experience.

I’ve always believed that it’s expectation which causes suffering, that we only are sad when things don’t go the way we want, and thus I feel I shouldn’t be suffering now. But living it, and expecting it, are two different things.

Familiarity doesn’t make it any easier. When the body senses biological threat, the result is cortisol, inflammation, pain. After all, particles are daily being lodged into our lungs. People are truly suffering here, in body and in spirit. Honest admissions of despair are rampant, and nobody is embarrassed about it.

COVID makes it harder. Let’s be honest: Our friends don’t really want us evacuated into their little homes and sharing air, nor do we want to put them in that position. So we stay put, always on the edge. I never thought I’d take breathable air for granted. Lowering my expectations that far seems, well, sad.

Some things help. Friends, offers of assistance, memories of the good days, and, yeah, air purifiers. We can also think ahead to prescribed burns, thinning, fuel reduction, forest management, fire resiliency, and Aldo Leopold’s idea of “intelligent tinkering,” where we make forests more resilient to climate change via smart restorations of natural landscapes. All this is good, but what would help most of all is to have others extend their empathy and make green-living the priority.

Wouldn’t it be a miracle if the whole damn world banded together and realized climate change was the number one priority? Accepted that science was real? Got it together, made some changes at home, such as not buying anything unnecessary? Because that is part of the true fix. At some point, drastic measures will happen, because the suffering will extend to all, and to such an extent that it cannot be ignored-- though I wish that weren’t necessary.

This morning, I woke up to birds still at the feeder, a fawn walking by, winds calmer. It’s creepily quiet, with no traffic because everyone west of me is evacuated.

It is still a sad time and I feel broken, but the air quality has moved from Hazardous to Moderate, which has me thinking that perhaps we, as a people, could move in that direction, too, especially during the clear-sky times when we can think and get to work.


*Laura Pritchett is a contributor to Writers on the Range, [writersontherange.org](http://writersontherange.org), a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She is a novelist and directs the MFA in nature writing at Western Colorado University.*



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# Water Wisdom

BY KATE FOLEY  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

On Oct. 20, the Gallatin River Task Force hosted a workshop focused on using water rights as a legal tool to ensure there is enough water to support a healthy ecosystem and fishery.

Kerri Strasheim from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation provided the foundation for the workshop, stating that, “A water right is a property right and is protected by the Constitution. It has value, meaning it can be bought and sold separately from land and it can’t be taken away without due process.”

Strasheim explained that a water right gives the holder the right to use the state’s water by diverting, impounding or withdrawing it for a beneficial use. “Some beneficial uses include agriculture, industrial mining, municipal power, instream flow, aquifer recharge and mitigation,” she said.

Meg Casey, a staff attorney at Trout Unlimited, expanded on the concept of instream flow. “Instream flow is essentially a legal tool for maintaining fisheries and restoring degraded habitats,” Casey explained. Through instream flow, unused water gets put back into reach of a natural stream. This becomes especially useful to ensuring healthy water temperatures and oxygen levels for the inhabitants of the Gallatin River during low-flow periods.

Currently, Big Sky is experiencing a series of water-supply issues exacerbated by periods of drought and a changing climate. Strasheim alluded to these, noting that “wastewater treatment is a big limiting factor” on how Big Sky can develop. Speaking to wastewater discharge, Mace Mangold of WGM Group elaborated on the purpose of the GRTF-funded Canyon Study. “We’re looking into feasibility for full collection

## Water Wisdom: A right to conserve

of the canyon sewer area,” he explained, as the canyon is currently “100 percent septic tanks and community systems, treating sewer effluent to a relatively low quality” and posing threats to water quality in the canyon.

The primary disposal mechanism outlined in the Canyon Study is groundwater recharge, achieved “through a recharge gallery subsurface or above ground recharge basins,” according to Mangold. Supplementary mechanisms such as snowmaking and land application are also possibilities. “I see land application through a purple pipe network to offset consumptive use,” Mangold explained.

Russ Radliff, a water-rights specialist for the WGM Group, closed out the workshop by connecting wastewater discharge and water rights. Radliff explained that the Upper Missouri River Basin is closed to new water rights permits.

“We are trying to come up with new concepts to find ways to actually salvage water that could potentially offset new uses,” Radcliff said, such as water-rights mitigation, a legal tool to make water available for a new use through the development of a new or alternative supply, which could include the use of treated wastewater.

While water rights can be confusing, one thing is clear—they can be a tool for augmenting instream flows and keeping water levels higher in the watershed. For example, through leasing unused water rights to Trout Unlimited, rights holders could place flowing water back into the natural stream, keeping it filled with fresh, cold water that supports healthy ecosystems, fisheries and our community.

*Kate Foley is a Big Sky Watershed Corps member working with the Gallatin River Task Force.*



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Visit Big Sky

Living with COVID-19 pandemic makes one’s physical well-being more important than ever. With nearly 13 million visitors to Montana in 2019, having non-resident visitors during a time of heightened public health awareness has brought public safety to the forefront. As a result, Visit Montana—in partnership with statewide tourism regions and Destination Marketing Organizations including Visit Big Sky—launched the MONTANA AWARE campaign. Now, more than ever, the health and safety of Montana citizens and visitors is the top priority.


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Mental health at this time is just as important as one’s physical well-being. September 6-12<sup>th</sup> is National Suicide Prevention Week. This year’s Big Sky Chamber’s Eggs & Issues will focus on Behavioral Health Services. [#NOTALONE](#)

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**BIG SKY CHAMBER**



# Hitting the road for hit animals

## A cross-country trek to increase awareness of animal mortalities caused by vehicles

BY MIRA BRODY

**GALLATIN GATEWAY** – For those currently attempting to contact Scott Poindexter, he’s likely on the side of the freeway somewhere—anywhere, really—in the contiguous U.S. On Oct. 13, it was a public restroom, to muffle the sound of the howling wind outside, in Kansas as he completes a cross country trek to raise awareness of animal mortalities caused by vehicles along America’s roadways. He’s taking the day off after walking 31 miles the previous day. Poindexter’s considers it a “reasonable” goal to walk between 20–25 miles per day.

Not many people would consider walking across the country a “reasonable” endeavor, but Poindexter doesn’t mind stretching his legs for a good cause. He calls his project Walk4WildlifeCrossings, and the goal is to speak for the millions of animals that die annually on U.S. roadways, accompanied by hundreds of human deaths and about \$8 billion in damages to people and their vehicles. Road kills are a common sight across the country, but it’s particularly troublesome in the Western U.S., where once rural populations are growing as people escape city life.

After Poindexter’s work guiding in Denver this past summer was put on hold, the Lafayette, Colorado native and chiropractor with a background in animal science, decided to take his passion for animal advocacy to the open road—literally. It wasn’t his first time—in 2010, he rode his bike across the country to raise awareness for the child obesity epidemic.

“When my tour guiding gig out of Denver wasn’t going to happen this season, [a] little light bulb went off,” Poindexter said. “I don’t know what your dreams are, but most people when they get to the end of their life, haven’t done them because there’s always an excuse. There wasn’t an excuse. I had a backpack, and I had shoes.”

Poindexter’s direct approach to following his dreams is a way for him to spread awareness on very complex problems. Aware that he isn’t passing laws or moving mountains on his 3,000 mile journey, he is content with the idea that maybe someone he talks with—even if only one—will decide to change their life because of his efforts.

He began his walk on June 23 in Neah Bay, Washington, before continuing toward Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. In Rawlins, Wyoming he was stopped from entering Colorado due to road closures from the Mullen Fire and was forced to restart out of Pueblo, Colorado.

Without fancy gadgets, he uses MapQuest and Google Maps, as well as talking to locals to patch together a viable route. Between Missoula and Rawlins he was able to use the Adventure Cycling Association maps. With him, he carries basic camping supplies, food and water, and a recently acquired stroller, on which he transports his supplies in front of him, which makes the long-distance travel easier on his body.

“I so appreciate what Scott is trying to do because it is easy to overlook roadkill and it’s become so normalized, especially in a place like Montana,” said Jennifer Sherry, wildlife advocate for the Natural Resources Defense Council. “I was excited to see his effort, which is shining a light on it.”

The Montana Department of Transportation undertook a corridor planning study of U.S. Highway 191—between Four Corners and Beaver Creek Road south of Big Sky—with input from the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Montanans for Safe Wildlife Passage Coalition. U.S. Highway 191 sees an average daily traffic volume of 6,000 to 17,000 and as Big Sky and Bozeman grow, MDT forecasts that by 2040, average daily traffic volumes could increase in range from 10,000 to 30,000.

“It’s an interesting section of road because it connects two of Montana’s fastest growing communities and these are communities where people are really engaged in the conservation efforts in their areas,” Sherry said. “For wildlife, this road will essentially become a giant undulating wall of metal.”

The corridor study, which began in August 2019, will gather information on traffic patterns and transportation issues and will not only impact residents and the millions of travelers who pass through the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem each year, but also the wildlife who call it home. Yellowstone National Park, through which U.S. 191 bisects, saw record-breaking visitation this summer, all from domestic travelers. Sherry says that people from all over the country recognize the unique value of the local ecosystem, which is uplifting to their efforts.



Poindexter recently acquired a jogging stroller, which makes it easier to carry his supplies cross-country. PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT POINDEXTER

When it comes to safe wildlife crossings, there are a few different solutions that other areas have implemented, such as animal-specific crossings constructed over or under busy roadways. The first step to reaching these solutions, Sherry says, lies in the data.

“The next step is not to jump to building solutions, but to gather the information needed to design those solutions, in order for it to be successful,” she said. “What analyses are showing are that a lot of these solutions require a lot of money upfront, but in the long run they really pay themselves off in terms of the prevention of collision. And when you factor in the value of the animals you’re saving from a pretty miserable death ... there are value in these solutions.”

According to a cost-benefit analysis conducted by the Western Transportation Institute in 2007, the estimated average costs for each deer, elk and moose collision per accident is between \$8,015 and \$28,600. This includes costs associated with vehicle repair, human injuries, human fatalities, towing, accident attendance and investigation, hunting and recreational value of the animal involved as well as carcass removal and disposal.

Of course, not all animals perish immediately—after collisions, many suffer with injuries in the very habitat they call home simply because they crossed a narrow strip of asphalt at the wrong moment. Poindexter has seen his share of dead and injured animals during his trek, the perfect fuel for a journey centered around speaking for those who do not have a voice of their own.

“Most time when someone asks me what I’m doing ... they get it pretty quickly, that yeah, it’s a disaster with our roadways,” he said. Seeing roadkill is pretty commonplace, especially in the West, yet both he and Sherry agree that it shouldn’t be.

Poindexter said he’s also learned lessons along the way—from ranchers who’ve made their living off their land for generations, to housing developments where families have chosen to raise their children and find comfort in their own lives—the solution of “moving aside” for wildlife corridors becomes complicated.

“Crossings are just a Band-Aid for a mess that we’ve created by putting pavement all over, gravel roads and train tracks,” Poindexter said. “But it’s a Band-Aid we’ve got to try ... I don’t know what else you can do.”

In the meantime, Poindexter will keep putting one foot in front of the other, encouraging conversation and action.

“I hope I’m inspiring people to know they can get involved and can make a difference by supporting these organizations,” he said. “The moment has never been better because the momentum is there.”

*Follow Poindexter’s journey at [BoldlyExplore.com](http://BoldlyExplore.com), and learn more about the U.S. 191 corridor study.*



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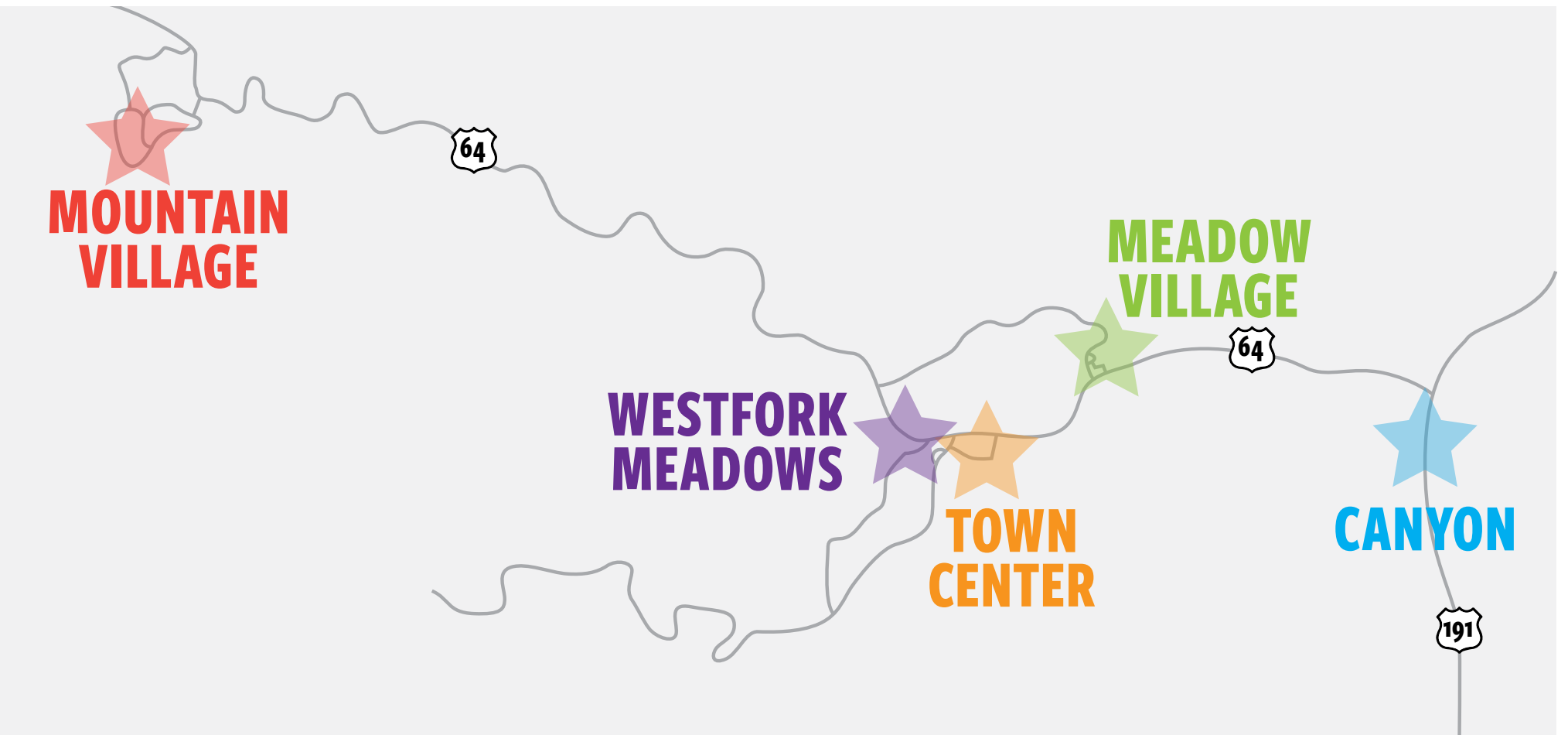
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# From the mountains to Mars, local artist has seen it all

BY MIRA BRODY

GALLATIN GATEWAY – Bill Arbanas helped build the Mars Rover “Curiosity” when he was 65, and prior to COVID-19 halting operations, Arbanas was set to assist with the construction of the next Mars Rover, “Perseverance.” He’s painted murals displayed around the world, taught and produced three-dimensional animation work for more than three decades, including animation work featured on the set of the “Babylon-5” TV series, and even owned one of the first color computers back in the 80s.

