

# 7th annual Pie Party rolls out

Big Sky's ambitious COVID-19 testing program

**Special: Holidays in Big Sky** 



explorebigsky.com



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# **ON THE COVER:**

A two-horse team wearing Santa hats pulls guests through a winter wonderland at Lone Mountain Ranch. The sleigh ride dinner at LMR is legendary with locals and travelers, taking guests to an oil-lantern-lit cabin for a family-style prime rib dinner. PHOTO BY **TERI BOCKO PHOTOGRAPHY** 

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

HISTORY34
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT36
FINANCE39
DINING44
FUN45
BEST OF BIG SKY49
ATHLETICS TOP STORIES 202065
HOLIDAYS IN BIG SKY77

# **HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

# **Best of Big Sky: Winners revealed!**

Votes were counted and the results are in. Big Sky residents nominated and voted for their favorite local businesses, people and places in more than 30 different categories. Winners include first, second and third place as well as EBS editors' picks. Who did you vote for?

# 10

# Follow the leader, part 2: Local governance in Big Sky?

Historically, most infrastructural issues in Big Sky are resolved, but the solutions are often a product of extensive time and coordination. One expert proposes alternatives to the current complex patchwork of leadership in this unincorporated resort town.

# 12

# 7th annual Pie Party rolls out

In early December, Ashley Dodd drove around Big Sky distributing pies and collecting donations for the Big Sky Community Food Bank. In years past, Dodd's Pie Party has drawn upwards of 100 people but this year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, Dodd had to get creative.



# Big Sky's ambitious COVID-19 testing program

The new Big Sky surveillance testing program launched on Dec. 7 and has already tested hundreds of Big Sky residents. Tests are available weekly on Monday and Tuesday at the Big Sky Chamber and Visit Big Sky offices in Town Center.

# **Special: Holidays in Big Sky**

Tasty treats, festive flicks and must-hear music await readers in this special holiday section. From cookies to bake for Santa to a heartwarming family film screening, the holidays are here and full of cheer.



# **Opening Shot**

Congratulations to Pvt. Truman Pitsenberger from Belgrade High School who graduated from boot camp on Dec. 4. He will be a 3043 Supply Specialist, studying at Camp Johnson, North Carolina, where he will perform and monitor management and procedural application of manual or automated inventory control actions. He will be able to design, plan, execute and monitor supply chain activities with the objective of leveraging worldwide logistics and facilitating accountability in retail and intermediate inventory activities and units. PHOTO COURTESY OF MCRD SAN DIEGO.

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Letters to the editor allow EBS readers to express views and share how they would like to effect change. These are not Thank You notes. Letters should be 250 words or less, respectful, ethical, accurate, and proofread for grammar and content. We reserve the right to edit letters and will not publish individual grievances about specific businesses or letters that are abusive, malicious or potentially libelous. Include: full name, address, phone number and title. Submit to media@outlaw.partners.

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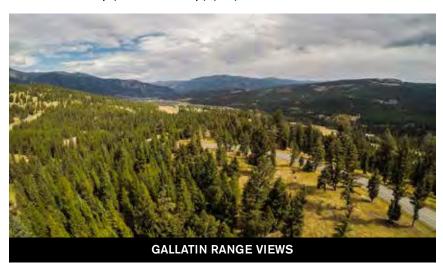
Inspiration Point
SPANISH PEAKS MOUNTAIN CLUB
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Moose Ridge Condos BIG SKY TOWN CENTER 5 BED + 5.5 BATH | 3,885 +/- SQ. FT. | \$1,980,000



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32 Market Place, 1A
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39 Homestead Cabin Fork
SPANISH PEAKS MOUNTAIN CLUB
3 BED + 5 BATH | 2,318 +/- SQ. FT. | \$2,950,000

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# What is your favorite Holiday tradition?



**Katherine Berceau** *Big Sky, MT* 

"Every Christmas, I want the Invader Zim Christmas special episode. That special is actually, I think the peak—even though it's the last episode they ever did—that's the peak of this series. Yeah, so every Christmas me my boyfriend and our dog watch that."



Angela Meeks
Huntsville, Alabama

"My favorite holiday tradition is watching movies with my family on Christmas, like 'Die Hard."



Will Brunner Big Sky, MT

"I would say probably cutting down a Christmas tree with the kids, that's probably my favorite holiday tradition. You know with some hot toddies, that's always the fun part."



Madison Woith Big Sky, MT

"Well, my family, personally, we do a cookie decorating competition. And I'm a little bit competitive, so I like to win."

#### BETTER TOGETHER A monthly District bulletin RESORT TAX Since 1993, over \$70,000,000 has been collected and strategically invested in Big Sky. \$8 M Did you Community Development & Social Services know? \$7 M -Economic Development Housing \$6 M -**Big Sky Resort** Infrastructure **Area District** Public Safety \$5 M is 1 of 7 special Recreation & Conservation purpose districts in Big Sky. Each board is locally \$3 M elected. \$2 M Remember to VOTE! \$1 M FY00-FY96 FY10-FY06 FY05-FY01 FY15-FY11



# Annual Business Registration Deadline: 12.31.2020

All businesses operating within the District must register each year, whether or not they collect resort tax. To register visit:

ResortTax.MuniRevs.com

# **COMMUNITY SURVEILLANCE TESTING**

FREE weekly Covid-19 testing for community members & local workers who are *not* sick and *not* experiencing symptoms began Monday Dec. 7th and will run through the winter season.

Please visit: **BigSkyRelief.org** for testing dates & locations.

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

# Wild and Scenic Rivers strong tool for Gallatin

In a recent Letter to the Editor, Robert M. Hamilton of West Yellowstone wrote in about Wild and Scenic designation on the Gallatin. We'd like to thank Mr. Hamilton for his passionate concern for the Gallatin River. He is correct that the Gallatin is special and under a lot of pressure as Montana grows and develops. While Wild and Scenic designation is not a cure-all, it does do some important things for conserving the values we love about the Gallatin, for example its outstanding values as a recreational river.

Over the past several years, especially last summer with the COVID-19 outbreak, use of the Gallatin is at an all-time high. It is no secret that the Gallatin and southwest Montana are experiencing rapid growth and record visitation, and Wild and Scenic is the best tool for ensuring anglers, rafters and kayakers don't love the river to death.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act restricts activities that would harm a river's special values—in the case of the Gallatin, recreational—and it requires the development of a Comprehensive River Management Plan to guide management along designated rivers for a period of 10-20 years.

Again, these are just some of the tools in the conservation toolbox. Should we develop creative solutions to the traffic issues on Highway 191? Yes. Should we educate river users on ways to be better stewards?

Yes. Should we keep investing in the best water-management infrastructure in Big Sky? Yes. But we should also designate the Gallatin as Wild and Scenic, preserving its outstanding values as a recreational river for future generations. If you agree, add your name to the list of endorsers at healthyrivermt.org.

—David Tucker, communications manager, Gallatin River Task Force

#### Gratitude for BSSD educators

A huge thank you and Happy Holidays to the Big Sky School District 72 professional educators, staff and administration. Many in the community may not have an association with the local public school or follow what is happening to education on a global, national, state and local level due to COVID-19. The dedication to safety and education, the outside-the-box thinking, the pressure of being a public health servant in an unprecedented global pandemic, the additional stress of managing budgets and tax dollars in a crisis with very little financial help from the state, and the emotional toll of everyone working inside the district is so beyond the job description it is unimaginable. Please thank a member of the district if you get a chance to see them. And, thank you to everyone in the community who has trusted the school to continue to educate your loved one. Happy Holidays.

— Whitney Littman, parent, community member and Big Sky School District Trustee







# **Montage Big Sky names GM**

#### **MONTAGE HOTELS AND RESORTS**

Longtime hotel manager and vice president Michelle Caporicci will serve as general manager of Montage Big Sky, set to open in 2021. With more than 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Caporicci will oversee all daily operations of the resort in Big Sky, Montana, according to a Dec. 15 statement.

"We are proud to have Michelle lead the team in opening Montage Big Sky," said Alan J. Fuerstman, founder, chairman and CEO of Montage International. "Michelle brings an impressive track record of industry leadership and experience and will do an amazing job bringing this iconic resort to life."

In this role, Caporicci will build the leadership team, ensure a successful opening and manage day-to-day operations of the resort. Centrally located within Big Sky's 3,530-acre Spanish Peaks enclave, the resort will feature 150 guestrooms and suites and 39 Montage Residences, while offering ski-in, ski-out access to Big Sky Resort's 5,800 skiable acres.

Resort amenities include a three-meal restaurant, market, pub and recreation room with a bowling alley, indoor lap pool, family swimming pool, fitness center, signature Spa Montage, children's programming and over 12,000 square feet of meeting and event space.

Montage Big Sky also features a walk-on golf access to the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club 18-hole Tom Weiskopf-designed golf course.

# **WMPAC** goes outside

#### WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

BIG SKY – Amid the endless cancellations of social events, performances, and public gatherings over the course of this pandemic, it can be easy to assume that the entire entertainment world has gone dark. At Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, that's not the case.

Easily the most unique performance of the season (and of the center's eight-year history) will take place over two days, Dec. 27 and 28. The show is called In a Landscape: Classical Music in the Wild, and will take place not in the theater but on the Big Sky Resort golf course. A nine-foot Steinway grand piano will be placed in the golf course's driving range, around which a labyrinthine track will be custom-groomed by the Lone Mountain Ranch. Award-winning concert pianist Hunter Noack will perform at the center of the track while audience members explore the course via cross country ski or snowshoe. Each guest will be given a high-quality set of Bluetooth headphones, through which his concert will be streamed.

"It's like nothing we've ever done before, but we're beside ourselves. It's going to be incredibly cool," said Zirkle.

Noack has been performing piano in untraditional locations for years, and has been featured on CBS This Morning. "The music becomes a soundtrack to your experience in the landscape," Noack said, and Big Sky's stunning town center is a perfect location to explore the natural and musical world.

Tickets are more information are available at warrenmillerpac.org.

# **COVID-19 vaccine arrives in Montana**

# EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – On Dec. 14, Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital received 975 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, making it one of ten Montana hospitals to receive the long-awaited vaccine.

At a Dec. 7 press conference, Gov. Steve Bullock announced that the first vaccine round would be distributed to health care personnel, per recommendations issued by the national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and reinforced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The allocation each location received was based off of a survey conducted by DPHHS with Montana hospitals on the estimated number of health care workers that will receive the vaccine.

The second-round doses of the vaccine will be provided to the state in a separate shipment prior to the second dose schedule, which is 21 days apart from the first.

According to the Office of the Governor, the state is still acquiring details from the federal government on subsequent rounds of vaccines and will provide additional plans as they are finalized.

# Arts Council receives Murdock Grant, hires event coordinator

ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

BIG SKY – The Arts Council of Big Sky was recently awarded a grant from the Murdock Trust to hire a new, full-time employee. The \$115,000 grant will be spread out over three years and was part of more than \$12 million awarded at the trust's August meeting to nonprofits serving Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

The Arts Council has hired China Reevers as Event Coordinator, adding critical support for the organization's ever-growing schedule. Reevers has previous event experience locally at Lone Mountain Ranch, Big Sky Resort and the Yellowstone Club, and earned a B.A. in journalism from Michigan State University. She has also held past positions at Linus Bike and Paste Magazine.

"I am thrilled to join the Arts Council as the newest team member, and am excited to bring my own passion and experience to the position," said Reevers. "I'm looking forward to growing with the organization and seeing what we can create together."

Each year, the Arts Council produces about 30 larger scale events, and many smaller events geared to more specific audiences.

"The Arts Council is a growing organization and adding another employee increases our capacity to offer more to the Big Sky community," said Brian Hurlbut, the Arts Council's executive director. "We're very thankful to the Murdock Trust for believing in our mission and supporting our efforts."

# Candace Carr Strauss departs from Big Sky Chamber, Visit Big Sky

## BIG SKY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BIG SKY – Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky CEO Candace Carr Strauss has been named President and CEO of the Sedona, Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau and will resign from her Big Sky position effective Feb. 10, 2021.

"It has been my honor to serve with so many dedicated professionals and caring human beings," Strauss said in a letter to Big Sky Chamber and Visit Big Sky Board Chairmen Scott Johnson and Tim Drain. "I will carry with me fond memories of the special people and place that is Big Sky."

Since Strauss took the helm in early 2017, she has contributed to the community's success in bed tax revenue, led the Chamber and Visit Big Sky's pandemic response, was involved in 60 small business microgrants for Personal Protective Equipment, took steps toward Mountain IDEAL certification, aided in the establishments of the Big Sky Sustainability Network Organization and led the Chamber's efforts to help secure a \$10.3 million federal grant to improve U.S. Route 64.

Strauss also serves as Vice Chair to the Big Sky Community Housing Trust, created Leadership Big Sky and was appointed to the U.S. Travel Association's Board of Directors in February 2018 as well as Vice Chair of the Montana Association of Chamber Executives and to the Montana Infrastructure Coalition Board of Directors.

Johnson and Drain said the Chamber will conduct a national search to hire a new CEO.

# BECAUSE MOUNTAIN LIVING IS ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE.

Thinking about living in Big Sky, Montana? Perhaps now's the time.



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# Big Sky surveillance testing program takes off

# BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – The Big Sky surveillance testing program tested 600 residents during its first week of operation and yielding three positive cases.

Moving forward, there will be 450 tests a week available for Big Sky residents on a first-come-first-served basis. Self-administered tests are available at the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce/Visit Big Sky Town Center Office on either Mondays from 12-7 p.m. or Tuesdays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Test kits may be dropped off at the same location during the hours listed above or from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday.

The \$4.5 million surveillance testing program is made possible through the efforts of Big Sky Relief partners including the Big Sky philanthropic community, and Big Sky Resort Area District, as well as community employers, and Visit Big Sky.

The first week the program hit a slight roadblock when a piece of communication equipment in the mobile lab failed and a replacement part had to be shipped in. This hiccup accounts for the longer turnaround times the first week as all the samples gathered had to be shipped out to California.



Each week, 450 tests are available for asymptomatic Big Sky residents. PHOTO BY JOE O'CONNOR

In the future, turnaround times should be much shorter. According to Daniel Bierschwale, executive director of the Big Sky Resort Area District, a recent lab report indicated the average turnaround time for results is 16 hours.

The testing program is intended to test asymptomatic individuals frequently through the winter in an effort to keep the Big Sky community open and safe. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 50 percent of COVID-19 transmission is through people who are not experiencing symptoms.

The program is not meant for symptomatic individuals. Symptomatic individuals are encouraged to call the Bozeman Health COVID hotline and go to the Big Sky Medical Center to get tested.

"Surveillance testing is the systematic testing of a community to identify asymptomatic individuals, isolate and quarantine positive contacts, and then contact trace those positive individuals," Bierschwale said. "It's about frequency of testing and ensuring that as many people as possible are participating gives us a good understanding of what the spread is."