However, Arbanas’ favorite thing to do involves a slower pace: Standing still for hours at a time behind the lens of a camera, long enough for the wildlife around him to reemerge after his arrival.

Since the pandemic has slowed many industries, Arbanas has invested more of his time in MEMORY-LAPSE, his time-lapse photography business. Armed with a basic camera setup, typically including a Canon camera, tripod, intervalometer and a sandbag to keep it steady, he’ll venture off into one of the many mountain ranges surrounding his home in Gallatin Gateway to capture the subtle movements many individuals may otherwise miss.

Although Arbanas moved to Montana three years ago, staring at the mountains everyday was a lifestyle he’d envied for 41 years.

“The cool thing about time lapses, is you go out with your camera, you find a beautiful spot and then you’re forced to stay there from 20 minuets to an hour and a half,” Arbanas said. “When you’re forced to stay in one spot and not move, the things around you start to move around again. Time lapses force you to stop, and look, and observe.”

Capturing a time lapse photograph involves a steady camera that is set to take a photo every three to 20 seconds, depending on the exposure necessary to capture the subject. Arbanas says clouds are his favorite subjects to shoot—describing that it’s reminiscent of childhood, when you’d lay on your back and imagine the different shapes they’d take above you. With the diversity of Montana’s weather, Arbanas also never tires of taking time lapses of the landscape—he sometimes captures all four seasons in one day.

Arbanas’ artistic passion follows ancestral roots. His grandparents were from a town called Arbanas that existed 400 years ago, a place where many Catholics along the Turkish-Albanian border (now Croatia) sought refuge from persecution from the Turks.

Everyone who lived there adopted the last name Arbanas. After spreading to Croatia and one to Lithuania, Arbanas’ grandparents immigrated to the U.S., where his mother’s parents came to own a photography business in Chicago and later a portrait studio when they moved to a 300-acre farm in Michigan near Kalamazoo.

Arbanas attended an array of colleges and universities, including Northern Illinois University, Kent State University, Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio, the College of DuPage, in Glen Ellyn, Illinois and the North American School of Conservation for post-grad. Since photography degree programs weren’t offered when he attended school, Arbanas instead elected to study journalism, hoping he could gain some experience in photojournalism—his dream was to work for National Geographic or Disney, shooting nature films.



Bill Arbanas stands next to the utility box mural he created for the Garnet Mountain Estates neighborhood. The style is inspired by ancient Japanese watercolor paintings. PHOTO COURTESY OF MEMORY-LAPSE

Although he never shot nature films, he did his fair share of traveling abroad after joining the military in 1966 where he attended the jungle school for Vietnam, only to later be stationed in Germany. While abroad, he fell in love both with a woman and the mountains—particularly the Matterhorn.

“I’ve always loved mountains and one of the mountains I wanted to climb was the Matterhorn down in Switzerland,” Albanas said. “We get a month off in the military, so my buddy and I hitchhiked [to Switzerland] in early June in ‘68.”

Although they never summited, he did meet his wife, Joan, in Switzerland. After marrying, they lived in Manchester, England where Albanas cleaned airbrushes and reviewed airbrush products for the Badger Airbrush Company.

The couple moved back to the states in 1986 and similar to how he learned photography, Albanas taught himself three-dimensional animation on the Commodore Amiga—the world’s first color computer. He worked for a gaming company, then for a doctor at an orthopedic hospital where he filmed procedures in the operating room so the hospital could produce educational surgical videos. Over the course of five years, Albanas says he recorded more than 3,500 surgeries and learned more about medicine then he ever wanted to.

That’s when he and Joan moved to Los Angeles. During his time working on the Babylon-5 TV series, Albanas taught three-dimensional animation, eventually getting the job at NASA’s laboratory. Joan passed away over 13 years ago from cancer and Albanas later relocated to Phoenix, Arizona to care for his father, who died at the age of 99. After his father’s passing, Albanas set his eyes on Big Sky.

“41 years ago I was aimed at coming up here to build a cabin and say, ‘to hell with the rest of the world,’” Albanas said. “It took me 41 years to get here. Once [my dad] passed I moved up here immediately and I’m really sorry I didn’t do it 41 years ago.”

He has since done his part to not only capture the beauty of the area, but also enrich its natural beauty. He recently beautified a peeling utility box in the Garnet Mountain Estates neighborhood, his first mural in nearly a decade.

“Every time an opportunity opens a door you really need to go through it, otherwise you really lose out,” Albanas said of his mural work—a sentiment that could apply to his brimming life as well.

Unfortunately, during his work on the mural, a nagging back injury flared up and he is in need of surgery for a ruptured disk. However, he’s been able to continue his time lapse photography, spending his days along Spanish Creek among the bison herd and the landscape he spent so many years dreaming to reach. Alongside clouds, many of his time lapses feature the night sky—Albanas is a self-described astronomy geek.

“I’m 75, so that was 10 years ago,” Arbanas said, recalling his time in NASA’s jet propulsion laboratory. “I was still an old fart and to have that as a kind of a frosting on my career was just fantastic. I love working on TV and movies, but it’s fleeting. When you work on something like the Rover ... that’s there forever.”



What Arbanas called his “most basic” time-lapse setup: camera, tripod, intervalometer and sandbag. PHOTO BY BILL ARBANAS



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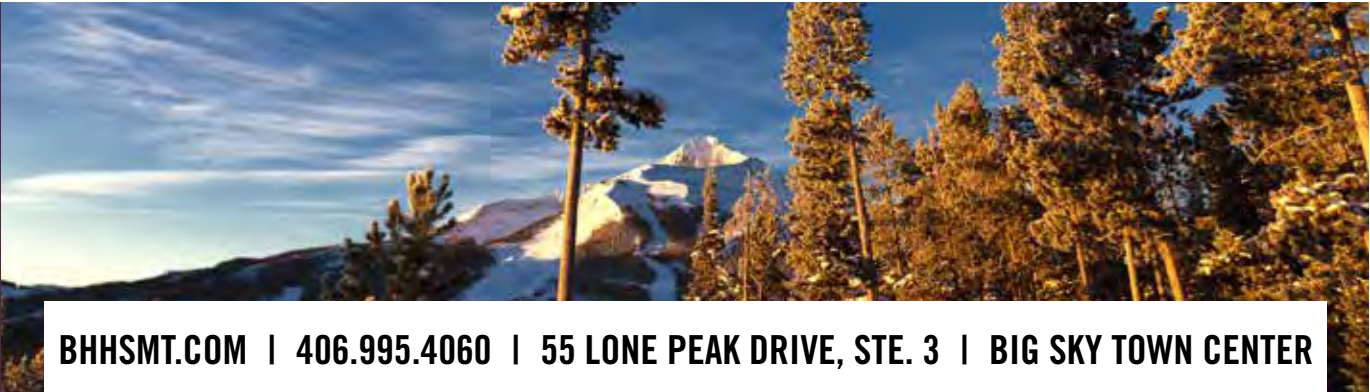
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# Album Review: “Wildflowers & All the Rest” by Tom Petty

SAMUEL ORAZEM  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

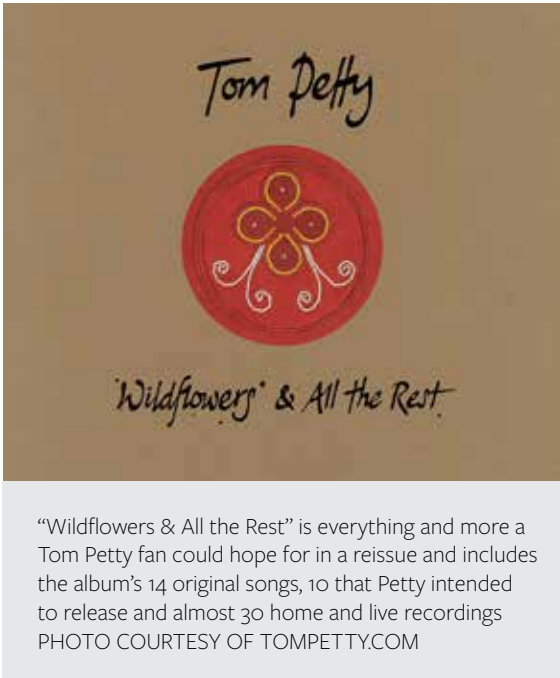
★★★★★

I was first introduced to Tom Petty when he played the halftime show at the Super Bowl XLII in 2008. I was 10 at the time and had never had much interest in any music except what was played on Kansas City’s Mix93.3—top 40 hits, such as the Black Eyed Peas and Rihanna. That halftime show was the first time I began to look at rock as something that might be of interest to me. While my twelve years of exposure to Tom Petty’s catalogue is comparatively short, when he passed in 2017 still felt like I lost one of the most influential artists in my music-listening career. Because of all of that, this reissue of “Wildflowers” was of particular interest to me.

“Wildflowers & All the Rest” is everything you hope a reissue of one of your favorite albums could be. The album is not just a cheap remastering of the original material like the cheap movie remakes often released nowadays. This reissue is packed to the brim and the deluxe includes the album’s 14 original songs, 10 that Petty intended to release but were axed by the label, and almost 30 home and live recordings.

The remastered tracks are unchanged—as one would hope of something as wonderful as “Wildflowers.”The ten newly released tracks fit neatly into the album’s introspective theme. From the first listen, it is understandable why Petty chose to cut these specific ten songs out of the

original release at his label’s request, but they are still a welcome addition to the track list. “Wildflowers” feels more complete with their addition and, while they may not end up in any of “Tom Petty’s Greatest Hits” playlists, anyone who considers themselves a Tom Petty fan will probably add a few of them into their regular rotation.



The home recordings are where this reissue truly peaks. “Wildflowers” always felt like a deeply introspective album for Petty after moving on from The Heartbreakers and testing the waters of solo artistry. These home recordings give an extremely intimate view into Petty’s life and make the life of a rock star feel oddly familiar. Any listener, especially those who play an instrument themselves, will experience an uncanny emotional resonance upon hearing a larger-than-life person in such a personal setting. Hearing Petty playing hits like “You Don’t Know How It Feels” in his home, without a backing track, frantically but suavely switching between guitar and harmonica will make any home-musician feel like they can make the next hit all on their own.

That feeling of this reissue being intensely personal is ultimately what makes it work so well. It feels like, for once, label executives created an album for fans. It is an aggressively personal, posthumous look into Petty’s experience of life and, depending on the version, has a runtime of up to five hours. In a time characterized by flagrantly impersonal remakes and reissues of classic media that only function to serve as reminders that the original work exists, “Wildflowers & All the Rest” manages to rise above the rest and feel truly worthwhile. Its extensive runtime never feels exaggerated to justify the reissue’s existence and every piece feels curated and cohesive. Each part feels like it is in its proper place, just like Tom Petty would have wanted it.

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# BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, Nov. 6 – Wednesday, Nov. 19

*If your event falls between Nov. 20 and Dec. 3, please submit it by Nov. 18 by emailing [media@outlaw.partners](mailto:media@outlaw.partners)*

## Friday, Nov. 6

### Can the Griz

Montana Science Center, Bozeman, 9 a.m.

### Virtual Cinema with Bozeman Film Society

Access Online here: [bozemanfilmsociety.org](http://bozemanfilmsociety.org), all day

### Music and Margaritas

Santa Fe Reds, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

## Saturday, Nov. 7

### Love INC Clothing Giveaway

Gallatin Country Love INC., Bozeman, 9 a.m.

### Adult Belly Dance Class

OULA Studio, Bozeman, 3 p.m.

## Sunday, Nov. 8

### Game Night: Live Trivia

Bar IX, Bozeman, 8 p.m.

### Brunch and Live Music

Pine Creek Lodge, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

## Monday, Nov. 9

### Pints With Purpose: Foster The Earth

Bridger Brewing, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

### Local's Night

Bunkhouse Brewery, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

## Tuesday, Nov. 10

### Perfect Pairings With Outlaw Brewing

Montana Ale Works, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

### Gallatin Valley 2040

Virtual Event, 7 p.m. Access online here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/how-and-why-to-put-local-foods-at-the-center-of-your-thanksgiving-tickets-126889236121?fbclid=IwAR3ASscvJRRrgCBUsN1-a4LetjUSCPnuhM-GygIREa4Odjm9PCC5T5o8gCY>

## Wednesday, Nov. 11 (Veterans Day)

### Educator Wednesdays at Bunkhouse

Bunkhouse Brewery, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

### Sushi for Soldiers

Kappa Sigma House, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

## Thursday, Nov. 12

### Black Diamond Big Sky Store Opening

Black Diamond Store, 10 a.m.

### Chalk Tails

Dry Hills Distillery, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

### Thursday Night Ice Climbers of Bozeman #31

Hyalite Canyon, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

## Friday, Nov. 13

### Teton Gravity Research “Make Believe” Premiere

Big Sky Town Center, 4:30 p.m.

### Donnie’s Inferno

Kountry Corner Café, Four Corners, 5:30 p.m.

## Saturday, Nov. 14

### Pumpkin Drop!

Gallatin Country Fairgrounds, Bozeman, 9 a.m.

### Sunrise Karaoke – The Friendly

The Friendly Tavern, Belgrade, 8 p.m.

## Sunday, Nov. 15

### Devil’s Toboggan Presents: An Old West Murder Mystery Party

The Devil’s Toboggan, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

### Sunday FUNday at Bozeman Brewing

Bozeman Brewing, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

## Monday, Nov. 16

### Nutrition Series: Realistic Holiday Eating

Lone Peak Performance, 5:15 p.m.

### Music Monday

Red Tractor Pizza, Bozeman, 6:30 p.m.

## Tuesday, Nov. 17

### The Clothesline – Ribbon Cutting

The Clothesline, Bozeman, 4 p.m.

### Bingo Night

Molly Brown, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

## Wednesday, Nov. 18

### Ladies Night at Heyday | 2020

Heyday, Bozeman, 4 p.m.

### Live Music

Wildrye Distillery, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

## Thursday, Nov. 19

### November Yappy Hour with Working Dogs for Conservation

Dee-O-Gee, Bozeman, 4:30 p.m.

### Family Science Day: Physics

Montana Science Center, Bozeman, 3 p.m.



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School at home pg. 38



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Back 40: Blue river bounty pg. 46

# Lady Big Horns advance to divisional tournament semi-finals

## Place third in district tournament

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – The Lone Peak High School Lady Big Horns volleyball team came from behind to earn a five set victory in their divisional tournament matchup against the Seeley-Swan Blackhawks on Nov. 3. Playing with their season on the line and their backs against the wall, LPHS trailed 13-7 in the best of 15, fifth and final set, before rallying to earn the decisive 16-14 win and claim the match.

“Directly after the match, there were tears and hugs and absolute disbelief that that had just transpired,” LPHS Head Coach Missy Botha said. “... It was definitely one of the best sporting events, I’d ever been a part of.”

Seeley-Swan won the first set by a slim three points, but Lone Peak rebounded to capture sets two and three. With an opportunity to end the match in set four, the Blackhawks managed to stave off the Lady Big Horns, again coming away with a three point victory, setting up the dramatic fifth set comeback by LPHS.

Seniors Ivy Hicks and Chloe Hammond led the team in assists and digs with marks of 42 and 22 respectively. Fellow senior Reilly Germain shared the team high of six aces with sophomore Maddie Cone. Cone also paced LPHS with 18 kills, while junior TJ Nordahl rounded out the Lady Big Horns statistical leaders with two of the team’s three blocks on the evening.

“They just refused to let their season end,” Botha said. “It was the closest we’ve been to complete elimination from not only the postseason but, you know, a team full of

seniors who, you know, that would have been the end of their volleyball careers.”

LPHS traveled to play Hot Springs on the evening of Nov. 5 in the semi-finals of the Western Class-C divisional volleyball tournament. If the Lady Big Horns advance to the championship game, they would face the winner of a matchup between Manhattan Christian, who defeated LPHS in their final regular season contest on Oct. 26 in straight sets, or Charlo.

On their way to punching their ticket to the divisional tournament, Lone Peak placed third for the fourth consecutive season, according to Botha, in the district tournament.

Playing on three consecutive days, LPHS handled Harrison-Willow Creek three sets to none on Oct. 29 but was stunned by their rival, the Gardiner Bruins on Oct. 30, falling three sets to two and avenging a loss to LPHS from earlier in the season. In their final match of districts on Oct. 31, the Lady Big Horns overcame a two set to none hole against the Shields Valley Rebels, winning the final three sets and the match to claim the third place trophy.

Hicks displayed her excellent knack for distributing the ball, compiling 96 kills throughout the course of the district tournament and leading the team in that respect in each of their three matches. Senior Hannah Dreisbach and Cone both led the team in kills twice during districts. Dreisbach paced the team with 11 kills against the Rebels, while Cone had a team high 16 against the Bruins. The two shared the team lead at 11 apiece against Harrison-Willow Creek.



LPHS senior Ruth Blodgett (34) serves versus Shields Valley in the district tournament on Oct. 31. Lone Peak traveled to play Hot Springs on Nov. 5 in the semi-finals of the divisional tournament. PHOTO BY KARA BLODGETT



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MONTANA



# Big Horns fall in final contest

BY BRANDON WALKER

ABSAROKEE – Playing on the road for their final contest of the season on Oct. 23, the Lone Peak High School varsity football team was beaten by the Absarokee Huskies 38-26 as the Huskies rallied back from a 14-point deficit in the second half to seize the victory.

“It was our best performance of the year. [The] guys really came together against a team that beat us pretty badly early in the season,” said Big Horns Head Coach Adam Farr.

After a 36-19 defeat at the hand of the Huskies in their first matchup on Oct. 2, LPHS made a statement to start the game. Freshman Juliusz Shipman weaved through Absarokee defenders and returned the opening kickoff roughly 65 yards to the end zone for the early Big Horn touchdown. Sophomore Pierce Farr converted the rushing 2-point conversion, leaving the score 8-0 Lone Peak.

The Big Horns continued their early success when sophomore quarterback Isaiah Holst found junior wide receiver Isaac Singer open for an approximately 22 yard passing touchdown. The touchdown was Singer’s first of the season.

In a near reversal of roles from their first meeting, in which Absarokee led 22-6 at the half, Lone Peak would eventually take a 20-6 lead into halftime thanks to their final touchdown of the first half—a 50 yard screen pass from Holst to Farr who evaded the Huskies defenders to reach the endzone.

In the second half, turnovers became the Big Horns’ Achilles heel. Farr detailed, after a first half that was turnover free, three second half fumbles shifted the momentum of the game in favor of the Huskies. Capitalizing on the Big Horns mistakes, Absarokee outscored LPHS 32-6 in the second half to come away victorious.

Holst capped off the Big Horn scoring when he found some room to run in the fourth quarter and rushed into the endzone from roughly 15 yards out. Meanwhile, Holst’s back field mate, Farr finished the game with a hefty 24 tackles in his effort to stave off the Huskies.

“Again, the team really came together and had a stronger performance against a team that we lost badly to earlier in the season,” Farr said.

LPHS finishes the season with an 0-7 final record. Lone senior Kole Maus is the only athlete not returning to the gridiron for Lone Peak next season.

“I’m feeling great. We got great contributions [from] freshmen, sophomores, all over the place this season,” Farr said. “We we’re in virtually every game except for a couple. The maturity that they gained from the varsity season, with very few upper classmen, I think will translate well into next year.”



LPHS sophomore running back Pierce Farr (50) evades an Absarokee Huskies defender on Oct. 23. Lone Peak fell to Absarokee 38-26. PHOTO BY KIM HOLST



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# Does your brain need a party?



BY LINDA ARNOLD  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

We all know the feeling of looking forward to something—planning a trip, scoring great tickets for a concert or getting excited about our annual PBR events, just to name a few.

The trouble is many of these activities have gone by the wayside during the COVID-19 pandemic. And, just as is the case with those plans, the excitement has evaporated as well.

**Party on**

Anticipating future fun events is a powerful mood booster, and a lack of things to look forward to is likely contributing to a national state of melancholy, according to Dana G. Smith, Ph.D. Dr. Smith is a former brain scientist and senior staff writer at Elemental, which publishes science-backed health and wellness information. She cites research studies with the following conclusions:

- Looking forward to good things is a key element of well-being.
- The more positive events a person anticipates, the brighter their mood.
- Actively planning for the future is linked to greater optimism about the coming months and years.
- Those who are depressed anticipate fewer positive events than non-depressed people.
- Anticipating a reward—even a small one—increases positive emotions before and after a stressful event.

**Revising your scope**

Back in the days when we had lots of events occurring, I would caution my friends, and myself for that matter, from living too much in the future—and not enjoying the now. The last seven months have shifted a lot of perspectives, though.

This pandemic has actually resulted in many of us getting more creative. “Inject life with small, short-term sources of happy anticipation,” advises writer and editor Markham Heid. Psychologist Christian Waugh explains we can still anticipate positive events, but we may have to “microdose” them. “Instead of thinking big—or way into the future—think smaller and closer in time.”

Plan out a big hike, rearrange some furniture to create new energy in your home,

or check out an online class in something new. A friend of mine is signing up for “Beginning Ukulele,” while other friends are learning Spanish and Italian.

The planning process even creates a little party in your brain because it releases dopamine, a pleasure hormone. Dopamine is stimulated when we strive toward a goal. It motivates us to take action, so we can experience the pleasure of the reward.

The idea is to get the same kind of mood enhancement as before. Even if it’s on a smaller scale, the rewards are still there.

**Living with uncertainty**

My friend and fellow writer, Derlys Gutierrez, relays an experience on her blog, No Words Unsaid, that speaks to our current uncertainty. Gutierrez is an attorney and shared that one of her colleagues said things would be easier if we could just have some certainty.

“The conversation reminded me of the illusion we have that there is certainty in anything in life,” Gutierrez reflects. “We walk through metal detectors in courthouses and airports because these will keep us safe.”

“We sign into buildings, show identification and proceed to the elevator because a security guard thought we looked safe,” Gutierrez continued. “It’s a make-believe illusion that keeps us feeling good.”

The pandemic has not stripped us of certainty, Gutierrez explains. It has merely wiped out the illusion of uncertainty, and it’s a game our minds play because it’s unnerving not to know what’s going to happen next.

“The reality is that with each blink of an eye, things change,” says Gutierrez. “The cells in our body replace themselves. That’s the certainty—that everything changes.”

**Party Planning**

As my friend Tom Kesting says, “Give up, give in—or give it all you’ve got.”

We could all use more things to look forward to these days. So, go throw that party for your brain.

*Linda Arnold is a syndicated columnist, psychological counselor and Founder of a multistate marketing company. Reader comments are welcome at [linda@lindaarnold.org](mailto:linda@lindaarnold.org) or visit [www.lindaarnold.org](http://www.lindaarnold.org) for more information on her books.*

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BY KALEY BURNS  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

A historic virus, subsequent quarantine, economic stress, decreased social interaction, mental health challenges, political division of the country, wildfires and hurricanes have combined to make this a year of exceptional burden for our health.

The year 2020 has affected not only our emotional well-being, mental health and our physical stamina, but also influenced us at a physiological level. The compensatory responses to these stresses are known as stress responses. Based on the type, timing and severity of the stimulus, stress can exert various actions on the body. Most notably, stress lowers our immune system, which can increase our susceptibility to various ailments.

We’ve also been burdened with reduced opportunity to de-stress collectively, whether that means seeing coworkers, attending church gatherings or meeting friends for dinner. Furthermore, there is the concern of long-term effects on individuals and communities. The risk of being unhealthy has come into the spotlight, along with the risk of reactive disease care.

On a more positive note, perhaps this year has made some of us think more carefully about the way we take care of one another and ourselves. A lot of our mental wellness depends on social connection, physical activity, events and meaningful work.

## The key moving forward: Our health behaviors

Our health and lifestyle behaviors can make a significant difference in how the future unfolds for our neighborhoods and our personal health. While we have endured a burdensome time, we can feel empowered to increase our stress resilience.

While the world is focused on a cure, it seems not enough of the current conversation has focused on the ways we can support overall wellbeing. Arguably, the optimal way to build resilience is by creating and living a healthy lifestyle, where a strong body and immune system can flourish.

## Increasing demand and growth of holistic health

Along with the increase in healthy foods available at grocery stores, the natural approach to care is becoming more prevalent. Preventative care is often more effective than care that occurs after the onset of illness. Holistic health provides patients with personalized, whole person, self-guided care. People are prioritizing natural ways of tending to their bodies and minds.

Thanks to conventional interventions, we are living longer and surviving significant surgeries and diseases. In conjunction with appreciation of conventional medicine, is the growing concern that by focusing exclusively on fighting disease, viewing individuals as lab results and operating reactively, we lose sight of the comprehensive picture of one’s health.

Conversely, increasing self-awareness, addressing the whole person, and working in a proactive fashion, is in the best interest of optimizing health. Our future as a society begins to look a bit brighter when we take a wholeness approach to wellness, recognizing the variety of doctors and healing practitioners in our community and monitoring our own health on a daily basis. As we approach a new year, we are encouraged to think about what healthcare is and how we utilize it to nourish our communities.