"Based upon what we heard from the community, we added an overnight 24/7 drop off, which is in the chamber foyer," Bierschwale said. "It's a secure drop off that we can pick up on a daily basis so if someone wants to drop it off there, they're able to do so very easily at their convenience."

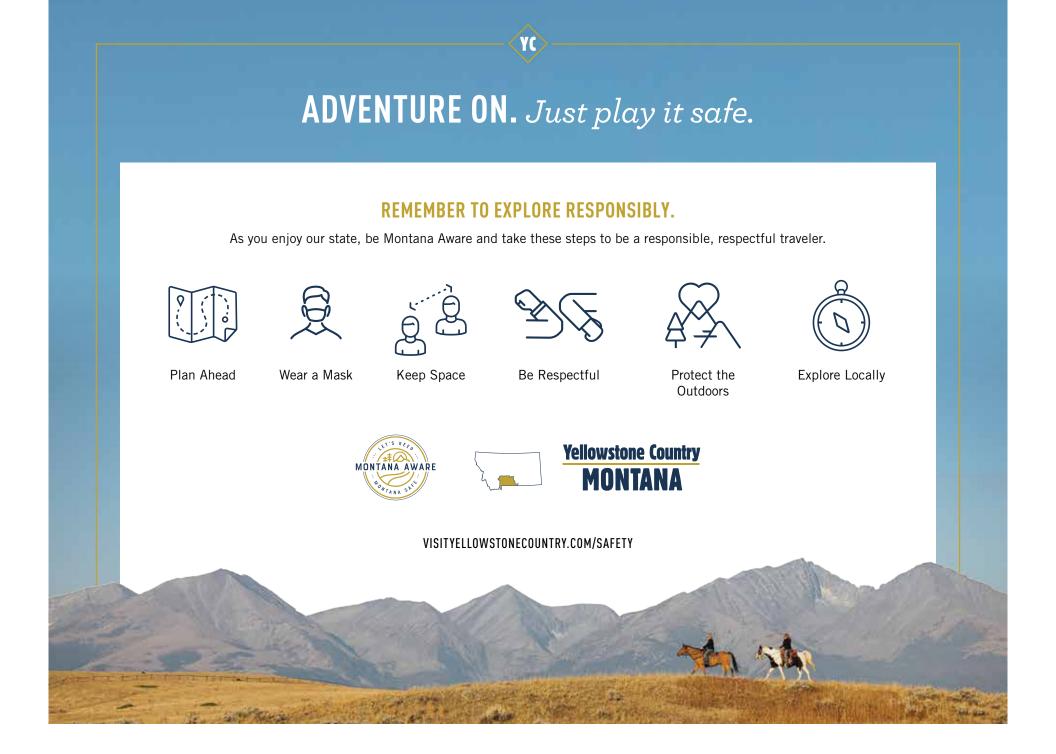
Tests are picked up from the Chamber/VBS office at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. and taken over to the mobile lab parked at the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District.

It is important that residents do not go to the mobile lab themselves. The pick-up and drop-off location are in the Chamber/VBS office and any updates to location and hours will be posted on the Big Sky Relief website.

If there are any special circumstances that prevent residents from picking up a test kit during the allotted times, they may call the BSRAD office and ask for Bierschwale who will be happy to help.

While picking up a test each week, make sure to also pick up any personal protective equipment you may be lacking. There are still 120,000 free masks available in the VBS office along with hand sanitizer.

Visit bigskyrelief.org for the most up-to-date information on surveillance testing in Big Sky.







14 SWIFT BEAR ROAD | \$2,995,000

With easy ski access and panoramic Lone Mountain views, this gorgeous custom home is located on a 1.5-acre property in Cascade Highlands. The groomed ski trail runs right past this furnished residence which offers primarily one-level living with large windows in every room of the home, a pond and circulating stream in the backyard, a large back patio and deck, a hot tub, and a free-standing sauna. The ADU can be accessed either through the garage or through a private entrance (along with a private driveway area), and offers 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, a living room, a dining area and a kitchen. // SANDY REVISKY | 406.539.6316



TBD ULERY'S LAKES ROAD, LOT 7 | \$1,100,000

Located within the gated 500-acre community of Ulery's Lakes of Moonlight Basin Ranch, this homesite maximizes privacy and views. Drive through majestic Lodge Pole Pines to an open meadow offering incredible views of Lone Mountain. Enjoy fishing across the street and hiking, snow-shoeing and cross-country sking in your own backyard as the subdivision allows usage of the lakes and community acreage. A short drive will take you to the Moonlight Lodge, Madison Village base area, golf course and Big Sky Resort's Mountain Village. // LYNN MILLIGAN | 406.581.2848



40 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD, UNIT 1929 | \$295,000

Beautifully kept, 3rd-floor Shoshone Condominium adjacent to the Swift Current and Ramcharger 8 chairlifts in the Mountain Village of Big Sky Resort. Offering mountain views and immediate proximity to all base area amenities, this ski-in/ski-out property is fully furnished and turnkey; just bring your winter gear and settle right in! Owners enjoy the association pool, fitness center, sauna, concierge services, dedicated parking, valet, housekeeping, room service, and more. Delight in dinner at Chet's Bar & Grill or get pampered at Solace Spa & Salon after a day on the slopes as both are located on the walk-in level of this building.// JACKIE MILLER | 406.539.5003



32 LOW DOG ROAD | \$2,300,000

Nestled in the trees, this private ski-in/ski-out home offers 4 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms in 2,759± sq.ft. of very comfortable living space. Located at the base of the Wardance ski run at Big Sky Resort, this charming home is within close proximity to all that the Mountain Village has to offer. The open floor plan is ideal for entertaining, and the back patio can't be beat! Offering 2 master suites, a family room, radiant in-floor heating, a gas fireplace, large laundry room and a recent remodel that included new appliances, new exterior paint, new metal roof, as well as a gorgeous furniture package. // SANDY REVISKY | 406.539.6316



The Summit offers the best lodging location at the Big Sky Resort! Centrally situated in the base area with the new Ram 8 and Swift Current lifts right out the door, the Summit offers the services of a fine hotel with the advantages of private condominium ownership. This condo has one king room, one double queen room, kitchen, three baths, with three separate lock-off configurations for the utmost in rental flexibility. Seller to pay off special assessment with accepted offer. // MARY WHEELER | 406.539.1745



85 PRIMROSE LANE | \$210,000

Build your Big Sky dream home on this flat lot in a wonderful neighbrhood! This is the best priced lot currently available in Big Sky. Located in the Ramshorn View Estates Subdivision adjacent to area schools and next to multiple recreational areas. Enjoy hiking and biking right out your front door and fly-fishing across Highway 191 or explore the many activities, restaurants, and shops in Big Sky's Town Center just 5.5 miles north. Head south to Hebgen Lake and Yellowstone National Park for additional outdoor fun only an hour's drive away. // BRENNA KELLEHER | 406.581.3361

406.995.4009 www.BigSkyPureWest.com 88 Ousel Falls Road, Suite B Big Sky, MT 59716

# Follow the leader, Pt. 2

# Under the weight of mounting challenges, local government alternatives are considered

#### BY BELLA BUTLER

This is the second installment of a two-part story, and part of a larger examination of leadership and governance in Big Sky. Visit explorebigsky.com to read Part 1.

BIG SKY – Since its rising popularity in the latter half of the 20th century, Big Sky has been patching leaks with duct tape.

In 1992, years before the iconic Lone Peak Tram took its first trip to the 11,166-foot summit, the Big Sky electorate voted in favor of imposing a 3-percent resort tax on luxury goods and services sold in the, at the time, recently established Big Sky Resort Area, a boundary designated by the Montana Department of Revenue. In 1998, the local electorate voted to a create a district for local administration over resort tax.

This monumental action came as much-needed medication to an area that was feeling the growing pains of a kid that grew too fast; in the '90s, Big Sky's sewer system had sprung a leak and as a result the Montana Department of Environmental Quality placed a three-year temporary building moratorium on new construction. In response to the DEQ's compliance order, Big Sky's Rural Improvement District 305 was replaced with a county water and sewer district, which has more authority to address such issues.

Resort tax also provided much needed revenue to the unincorporated area at the time and to date around \$70 million has been collected.

But some of Big Sky's early problems are still present, and the strength of the duct tape will continue to be tested; after all, expansion shows no sign of slowing. Experts and locals have begun to question if the status quo of operations in Big Sky will be enough to carry the community into a healthy and sustainable future.

Despite a well-endowed resort tax base, infrastructural challenges continue to arise.

In 2017, the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce was granted \$20,000 in resort tax dollars to commission a traffic study, which was conducted by Sanderson Stewart, a Bozeman engineering company. Both Madison and Gallatin counties also provided funding for the study, which in total cost \$80,000. The study identified several hazards, including high traffic volumes and unprotected turning lanes on Big Sky's main artery, Lone Mountain Trail.

In June of 2020, the DEQ acted again in Big Sky, putting a temporary freeze on the approval of new subdivisions in Big Sky due to concerns about the capacity of the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District's wastewater treatment plant.

Most recently, the public health and economic threats of COVID-19 that plagued the world appeared in various iterations in Big Sky, leaving many in this tourism-based market unemployed as small businesses battled to stay afloat.

Historically most infrastructural issues are resolved, but the solutions are often a product of extensive time and coordination.

After reviewing Big Sky's water and sewer district documents, the DEQ confirmed in November that the documents demonstrated adequate capacity at the treatment plant. A \$10.3 million federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant was awarded to Gallatin County in 2018 to improve the road and bolster public transportation. And the Big Sky Resort Area District, in partnership with several foundations, provided funding for businesses, individuals and public health initiatives in order to stave off further local pandemic tragedy.

Dan Clark, the executive director at Montana State University's Local Government Center, has conducted work in Big Sky for about a decade. In 2018, the Chamber hired Clark to produce a report exploring local government options for Big Sky.

According to Clark, it's perhaps not so much that Big Sky's problems aren't being solved, but rather that the efficiency, or potential lack thereof, in the solutions process may need further examination.

"[Having] a lot of organizations requires a lot of leadership, and is that the best and most efficient use of all those talents?" Clark asked during a Nov. 11 interview with EBS. "Is it possible that we could ... consolidate the energy that's invested in managing the community and to delivering all these services?"

Furthermore, Clark posed two important questions: Is there currently an efficiency in energy? And is there an effectiveness in communication within this complex network of leaders? "I think here is this unmet potential that's still on the table," he said.

Candace Carr Strauss, current CEO of the Chamber, celebrates the coordination and leadership efforts put forth by the various leaders in Big Sky and holds the TIGER grant example up as a proud picture of what her organization and others are capable of achieving in Big Sky.

While it's the standard role of a chamber of commerce to be the voice of local business, Carr Strauss believes that because local business is so intertwined with community, and because the Chamber receives public funding through resort tax, the Chamber is obligated to serve the greater community beyond business.

These additional responsibilities, though, are not without cost.

"If you go out and talk to my peers, we're all exhausted," Carr Strauss said in an August interview with EBS, referencing specifically the pandemic challenges over the past nine months. Carr Strauss has since submitted her resignation from the Chamber, effective in February 2021. "We're burning the midnight oil to ensure that we survive and come out as whole as we can on the other side."

While the commonly assumed antithesis of Big Sky's libertarian model is incorporation, Clark suggests that the community should first build out a pathway toward broaching the topic of incorporation. He says asking questions about the current status quo is step one: examining issues presently facing the community and questioning the efficacy and efficiency in their handling.

While Clark told EBS in November that incorporation is "one of the more viable" leadership options for Big Sky, Clark's 2018 report puts a spread of options on the table. Clark was asked by the Chamber to exclude incorporation from his report.

According to Carr Strauss, the Chamber requested Clark examine how the community of Big Sky could better use the tools already available in order to facilitate more collaborative local governance and was specifically asked to omit incorporation as an option in order to avoid duplicating past efforts and to consider community management through systems already in existence.

# Big Sky is booming...again



Beehive Basin Average Daily Foot Traffic 2020:

+39% from 2019



MT 64 Traffic Counts 12/1-12/14:

+3.5% from 2019

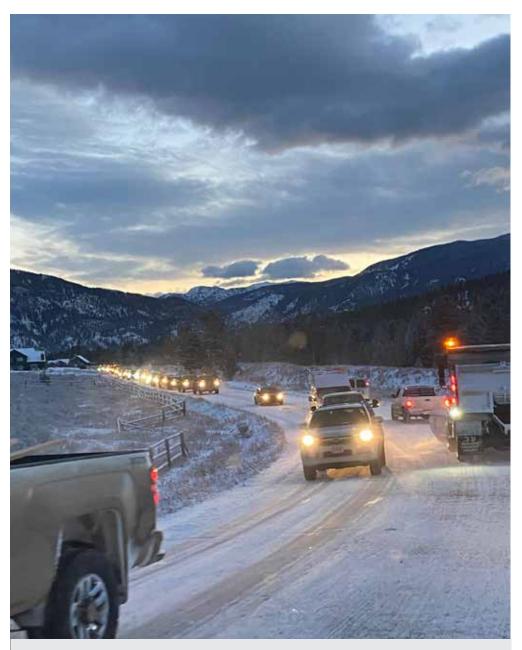


on average, reservations on the books are UP from 2019

\*Data courtesy of Visit Big Sky, Big Sky Community Organization and the Montana Department of Transportation

\*Occupancy data reflects reservations on the books as of Nov. 30 for participating

\*Occupancy data lodging partners



High traffic volumes are just one of the rising trends in Big Sky putting pressure on local infrastructure. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

Clark's report details six potential leadership options for Big Sky, three of which he called "top options" and three he described as "less likely of a fit for Big Sky."

The three most feasible options Clark's report proposed were a Community Council, a Special or Multi-Jurisdictional District, or the currently existing Big Sky Resort Area District, but with some operational modifications.

In a Community Council scenario, the Gallatin County Commission or voters would choose representatives to serve on the council, but the council would be an "official subdivision of county government. Advisory to county commission only," according to Clark's report. No such commission currently exists, but specific councils such as the Zoning Planning Advisory Committee perform similar advisory service on special topics.

A Special or Multi-Jurisdictional District would not be recognized as a municipality either and representatives would be determined in a similar fashion as the Community Council. According to Clark's report, "Districts may employ people, purchase equipment, enter into contracts, receive funds, construct, improve or maintain property and provide grants in support of purpose of district."

Big Sky could also consider two modifications to the currently existing resort tax board's operations, Clark's report states. First would be to shift the focus from funding the strategic planning efforts of other organizations to funding projects that align with a more collective community plan. Another more difficult option, Clark wrote, would be to approach the Montana Legislature about providing broader powers to resort area tax districts.

Clark said over the years he's learned to discuss this concept in terms of tradeoffs. Unlike pros and cons, tradeoffs are never good or bad, he says, but rather a choice.