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5:00-6:00pm Body Melt	4:15-5:15pm All level Yoga	Community Acupuncture 11:00am-1:00pm	10:00-11:15am Core Flow	11:00am-12:15pm All Levels Yoga	10:00-11:15am All Levels Vinyasa Flow	5:00-6:15pm All Levels Kundalini Yoga
8:00-9:00pm Yoga Nidra		5:30-6:45pm Heated Flow	4:15-5:15pm All Levels Yoga	5:30-6:45pm Heated Flow	5:30-6:45pm All Levels Yoga	
		7:00-8:15pm Virtual Raja Vinyasa Yoga		7:00-8:15pm Virtual Raja Vinyasa Yoga		



# School at Home: COVID and beyond

BY BRITTANY L.M. LADD

Little did I know at the time, but the late night flight home from Dallas, Texas to Bend, Oregon on March 12 was to be my last air travel. Countries around the world were shutting down quickly in response to the novel coronavirus and I was in a hurry to get home to my family after spending the week in Dallas as a member of the American Montessori Society’s Emerging Leaders Fellowship program.

I was on pins and needles during the two flights, and I wanted nothing more than to be back home with my husband and three children. We had already canceled our spring break travel plans overseas, understanding that life as we had known it was quickly changing before our eyes.

By Monday, March 16, the state of Oregon declared a state of emergency and issued shelter-at-home orders. As it turned out, schools statewide would be shuttered throughout the remainder of the school year.

Fast forward nearly six months, and we all know a lot more about the novel coronavirus—COVID-19 as we understand it now. It has touched our lives in countless ways, and sadly, some of us may have lost a loved one or may have faced hardships in our family. Our hearts and minds have opened up to understand the scale and implications of a global pandemic. We have even acquired a whole new lexicon to go with it: social distancing, quarantines, PPE, antigens, etc.

My four-year old daughter works these words into her imaginative play sometimes, for example: social distancing her stuffed animals and making a mask for her baby doll to wear to the park. Children are always so resilient—they learn, they adapt and they carry on.

But how else has COVID-19 affected our lives? For me, as an educator, the largest issue at hand is the way our children are experiencing learning as we continue to adapt educational offerings within the overarching health concerns of our society. Schools throughout the nation, and moreover the world, are working tirelessly to develop online learning platforms so that teachers can carry on their critical work with students, developing innovative methods to connect children and adults in ways that feel meaningful.

My family was unique in one sense: we were homeschoolers, and I had spent over a decade teaching my children from home in alignment with a Montessori philosophy and lifestyle. So where did that leave us educationally?

Like almost everyone I know, we actually spent about a month just adjusting. No major expectations were placed on anyone, neither the kids nor the adults. With so much uncertainty and anxiety—locally and globally—the most important thing for everyone’s sake felt like staying home together safely, and maintaining a strong sense of well-being, which meant no more work schedules, school schedules, after-school schedules, and limited exposure to friends and extended family.

It wasn’t easy for anyone, as we felt layers of disappointments on different levels. On the other hand, we were together, safe and stable, and for that I was deeply grateful. The long, quiet days were filled with cooking, books, games, more cooking, nature walks, movies ... and more cooking.

I came to realize in hindsight that the month of cocooning had been the important “pause” that we needed to equilibrate our personal and collective energy so that we could realign ourselves to the new norm. After the pause came the “pivot.” How would we choose to respond to COVID-19, educationally-speaking, going forward? It turned out to be easier than I had imagined. With some minor tweaks and adjustments to our well-established homeschool routine, we were able to carry on with a semblance of normalcy, albeit in a more casual, less-structured manner.

For my youngest child, she reported to me matter-of-factly that she actually liked being home with everyone all the time. She was three at the time, and to her not having to be anywhere other than home from sunup to sundown seemed like she had hit the jackpot. As the youngest, she was born into a full, active family and had until this point, spent a great deal of time on the go to the big kids’ afternoon activities and other family events.

She absolutely cherishes the home environment, which is one aspect of the Montessori philosophy. Her home is her world where she draws a great deal of meaning from her day-to-day, hands-on experiences. With nowhere to be and no outside activities scheduled, she had even more time for the things that were important to her. We spent hours and hours reading, playing, doing art projects and spending time in nature. She even eagerly helped me with all the extra cooking and housework. It was a chance to say “Yes!” to her wonderful ideas and simply to “Follow the Child,”—a Montessori mantra. In short, she was thrilled!

My middle child also expressed an overall satisfaction with stay-at-home learning. At 11-years old, she missed her friends and her special classes, but overall, the sentiment was that with extra time at home, the days became more open-ended allowing for a true

child-directed schedule. This shift left her feeling more rested and at ease, and she was at peace. I think this self-awareness is pretty amazing in today’s world where we tend to be always “doing,” with less emphasis on “being.”

She had finally received permission during this unique time to tap into a deeper sense of wellness. Here’s why this is interesting to me, from an educational standpoint: from this place of rest, she became newly invigorated toward her studies and was eager to complete her curriculum for the year. In fact, for the first time ever, she worked on several courses throughout the summer of her own volition with energy and excitement. It has been amazing to watch her grow and mature. Autonomy, choice and self-motivated, self-directed learning are all important aspects of a Montessori education.

It was my oldest child who perhaps surprised me the most, though. While homeschooled throughout the elementary years, he had attended an independent middle school for the past two years. When his school closed and then introduced its online learning model for the spring, we realized that it wasn’t going to be a good fit to continue his education throughout the spring term. Instead, he chose to jump back into homeschooling. He committed to finishing his math curriculum and from there we brainstormed a plan to ignite his passions for certain subjects again now that he had the time.

At first, he invested his energy completing his independent science research, which he submitted to the state science fair digitally since the in-person event was canceled. He worked tirelessly on the details and converted all of his work to a digital format. To his great surprise and joy, he won first place at the state science fair in his division. He also spent hours and hours reading for pleasure, and my favorite part was that he took a deep dive into photography. Finding an online instructor, as well as several other resources, he delved into the history, the art, the science and the modern applications of photography. He spent early mornings hiking to an eagle’s nest to photograph an eaglet. He stayed up all hours of the night taking star trail photos over mountain peaks. He built a website to showcase his photography. He is now researching ways to make a living as a photographer, and during all that time, he turned 14.

It was a strong reminder that teenagers also have a deep need for the gift of time and rest so that they can tap into their authentic selves and apply their talents to the world around them. We need to honor the whole child (and the whole adolescent) in our work as educators and trust them to show us what they desire from their education. We can collaborate with our learners to set goals and then facilitate their discovery of what ignites their passions. That is true Montessori education.

With the inevitable close of summer, the days grow shorter and the evening air is noticeably becoming cooler. When we turn the calendar to September, we will once again return to our daily homeschool routine and rhythms. My role changes from year to year with the growth and development of the kids. With my youngest—eager to learn all of her letters and begin reading and writing—we are setting up the home environment to meet those needs with the correct learning materials. We will spend a lot of time together with her Montessori lessons.

My middle child is riding horses again and is already gearing up to continue her education through a self-directed horse studies unit, weaving together many different areas of curriculum. She needs me by her side less and less these days as she practices and demonstrates increasing independence. I offer my services in the form of a guide, and we work together weekly to set goals and daily to review her work and progress.

My oldest child will be taking several online courses at the high school level this year. He is venturing into a new era of his education. While he doesn’t need as much help from me anymore, I will certainly be there to support him however he needs in the months ahead. And the kids know that I’m always available for the recommended twelve hugs per day or a cup of tea together when we need a break. It’s one of the perks of homeschooling!

In the end, my biggest takeaway from the last six months of doing life together day-in and day-out has been a return to the simplest pleasure: building deep relationships at home with the people I cherish. This is exactly the reason I got into the business of homeschooling all those years ago in the first place. I trusted that by building a life together, sharing our days and experiences as a family, I would not only be able to offer my children a unique education but also entrust them to become self-actualized humans: able to discover their truest selves and then, in turn, offer their gifts to the world.

As this global pandemic continues, my hope is that all educators will strive to keep to this vision, which Maria Montessori expressed so beautifully:

“The education that will lead the way to a new humanity has one end alone: leading the individual and the society to a higher state of development. The concept becomes clearer if we realize that mankind has to fulfill a collective mission on earth, a mission involving all of humanity and, therefore, each and every human being.”



Brittany and her three kids last April on the Rogue River in southern Oregon getting some much-needed “nature therapy” during the early onset of COVID-19. PHOTO COURTESY OF BRITTANY LADD



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BIG SKY



3735 Pinewood Drive  
6,544 +/- SQ FT / \$4.95M



64 Lodgepole  
6,160 +/- SQ FT / \$4.295M



NEW LISTING  
360 Rainbow Ranch  
6,105 +/- SQ FT / \$3.3M



8 Little Thunder  
4,321 +/- SQ FT / \$2.975M



UNDER CONTRACT  
49820 Gallatin Road  
3,677 +/- SQ FT / \$1.895M

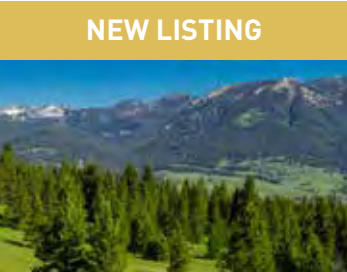
BIG SKY - LAND



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - 2A-1B  
526 +/- ACRES / \$5.8M



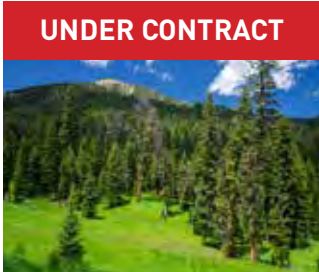
Moosewood Lots 3 & 4  
Lot 3 / 6.9 +/- ACRES / \$1.4M  
Lot 4 / 5 +/- ACRES / \$1.1M



NEW LISTING  
The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 2A-1A  
196 +/- ACRES / \$2.199M



UNDER CONTRACT  
The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 3B-1  
23 +/- ACRES / \$875k



UNDER CONTRACT  
The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 1A-1  
21 +/- ACRES / \$795k



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 2B-1  
20 +/- ACRES / \$875k

BOZEMAN & GREATER MONTANA



UNDER CONTRACT  
529 Clancy Way, Bozeman, MT  
4200+/- SQ FT / 1.01 +/- ACRES  
\$1.69M



Homestead at the Beacon Butte, MT  
640 +/- ACRES / \$1.65M



Rocking S7 Ranch Lot 4  
Bozeman, MT  
20.232 +/- ACRES / \$650K

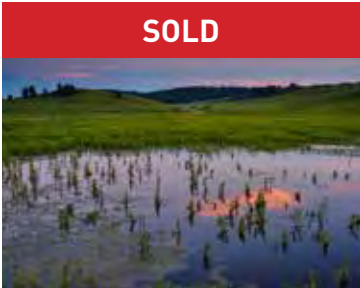


UNDER CONTRACT  
380 Mountain Man Trail  
Montana Ranch  
20.8 +/- ACRES / \$325K



223 Town Center Avenue  
Big Sky, MT  
2882 +/- SQ FT  
1601 +/- SQ FT Patio \$1.525M

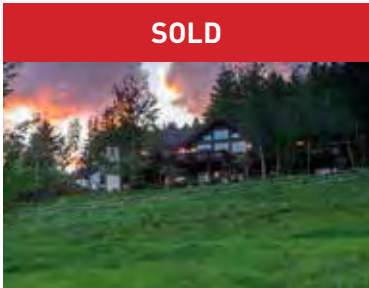
RECENTLY SOLD



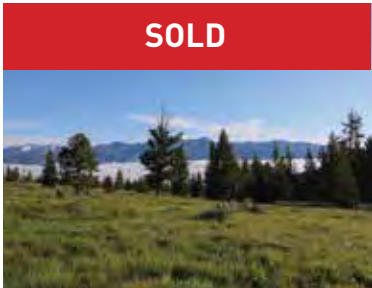
SOLD  
Yellowstone Ranch Preserve  
List Price: \$19M



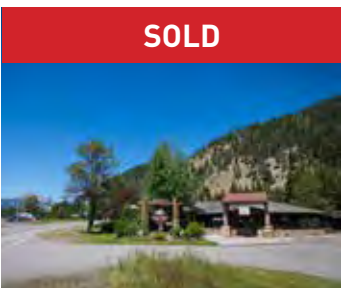
SOLD  
13285 Dry Creek Road  
Bozeman, MT  
7448 +/- SQ FT / \$5.95M



SOLD  
2005 Upper Chief Joseph  
7,690 +/- SQ FT / \$4.3M



SOLD  
Mountain Meadows  
120 +/- ACRES / \$3.495M

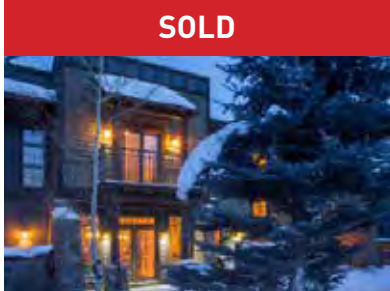


SOLD  
Big Sky Corner Property  
List Price: \$3.24M

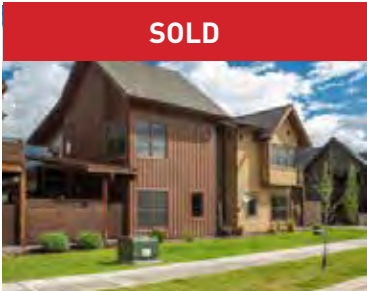
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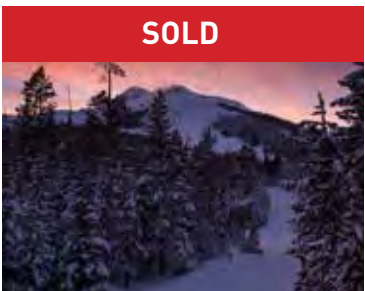
SOLD  
705 E Orange  
Bozeman, MT  
2,200 +/- SQ FT / \$915K