Several tradeoffs exist when considering alternative government and leadership in Big Sky, Clark said: problems that would subside and those that might emerge. Considering these tradeoffs is part of building out the path toward bigger, more concrete questions, Clark suggests. At the end of the path, one looming question, he said, still remains.

"I don't think the question is ever going to go away until it's actually asked," he said. "The question of incorporation."

Brandon Walker contributed reporting to this article.

Follow EBS as we continue reporting on the ongoing examination of governance and leadership in Big Sky.

# DEQ greenlights wastewater treatment facility construction

# BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – On the heels of its approval of Big Sky's current wastewater treatment plant capacity, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality greenlighted the new water resource recovery facility project.

The Big Sky County Water and Sewer District received a letter from the DEQ on Dec. 14 outlining the wastewater treatment plant upgrade and expansion. Big Sky voters in May of 2020, approved a 1-percent resort tax increase, specifically earmarked for infrastructure, that will pay for up to 60 percent of the \$43 million project.

"What that approval really means from DEQ is that [the water and sewer district] can begin construction of the new plans," Terry Campbell, an environmental engineer with the DEQ said. "Prior to receiving that approval, it would have been illegal for them to begin construction activity."

DEQ has been working with the district to review planning documents, a solicitation package and to procure a membrane filtration system necessary for the treatment of water in the new plant.

Several details remain to be ironed out, and construction isn't slated to begin until spring of 2021. However, this latest approval is the final piece of the puzzle in the ongoing review and approval process that DEQ and the water and sewer district have been wading through.

The district in November sent out an advertisement for contractors interested in bidding for work on the treatment plant upgrade project and expects to award a contract in March of 2021. The bid period was initially set at six weeks, which would have originally ended the last week of December, but was recently extended to ten weeks, now ending on Jan. 29th, in order to account for the holidays.

Now that the district has approval from DEQ, construction can begin as early as April 2021 with an estimated completion date projected for summer of 2023.

Financing for the project is still in the works. One portion is expected to come from a State Revolving Fund and another could be funded though bonds.

The DEQ and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation jointly administer the SRF loan program, which was created for drinking water projects. But the SRF lacks adequate money to fund the entire project, and the district adjusted to consider other funding options such as a request for proposal.

"We've shifted our course on how we're going to finance the project [and are] working with DA Davidson people to put an RFP together," said Ron Edwards, general manager for the district, referring to the nationwide wealth management firm. "Basically, you put an RFP together, what the project is [and] what the needs are, and then you shop that around to see what kind of private money you can get."

Each year, the Environmental Protection Agency provides a federal grant commitment of \$6 or 7 million to the program. That money is supplemented by past loans that are recycled and infused back into the program, according to DEQ's Campbell.

"We've never historically had a problem meeting all of the loan needs in the state, but we've had some huge projects in the last couple of years," Campbell said. "We're all of a sudden at a point now where that money is not going far enough to meet all of the loan needs and Big Sky's timing, and the cost of this project is just such that we can't do all of it."

Despite the funding setback, the DEQ approval means that the water and sewer district is still on schedule and can now officially award a construction contract and break ground.

Waiting on state approval could have potentially stalled the project, but luckily that isn't the case. "Since we just received a letter that's good news," Edwards said. "That means we're back in with everything to keep going with our schedule."



Construction can now officially start in April 2021 on the new wastewater treatment plant and upgrade following the DEQ's newest approval of the project. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

# A parade of pies

# A community tradition the pandemic couldn't stop

# BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY - It would be strange to see a flatbed trailer, laden with 180 individually wrapped slices of pie, being toured around your neighborhood cul-de-sac. Then again, a lot of the COVID-19 adaptations we've witnessed this year have been unconventional. Ashley Dodd wasn't afraid to get creative when the pandemic deemed it unsafe to host the regular 150 guests at her annual Pie Party, a tradition now in its seventh year.

Dodd and her family—husband Matt, daughter Piper, 10, and son Jasper, 7—have been living in Big Sky full time for the last seven years, and for each of those years they have hosted what they call a Pie Party in their home, usually at the beginning of each December. Dodd, an avid baker by both trade and hobby, bakes upwards of 20 different pies, and invites the community into their home to take a slice and enjoy a neighborly visit. While her first year they had about 60 guests, the event has since grown to, Dodd estimates, between 120-150 people. Impossible to host safely this year due to COVID-19, Dodd and her family got to work using her baking skills and a trailer.



Ashley Dodd bakes about 20 pies annually in flavors of: apple, mixed berry, chocolate satin (Dodd's personal favorite), key lime, lemon curd and salted honey. PHOTO COURTESY OF

"There's a lot of downsides [to COVID-19] but the upside is that people have been so creative," Dodd said.

On Sunday, Dec. 6 in the afternoon, the family drove counter-clockwise from their home at Rainbow Trout Run, down Limber Pine Place, up Sage Drive and back down toward the Big Sky Fire Department, distributing pies as they went. The pies then completed their journey through Fire Pit Park, and back to the Dodd's house. All slices of apple, mixed berry, chocolate satin (Dodd's personal favorite), key lime, lemon curd and salted honey found a home, and the donation box they displayed for the Big Sky Community Food Bank collected \$300.

"I'm so happy with how the Pie Parade turned out," Dodd said. "Although we didn't see as many people as we normally would have, we saw a great number of our friends and neighbors and we're able to bring a little holiday fun. My kids really enjoyed helping out, and riding on the trailer, and were proud of the contributions we were able to raise for the Food Bank—which could still use a lot of help this year if people are still able to contribute!"

Dodd is no stranger to the value of community involvement—after meeting her husband in Washington while they were both working as travel guides for Backroads Active Travel, they eventually both found themselves in Big Sky. Dodd worked as a snowboard instructor as well as at the Hungry Moose Market and Deli, where she put her skills to work in the bakery. Once the Dodds moved to town full-time, she took the position as head baker at the Moose before transitioning to a role at Ophir Elementary, where she has been cooking and baking for the school's lunchroom for the last three years. Dodd is also a part of the Big Sky Community Theater and the founder of the Big Sky Virtual Kitchen, which has since ramped back up for the Big Sky

You can tune into the Big Sky Virtual Kitchen on their Facebook page—on Wednesday Dodd and Lindsie Hurlbut, the Big Sky School District's food services manager, made a "bake-along" chicken pot pie.

"I just think the more involved you are in your community, the more you're going to care and be a steward in your community," Dodd said. "The more involved you are in different groups and activities, the broader experience you have. I think that gives you a better idea of what the community needs to function and to function well; what we need to grow... and where we can find opportunities to find joy."

This week, joy came in the form of 180 slices of pie on a flatbed trailer.

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# Big Sky's Soup Shack will warm ones soul

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY - During a global pandemic, where physical and mental health is

of the utmost importance, in a place that is regularly blanketed by multiple feet of snow, accompanied by subzero temperatures, soup may just be the secret ingredient to lift the spirits of the weary. The Soup Shack, located in the small grab-and-go building in Wilson Plaza in Big Sky Town Center, is serving up fresh, warm, healthy homemade soups from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. daily by none other than Jen Steele, the woman behind Steele Pressed Juice and Java, which operates out of the same location during the summer months.

"Last winter I learned that being open during the days, everybody's just in a rush to get up to the resort to ski, so I decided this year, let's try something different, and tried opening at night and doing soup, which is kind of like my other passion," Steele said. "I'm able to take everything I know about the ingredients that go into juices and apply them to soups. And it's warming, so it just makes sense to do that."

It's extra handy, perhaps, that the location is grab-and-go, offering a COVID-safe way to snag a warm, mobile meal and some toasty naan for dinner after skiing or riding all day. Inside the shack, Steele has four crock pots bubbling, three full of her daily rotating soups—this week it was sausage white bean and kale, carrot ginger and vegan chili—and a fourth for her to cook and experiment while she's working. With a background in culinary arts, the Cocoa Beach, Florida, native moved to the area five years ago, leaving briefly to live in Hawaii, but then returning after the realization that she missed the snow.



Jen Steele owns and operates Steele Pressed Juice and Java in the summer, and the Soup Shack in the winter in the grab-and-go kiosk in Wilson Plaza. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

When concocting her soup recipes, she says, there's some overlap with the juices she's familiar with. Her carrot ginger soup, for example, is a savory version of her Pacifier juice offering during the summer months, which includes

detoxifying elements.

"I just kind of remember things that I love a lot, or take a juice ... like right now in experimenting with the ingredients in the detox juice—beet celery, carrot—taking that and adding savory ingredients like onion and garlic and broth and seeing how that comes out as a soup, and that's been fun," Steele said.

She gets her produce locally—much of what she's cooking with right now was carefully preserved from the Big Sky Farmers Market.

The Soup Shack opened two weeks ago and will serve homemade, steaming hot soup until the resort closes for the season. Working in tandem with the soups to warm her patrons, Steele offers hot beverages including, coffee and her signatures juices as well as bone broth from the Cauldron Apothecary.

"No one really has soup as their main event, you know, so my goal is to have that as the main show since ... I can make the juices in my sleep," Steele said.

To stay in touch with Steele's daily rotations, follow her on Facebook or Instagram and the next time you need something to warm both your body and soul after an exhilarating day on Lone Mountain, swing by, wave hello, and grab a soup from the little east-window in Wilson Plaza.

# BSSD school board votes to return students to classrooms

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Big Sky's public-school students are heading back to in-person learning.

On Dec. 15, the Big Sky School District School Board voted unanimously in favor of a recommendation from the school's Reopening Task Force to move toward a phased adoption of Learning Model 3, a 100 percent return of students to the classroom daily. The adoption of Learning Model 3 does not eliminate the availability of an online or remote learning alternative.

"There's a lot of literature and opinion around COVID and how to deal with it, but there's also a significant opinion and writing around what this particular pandemic has been doing to our students and that's what we want to try to mitigate and remedy and get our kids back in school," said BSSD Superintendent Dr. Dustin Shipman.

The 100 percent on-campus phased reintegration will occur in three stages, according to the recommendation from the school's Reopening Task Force. The first group of students to return fully to campus will be kindergarten through fifth-grade Ophir Elementary students on Jan. 11.

Next, on Jan. 18, sixth- through eighth-grade Ophir Middle School students will once again attend class 100 percent in person. Finally, Lone Peak High School students in grades ninth through 12th will return fully to the classroom on Jan. 25.

"I've wanted nothing more than to have all the students back in school all the time," Shipman said. "I have a student who I want back in school all the time, pe what we exist for That's our promise to the taxpayer. ... We all h

said. "I have a student who I want back in school all the time, personally, because that's what we exist for. That's our promise to the taxpayer. ... We all have some sense of trepidation, but at the same time we want kids learning in front of us."

The school board did not establish parameters in regard to positive COVID-19 cases that would illicit a return to distance learning but can review the learning model and possibly switch to another if necessary. The board plans to closely monitor the weekly surveillance testing results and BSSD will only quarantine necessary parties based off testing results and possible exposure.

"Schools are in unprecedented events all the time around the world with wars and famines, and no electricity and no water," Shipman said. "... And the answer to that is coming together as a community who has the same vision for their kids."

BSSD is currently utilizing Learning Model 2, a 50 percent remote learning and 50 percent in-person learning hybrid model wherein students alternate days learning remotely and on campus.

The decision comes following the commencement of weekly surveillance testing of

students and staff within the school who have provided consent to test. According to BSSD's COVID-19 dashboard, just one positive test result out of 89 students and staff tests was reported—a positivity rate of just over 1 percent—in the most recent round of testing recorded on Dec. 10. As of EBS press time on Dec. 16, only four of 249 completed tests of BSSD staff and students have yielded a positive result for COVID-19.

The phased implementation of Learning Model 3 does not eliminate an ongoing campaign by BSSD to acquire additional consent from students and staff to opt in for weekly COVID-19 surveillance testing. The school board had previously established a goal of a 65-percent consent threshold at each grade grouping for the surveillance testing in order to move toward Learning Model 3.

Forty-seven percent of Ophir Elementary students have provided consent for the weekly surveillance testing as of EBS press time, while approximately 44 and 27 percent of Ophir Middle School and Lone Peak High School students, respectively, have provided consent.



At the Dec. 15 school board meeting, the board made tentative plans to hold a special board meeting on Jan. 5 to continue reviewing processes and procedures ahead of the phased implementation of Learning Model 3.

"I'm very confident that a 100-percent in-person learning model is going to be successful for everybody, academically, socially [and] emotionally, across the board," Shipman said.

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# News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners



# AWAKENING TEDxBigSky 2021 Speaker Lineup

#### BY GABRIELLE GASSER

Featured below are three out of a total of nine speakers slated for this year's TEDxBigSky. Visit tedxbigsky.com to read the rest of the bios.

BIG SKY - On Jan. 30, 2021, nine speakers will speak at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center to articulate this year's theme of "Awakening."

This year, the 2021 Big Sky Ideas Festival will focus on the Awakening process that the country has gone through in 2020. As the world emerges from the lockdown, also emerging are the stories of lives changed, businesses pivoting and incredible examples of humanity and community building.

Before virtually attending this year's event, EBS spoke with three of the speakers who will be presenting at TEDxBigSky 2021.



#### Max Lowe

Max Lowe has crafted his skill as a director and photographer in his search for adventure and unheard narratives. In some of the most remote corners of the world, Lowe has been witness to stories spanning the gap of human experience.

His career began in 2012 with National Geographic with a Young Explorers Grant. He went on to work with National Geographic Magazine as well as NG Adventure and Travel, where he forged a career for himself traversing the globe, telling

both his own stories as well as those of the people he encountered along the way.

In recent years, Lowe has directed, shot and produced numerous short documentaries and branded films including the award-winning "Adventure Not War" and "Bare Existence." In the spring of 2020, in partnership with National Geographic Channel, he completed his first feature documentary project, "Torn," an exploration of his family's trauma after the death of his father.

Explore Big Sky: What does the theme of awakening mean to you?

Max Lowe: "It kind of plays into what my last year has looked like, which has been focused on working on my first feature doc project, which also happened to be about my family and my own experience with one of the most impactful and traumatic events of my life, which was the death of my father in 1999 and the subsequent discovery of his body in 2016 ... When I thought about what awakening meant to me, it was kind of that you can use storytelling to see yourself as a character in your own story—whether or not you're actually making a film about yourself—and by that, kind of separate yourself from that sense of self that insulates you from sometimes seeing the things that you need to see that are sometimes closest to you."

EBS: What inspired you to travel the globe and seek out stories?

ML: "It was probably growing up with parents who instilled that as part of our lives. I traveled internationally for the first time when I was two years old to go meet my dad after he had summited Everest with my mom in Thailand. I think that the fear of the unknown is something that paralyzes some people into not going off and traveling, so being inspired to do that by my parents really brought about this hunger to do it more in my later life, and then weave that into my career as a filmmaker and photographer."

EBS: What is your favorite subject to shoot?

ML: "People just in general, I mean, I've shot stories across the gambit largely in the outdoor and adventure space just because that's kind of where I grew up as a person and in my career. I think that engaging with interesting characters and putting those characters in a situation or a scene, or a landscape, or an interaction with wildlife, whatever it might be. I think that stories with people in them are the most interesting ones to other people because that's how we relate to the world."