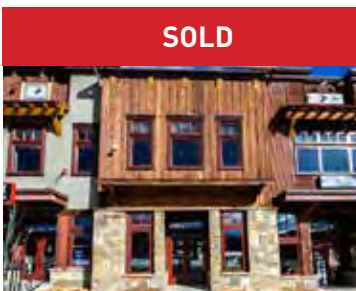
SOLD  
81 Pheasant Tail Ln. Unit 2  
2,707 +/- SQ FT / \$839K



SOLD  
211 B Pheasant Tail  
\$692K



SOLD  
Lot 39 Diamond Hitch  
1 +/- ACRE / \$595K



SOLD  
Marketplace Unit 104  
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1,204 +/- SQ FT / \$560,920

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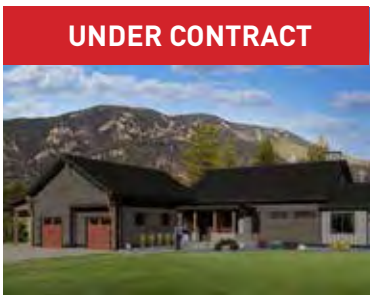
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Parcel 1 - 5.0+/- ACRES

1955 Little Coyote Drive  
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Lodges at Elkhorn Creek  
2,060 - 2,203 +/- SQ FT  
\$1M - \$2.25M

Gallatin Foothills Lot 5 & 6  
\$950K - \$1.295M  
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189 B Pheasant Tail  
1590 +/- SQ FT / \$699K



Ranches at Yellow  
Mountain - Tract 3A  
- ACRES / \$750K

The Ranches at Yellow  
Mountain - Tract 4A  
20 +/- ACRES / \$750K

The Ranches at Yellow  
Mountain - Tract 1L  
21.29 +/- ACRES / \$750K

Big EZ  
Lot 42: \$449K / 20 +/- ACRES  
Lot 43: \$425K / 20 +/- ACRES  
Combined: \$799K

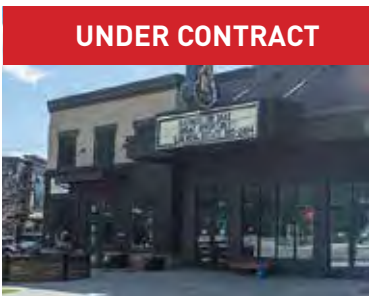
Gallatin Foothills Lot 4  
1.519 +/- ACRES  
\$395K  
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177 Silver Run Drive  
0.402 +/- ACRES  
\$329K

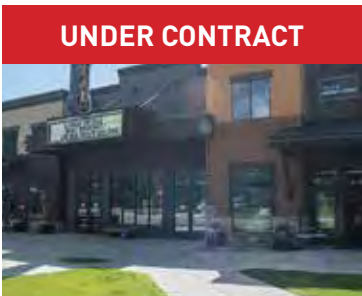
**BUSINESS**



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50 Ousel Falls  
Big Sky, MT  
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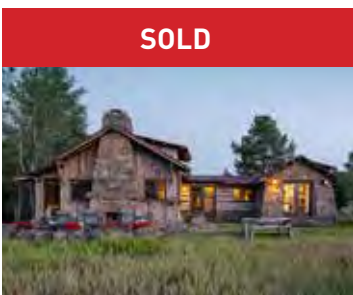
Airport Garages  
Bozeman, MT  
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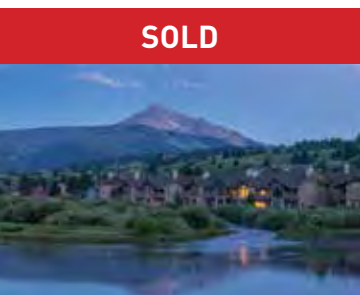
Terranaut Adventure Vans  
Bozeman, MT  
*Call for details*



78 Meadow Village Dr. Big  
Sky, MT  
4,769 +/- SQ FT / \$2.1M



3250 Two Moons Rd  
4,064 +/- SQ FT / \$1.995M



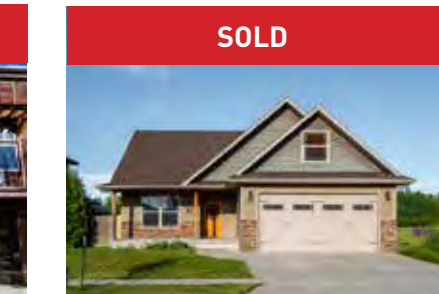
Crail Ranch Unit 40  
List Price: \$1.35M



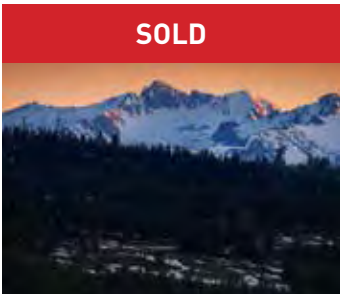
2078 Little Coyote  
List Price: \$1.079M



Ski Tip Lot 10  
List Price: \$975K



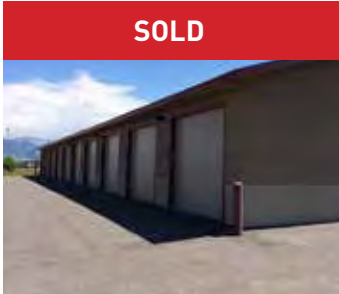
988 Meagher  
Bozeman, MT  
2232 +/- SQ FT / \$499K



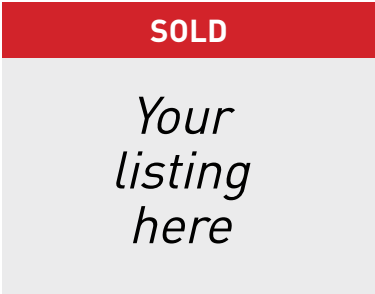
Lot 2 Big Buck Road  
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# Making it in Big Sky: Rainbow Ranch Lodge

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – The Rainbow Ranch Lodge was constructed in 1919. Now, more than 100 years and a name change later, the lodge continues operating strong. As with anyone in the hospitality industry, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented the lodge with various challenges, but business has rebounded over the last couple months, according to the lodge’s General Manager Scott Nelson.

Nelson is optimistic for Big Sky’s future as a growing community. Enlisting a new approach that involves consistent hours through the “shoulder season,” he and his staff were doing well until COVID-19 rocked the U.S. in March.

“It’s exciting for any of us in Big Sky right now ... to realize that this community is truly becoming a community,” he said. “The peaks and valleys of offseason are waning, we’re not to having to deal with that as much anymore.”

Nelson is originally from Spokane, Washington. As a child, he split his time between Washington and his family’s farm in North Dakota and during his travels between the two states, Bozeman was a frequent stopping point. Through the years, he recalls experiencing an interest in the area even in his adolescence.

After attending courses at Spokane Community College, Nelson worked in managerial roles for a number of years at golf clubs, restaurants and other private clubs. He was presented with the opportunity to take the reins at the Rainbow Ranch Lodge in May of 2019. After a convincing visit to the property, he returned to the area that intrigued him as a young boy, relocating from Wyoming and assuming his current role.

“And I only had to look at the property once to go, ‘it’s not going to suck coming to work every day in Big Sky when you get to work right on the river,’” he said.

Nelson recently spoke with EBS about the challenges of operating a hospitality industry business amidst a pandemic as well as his business strategies.

**EBS:** *Have you ever faced a more challenging situation when holding a managerial position?*  
**Scott Nelson:** “No, I have not. I think virtually everybody in hospitality would agree with this, it has literally kind of turned our world upside down. Not only the way we have to manage it, but the way we have to live through it and to continue to execute guest services. I mean, it has tossed us into a whole new realm.”

**EBS:** *How long do you believe COVID-19 will continue to affect the hospitality industry?*  
**S.N.:** “My belief is that we’ll be dealing with it going into 2021. And my belief, is my belief, I’m just realistic in that that’s what we’re stuck with, is that there’s no current solution. We’re coming to the end of 2020 and we just all have to remain safe and still, we have to operate, somehow I still have to keep people employed and I still have to pay bills.”

**EBS:** *How do you balance the excitement and anticipation that accompanies a couple’s wedding day while also factoring in COVID-19 safety precautions?*  
**S.N.:** “With staff education. And literally, honestly, just being concerned about it, I have had staff meetings. You know, one of the things that I’ve made clear to the staff [is], if anybody was to get sick on my watch, I couldn’t forgive myself.”

**EBS:** *When there is a vaccine distributed for COVID-19, do you believe it will have an immediate effect on the economy?*  
**S.N.:** “Absolutely, I feel that it’s going to lift the cloud that’s above us right now. [The cloud] is because this virus has governed us for literally six to seven months, and you said it, it’s a pandemic, you know, and it’s worldwide.”



General Manager Scott Nelson and his staff at the Rainbow Ranch Lodge have seen business rebound of late after the COVID-19 pandemic presented the hospitality industry with many challenges. PHOTO COURTESY OF RAINBOW RANCH LODGE

**EBS:** *Business wise, have there been any silver linings that have accompanied the pandemic?*  
**S.N.:** “As I’ve already touched on, hotels—the hotel rooms have been staying busy and the restaurant has been staying busier than normal—and that’s with half the seating that I had before. It’s also prompted me to do research with the owner, that we’re going to do a deck—add a deck to this. Because of the pandemic, and we have deck seating, everybody obviously wanted to be out there, but you only have so many tables and so many chairs.”

**EBS:** *What do you think it was about your business strategies that were so successful for the Ranch in roughly your first year as General Manager?*  
**S.N.:** “I think it was team first. [I think] that we were able to put a good team in place. I think secondary was my belief that you constantly work for your customers.”

**EBS:** *What’s the best business advice you’ve ever received?*  
**S.N.:** “I know it’s so simple, but I think you have to care about your customers, you have to care about your employees, you have to care about your operation of your business, and as long as you can adhere to caring, and I know that might sound corny, but you will achieve if you stay with that goal of trying to do it right and simply caring. That’s what I believe and that’s what I try to live every day that I’m here.”

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# Local foodies spotlight role of eateries in community

## Social media dining review page turned LLC

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – When Celine Saucier took her friend and business partner Jayde Wilmes to the Sit and Spin Laundry Lounge in Big Sky for her birthday, Wilmes could barely believe she could do her laundry, drink a shot called the “Tide Pod” and eat macaroni and cheese all in the same room.



Celine Saucier and Jayde Wilmes founded AlwaysHungryMontana, an Instagram account that highlights the different food and drink around Southwest Montana. PHOTO BY WNDRLSTPHOTO

Wilmes and Saucier are the duo known on Instagram as AlwaysHungryMontana. A scroll through their feed reveals local food, cocktails and those who bring them to life—sort of like a social media food and dining guide.

“I thought, this was probably the greatest place I’ve ever had a drink,” Wilmes said. “There’s no way we’re getting a drink at a laundromat and ordering mac’ and cheese.”

You’ll hear both girls sing their praises for Lotus Pad, where they’ll indulge in the Thai fries, the Rainbow Ranch, for the views and “staycation” experience, and the Haufbrau House for the culture.

“Every single time I got there I’m going to see something that I do not expect to see,” Wilmes said of the downtown Bozeman dive bar.

Although the word “hungry” appears in their business name and both it and their friendship was one born from their love for food, an eatery is all about the experience for the duo. Through their Instagram page, they share their experiences through vibrant photography and sincere reviews on local restaurants and bars.

Saucier is from Midland, Michigan and works as a civil engineer at Morrison-Maierle, while Wilmes, who’s from East Lansing, Michigan with a background in literature and philosophy, works at Wildrye Distillery. Although natives of the same state, they didn’t meet until they both landed in Bozeman. Once acquainted through a mutual friend, the two bonded one night over a cheeseboard at Plonk.

“It kind of started as a joke, to be honest,” Wilmes said. “We realized how much we liked cocktails and delicious food and at one point we were joking around that we were following all these food Instagram [accounts], we should just start taking pictures of food and post it on our own Instagram.”

In March 2018, they came up with the Instagram handle AlwaysHungryMontana, posted a photo of the tuna tower from Dave’s Sushi, and were encouraged by the positive feedback they received from their followers. Since then, they’ve grown the brand into an LLC, through which local bars and restaurants can request that Wilmes and Saucier come for a promotional visit.

Their ultimate goal though, involves hot sauce—a concoction they’ve crafted themselves.

“We love spice, we had messed around with chili oils in the past we stumbled on something we enjoyed the flavor of,” Wilmes said, noting that a lot of the inspiration came from Saucier’s mother, who is from Hong Kong. “We took it around to businesses ... The more chefs we had in town try it, the more we realized we had a product here

that wasn’t available in Bozeman. I think it’s a great product and that’s what motivated us to start.”

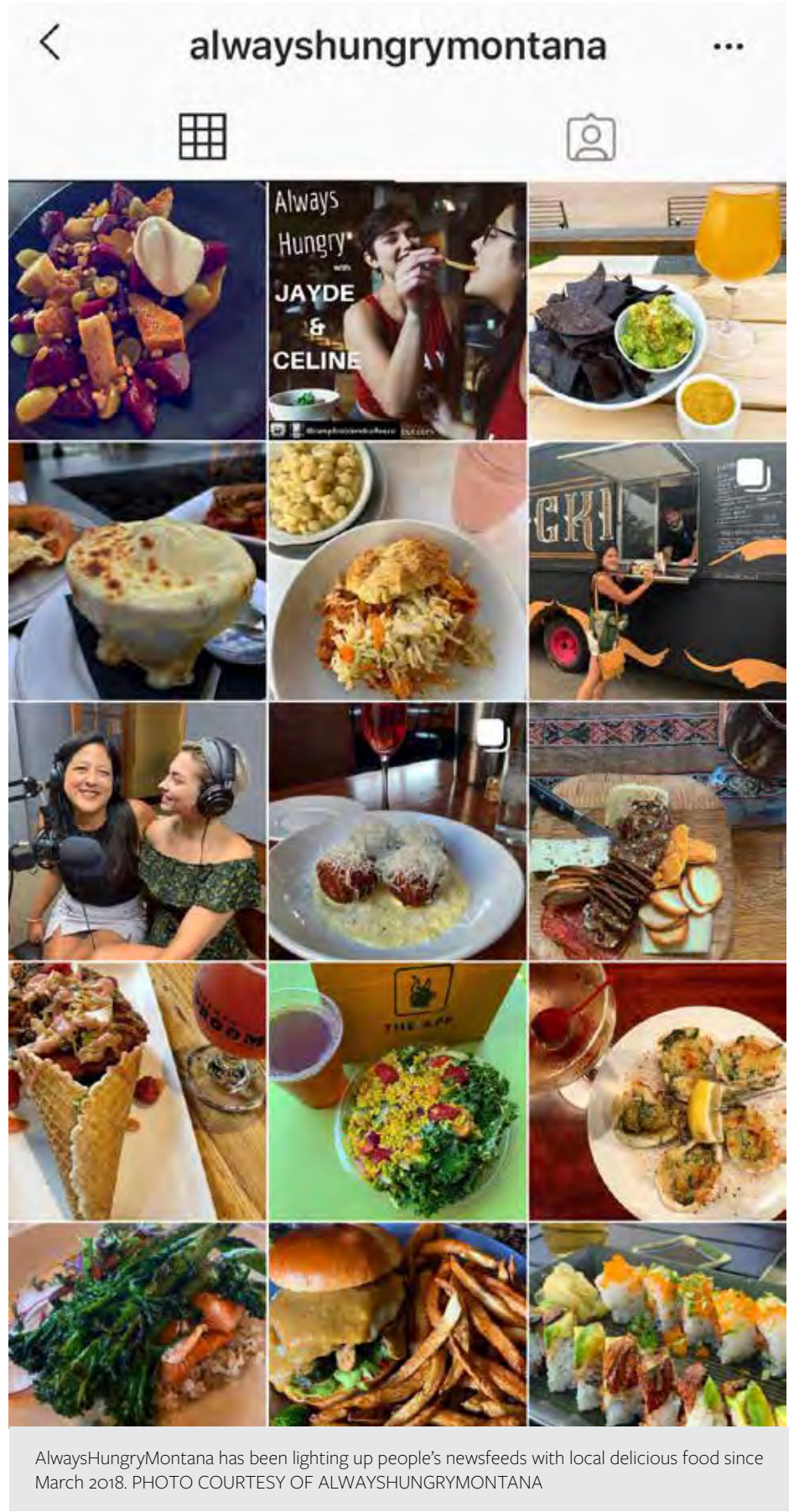
The sauce, or oil, is a mixture of chili powder and Thai chili oil, a mixture Saucier describes as “savory, spicy and smoky,” and that they currently only offer to chefs. Saffron Table, which closed it’s doors at the beginning of the COVID-19 shutdown, once featured the chili oil on their naan. Meanwhile, there are ample restaurants in the area, providing the duo with diverse dining experiences to feed their appetites.

“We’ve grown to love the community,” Saucier said. “We grew up in these areas where there was a lot of diversity of food and we wanted to showcase what food was in Montana. The best thing about Bozeman restaurants is that they continue to take [ingredients] from local farms ... and I think that’s why people are coming into town.”

Although business has slowed since the pandemic, Wilmes and Saucier try to patron at least one restaurant each week, even if it comes in the form of takeout. In addition to delicious plates of food and cocktails, the girls speak fondly of the relationships they’ve made with local business owners and chefs.

“It all comes around to Bozeman having more a community feel more than other places that I’ve lived,” Saucier said. “We find ourselves being really attached to the owners and the staff. People are really passionate about what they’re doing. It makes it easy to walk in as a tourist, or a local.”

You can follow Wilmes’ and Saucier’s “food-ventures” on Instagram @alwayshungrymontana.



AlwaysHungryMontana has been lighting up people’s newsfeeds with local delicious food since March 2018. PHOTO COURTESY OF ALWAYSHUNGRYMONTANA





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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.*

## Did we just witness another golden age?



BY SCOTT MECHURA  
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

I remember the weekend. I, along with three friends, hit the road the morning of May 3, 2002. We were driving from St Paul, Minnesota to Chicago, Illinois for a weekend of dining we had all talked about and prepared for, for months.

Lunch at Goose Island Brewery, dinner at Charlie Trotters, Saturday brunch at Rick Bayless’ Frontera Grill, dinner at Rick Tramonto’s Tru, beers at the Map Room and finally, hit the road Sunday morning with the most gourmet of grab and go food from Trotter’s.

I think I’m still full and while I wouldn’t exactly put it up there with the “Works and Days” by Hesiod, I lament sometimes with chef friends about how we are seeing the end of an era. And COVID-19, as it can be blamed for many things, is only the final nail in this coffin.

American’s generally use the term fine dining as a bit of a blanket statement for any restaurant they deem ‘fancy.’ Another vague term, but more specifically, I’m talking about true fine dining.

Linen covered tables, a dedicated sommelier, staff in suits, multiple courses, a wine list that reads like the Library of Congress, and a final bill that can sting for a while.

In their hay day, these restaurants were not only a mecca for boomers, but they were the most coveted of jobs and internships for aspiring cooks and chefs. They were the ultimate resumé builder for young men and women like me.

But slowly, they began to fade. Access to reservations went from impossible to difficult and pretty soon, a table for four at 8:00 pm could be had in as little as a week or two.

Then the inevitable: One by one, many of these pillars of the industry began shuttering. Charlie Trotters, Cyrus, Le Cirque, and La Belle Vie (where I was the opening sous chef).

Rising costs of server wages, fickle delicate ingredients that became more expensive, a 2008 recession, ultimately all were contributors to their downfall and hundreds like them.

But something else was also happening. A sea change; the next generation. Generation X, whose moniker began in 1981, never found substantial interest in dining the way previous generations had. Fine dining was replaced with grab and go, fast, casual, modern bistros and gastro pubs.

Suits were replaced with t-shirts, tattoos and bandanas. Linen was covered with butcher paper and eventually removed altogether. Portions got larger and mysterious unpronounceable ingredients began to disappear, and atmospheres became more casual.

I’m all for change and evolution. There are fantastic chefs and restaurants all across America that are at the top of their game with none of the aforementioned. But it doesn’t mean I don’t miss the old style and the skill and experience.

Whenever I knew I was traveling to the big city, my priority was to get reservations in wherever the underground chef pipeline said I had to dine. And much like seeing the World Trade Center before they collapsed or riding a classic roller coaster before it’s dismantled, I’m fortunate I was able to experience many of these culinary giants when their doors were still open.

*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.*



# American Life in Poetry: Column 815

BY TED KOOSER  
U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

Over the years I haven’t chosen more than a few poems about the writing of poetry, mostly because if you don’t write poems you might not be interested. But I do like this poem about poets by Richard Jones, from his new book Avalon, from Green Linden Press. I, too, get up early to write in Nebraska, while Richard is up in Illinois.

**Devotion**  
“Poetry not rest,” is trouble’s answer,  
rising before the sun, setting out  
in a gray light to the dull grumble  
of thunder to balance the words  
bottle or old wooden chair or bluebird  
on a line’s life-or-death tightrope,  
struggling to add color to the canvas,  
purple or burnt umber, transcribing  
seven violins crying to the willows,  
or simply cutting a stem of rosemary,  
the deep smell of earth for inspiration,  
the earth and the grave, never resting,  
working from sheer will and memory,  
working with quill and ink if need be,  
knowing trouble and rest won’t last,  
that no one has the cure for this life  
though we honor the day with words,  
name the plow and extol the hammer,  
knowing that even the poorest poet,  
if a poet, is at a desk in a corner  
of eternity, already long dead,  
laboring to transform death to praise,  
never wearying, never once losing faith.

*We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright (c) 2020 by Richard Jones, “Devotion,” from Avalon, (Green Linden Press, 2020). Poem reprinted by permission of Richard Jones and the publisher. Introduction copyright ©2020 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction’s author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004–2006.*

## Corner Quote

“In a room where people unanimously maintain a conspiracy of silence, one word of truth sounds like a pistol shot.”

-Czesław Miłosz

## Big Sky Brews:

# 208 Session Ale by Grand Teton Brewing

BY MIRA BRODY

*Editor’s note: Reflecting on summer we’ve decided to repurpose this edition of Big Sky Brews when staff writer Mira Brody visited Grand Teton Brewing.*

While at Grand Teton Brewing, I snagged a growler of their 208 Session Ale. After a warm day on the trails and a high of 95, the light, crisp wheat ale hit the spot like any good recovery drink. It’s drinkable with a light body and citrusy in character. If you’re not a fan of citrus beers, however, don’t let that deter you, as the flavors are subtle and smooth.

The 208 is noted on the brewery’s website as “brewed to be Idaho’s beer.” It is brewed with 100 percent Idaho barley, Idaho hops and pure Idaho spring water. It’ll keep your evening mellow with an ABV of 4.7 percent and has won silver in the Great American Beer Festival awards.

*A version of this article originally appeared on explorebigsky.com in September 2020.*

# BIG SKY BEATS



## “Dreams” by Fleetwood Mac

Forty-three years after its initial release, Fleetwood Mac’s “Dreams” is not only back among Billboard’s top ten streaming songs chart, but also trending as a social media sensation. The song is from the group’s album “Rumours” which reached the top of the Billboard hot 100 chart in 1977. Why is it trending? Nathan Apodaca, a resident of Idaho Falls, Idaho posted a video of himself skateboarding, drinking cranberry juice and lip syncing to “Dreams” on TikTok at the end of September. Apodaca’s video has since garnered 11 million likes and over 500,000 shares on TikTok. In contrast to the light-hearted nature of the song’s resurgence, its origin comes from a time of emotional upheaval for the band. Stevie Nicks had just experienced the end of an eight-year relationship and the song “Dreams” was a product of her emotional state at the time. Nicks wrote the song in ten minutes by herself on her keyboard. The song features a dance beat, which was unusual for Nicks, and lyrics expressing her heartbreak.





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”

# Blue River Bounty

## How Mike Wiegele built a powder skiing empire deep in the British Columbia backcountry

BY BRIAN HURLBUT

Much like the late, legendary filmmaker Warren Miller, not everyone understood Mike Wiegele’s vision. As Miller toured the world promoting skiing through his annual movies, Wiegele was busy strategizing how to entice more skiers to the pristine powder he had discovered in the remote mountains of British Columbia.

The owner of Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing turned 80 years old in September, he’ll celebrate his 50th year in business next winter, and he shows no signs of slowing down.

In the late 1960s, the idea of bringing paying guests into the backcountry was unheard of—and logistically difficult. Unless, Wiegele thought, you have a helicopter.

“Who would spend money to go flying in the mountains to ski?” said Carman Smith, a third-generation logger who has spent his life in southeast British Columbia’s North Thompson River valley. Smith met Wiegele soon after he moved to the area.

“He had a totally different vision than what we had,” Smith said. “We hadn’t really thought about the mountains for recreation. I never dreamt of skiing up there.”

Smith, 82, and Wiegele have now been friends for nearly five decades, and Smith’s logging operation helped create some of the runs that Wiegele’s clients pay big bucks to ski. But back then, when Wiegele had sketches on napkins and daydreams about creating one of the world’s first heli-skiing operations, Smith just thought he was nuts.

Warren Miller and Mike Wiegele were also longtime friends and kindred spirits who met in 1963. Miller came to Blue River, British Columbia, to film for the first time in 1973 and Wiegele’s operation appeared in more than 20 of his films. Miller passed away in January 2018 at age 93, but left a lasting legacy of the ski bum-turned-entrepreneur lifestyle, which Wiegele still embraces today.

“He put trust in people and his friends when getting into the business, and that’s what I try to [do] today,” Wiegele said of Miller. “He’s gone, but his spirit is still with us.”

Born in Austria to a family of farmers who weren’t avid skiers, Wiegele nevertheless gravitated to the sport. Growing up, he skied whenever he wasn’t doing farm chores and eventually earned a spot on the national junior race team. By the time he was 21, he wanted out of post-war Austria and in 1959 emigrated to Canada, a place he’d been fixated on since he was a young boy, listening to stories from when his father and grandparents spent time working there.

After arriving in Banff, and then leaving for brief ski-instructing stints at Mount Tremblant in Quebec and California’s Sugar Bowl, he returned in 1965 and opened his own ski school at Lake Louise. One of his first students was Ken Read, who at age 20 became the first North American to win a World Cup downhill race.