EBS: What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk? ML: "I hope that they are inspired to maybe try and observe themselves as characters in their own lives. I think it has the power to-if you are willing to let yourself go therereally dissolve your ego and sense of self and allow you to see things in yourself that you might not otherwise. Vulnerability is honestly one of the most powerful things that you can share with other people."



## Josh McCain

Josh McCain is the Founder and President of a Bozeman-based nonprofit, Big Sky Bravery. Their mission is to reconnect active-duty Special Operations members with themselves and civilians, an unmet need McCain observed through his brother-in-law after he returned from his 14th deployment. After quitting a promising career in New York and moving to Bozeman to dedicate his time to the topic, McCain found a gap in nonprofit assistance for the active-duty communityespecially in the SOF community. To this date, over 200 men

and women of the Special Operations community have gone through Big Sky Bravery's weeklong programs.

Explore Big Sky: What does the theme of awakening mean to you?

Josh McCain: "My brother-in-law was returned from his 14th deployment at the time in Special Operations, and that's awakening to me. Every time he would come back home from deployment you could see a small part of him was left over there. I had this epiphany, this awakening, right, to do something for guys that are still serving, especially ones that are at the tip of the spear and Special Operations."

EBS: How does Big Sky Bravery support the SOF community?

JM: "The foundation of our program is based on three major principles. Number one is the value of extremely high risk, and high adrenaline based recreational activities. These guys when they're overseas are doing, you know, the most fast-paced, demanding, and horrific missions that our country has. When they get back home, the majority of them wind down with alcohol and, you know, other unhealthy things. We wanted to get them an environment where they had to do the exact same thing which is execute. The second is their value of self-worth. Which is, you know, when they get established in these units it would be very difficult to not have that consume your life and that be your identity, it's like an NBA or an NFL player. I've seen Special Operations make up their entire identity and we want them to focus outside of that you know, what did life look like before the military, what does it look like after the military, what excites you in your personal life what makes you come alive. The third—which is to me is probably the most important—is bonding the trust between civilians and members of the most elite Special Operations clients that our nation has. They didn't have any meaningful relationships with civilians, and it scared the hell out of them when they were getting out because the only thing, they were used to is their teammates and all of a sudden, this entire world is thrown at you, and you don't have these connections and you don't have that brotherhood or that sense of camaraderie, outside of your team that you're going to lose."

EBS: What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk? JM: "One thing that we've kind of come to peace with is finding what it is inside of all of us that makes us come alive and makes us a better person ... It starts within, if you can find something that you truly believe in and that really just makes your heart and soul come alive, there's a lot of good difference or a huge difference in good change that you can make in the world. And that's what I hope to gain out of my speeches people just want to take that leap forward to find something that is currently missing in their life."



## Jim Salestrom

Jim Salestrom is a storyteller, Emmy Award Winning songwriter and lead singer in CBS EPIC country rock band "Timberline." Salestrom was friends with John Denver and is featured on Denver's "Different Directions" album. He has also been a member of Dolly Parton's band since 1979. Salestrom has performed for four U.S. Presidents at the White House, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the U.S. Supreme Court four times. This will be his first TED Talk.

Explore Big Sky: What does the theme of awakening mean to you?

Jim Salestrom: "... My theme and my talk are about people who have inspired me, and they include President Jerry Ford. I got to play for him a number of times, and he's an amazing guy, and he hand-writes thank you notes to everyone you know, he was really old school, and he was amazing. I'm going to sing a few songs and tell a few stories. I'm going to try to keep it at 12 minutes, and I'm really looking forward to it."

EBS: What inspired you to become a musician?

JS: "Well, I went to a preschool in Omaha for kids that had, you know, that had an interest in music. My folks had been taking us to the symphony and they'd been taking us to church every Sunday and they sang in the church choirs, and they always had music on in the home. I remember seeing Elvis Presley on The Ed Sullivan Show when I was, I must have been like four or five, and then I remember the Beatles and I just for some reason I always knew that that's what I wanted to be I wanted to be a musician."

EBS: How has your successful musical career changed you?

JS: "Well, I've been really fortunate to try to be grounded and to stay grounded. I've seen what celebrity, and fame and money and power can do to certain people and a lot of people don't know how to handle it. There's no school for becoming a celebrity. And I'm really grateful, in a lot of ways, that I never really became a celebrity. I feel very, very blessed and very lucky, and I've, you know, hopefully not changed too much I've been pretty happy through all of it and I'm really happy that I get to do the TED Talk."

EBS: What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk? JS: "I hope that they'll have an understanding that, you know, a person like me could make a living, a comfortable living, as a musician, and that these people have been inspirational to me they've given me the courage to do what I do and they've taught me some valuable lessons. I'm hoping that people will take away the idea that there are people in their lives that have inspired them, and there's also people in their lives that they're inspiring right now. I hope that that's the case with me. I know it's the case with just about everyone in the audienc



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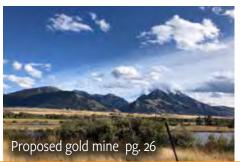
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SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS, SPORTS & HEALTH







# In carbon neutral effort, Big Sky Resort launches new program

Carbon offset program to help skiers reduce footprint



Travelers and skiers can use the new carbon calculator launched by Big Sky Resort to calculate the impact of their trip. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

# BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – It's now possible to take a carbon-neutral trip to Big Sky Resort with the help of a new carbon offset program.

On Dec. 10, the resort launched a carbon calculator on its website, in partnership with Tradewater, a Chicago-based company dedicated to preventing greenhouse gas emissions, which allows guests to calculate the impact of their trip and purchase credits to offset it.

Since the launch of the offset calculator, Big Sky Resort guests have destroyed and retired 41.85 tons of refrigerants.

"Providing skiers with an opportunity to offset their trip aligns with our sustainability goals at the resort," said Troy Nedved, Big Sky Resort's general manager. "This is an environmental action that reaches even beyond our operations. While resort-wide carbon neutrality remains the primary goal, the offset calculator is an additional tool that allows guests to join us in our pursuit of sustainability."

The calculator takes into account details such as method of travel, length of stay, lodging and number of travelers. Guests will then have the option to choose their offset level which could be 100 percent in order to be totally carbon-neutral or up to 200 percent to go above and beyond.

The credits purchased then empower Tradewater to eliminate greenhouse gases, preventing them from being released into the atmosphere.

Tradewater destroys some of the most volatile greenhouse gases ever created, chlorofluorocarbon refrigerants, which are 10,900 times more potent than carbon dioxide. The company has destroyed over 1 million pounds of CFCs to date and has prevented the equivalent of 4.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere. "Managing and destroying refrigerants is an essential strategy for fighting climate change," said Tim Brown, CEO of Tradewater. "This partnership gives Big Sky skiers the opportunity to help collect and destroy some of the most potent greenhouse gases that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere."

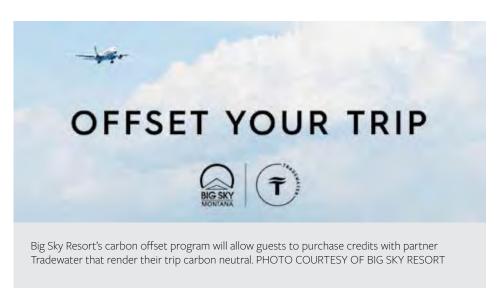
In addition to the carbon offset program, Big Sky Resort has several other initiatives in place as part of its sustainability initiative, "The Big Picture," which is working toward the resort's goal of operating with net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The resort aims to cut its atmospheric impact through rigorous efficiency measures and exploring clean energy, while investing in offset programs and statewide green tariff systems.

Since 2020, the resort's entire chairlift operation runs on clean energy, and as part of the 2025 vision the resort has been replacing older lifts with newer technology. For the short-term, while the upgrades are underway, the resort has been purchasing Renewable Energy Credits equivalent to the annual energy consumption of running 38 lifts.

The resort's variety of additional initiatives that it hopes will lead to its net-zero carbon emissions goal include the reduction of waste with recycling programs, reducing the use of natural resources, and the new Vista Hall building, which features new sustainability practices in dining environments.

Visit bigskyresort.com/sustainability for more information on Big Sky Resort's sustainability initiatives.





#### BY DAVID TUCKER **EBS CONTRIBUTOR**

Across the globe, this has been the Year of Resilience. In the communities of the upper Gallatin River watershed, it has been no different.

Starting in mid-March, when the coronavirus sent most of us into a state of lockdown, we have faced difficulty after difficulty, rising to meet the unknown and doing our best to overcome challenging conditions. At the Gallatin River Task Force, we hope the same can be said for the Gallatin River one day. It faces challenges, but we plan on overcoming.

In many ways, we are witness to the resilience of nature on a daily basis. A cutthroat trout that makes it through another brutal Montana winter is resilient. It adapts its behavior to the ice of winter and high flows of spring runoff, and in doing so, survives for another season.

Whitebark pine are resilient, weathering storm after storm high within the alpine basins where the Gallatin begins its downward journey. Faced with insect infestation, drought and wildfire, the most resilient trees cling to life among the rocks and thin soils.

Beaver are resilient, trapped to within an inch of their existence only to recover and reclaim their place as the ecosystem engineers they are programmed to be. Their presence on the landscape is felt up and down the food chain, from the miniscule macroinvertebrate to the massive moose.

And now we know that we can be resilient, coming together as a community to solve what we hope is the most significant public-health crisis of our lifetimes. We didn't do everything right, and we are by no means out of the

woods yet. Friends and neighbors have lost their lives, and many families, businesses and community organizations will never be the same.

But through what has been an undeniably difficult nine months, we have found ways to adapt to the challenges before us. We made sacrifices when we needed to, thought creatively about how to solve new problems and prioritized the collective at the expense of the individual—and by and large, when we committed to that approach, it worked.

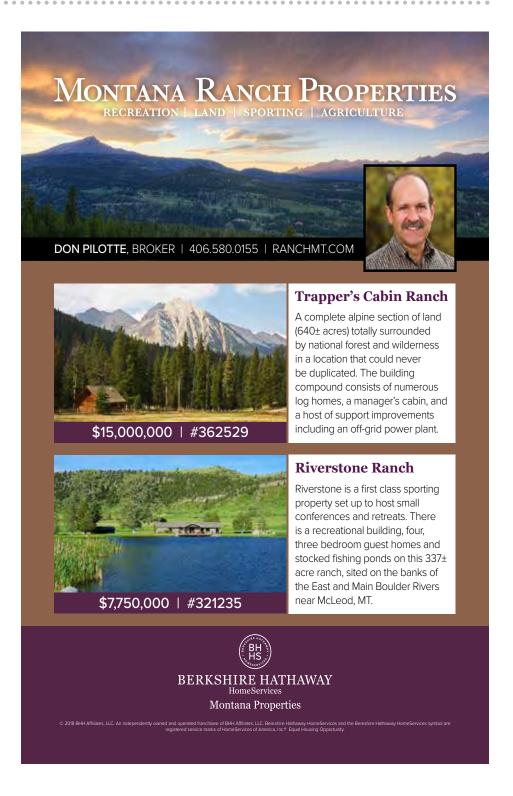
As 2020 rolls into 2021, it is that same approach we will need to carry forward to ensure clean, healthy drinking water, ample in-stream flows for healthy fisheries and resilience in the face of a changing climate.

COVID-19 showed us that we need community to be successful. It also showed us that as a community, we are inextricably linked to clean water in our homes, but also in our lives. We went to the river during some of the darkest days we have known as a nation, and the river was there for us. It kept us safe and connected us to our neighbors. It provided an escape from the news cycle and our endless Zoom calls. It cleaned our hands when that became a matter of life and death. And it reminded us that relative to many, we have it very good here along the Gallatin.

If we commit to the community approach to water conservation, the Gallatin will continue to give. New challenges will present themselves, and the Gallatin will continue to be resilient. As we prepare for the environmental challenges that are surely ahead, we can take our cues from the river, matching its generosity and resiliency to ensure we take care of it the same way it takes care of us.

David Tucker is the communications manager for the Gallatin River Task Force.





# THE NEW WEST

# Mountain Outlaw and Tom Brokaw

# Inside the exclusive interview



BY TODD WILKINSON EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

If you haven't noticed yet, American journalism legend Tom Brokaw, who proudly adopted Montana (and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem) as his home province decades ago, is now featured in a cover profile in Mountain Outlaw magazine, whose publishers also print this newspaper. The winter 2020-2021 edition is available

free at newsstands throughout the Northern Rockies.

What you may not realize is that it's a damned fine read—a "good get" as we like to say in the reporting business. The person who landed the interview is a friend of mine, Joseph T. O'Connor, the magazine's and EBS's Editor-in-Chief. Joe is the kind of bright young scribe far too humble to compliment himself with self-congratulations, but praise is in order. He's a journalist that people need to be paying attention to because, where talent is concerned, he's the real deal.

I thought it would be interesting to have this column revolve around an uncommon theme—a journalist interviewing another journalist about an interview he had with a famous newsman whose reporting and insightful news reading reached millions of people every night, coast to coast.

Yes, it's also more than uncanny that Brokaw, who currently enjoys emeritus status at NBC, left his mark at the same network where another Montanan—Chet Huntley, born in tiny Cardwell and who first had the vision that led to Big Sky—rose to prominence.

Enjoy this conversation with Joe O'Connor and make sure you pick up a copy of Mountain Outlaw.

**TODD WILKINSON:** Why do you think it's important to interview Brokaw now and hear what he has to say?

**JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR:** Tom Brokaw led the nation behind the news desk for five decades. People tuned in nightly to hear him deliver the news and it wasn't ever a biased situation the way many claim the

news is today. He was trusted. And that, in my mind, is the most important thing facing the nation: trust. But it can't be blindly following whatever echo chamber that we're watching, reading or hearing for our information. It takes critical thinking. That's what Brokaw had to say and it's critical for everyone to hear that.

**TW:** What struck you about the affection that he and his wife, Meredith, have for Montana and its natural environment?

JTO: First off, Meredith was wonderful. She and their daughter, Andrea, greeted us at their ranch with lemonade and cupcakes—sweetest welcome ever. The Brokaws do care deeply about Montana and the West and where it's headed. They're from South Dakota and bring a Midwest sense of kindness and honesty to the landscape. I think that allows for a more straightforward approach to conversations about this landscape and how we can protect it. Brokaw hunts and fishes and they both hike and enjoy the beauty of Montana. Meredith loves riding horses. They not only live on the landscape, they live as a part of it.

TW: By his example, how would you describe the values of "Citizen Brokaw?"

JTO: This gets at my point about how the Brokaws were raised. Tom was born in Webster, South Dakota (population 1,886, and that was in

2010), before attending high school in Yankton. I believe the small-town American values they learned there shaped who they are today. And you could always hear it in Brokaw's news delivery: professional, to the point. But the key, and he talked about this in our interview, was that he always kept himself out of his news reporting and anchor work. He told me that you have to know that as a journalist: the story is not about you. But he has also lived in New York and California and reported from around the world. That gives him a sense of empathy, which is so important not only for journalists but for everyone. Also, the man has a great sense of humor.

**TW:** Did your chat with Brokaw cause you to reflect differently on the role journalism plays?

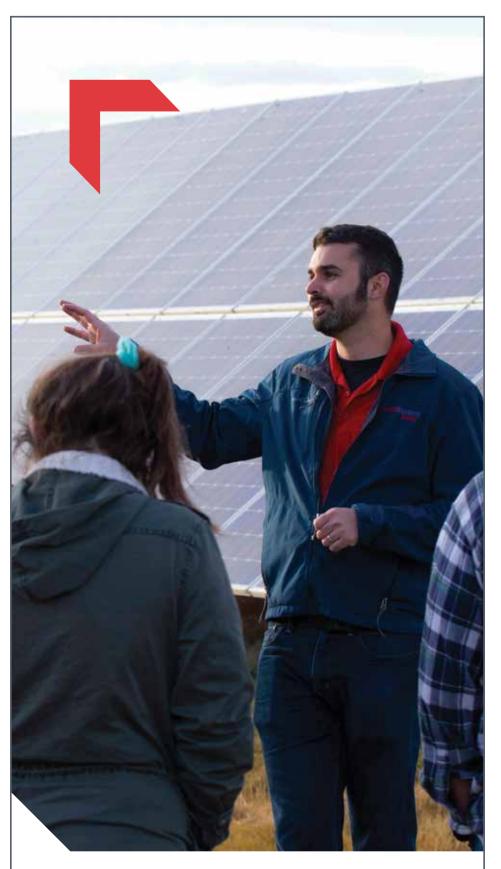
JTO: It did. Brokaw pointed to the importance of local journalism as being fundamental to us understanding ourselves as a country. He told me "America is at a real crossroads," and that journalism needs to have a bottom-up approach as much as a top-down. They say all politics is local. I believe that and think, in turn, all journalism is local as well. But the conversation also reinforced what I know: journalism requires the reporter to know himself or herself. If I can answer yes when I ask myself "Am I doing this story for the right reason and providing context and a fair approach to my reporting?" then I can sleep at night. You have to trust that you know yourself and you're doing this work for the right reasons. If not, you're in the wrong profession. Brokaw also said journalists need to have a stiff spine. And that is definitely true.

**TW:** I don't want you to give too many details away about your excellent interview, but offer a teaser about what you believe the punchline is. **JTO:** Ultimately, we all need to live our lives honestly and with conviction. Brokaw worked hard and had a bit of luck, which is important. But also being true to ourselves and trusting good instincts will take us a long way. And we have to give a damn about the world we live in. Tom Brokaw knows that Montana is a special place. We need to recognize that and understand we play an active role in its survival.

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 about famous Jackson Hole grizzly bear 399 by Thomas D. Mangelsen. Mangelsen also conducted the photo shoot for the Brokaw interview in Mountain Outlaw.



EBS and Mountain Outlaw Editor-in-Chief Joe O'Connor interviews legendary NBC newsman Tom Brokaw at his ranch in late October. Renowned photographer Tom Mangelsen walks ahead while EBS and Mountain Outlaw Publisher Eric Ladd tracks behind. PHOTO BY SUE CEDARHOLM



# Shining a light on the future.

Making smarter decisions about renewable energy requires knowledge. NorthWestern Energy's solar projects throughout the state of Montana provide clean energy to the power grid – and they're shaping the future of renewable energy, too. We're working with local universities to better understand where solar energy belongs alongside a balanced energy mix. And that research is helping us build a brighter future for the next generation of Montanans.



View more of the story at **NorthWesternEnergy.com/BrightFuture** 

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# Montanans' health interwoven with climate change

# Collaborative climate report indicates health risks climate change poses to Montanans

BY BELLA BUTLER

BOZEMAN—Air thick with wildfire smoke, devastating droughts and other extreme weather events will continue to strike Montana, says a collaborative report composed by health professionals, researchers and professors from across the state. Moving forward, the dilating climate drama will only continue to infringe on the health and wellbeing of Montanans.

The Climate Change and Human Health in Montana report, known by its seven authors as C2H2, was released on Dec. 8 as a follow-up to the 2017

Montana Climate Assessment. While the 2017 report outlined climate change impacts to agriculture, forests and water in Montana, C2H2 focuses on climate change impacts on Montanan's physical and mental health.

"We all know that the effects of climate change are not just in our future," said C2H2 co-author Alexandra Adams while introducing the report. "They're here now in the form of wildfires and smoke, flooding and vector borne diseases and already affecting our loved ones and our communities today."

Following a summer of severe wildfires across the West, C2H2 identifies three aspects of projected climate change that are of greatest concern for human health in Montana: increased summer temperatures and periods of extreme heat; reduced air quality from smoke as wildfires increase in size and frequency; and more "climate surprises," like flooding and extreme storms.

Under predictions in-line with a 70-year warming trend in Montana, annual average temperatures are estimated to increase by between 4.5-6 degrees by mid-century. Though recent robust snowpacks in the state make it hard to conceive, the report suggests that these high level snowpacks will be rare as a hotter Montana will result in earlier melting and runoff and subsequent flooding. C2H2 states

that peak runoff for most headwater streams in Montana now occurs 10-20 days earlier than in 1948, a margin that is only expected to grow.

The calamitous recipe of poor air quality, scarce water supply, extreme heat and other local manifestations of climate change threaten to create health crises, a breed of disaster human society has become all too familiar with in 2020.

The health threats produced by a changing climate report will negatively impact some Montanans disproportionately, C2H2 says. The report recognizes that Montana has unique health concerns due to its rural nature and limited access to healthcare facilities in some areas. Because of this, chronic disease, inadequate maternal and childhood healthcare, a high rate of vehicular deaths, and mental illness, suicide, alcoholism, and substance use disorders are common ailments in Montana.

With these in mind, the C2H2 authors identified groups of people more at-risk in Montana when climate impact is considered: people with chronic conditions like asthma and heart disease, people threatened by increased heat like pregnant women or those without access to shade, people with limited access to healthcare services; and people living in poverty.

In Montana, Native Americans, particularly those living on reservations, tend to fall in more than one of these high-risk categories. In interviews conducted for C2H2, half of the subjects living on the Fort Belknap Reservation reported being food insecure, a disparity that will likely only exacerbate as drought impacts crop yields. Many that were found to be more food secure reported

sourcing food from traditionally harvested plants and animals, much of which will be harder to access due to climate change impacts.

"Our issues are different and bigger and harder," said John Doyle, a panelist at the press event. Doyle, a member of the Crow Tribe and the Crow water quality project director at Little Bighorn College, said that climate impact stories from his reservation are different from others around the state.

Already in a wounded state, Doyle said the COVID-19 pandemic has only weakened an already impoverished area. The Independent Record reported

in July that though Native Americans make up only 7 percent of the state's population, at the time they accounted for 15 percent of the state's COVID-19 cases.

In addition to physical health, C2H2 articulated the existing and anticipated effects of climate change on mental health. According to the C2H2 report, MSU researchers surveyed farmers and ranchers and found that 74 percent of subjects self-reported moderate to high levels of anxiety regarding climate change effects on agriculture. Using data from 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that agriculture was among the top five industries that saw the most male suicides in the U.S.

In other pockets of Montana like Gallatin County, tourism is to local communities what agriculture is to much of rural Montana: economic livelihood.

While C2H2 does not specifically address the mental health concerns for a shrinking snowpack, one of the authors, Robert Byron, said during the press event that it will have a two-fold impact.

"Certainly the mental health applications of both earlier snow melt with spring flooding [and] longer drought—and both of those will go along with lesser

snowpack—are huge," Byron said.

First, C2H2 shares that especially for those with preexisting mental illness,

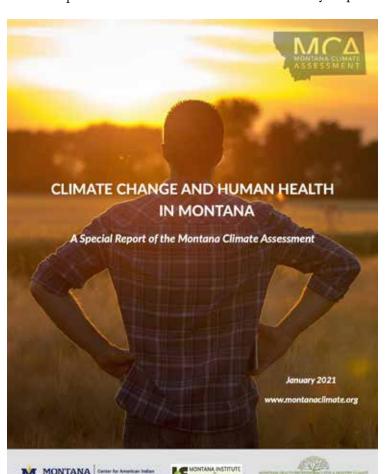
big weather events—like a spring flood—could impact mental health, increasing conditions from post-traumatic stress disorder to depression and anxiety to substance abuse.

Second, Byron said that a longer-term mental health impact of snowpack changes could occur following the implications for a town like Big Sky, which depends on a robust snowpack to stay afloat.

The report is not all doom and gloom, though. In fact, a few chapters at the end are filled with solutions-based content. C2H2 recommends the creation of a statewide public health network that addresses the health and economic impacts of climate change, boosting expertise in adapting to climate change and other general suggestions to help counter the threats outlined in the report.

Mari Eggers, another C2H2 author, said this report will fill ideally fill a gap of local climate and health data. "Both the health and the climate data down to a more local level are going to be essential to be able to plan and prepare for these coming events, and to protect both public health and our economy at the same time," she said.

The C2H2 report can be found online at montanaclimate.org.



The report, dubbed C2H2, was a collaboration by the Montana State

Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate and the Montana Institute

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

University Center for American Indian and Rural Health Equity, Montana

of Ecosystems. C2H2 has seven primary authors. IMAGE COURTESY OF

# One state still craves coal



# BY DUSTIN BLEIZEFFER WRITERS ON THE RANGE

As the rest of the West rushes to meet increasingly ambitious goals to reduce carbon emissions, one state is moving in exactly the opposite direction. It's Wyoming, which even wants to take on the coal-fired generation that states such as Oregon and Washington are abandoning.

Wyoming residents and businesses enjoy among the lowest rates for electricity because most of the state's power comes from burning coal, but those cost dynamics are changing quickly, making coal a liability.

Recently, a legislative committee advanced a bill to raise taxes on wind energy while also signaling distaste for rooftop solar and other forms of customer-generated electricity. It seems like a perplexing stance in the context of other states in the West that are retiring coal-fired power plants at a rapid clip.

But Wyoming leaders worry little about the devastation in the West wrought by climate change, and they criticize PacifiCorp, which proposes to retire several coal-fired units ahead of schedule, for potentially harming Wyoming towns such as Kemmerer, Rock Springs and Glenrock.

Unlike Colorado, New Mexico and Washington, Wyoming has never developed a plan to transition beyond coal. Instead, state leaders are trying to force utilities to keep aging coal plants in Wyoming burning. The state is also spending taxpayer dollars in a stealth effort to lobby against coal-plant closures outside its borders, in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and other states.

Meanwhile, Wyoming is negotiating to take on the coal power within PacifiCorp's operating region that other Western states are abandoning. That means Wyoming ratepayers—or a combination of customers in Wyoming and other states that might opt for more coal—would take on a larger coal portfolio. This could be risky financially, as the coal generation comes from older power plants, some beyond 40 and 50 years old.

Somehow, lawmakers have convinced themselves that the West's rush to renewables is foolish and will result in a knock on the door from other states. Then Wyoming could say, "I told you so" to these states that plead for coal-fired power after wind and solar fail to meet spikes in demand.

"Reliability is a big concern for customers," said Bryce Freeman, Wyoming's consumer advocate administrator in testimony before a legislative committee last fall. "The cheapest electricity in the world is no good if it doesn't work when customers need it, and that's exactly what's happened in California."

Well, not exactly. There were forced rolling blackouts in California last summer, but the cause was more operational shortcomings. A report by the California Independent System Operator found that power officials failed to anticipate and contract for enough backup power while also mistakenly keeping offline some of its backup from natural gas.

It seems a shame that the state isn't onboard with its Western neighbors to help decarbonize the grid. "The more people and states that participate, the easier it is to achieve any emissions goal," said Jonathan Koomey, energy and climate researcher at University of California Berkeley. "If you have more geographic regions contributing to the grid, it makes it easier to reduce emissions."

Anybody who has traveled the I-80 corridor across southern Wyoming knows that the state has an incredible wind resource. It even blows in the evening when customers in California need it most. There's now a glut of potential Wyoming wind energy proposals from developers that would produce more than 5,000 megawatts with a capital investment of nearly \$10 billion. It's worth noting that no other industry is contemplating such an investment in Wyoming, now in the throes of a historic budget crisis. Financial backers, though, are nervous, warning that the threat of higher state taxes on wind might make Wyoming non-competitive.

When the state Legislature took comment from close to 100 people about the state's coal-only agenda last month, most residents pleaded with lawmakers not to block commercial wind power development. Lawmakers weren't swayed.

The wind blows and the sun shines in other parts of the West, too, and the burgeoning renewable market might just blow past Wyoming. Wyoming's stubborn reluctance won't stop other Western states from leaving coal—and perhaps the Cowboy State—in the past.

Dustin Bleizeffer is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. He has worked as a coal miner, an oilfield mechanic, and for 22 years as a reporter and editor in Wyoming.



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#### **26** Dec. 18 - 31, 2020

# State Supreme Court blocks proposed gold mine near Yellowstone

The ruling — the culmination of a years-long campaign to prevent mining in the Emigrant Gulch area — has far-reaching consequences for other disputed mines in Montana.



The Supreme Court's recent denial of an appeal brought forth by a Canadian mining company effectively blocks the company from conducting exploratory drilling north of Yellowstone National Park. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

#### BY AMANDA EGGERT **MONTANA FREE PRESS**

The Montana Supreme Court has denied an appeal brought by Canadian mining company Lucky Minerals, effectively voiding its permit to conduct exploratory drilling for gold in a remote area north of Yellowstone National Park.

Tuesday's ruling marked the culmination of a years-long campaign to prevent mining in the Emigrant Gulch area. Popularized by a "Yellowstone is more valuable than gold" rallying cry, the campaign garnered endorsements from more than 400 local businesses and drew support from the U.S. Department of Interior and U.S. Congress.

In siding with plaintiffs Park County Environmental Council and Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the state Supreme Court unanimously reaffirmed a lower court's 2018 ruling that the Montana Department of Environmental Quality did not conduct adequate analysis on the potential environmental impacts of exploratory drilling operations in Emigrant Gulch.

The court found that DEQ erred by not taking a sufficiently "hard look" at how road improvements would affect wildlife like grizzly bears and wolverines, and that its "plan to make a plan" to address potential groundwater and stream impacts was insufficient.

Citing the proposed mine's proximity to Yellowstone National Park and the area's importance to both wildlife and a tourism-dependent human economy, the Supreme Court's opinion stated that "the need for fully informed and considered decision making could hardly be more pressing."

According to information on Lucky Minerals' website, the Emigrant Creek Project encompasses several targets across a nine-square-mile area that the company owns or controls on the western edge of the Absaroka Mountains. The company has staked 117 mining claims in the area, which it says has potential to host a multimillionounce gold deposit. The company did not return requests for comment on the ruling.