The same year Wiegele opened his ski school, his Austrian friend and renowned mountaineer, Hans Gmoser, started flying skiers into the Canadian mountains with helicopters. Gmoser and Wiegele spent many days together in the high peaks during the early ‘60s, touring in the backcountry and looking for the best snow. Gmoser’s operation eventually became Canadian Mountain Holidays and is still in existence today, although he died in 2006.

When the helicopters landed on the scene, backcountry powder skiing in Canada became a nascent industry. Gmoser made a film featuring him and Wiegele heli-skiing and Gmoser immediately jumped into the business of taking guests. Wiegele followed suit a few years later, starting in the town of Valemount at the foot of Mount Robson Provincial Park, and eventually settling on a remote British Columbia valley nestled between two striking mountain ranges, the Monashees and the Cariboos. The tiny logging town of Blue River, located between Jasper and Kamloops, would serve as his base area.

“The helicopter quickly made you realize that there was much more to be had,” Wiegele said. “We have a vastness of choices and that’s heli-skiing—having the choices.”



At 80 years old, Mike Wiegele is still the chief powder tester for his heli-skiing business. PHOTO BY JASON MARTIN





Ski film pioneer Warren Miller and Mike Wiegele, pictured here in Blue River in 2000, forged a friendship that lasted more than half a century. PHOTO BY DON COLE HARVEY

Wiegele’s business now has well over a million acres of terrain and more than 1,000 peaks they can access, on public land leased from the Canadian government. Guests can stay at the main lodge in Blue River or one of several private lodges scattered around the mountains. Wiegele has built a luxurious, comfortable experience for his clients, which average about 1,300 per winter. His company has also become the benchmark in an industry with close to two-dozen heli-skiing operations in British Columbia alone.

While the amenities do attract clientele, Wiegele knows that it still boils down to the bounty found on the slopes. With an average annual snowfall of nearly 400 inches, he believes the mountains around Blue River are the perfect powder paradise.

“It’s truly the most reliable and consistent snowfall,” he said. “If you have good snow, you have happy customers.”

Wiegele is proud to point out that his company hasn’t missed an opening day in 49 years, and that last winter there were only four down days due to weather—the season typically begins around Dec. 1 and wraps up by mid-April.

According to Wiegele, a crucial component to his success is the staff. Treating them more like family than employees, Wiegele has a long history of taking good care of good people. Bob Sayer, 62, earned a trip to Blue River 32 years ago, after winning the Canadian Powder 8 Championships at Lake Louise. He came to compete in the world finals at Wiegele’s, and soon after signed on as a guide—his dream job after working as a patroller and seeing Wiegele’s featured in several Warren Miller films.

More than three decades later, Sayer is now a lead guide and the operations manager for the business. He was one of the few guides back then with a family, and Mike Wiegele made it possible for him to make a living in the mountains.

“He didn’t have to—I was just another young heli-ski guide—but over the years I have been always really well taken care of by Mike,” Sayer said. “He wants the best for his company and his clients, and he knows that you will get the best out of people if you treat them well.”

These days a top Wiegele guide can make six figures; it’s hard work and long hours, but the dedication can pay off.

“We’re attracting high-quality people,” Wiegele said. “It has developed into a profession where you can make a living. The myth is gone that it’s a bum job.”

During the winter, the small community of Blue River swells with Wiegele employees. From dishwashers and housekeepers to massage therapists and cooks, Wiegele has about 240 people on staff during the peak season. That’s more than the entire town’s population, which has shrunk from about 650 to less than 200 in the nearly 50 years since Wiegele started. In an area where the logging and railroad industries once reigned, recreation now drives the local economy.

“Mike is really community minded,” said Carman Smith, the logger. “He has always been there for us.”

Smith described an event, many years ago, when one of his workers was hit in the head by a tree and badly injured. They were in a remote area that an ambulance couldn’t reach, and Wiegele happened to have a rare down day because of low fog.

“He took a helicopter and flew just above the highway, and followed the logging road all the way in,” Smith recalled. “He had a German doctor on board and we loaded my guy into the helicopter and flew right down to the hospital.” Smith credits Wiegele for saving the man’s life.

There was also the harrowing rescue in 1990, when Wiegele pulled survivors, including his own wife Bonnie, out of a burning helicopter that had crash-landed. These acts earned Wiegele a Medal of Bravery from the Governor General of Canada and helped cement his place in the Canadian Ski Hall of Fame. But the awards don’t mean as much as his innovations in snow safety and the impact they have had on the industry. He founded the Canadian Ski Guide Association in 1990, and that same year initiated avalanche research with the University of Calgary—something that all heli-ski operators now participate in.

“Many of the things that are standard operating procedure in the industry started with Mike—he’s always five steps further down the road than everybody else,” Sayer said. “His focus on safety has no limits, and his belief that nothing should get in the way of safety is his legacy.”

This focus on safety indirectly led him to be a pioneer of wider, shorter powder skis. In the early days, clients would often want the stiffest, longest skis available—up to 225 centimeters—for powder skiing, but Wiegele thought there was a better way. He started drawing up prototypes in the 1970s, but it wasn’t until the late 1980s that he was able to convince Atomic to make a ski specifically for deep, untracked powder.

“Just make me a ski for the skiers and not for the racers,” he told them. “We have to make a better ski.”

The Atomic Powder Magic debuted in 1988. With a 115-centimeter waist, they were not for the average skier, but in the mountains above Blue River they were ideal. The Powder Plus followed, becoming a standard that helped usher in the fat ski revolution.

All of these safety and product innovations are driven by one fact: Mike Wiegele loves to ski and he loves to take people skiing. Yes, he’s built a successful business over the years, but what hasn’t changed is his devotion to the sport he loves.

For his 80th birthday last fall, Wiegele again rode his bike 512 kilometers, from Banff to Blue River, in his annual Tour de Blue event to kick off the 49th year in business. The ride is part of Wiegele’s Get Fit for Winter program, designed to inspire his team for the upcoming ski season. And he did it with a bum knee, which was surgically repaired in late September. He plans to be healed in time to ski by February, the peak of the Blue River ski season.

“He’s as driven now as much as he was when he was 50,” Sayer said. “Mike doesn’t sit still.”

Sayer likes to tell a story from 1988 when Wiegele built the existing main lodge and chalets in Blue River. After construction was done, Wiegele lived in a small room in the basement, because he just needed a place to sleep for the winter.

“Here was this big, beautiful lodge and the owner lived in a storage closet because that’s all he needed,” Sayer said. “Mike is the consummate ski bum. He’s done well in life but all he really wants in life is to go skiing. And if he can go skiing everyday then he’s happy.”

Wiegele echoes this sentiment. After all, he moved halfway across the world as a young man to explore the Canadian mountains and to seek out the best powder. It’s what many winter enthusiasts do at some point in their lives, but in Wiegele’s case, he’s managed to create and sustain a business that empowers other snow lovers to follow their dreams. Much like the inspiration that Warren Miller evoked with his annual ski films, Wiegele wants people to experience the freedom that comes from gliding through powder.

In 2020 he’ll celebrate the 50th year of Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing, and it’s a safe bet that he’ll be just as excited as he was during that first season of flying clients to the high peaks of British Columbia.

“I’m motivated by the quality of skiing, the quality of snow, and the quality of friendships you develop,” Wiegele said. “That turns into a package of having fun living.”

Mike Wiegele is clearly still having fun. While some people his age dream about winter retreats to palm trees and sandy beaches, this skiing pioneer is waxing his boards for another season in the mountains—and he wouldn’t have it any other way.

*A version of this story was first published in the Winter 2019 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.*



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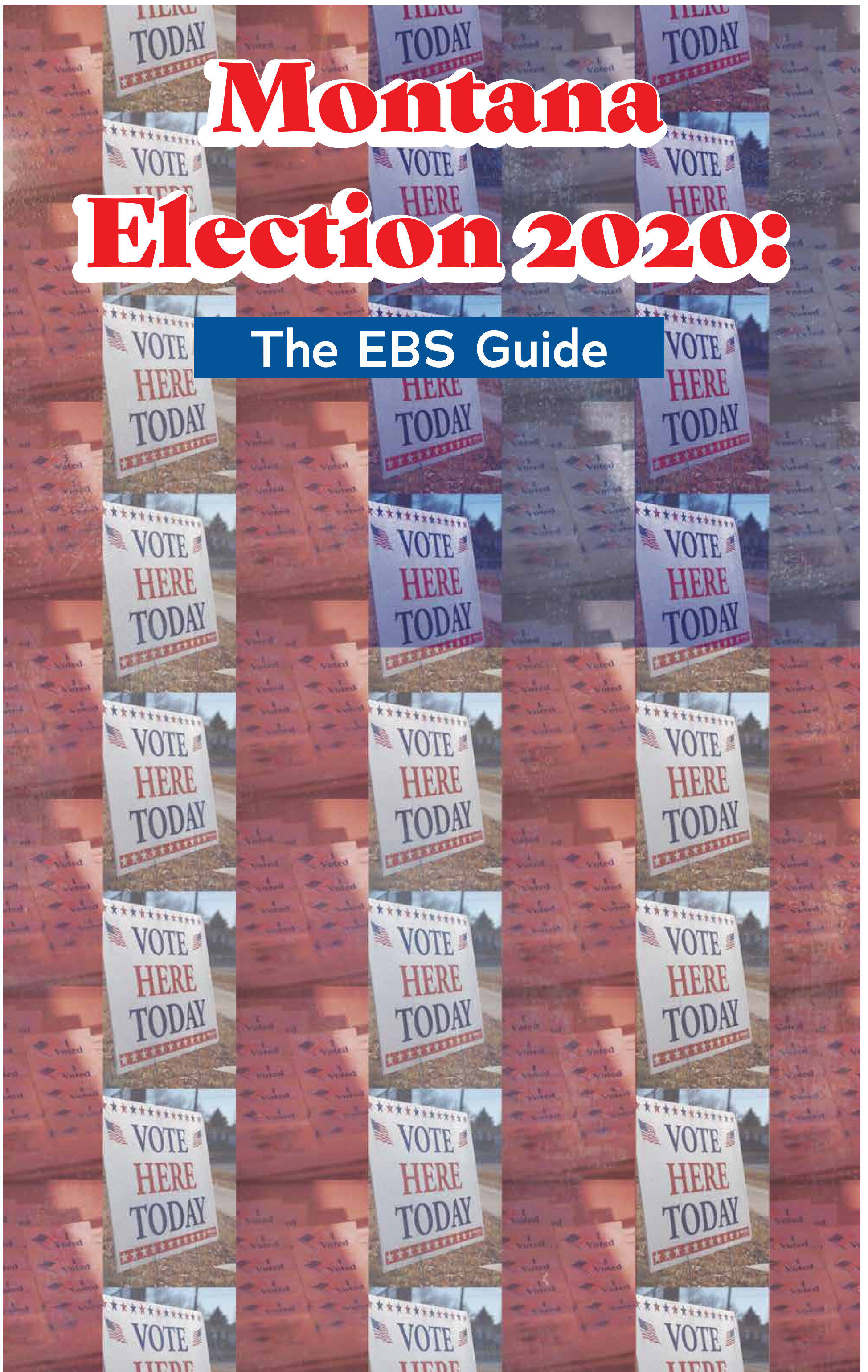
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# Montana Election 2020:

The EBS Guide







# ELECTION 2020: THE EBS GUIDE

## Results:

Statewide voter turnout: 80%  
Gallatin County voter turnout: 81%

## Republicans largely victorious in Montana elections

### Voters reflect after casting ballots

BY BELLA BUTLER AND BRANDON WALKER

BOZEMAN – After a record number of Montana voters turned in ballots both by mail and in-person, Montana Republican candidates cleaned up in statewide elections, setting a new tone for Montana’s government.

As of Nov. 2, total absentee ballots received outpaced the former overall voter turnout record from 2016, and masked voters in socially distanced lines capped off the total state turnout number at 601,671, nearly an 80 percent return rate, as of EBS press time.

On Election Day, the issue of party shifts in part brought large numbers of Gallatin County citizens to the polls at the Gallatin County Courthouse and the county fairgrounds, according to some voters.

“It’s a very high stakes election,” said Bozeman resident Hannah Johnson. “There’s a lot more going on than normal, so it’s extra important that I came out and voted today.”

Another Bozeman voter, Janece Martin, said the prospect of either Joe Biden or Donald Trump winning the presidency created anxiety on both sides of the aisle, while Bozeman resident MaryClare Rollins pointed to the importance of civic duty.

“There aren’t that many things that are expected of us to contribute to our democracy,” Rollins said. “You have to do jury duty. You have to pay your taxes and you show up and you vote on Election Day and I like that.”

Voters at the Gallatin County Fairgrounds waited patiently in lines for roughly half an hour on average, according to county election representatives, while those voting at the Gallatin County Courthouse saw hour-and-a-half wait times. Fairgrounds voters were equipped with masks, and hand sanitizing stations were close by.

In order to carry out in-person voting as safely as possible, orange traffic safety cones in lines indicated the appropriate distance voters should stand from one another.

Despite COVID-inspired changes, Gallatin County voter turnout hit 81 percent, with 71,818 votes cast, a less than 7 percent increase in turnout but a nearly 16,000-vote increase from the last presidential election in 2016. The county voted Democrat for all statewide and federal races, and will send one Republican state senator, one Democratic state senator, four Republican state representatives, and six Democratic state representatives to the Montana Legislature.

“Voting is one of the most important American rights,” said Dakota Fryrear, a resident of Belgrade, adding that he witnessed an increase in voters casting their ballots on Election Day in the younger age demographic.