"We came together across ideological and party lines to work together for this issue because we share values, and I think that is a really powerful model for how to get stuff done in defense of places."

Concerns about the project's potential to contaminate groundwater, pollute tributaries of the Yellowstone River, displace wildlife, increase light and noise pollution, and compromise the region's outdoor recreation economy inspired the 2016 creation of the Yellowstone Gateway Business Coalition, a collection of businesses and landowners stretching from Livingston to Gardiner that came out in opposition to the mine.

"We came together across ideological and party lines to work together for this issue because we share values, and I think that is a really powerful model for how to get stuff done in defense of places," said Park County Environmental Council Executive Director Michelle Uberuaga. "We win at the local level when we put people together."

#### STATEWIDE INFLUENCE

The ruling's reach extends far beyond the Lucky Minerals project. Plaintiffs say the court's decision has closed a "loophole" that allowed mining companies to move forward with agency-approved projects even while active judicial challenges raise concerns about environmental impacts.

At issue is the Montana Environmental Policy Act, a law passed in 1971 with nearly unanimous support, which requires environmental review prior to government actions that may significantly affect the human environment, and an amendment to that act that was passed in 2011. The amendment mandates that "a permit, license, lease or authorization issued by an agency is valid and may not be enjoined, voided, nullified, revoked, modified, or suspended pending the completion of an environmental review that may be remanded by a court."

The conservation groups argued that if Lucky Minerals had been able to go forward with drilling operations per its exploration license while court-ordered studies of environmental impacts were being conducted, any potential remedies might come too late to rectify damages already done. They argued that such an outcome would deny Montanans their constitutional guarantee of a clean and healthful environment and their right to public participation.

The court agreed: "The 2011 Amendments seek to allow Lucky to commence this work before DEQ completes supplemental review, a review that can be expected to achieve very little beyond informing Montanans — perhaps tragically — of the consequences of the actions that have already been taken," the court wrote. "A remedy implemented only after a violation is a hollow vindication of constitutional rights if a potentially irreversible harm has already occurred."

Jenny Harbine, an attorney with the nonprofit Earthjustice who argued the case on behalf of the plaintiffs, said in a press release that the court's ruling will apply to pending challenges to mining projects across the state. There are currently 70 active hard rock mining permits in Montana, and 96 exploration licenses of the kind Lucky Minerals sought.

"The Court was right to eliminate this barrier to those seeking justice by preventing such destructive activities," she said in the release.

Montana Attorney General Tim Fox joined Lucky Minerals and DEQ in the appeal, arguing that environmental rights should be balanced against private property rights also enshrined in the Montana Constitution. But the court found that "DEQ's erroneously premature approval of Lucky's application did not grant Lucky an irrevocable and constitutionally-protected private property right."

The Supreme Court took up six issues in its decision, and the role of private property rights was just one of them. DEQ and Lucky Minerals weren't entirely on the same page in terms of which of the six issues merited an appeal. The DEQ appealed only two issues, and the court sided with the agency on both.

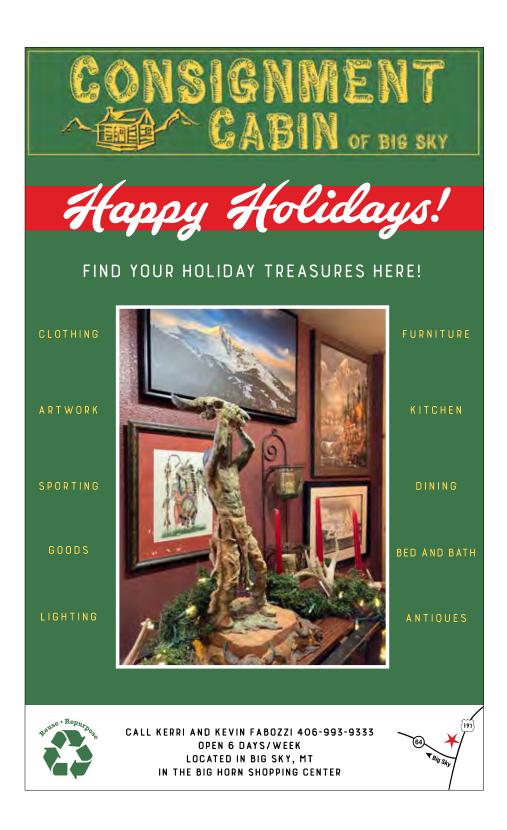
Now the DEQ has its marching orders: in addition to more fully considering road improvement impacts to wildlife and requiring a more in-depth plan to address water quality concerns, the agency must do a more robust analysis of alternatives to the proposed drilling.

In an emailed statement, a DEQ spokesperson said the agency is "pleased with the results."

# Solving for Z' movie premiere



How much can we gain from the mountains? How much can we lose? Presented by Patagonia and Teton Gravity Research, Solving for Z explores IFMGA guide and father Zahan Billimoria's relationship with the highs and lows of big mountain skiing. Check out the film premiere and learn more about Zahan's Samasara Mountain Experience programs. PHOTO COURTESY





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# Big Horns seek rebound season

### BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – The sound of squeaking rubber-soled shoes returned to the hardwood floor of the Bough Dolan Athletic Center in early December as the Lone Peak High School varsity boys basketball team took to the court for their first practices of the season.

The Big Horns first game of the 2019-2020 season took place on Dec. 7 but games won't begin until Jan. 5 this year due to COVID-19 precautions.

Varsity Head Coach John Hannahs believes the additional practice and preparation time will benefit his team in more ways than one.

"Absolutely, in a normal year we get 11, maybe 12 practices and [we] will usually have athletes who don't have enough [practices] to play in the first game," he said. "This year we get 19, so that won't be an issue."

A Montana High School Association requirement states that athletes must partake in 10 practices before becoming eligible to participate in any game action each season.

Four seniors graduated from last year's team, but 18 athletes are participating across all four high school grade levels this season. Hannahs said between 11 and 12 players will dress for each

varsity game with as many as 10 suiting up for coach Dave Magistrelli's junior varsity squad.

Hannahs says the four seniors, two juniors, six sophomores and six freshmen have impressed him through their first week of practice.

"The boys have set the bar high for themselves effort-wise this first week," he said. "They are incredibly driven and motivated for this season and it shows in how hard they work in practice."



The 2020-2021 basketball season has been delayed as a safety precaution due to COVID-19. LPHS athletes have returned to the gym to prepare for the coming season. PHOTO BY JOHN HANNAHS

The Big Horns finished with a 3-15 regular season record last year and departed the district tournament after losses to West Yellowstone and White Sulphur Springs. This year, LPHS has 15 games on the schedule, beginning Jan. 5 on the road against Harrison-Willow Creek, and concluding for the regular season on Feb. 12 at home for Senior Night against Sheridan. District tournament play will take place Feb. 17-20 in Butte.

Hannahs says opposing teams may underestimate Lone Peak this year, something he believes will work in the Big Horns' favor. Based on early observations, he also said cleaning up the glass will be something the team needs to focus on improving.

"We're going to have to figure out a way to out-rebound larger opponents and limit second chance shots," he said. "That and turnovers were our main struggle last year."

The 2019-2020 season was Hannahs' first season as the varsity team's head coach. He has already drawn on his experience from a year ago as he preps his team for this season.

"My practice structure looks different this year," he said. "With the extra practice time we have put an emphasis on fundamentals and conditioning. We'll also be prioritizing game situations as that is something I feel like we didn't spend enough time on last season."

Of the 15 regular season contests scheduled, Hannahs pointed to rivalry matchups with West Yellowstone on Jan. 15 and Feb. 11, and Ennis on Jan. 9 as some of the games that he's looking forward to.

"I enjoy sharing the love of the game with these guys, and we get to do that every single day which is pretty special," Hannahs said. "But I do think that this team will do some amazing things this season and I cannot wait to be a part of it."

# Lady Big Horns eye hoops with new coach at helm



Sophomore Jessie Bough and the Lady Big Horns are back on the court practicing at the Bough Dolan Athletic Center in preparation for the 2020-2021 season. PHOTO BY JOHN HANNAHS

## BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – On Dec. 7, one year removed from the Lone Peak High School varsity girls' basketball team's first regular season game of the 2019-2020 season, the Lady Big Horns returned to the court, but this time for their first practice of the year. Games will not begin until January this season as a safety precaution due to COVID-19.

One advantage: The Lady Big Horns didn't lose a single athlete from last year's team due to graduation.

This year's team will look to build on the 2019-2020 Lady Big Horns regular season with a near .500 record of 8-10. LPHS concluded last season by losing in consecutive contests to Shields Valley and Gardiner in the district tournament. One noticeable change this season will be the person calling the shots from the sidelines. Coach Loren Bough will be absent this season as he recovers from injuries he sustained in a mountain bike accident last summer. In his stead, Taylor Cummings, who was a volunteer assistant coach for Lone Peak last season, will lead the team.

This season will be Cummings's first experience as a head coach. The Belt, Montana, native previously coached at the collegiate level for four years, first as graduate assistant coach in South Dakota for Black Hills State University from 2015-2017, then as assistant coach from 2017-2019 in Wyoming at Sheridan College.

Cummings is familiar with the atmosphere of Class-C school athletics from her high school playing days at Belt. She went on to play point guard and captain her collegiate team at Montana State University Northern.

The team has a large learning curve ahead as they adjust to her style of play, but Cummings is very excited by what she's witnessed at the first week of practices.

"Overall, they have such good attitudes and  $\dots$  I can tell they're ready, so we've had really good practices so far," she said.

Thirteen athletes are participating between the varsity and junior varsity teams this season. Cummings said the teams have not been split yet, and likely won't be until the first game draws closer, but she anticipates rostering roughly six full-time varsity players and having seven junior varsity athletes with some crossover between the teams.

From her early observations, Cummings believes the team's "willingness to win" will be one of their keys to success this season.

"They're a solid group and they're all kind of driving in the same direction and I think that's going to be their greatest strength," she said, adding that communication and allowing themselves to make mistakes and play loose are aspects the team can improve on currently.

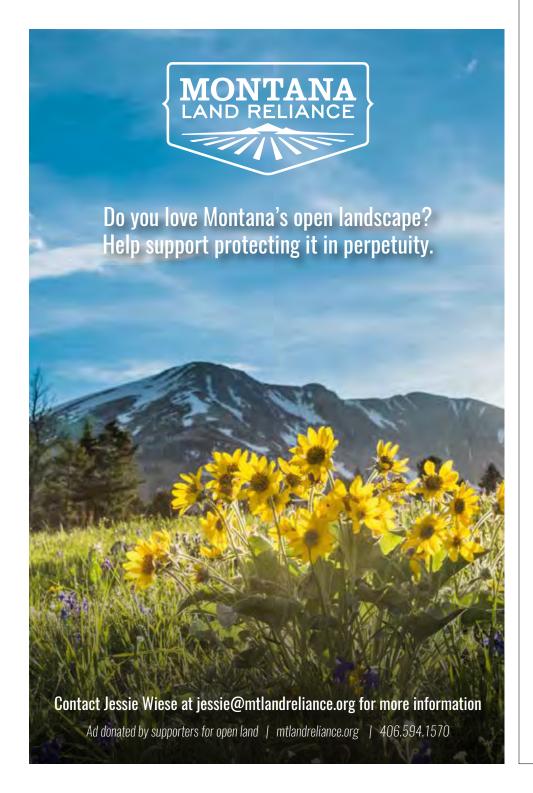
Having experienced a taste of the LPHS atmosphere last season and looking ahead to their 15-game schedule, Cummings is already anticipating matchups with rival West Yellowstone on Jan. 15 and Feb. 11 and a shot at powerhouse Manhattan Christian on Jan. 19 and Jan. 28.

"I was [also] hoping we're able to stay safe and get a full season because I really think they have an opportunity to make a splash in this district and even the division," Cummings said.

Lone Peak will start the season on the road at Harrison-Willow Creek on Jan. 5.

"Honestly, I think that was one of the reasons why I stepped in, was working with them last year and seeing how hungry they were to improve and be better and  $\dots$  put in the work," Cummings said. "They're very knowledgeable. They're smart girls."







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# 'The opportunity to play'

BY AL MALINOWSKI **EBS CONTRIBUTOR** 

Athletic teams at all levels of competition across our country have been challenged during the COVID-19 pandemic, not knowing if their next game on the schedule will be played, and if so, which of their athletes will be available to participate. Marquee games have been canceled, often at the last minute due to players testing positive for the virus. The cancellations have understandably been made in the interest of the health and safety of the participants and have led some to question whether the seasons should be postponed or altogether canceled.

Legendary Chicago Bears Hall of Fame linebacker, Mike Singletary once acknowledged, "Do you know what my favorite part of the game is? The opportunity to play." Those words could not be more appropriate for many athletes whose opportunity to play has been placed in question or in some cases, abruptly cut short.

Last year, winter sports regular seasons were played, but most post-season tournaments were not. The NCAA basketball tournament was canceled a week before it was scheduled to begin, and many elite basketball players had their college careers suddenly and unexpectedly come to an end.

In Montana, the high school state basketball tournaments were shut down on the day of the championship games, causing the Montana High School Association to crown co-champions in each classification. Likely many of those teams would have preferred to settle the co-champion title on the court, even if it meant doing so in an empty gym.

Practices for this winter sports season for high schools in Montana have begun after a three week delay, and it's a safe assumption those players must be wondering whether this season will occur. Coaches are reminding their players of the importance of focusing on what is within their control, and how every successful team has to battle through adversity, meanwhile the seniors are already circling certain games on the schedule, dreaming of finishing their high school careers with a victory over their rivals.

When former athletes reminisce about their careers, they often discuss the biggest games they have played, especially if they had the opportunity to play for a championship. But the most memorable experiences often revolve around spontaneous moments that occurred at practice, on bus rides or other team activities. The value that athletics can have on individual's education rarely has much to do with the final win-loss record of the team.

Athletes who transition to other successful endeavors after their athletic careers end, routinely speak of the lessons they learned during their participation in sports. It's not only professional athletes who credit athletics for lessons learned, but also many whose sports careers ended when they realized they had other talents that gave them a better chance at making a good living.

The athletes currently preparing for their seasons will have no influence on the number of games they will play this year or how long the season will last. However, because they currently have the opportunity to play, they have the same chance to create those life-long memories, whether this season becomes an abbreviated one or not. Just like every new season, there are lessons within the adversity for those who chose to learn them.

# The Big Sky Ski Team gears up for another exciting season



Coach Aaron Haffey and athlete Brooke Brown pause at the bottom of Ambush. PHOTO BY LUKE KIRCHMAYR

BY LUKE KIRCHMAYR

EBS Contributor

Although last year's ski season was cut short due to COVID-19, the Big Sky Ski Team has been working overtime to be fit for the 2020-2021 season.

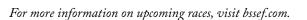
From Nov. 21-25, BSSEF hosted a pre-season training camp at Big Sky Resort open to local teams. BSSEF athletes Ryan Beatty and Caleb Unger also traveled to Copper Mountain, Colorado to participate in the 2020 International Ski Federation National Championship where both placed exceptionally well in the super-G and downhill. Beatty placed 37th and 33rd respectively and Unger placed 46th

In an effort to keep athletes healthy and out shredding, BSSEF has implemented new policies to keep everyone safe.

"We are requiring all athletes and staff to wear masks, we are limiting clubhouse traffic and doing temperature tests for all staff before training," Aaron Haffey, junior development coach said. "We will also begin doing surveillance testing for staff. We have also been strictly following all CDC and Gallatin County recommendations to limit the spread of COVID-19."

FIS and local races have also started to limit the total number of racers to 100 and have discouraged spectators. With limited capacity, BSSEF athletes will have to work extra hard this year because the qualification is decided by FIS and USSA points which have been determined from their U16 season. The athletes with the top points from each division can qualify for the race.

With new changes in place to keep the athletes safe, the first races have been scheduled, starting with a FIS race in Jackson Hole on Dec. 17-22. The race will consist of two slaloms at Snow King Resort. The first local race will be held at Blacktail Mountain Ski Area on Jan. 14-17 and will consist of two slaloms and two





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Living with the 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. Now, more than ever, the health and safety of Montana citizens and visitors is the top priority.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

For our resident visitors and visitors who are enjoying all that Montana has to offer, please be prepared for the following protocols and safety precautions:

- Masks are required in counties with more than four active cases for people over 5-years-old in public indoor spaces and outdoor settings where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Know a destination's public health guidelines before you arrive
- Stay home if you're sick.
- Understand some services and destinations may be limited.
- There is currently no travel-related quarantine.

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# BY DR. ANDREA WICK EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Feeling anxious? Well you are not alone! 2020 has been a tough year to say the least. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 40 million Americans suffer from reoccurring symptoms of anxiety. I'm sure this number has increased this year. If you have been struggling with anxiety throughout the past few months, here are some natural supplements that may help. I encourage you to follow up with a naturopathic doctor or chiropractor to find out what may be most beneficial for you.

**Magnesium** is a wonder mineral, though it is difficult to get enough from food alone. Magnesium glycinate and malate are best for helping with symptoms of anxiety and are known to have qualities that calm the nervous system. Taking magnesium before bedtime can help you get a more restful night's sleep.

GABA, or Gamma amino-butyric acid, is a neurotransmitter in the brain and also helps to calm the central nervous system. When there is a deficit of GABA, high blood pressure, anxiety and insomnia develop. Taking magnesium helps the body to manufacture and absorb GABA more effectively.

**L-tryptophan** and 5-hydroxytryptophan are amino acids that are responsible for producing serotonin in the body. Taking 5-HTP at bedtime helps promote longer sleep at night and less anxiety during the daytime. Eggs, turkey and chickpeas are high in tryptophan.

L-theanine is an amino acid that also helps calm the central nervous system. It is found in green tea and can be an effective treatment for anxiety. L-theanine helps to increase dopamine and serotonin, which are feel-good neurotransmitters. A 2018 study by the Journal of Psychiatric Research

found that participants with General Anxiety Disorder improved their sleep quality by taking 1-theanine.

**Valerian root** and passionflower are herbs that help with anxiety, nervous system tension and insomnia. They are thought to increase GABA production.

Practices that you can start daily to help increase serotonin and dopamine in the body include meditation and exercise. According to Harvard Medical School, exercise decreases nervous system tension and increases serotonin and dopamine. Exercise also activates the frontal regions of the brain. The best thing to do for your body is to move it!

Meditation is a mindfulness technique that helps to keep obsessive thoughts at bay and helps us to stay present. When anxiety ensues, it is usually a manifestation of fear of the unknown, or constantly thinking about the future. Concentrating on your breathing helps to calm the body and keep your mind from overanalyzing events and thoughts.

Therapy, counseling and speaking with a mental health professional will also provide you with the tools needed to deal with anxiety.

Don't be afraid to seek out professionals who are trained in identifying the root cause of your anxiety. The mental health hotline offers free and confidential care from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday. The number is (877)-503-0833. The current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic are causing more people to find healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with anxiety.

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

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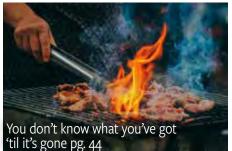




# **SECTION 3:**

BUSINESS, HISTORY, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT, FINANCE, DINING & FUN









# Making it in Big Sky: Triple Creek Realty

## BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Back when Lone Mountain Trail—locally known as the Spur Road—was an unpaved gravel road and oil dripped off the chairlifts at Big Sky Resort, Triple Creek Realty was doing business.

As Big Sky's oldest independent real estate company, Triple Creek Realty has witnessed many changes in the area. The company was founded in 1974 and is now owned and operated by Jerry and Becky Pape, along with their son Jerry Pape Jr. The Papes purchased a condo in Big Sky in 1972 and moved to the area in 1973.

Initially, there was a limited amount of product until former logging land became available as recreational land, according to Becky. Since then, Triple Creek Realty has weathered a building moratorium in Big Sky, a recession, and now, a global pandemic.

Most recently, according to Jerry Pape Jr., Triple Creek Realty closed a deal for the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office to purchase the After Zero-In Indoor Shooting Range located at Four Corners for more office space.

Explore Big Sky talked with the Pape family to learn more about Triple Creek Realty and how the business has changed and grown over the years.

Explore Big Sky: How has the real estate industry changed over the years?

Becky Pape: "Well, it's changed dramatically.

Initially there was a limited amount of product.

In other words, Big Sky, the resort that was going to be developed by those corporations, was limited in acreage. ... And then...the Porcupine Exchange occurred, where certain tracks of lands [were] acquired that were formerly Burlington Northern [Railway] pieces of land that they used to log. They said, there'll be more money in recreational land than there was in logging any further. And so, those lands were available for sale, those are the 20-acre parcels, the 40, the 200-acre parcels and so on. ... All of a sudden, the door opened, and everybody realized they could develop. However, subsequently, there have been many

downturns in the market, as well as just recently, an eight-year recession. ... And so, things would get started and then stop. ... And, by the same token, we were just trucking along doing real estate, selling what pretty much already existed. ... So that's sort of the evolving history. And it's been a real estate market of starts and stops."

**EBS:** How has the pandemic affected the real estate market and your business? **BP:** "Oh, it's true it's taken off like crazy. ... Whatever is available, and there's very little inventory, people are buying, just to have a place to stay, to get out of the way. ... But they're fleeing here, because they see it as a safe place to shelter. Although, again, as you know, and I know, the amenities are somewhat limited. ... And that

has somewhat controlled the growth. But it has escalated dramatically now. And actually, it has escalated faster than the infrastructure has been put in place. So that's where it stands, there's very little inventory. There's no mid-range inventory. There's very little low-range inventory. ... There's so many [listings] for what would be deemed to be ridiculous prices. But the market is supporting it, because people will do anything to get a place. And that's what's happening to the real estate market. So, you know, we've had our boom-and-bust cycles many times. And the last one was, I think things sort of collapsed in 2000, then we had the recession until 2008 or 2009. And now we're in another boom, mainly virus-caused, and anything listed, even ridiculously priced, is selling."

EBS: How is Triple Creek Realty different from other real estate companies?

Jerry Pape Jr.: "Well, we have an additional part to that, which is what differentiates what we do.

We have a consulting firm that people pay us to work through complicated issues in real estate, land development issues, things along those lines. We're the only one who does that in the state. ... But

the only one who does that in the state. ... But that's one of the other things that differentiates a lot of our organization. ... We are not a franchise, we're solely owned, and we provide a different level of training. ... And so, when you're working with someone in our organization you have a very different level of training, hundreds and hundreds of hours that somebody has before we're going to let

EBS: What is your plan for the future of the company? JP Jr.: "If you were to come to work for me, I would be paying for you to go through your test and your education, I'd be covering all of those costs. So, you would make less money in

them use a pen and sell you something."

commission, so what I do, but you would make more consistent money. ... You'd be working as part of a team. So, it's a very different model for how to do this sort of thing and one that's, we think, considerably more successful. ... Basically, if I showed up at your door with five people, I'm the broker and four more agents, you pay the same commission amount but you get four people working for you. ... It gives you better coverage, better understanding. It also provides for better training experiences. If you were an agent in training, you would be being trained by the others by the experiences that you were having as opposed to running out of the first few transactions you have with people you know or friends and family and then sitting there."

EBS: What is your best business advice?

JP Jr.: "The advice to give for anybody in business is reserves, debt management, and equity acquisition. ... So, it's very rare you accomplish a plan you didn't have. ... Statistically speaking you miss 100 percent of the punch you don't take. My favorite quote of all time is from Gary Player, who sadly is dead: 'The harder I practice, the luckier I get.' ... In business, the advice we give is, you can't plan for everything, but that doesn't mean you should plan for nothing."



Supervising Broker/Owner Jerry Pape Jr. shares responsibility for the business with his parents, Becky Pape and Jerry Pape. PHOTO COURTESY OF JERRY PAPE JR.

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# **Oly Days**

# How one decade of sun, skiing and rabblerousing will never be forgotten



Lone Mountain in all her glory. Rendering of Big Sky Resort, circa 1978. Photos courtesy of Big Sky Pioneer Photo Collection/Flickr

# BY J.C. KNAUB

During the early years of Big Sky Resort, the route to the ski area was no more than a logging road that turned into a muddy mess every spring. Tourists were scarce, the war in Vietnam was winding down, and at times, the hardy folks that adopted the fledgling resort as their new home felt like the whole place was all their own.

It was a mild spring day in March of 1975 when I first saw the 10-foot-tall replica of an Olympia beer can hanging from the gondola cable, silently making its way uphill. It was a beacon of hope, and a sure sign that the season was waning. The wonderful prop meant the biggest ski party of the season was officially underway—it was Oly Days!

The event started in 1974 and ran aground in 1984 when members of Montana State University's football team got a little too rowdy over the long weekend. But for that decade, Oly Days would measure up as the premier end-of-season bash where beer flowed like glacier melt from the south face of Lone Mountain.

There was something for everyone during the three-day extravaganza: live music, the dual GS town league championship, a triple slalom, kids' races,



From left-right: Gary "Chicken Fry" Collins, Steve Blakeley and Greg Dahling film Oly Days, circa 1978

snow sculpting, snow golf, single- and three-man team inner tube races, all preceded by a Calcutta auction where lucky bidders won hefty cash payouts if their team placed in the top 10. A red hot air balloon with "Ski the Sky" emblazoned on the side made a few passes, but the sense of community was most prevalent when that giant Olympia beer can whisked overhead, making laps on the gondola towers.

My participation in the first couple of years eventually led to directing the event from then on. In those days, nostalgia and tradition were the rage, so we handed out beer can trophies to the winners of the various events. The Oly Cup, a giant megatron award, was bequeathed to the best townleague team.

Before ski area liability was a major concern, the three-man inner tube event was a huge crowd favorite. In the late '70s, it even made it into a Warren Miller movie. It was amazing to see how serious athletes were about this competition; some even waxed their tubes! Carnage ruled over the pro bump that was built for the giant slalom race, but also served as a launch zone for inner tubes. Helmets weren't required for the first couple of years, but that quickly changed due to the fact that many tubers wore ski boots and, after vaulting over the bump, would inadvertently knock each other unconscious with them.

In one instance, an inebriated tuber went off course, flew over a cat track backwards and narrowly missed a slash pile with the back of his neck by inches. We had a flimsy cheese grater safety net with bamboo poles that lasted one heat. Spectators were leveled in the finish area by the thundering horde of inflated truck tire riding troublemakers. It was great action, but as Gary "Chicken Fry" Collins recalls, Team Ore House owned the event for years:

"In the top seed was the Ore House team who rode the 'Tube Steak' to victory," Collins said. "Team members Kevin Kelleher, Kevin Breen and Rob Griffin were tubing gods, and were treated like rock stars. They wore black wetsuits, in part to help adhere [themselves] to the tube. They trained hard for days, developing their start strategy. The race seemed to be won at the start. A good start with a good grip and a proper stack increased your odds of surviving the jump."

As fun and action-packed as tubing was, the triple slalom was the real feature event. I'm told it was invented in Aspen and brought to Big Sky by the first ski instructors. In all of my 40 years as a racer, coach, and technical delegate, I have never seen an alpine race like it. We started at the top of the Tippy's headwall with three start wands. The single-pole bamboo gates were equally spaced, measured with patrol rope, for a 22-gate, 20-second run.

The cast of characters was mind boggling: Vuarnet powder junkies, bearded three-pin hippies, bartenders, cat drivers, lift operators, goggle-tanned shred betties in white turtlenecks and push-up Roffe stretch pants, resort management, a bevy of green card Austrians, ex-pro racers, and anybody who could stand the pressure of hundreds of spectators hooting and hollering as three evenly matched gate crashers came down at the same time.

Oly Days wasn't just about drinking beer in the sun, it was about the great people that shared that space in time: The waiter, the ticket girl, the patroller, the dirt bag living in his van in the parking lot. The deck surfing in front of the mall, the "As the bull wheel turns ..." drama, the course reports of who got hurt, who got run off, who got married, and who split. It was about the town, the blower pow, the lifestyle, and the dudes or dudettes you hung out with.

It's still pretty much the same, but there are way more people soaking it up. The image of that giant beer can gliding on that steel gondola cable will always be with me. It brings me back to a time when my life was as simple as an inner-tube race, a lap in the Couloir, and a hug from a pretty girl with a killer goggle tan in Roffe stretch pants.

J.C. Knaub is the owner and CEO of Andesite Construction and has lived in Big Sky for more than 40 years. He can get a killer goggle tan.

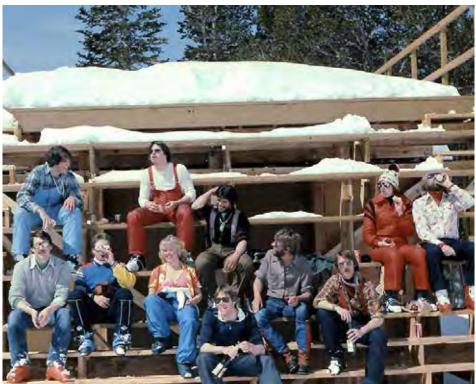
A version of this story was first published in the winter 2013-2014 edition of Bomb Snow magazine, which is being reborn and looking to publish once again this winter after a four-year hiatus. Welcome back, Bomb Snow!



Mike "Dobi" Donovan donning the first Big Sky Resort ski patrol jacket, a beautiful red and yellow number.



Dan Wade (left) mugs for the camera.