“What we see here is that younger voters, so those 18 to 29, did turn out in Montana and they voted Republican, which is not necessarily anticipated,” said Eric Raile, an associate professor of political science at Montana State University. “Usually Democratic candidates do better with younger voters [and] all indications were that they would do better with younger voters again. We don’t know if those younger voters voted Republican all the way down the ballot, but it seems likely that they did given that Republicans won just about everything in terms of statewide races and a lot of the state Senate and House races.”

In Gallatin County, the Senate race has so far collectively received the most votes of any race, and Initiative 190, to legalize marijuana recreationally, has garnered the most votes in the county among the ballot measures. These two races were also notable for their robust campaign finances. Indeed, in mid-October, CNN named Montana’s Senate race the fifth most expensive in the country.

Montana may also be skewing even more conservative, according to Jeremy Johnson, associate professor of political science at Carroll College in Helena. “The areas that we’ve really thought about as swing areas in Montana have really moved red,” said Johnson, citing counties including Cascade and Yellowstone.

With a large number of voters indicating interest in a unified Republican government, MSU’s Raile said Montana may start to resemble its devoutly conservative neighboring states.



More than 600,000 ballots were cast by registered Montana voters in the 2020 general election translating to a voter turnout of nearly 80 percent as of EBS press time. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

“I think the expectation overall would be that we’re probably looking at policies more like what we see in ... the Dakotas, Wyoming and Idaho,” Raile said. “We don’t know for sure and I think there’s a larger liberal population in Montana than you have in those states, but I don’t know that liberals are going to have a lot of avenues for pursuing their interests in the next two years.”

In the high-profile Senate race pitting Democrat Gov. Steve Bullock against the incumbent, Republican Sen. Steve Daines, the Associated Press unofficially called a Daines victory. Following suit, the AP announced Republican Greg Gianforte’s defeat over opponent Democrat Mike Cooney.

Other unofficial statewide victors include Republicans Christi Jacobsen for Secretary of State, Austin Knudsen for Attorney General and Troy Downing for State Auditor. From Big Sky’s House District 64, Republican Jane Gillette won the representative seat.

According to Johnson, an “engaged and active Trump electorate” gave Montana Republicans the prevailing edge. For the first time since 2004, Montana will have unified government through the marriage of a Republican governor and Republican-controlled Legislature. “There’s going to be changes,” Johnson said of Montana’s new political landscape in a Nov. 4 interview. “Elections have consequences.”

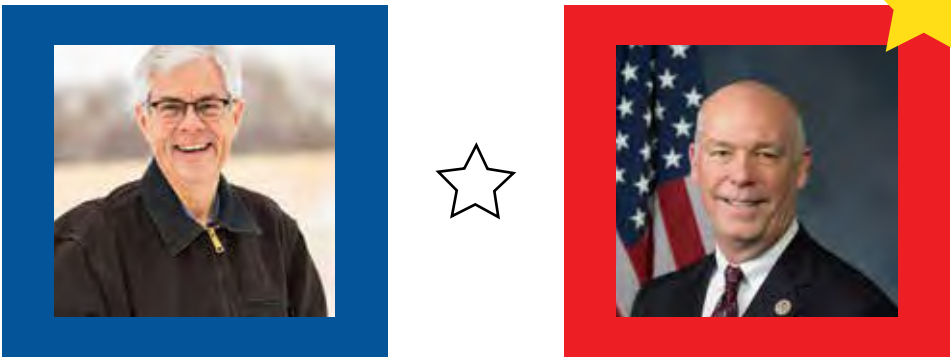
Johnson predicted that issues that have not held much attention in Montana’s government will gain a spotlight. “It will not be good for labor unions in the state, it will be more pro-business legislation introduced,” he said, adding that conservative takes on social issues like abortion will likely gain more traction.

Despite the outcomes of the election, Bozeman voter Martin expressed a call for unity.

“Regardless of who wins or loses, there’s going to be a lot of people who ... need support,” Martin said. “We really need each other as Americans not to become more divided because of who won or lost, but to be more connected.”



★ GOVERNOR ★

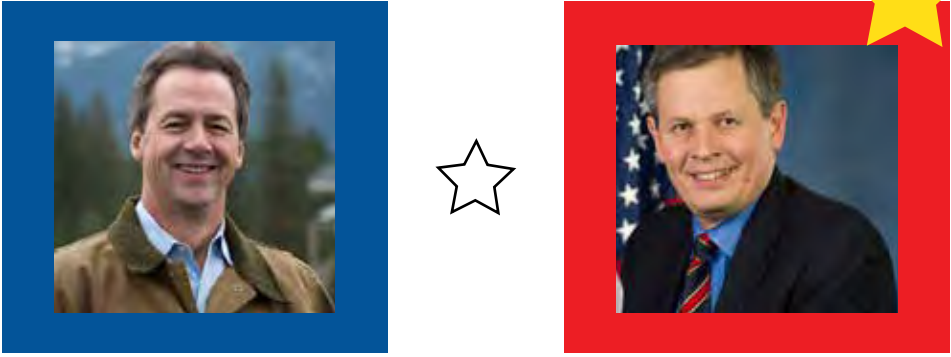


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★ U.S. SENATE ★

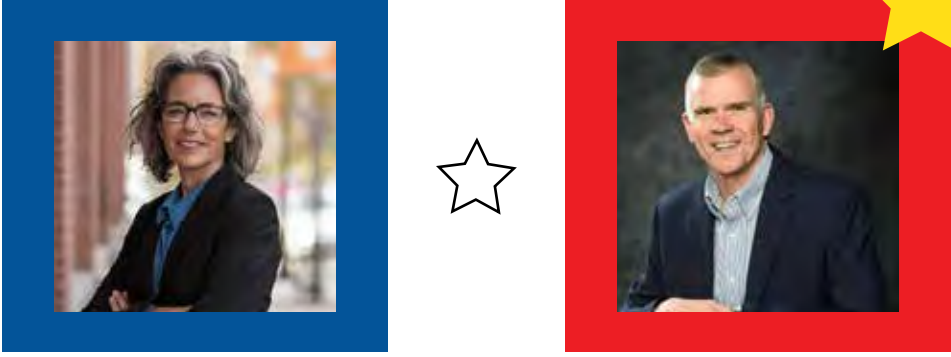


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★ U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ★

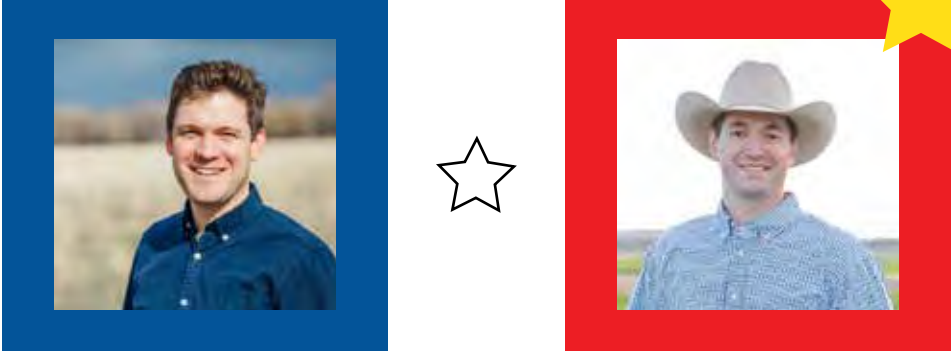


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★ ATTORNEY GENERAL ★

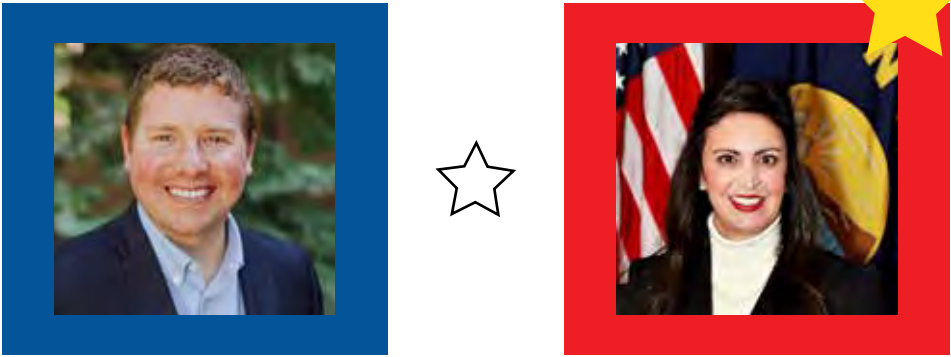


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★ SECRETARY OF STATE ★



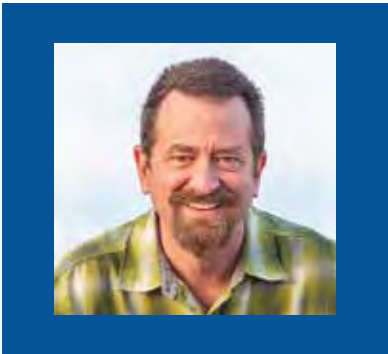
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60%



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 64



42%

Brian Popiel

Jane Gillette

53%

GALLATIN COUNTY COMMISSION



56%

Zach Brown

Carter Atkinson

44%

GALLATIN COUNTY BALLOT MEASURES

- LR-130 Firearms: Proposes to remove local government authority to regulate the carrying of concealed weapons. —did not pass
- C-46 Direct Democracy: Would change language in the Montana Constitution to match existing signature distribution requirements for initiated constitutional amendments. —passed
- C-47 Direct Democracy: Proposes to amend language in the Constitution to match existing requirements for initiated state statutes and veto referendums. —passed

- CI-118 Marijuana: Authorizes the Legislature or a citizen initiative to establish a minimum legal age for the possession, use and purchase of marijuana. —passed
- I-190 Marijuana: Would legalize the possession and use of marijuana for those over 21 and impose a 20 percent sales tax on marijuana. —passed

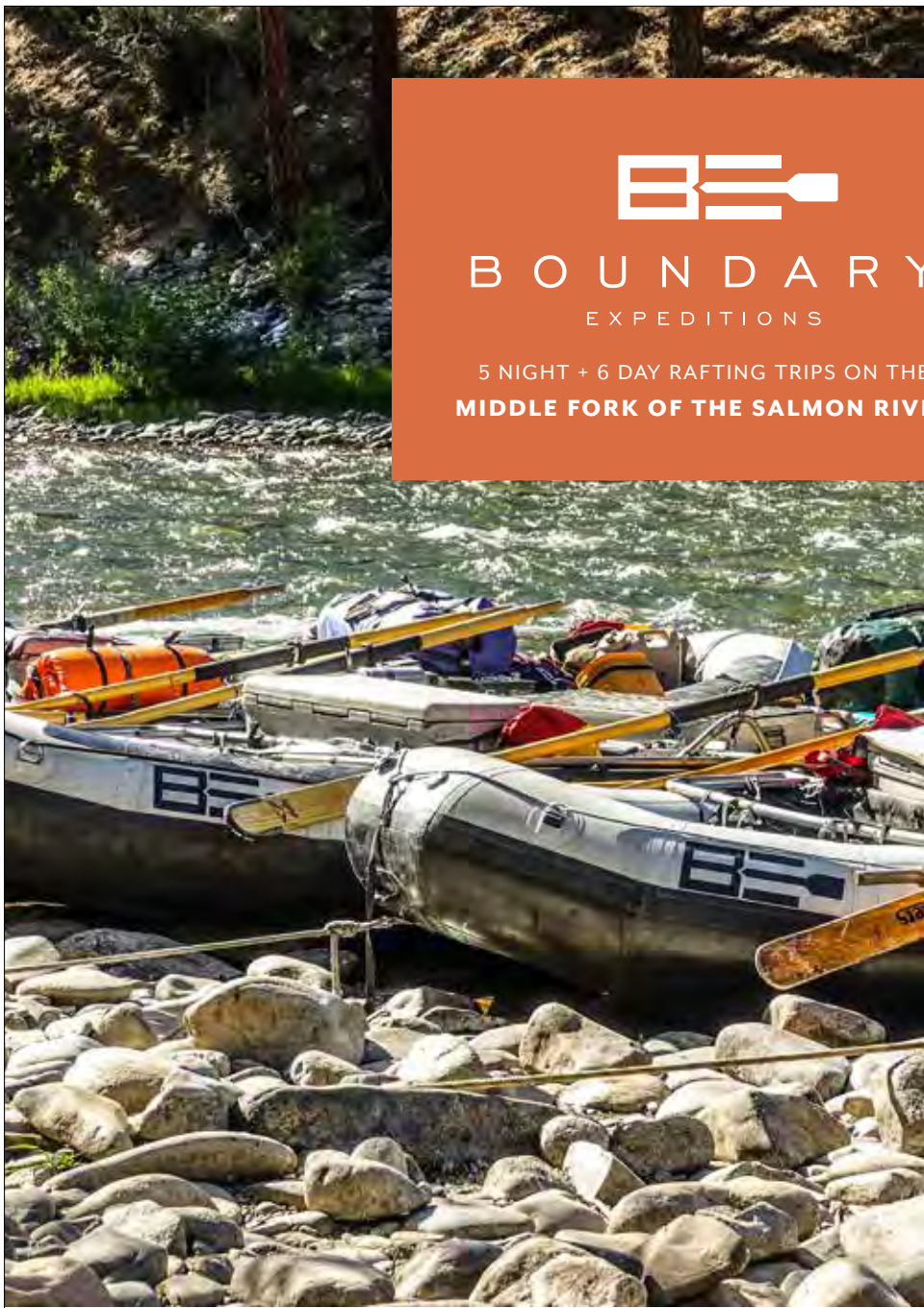






EBS captured the sights and sounds as voters turned out to cast their ballots on Election Day 2020. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTOS





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