Hanging at Oly Days. A view of the spectator



# **BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR**

# Friday, Dec. 18 - Thursday, Dec. 31

If your event falls between Jan. 1 and Jan. 14, please submit it by Jan. 6 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

#### Friday, Dec. 18

#### **Contactless Santa Photos**

Gallatin Valley Mall, Bozeman, 4 p.m.

#### **Adult Puck Lunch**

Ressler Motors Ice Rink, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

# Saturday, Dec. 19

# Hamlet: A Radio Play

Online, 7 p.m., WMPAC.LIVE

### Saturday Sweat: Free Community Workout

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

#### Sunday, Dec. 20

#### Big Sky Virtual Kitchen

Online, 5 p.m., Big Sky Virtual Kitchen Facebook

### Game Night: Live Trivia

Bar IX, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

# Monday, Dec. 21

#### Big Sky Virtual Kitchen

Online, 5 p.m. Big Sky Virtual Kitchen Facebook

#### Special Virtual Cordi Class with James Sewell

Online, 5:30 p.m., Access Here: https://santoshabigsky.com/calendar/

#### Tuesday, Dec. 22

# **Ugly Sweater Party**

Pinky G's, 8 p.m.

# Trivia Tuesday

Union Hall Brewery, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

# Wednesday, Dec. 23

# **Total Body Conditioning**

Online, 8 a.m., Access Here: https://lppf.ptminder.com/

# **Educator Wednesdays**

Bunkhouse Brewery, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

# **Thursday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve)**

# Thursday Night Ice Climbers

Hyalite Čanyon, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

# Christmas with Philip Aaberg

Montana PBS, 7 p.m.

# Friday, Dec. 25 (Christmas)

# Christmas Feast

Sage Lodge, Pray, MT, 5 p.m.

# Music and Margaritas

Santa Fe Reds, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

# Saturday, Dec. 26

# Hyalite Tour Festival

Online, all week, Access Here: https://www.bridgerskifoundation.org/events/hyalite-tour

#### **Introduction to Fly Tying**

Fins and Feathers, Bozeman, 1 p.m.

#### Sunday, Dec. 27

# In a Landscape: Classical Music in the Wild

Big Sky Golf Course, 3 p.m.

#### Live Poker

Cat's Paw, Bozeman, 3 p.m.

#### Monday, Dec. 28

#### Trivia Night

Pinky G's, 7 p.m.

#### Science Around the World: Winter Break Camp

Montana Science Center, Bozeman, 9 a.m.

#### Tuesday, Dec. 29

#### **Open Mic Comedy**

American Legion, Bozeman, 9 p.m.

# Service Industry Night

Blend, Bozeman, 4 p.m.

## Wednesday, Dec. 30

#### Live Music

Wildrye Distillery, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

# Little One's Story Time

Bozeman Public Library, 10 a.m.

## **Thursday, Dec. 31 (New Years Eve)**

## Thursday Night Ice Climbers: New Years Eve Edition

Hyalite Canyon, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

## Sunrise Karaoke

Eagles Bar, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

# **BSCO WINTER PROGRAMMING**

## **GLIDE BIG SKY**

Glide Big Sky is a bi-weekly cross-country ski series January through March. The location changes each week so you can experience a new groomed trail in the Big Sky area with experienced Nordic ski guides. Wednesday's at 2pm

- January 6: Glide Community (Community Park Trails)
- January 20: Trails to Tavern\* (Crail Trail to Horn and Cantle)
- February 3: Spruce Cone Trial
- February 17: South Fork Loop
- March 3: Golf Course Crash Course
- March 17: Pace to the Pub\* (Town Center Trails)

# BIG SKY VIRTUAL KITCHEN

To participate, ask to join the BSVK Facebook Group for more information including recipes and times. All programs will be recorded via Facebook Live on the group page and are available to view at a late time.

The upcoming Holiday Series will include:

- Sunday, December 20: Chicken & Andouille Sausage Gumbo with 320 Ranch
- Monday, December 21: Christmas Morning Cinnamon Rolls with Ashley Dodd

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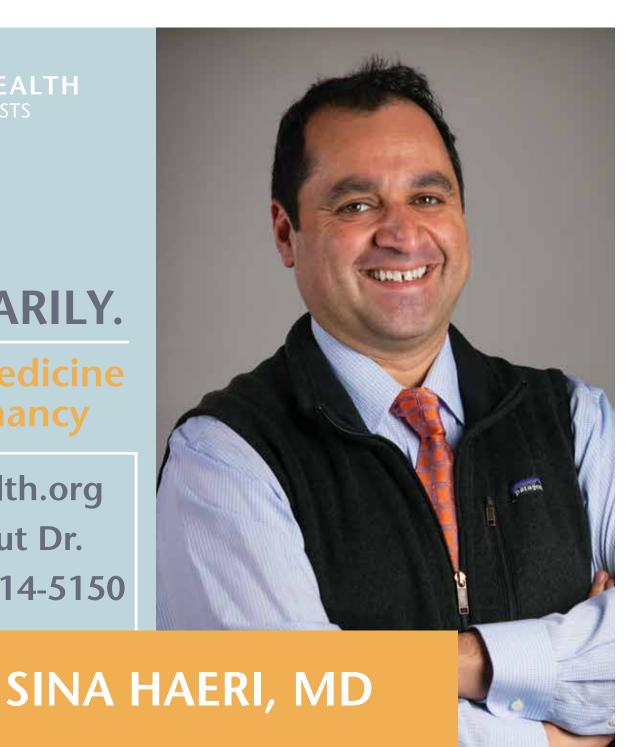


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- 100 colonies estimated in 2015 in Yellowstone National Park
- One colony may support 2–14 beavers that are usually related. Six is considered average
- YNP's beavers escaped most of the trapping that occurred in the 1800s due to the region's inaccessibility

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

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### **Enjoying the Ride: 'Tis the Season**



BY SCOTT BROWN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Here we are in the middle of the holiday season 2020, one of the craziest years in history—World War I and II excluded—and there is finally light at the end of the tunnel. The light I speak of may be found in many different ways: perhaps the

observation of religious holidays, political outcomes, a return to work or school, or maybe in the fact that there are three promising vaccines and over 200 more in development that promise an end to the COVID-19 pandemic. I sincerely hope we all can find some comfort in the light of this 2020 season. With that in mind, I'd like to discuss the topic of gifting during this season of giving.

Author and politician Roy T. Bennett sums up this topic nicely in his book "The Light in the Heart" with this quote: "Help others without any reason and give without expectation of receiving anything in return."

With giving in mind, I suggest we briefly review estate and gift taxes. The Internal Revenue Service has set the official estate and gift tax limits for 2020 at \$11.58 million per individual, up from \$11.4 million in 2019. In 2021 the estate and gift tax exemption is scheduled to rise to \$11.7 million. So, in the tragic event that a married couple dies this calendar year, their estate could shield \$23.16 million dollars from the so-called death tax. I share this with you not because it is applicable to most individuals or families, but because for some people, estate planning and gifting go hand in hand.

It is important to note that Joe Biden hopes to bring the estate and gift tax back to its 2009 level of \$3.5 million for individuals or \$7 million per couple, with a graduated rate up to 77 percent compared to today's flat rate of 40 percent. It's also important to realize that 17 states, including the District of Columbia, levy separate estate and/or inheritance taxes some starting at the first dollar of an estate. This would impact many households.

Moving on, the annual gift exclusion amount remains the same at \$15,000 per person, per beneficiary for 2020. It's interesting to me that many people with

advanced estate planning strategies like a GRAT, GRUT, CLAT or CLUT (we will review each of these in more detail another time) but don't always take advantage of the \$15,000 annual gift to their children, their children's spouses, grandchildren or even their spouses. Please note: if you gift a single beneficiary more than \$15,000 in one calendar year you are then using a portion of your lifetime gift/estate tax exemption.

Of course, a couple can gift each beneficiary \$30,000 in 2020. Obviously, giving isn't just about lowering taxes or monetary bequests, you can always give the value of your time or almost anything someone could benefit from receiving like used bikes, skis or books to name a few.

Finally let's talk about some fun ideas for gifting to adult children. One idea is to gift them a vacation or gift money toward a vacation fund. Some others include, making contributions to their retirement accounts, paying for education or medical expenses, or highly appreciated stock. Of course, you could simply give the gift of cash. I think all of these are great gifting ideas that will help your loved ones enjoy the ride!

Scott L. Brown is the Co-Founder and Managing Principal of Shore to Summit Wealth Management. His wealth management career spans more than 25 years and he currently works and lives in Bozeman, MT with his wife and two sons.

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



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



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



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



5,000 +/-1,900 +/- SQ

#### **SPANISH PEAKS CLUB**



Lot 38 Bitterbrush Trail 1.270 +/- ACRES / \$800K

#### **UNDER CONTRACT**

**BIG SKY - LAND** 



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - 2A-1B 526 +/- ACRES / \$2,390,000



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



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 2A-1A 246.9 +/- ACRES / \$2,390,000



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 3A 20 +/- ACRES / \$817,500

#### **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



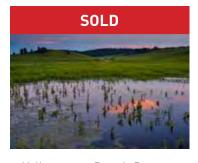
Rocking S7 Ranch Lot 4 Bozeman, MT 20.232 +/- ACRES / \$650K

#### COMMERCIAL



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

#### **RECENTLY SOLD**



Yellowstone Ranch Preserve List Price: \$19M



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



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



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



Big Sky Corner Property List Price: \$3.24M

#### **RECENTLY SOLD**



2078 Little Coyote List Price: \$1.079M



Ski Tip Lot 10 List Price: \$975K



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



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



189 B Pheasant Tail 1590 +/- SQ FT / \$699K

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verview Lane SQ FT Home FT Barn / \$2.5M



49825 Gallatin Road 2,568 +/- SQ FT / \$1.3M Parcel 1 - 5.0+/- ACRES



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



106 Prairie Fire Rd 3594 +/- SQ FT plus garage / \$1.325M 1.679 +/- ACRES



Gallatin Foothills Lot 5 \$950K Call for more information



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 4A 20 +/- ACRES / \$817,500



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 1L-2B 42.40 +/- ACRES / \$1.8M



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



Gallatin Foothills Lot 4 1.519 +/- ACRES \$395K Call for more information



177 Silver Run Drive 0.402 +/- ACRES \$329K

#### **BUSINESS**



Marketplace Unit 202 Big Sky, MT 966 +/- SQ FT / \$389K



50 Ousel Falls Big Sky, MT Call for details



Lone Peak Cinema \$140K / Big Sky, MT Call for details



Airport Garages

Bozeman, MT
\$29.9K per unit
Taking reservations for building G



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



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



Crail Ranch Unit 40 List Price: \$1.35M



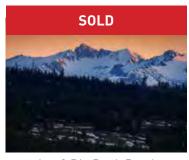
1955 Little Coyote Drive 3,100 +/- SQ FT / \$1.25M



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



Marketplace Unit 104 Big Sky, MT 1,204 +/- SQ FT/ \$560,920



Lot 2 Big Buck Road 20 +/- ACRES / \$480K



130 Mountain Man Trail Montana Ranch 20.8 +/- ACRES / \$325K

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- Big Sky Resident, Thomas Odenthal



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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.

# You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone



### BY SCOTT MECHURA EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

The human body is a complex machine.

That's an obvious statement, I know, but think about it—millions of brain functions every day, the fact that we have something called a memory that records and stores past occurrences, the combinations of complex motor skills that all work in unison, our immune system ... you get the idea.

But one part of this machine in particular has always fascinated me: our five senses.

Much of what the body does is internal. In other words, it's all inside as part of that complex machine. But the senses, sight, sound, smell, touch and taste, are there for the sole purpose of taking in the world around us, at which point the body and brain go to work to then process the information it just gathered. Lose one or more of these, and you know it instantly.

Several weeks ago, I was tidying up my yard for the season. Minimizing the gas in my mower and filling the snowblower with fresh gas, which then was used only three days after my mower. Welcome to Montana.

I don't know about you, but I find it almost impossible not to get some amount of fuel on my hands or a rag while performing these duties, but this time I noticed something right away. To confirm my suspicion, I put my hands and the rag up to my nose and took in a deep inhale. Nothing. I immediately knew what that meant.

#### I had COVID-19.

It was a Greek Tragedy, I thought to myself. Or an episode of the Twilight Zone where the last man on earth only cared about reading, only to break his glasses. I was the chef who couldn't smell.

Many who share this symptom often say they can't smell or taste, but that isn't accurate. Smell and taste are different. Taste comes from taste buds on the tongue and detect sweet, sour, salt, and bitter.

Smell however, is far more complex. Aromas enter the nasal cavity and hit millions of olfactory receptors, which send messages to several areas of the brain. One of those areas is our memory—smell is the sense most closely linked to our memory.

Another area is the taste buds. Your airway moves the aromas into the sinuses (think about how hot mustard and horseradish feel), and also down to meet what the taste buds are detecting on the tongue. It is this circular airflow that then send messages to the brain for you to further recognize and decipher what you are experiencing. All of this happens in a fraction of a second.

My sense of smell is coming back, though it's taking its time. My cooking of late is composed of experience and instinct more than anything else at this point. Just because you have made a recipe and followed it perfectly, doesn't mean that it can't taste a little different sometimes. Were the herbs or spices old? Were the tomatoes perfectly ripe or still pale and hard? There are many variables that can alter a recipe in subtle ways, that's why tasting is so very important.

However, back to experience and instinct.

After decades in my field, I can prepare a dish having a solid understanding and expectation of what the end result will be in this time of being olfactory handicapped.

Experienced chefs know that the flavor of a slow-grilled medium rare ribeye steak will taste different than a hot charred-on-the-outside medium rare ribeye.

I'm currently doing all the things you should be doing to recover your olfactory sense. But I can't think of anything I've taken for granted more than my smell, now that I've experienced what it's like when it's gone.

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 820

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

James Crews, the author of this week's poem, is the editor of a fine anthology from Green Writers Press called Healing the Divide: Poems of Kindness and Connection, much needed in our troubled world. Here, as I see it, he graciously pays his respects to William Carlos Williams, our great poet of the local and ordinary, who once wrote about the pleasure of eating all the plums his wife had left in the refrigerator. His newest book is Bluebird.

#### Clearly

To see clearly, not needing a drink or pill or puff of any pipe to know I'm alive. To come home, peel off sandals and step onto the cool tile floor needing only the rush of water over strawberries I picked myself and then a knife to trim the dusty green heads from each one, to watch them gleam cleanly in a colander in a patch of sun near the sink.

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"It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that while there is infection in disease and sorrow, there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humour."

-Charles Dickens,
"A Christmas Carol"

#### **CROSSWORD PUZZLE ACROSS** 37 Myth. strong ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE man O B I A V E I M A M L E R A I R P L A N E O T B P O E M 38 "Battle Hymn of 1 Malign 5 Soft job 9 Man the Republić' writer 40 S. Afr. savanna 43 Orinoco SOAP 12 Grant LTDEENACTERS 13 Irish nobleman tributary TAD TANA 14 Guido's note (2 44 Chicle tree words) 15 Ohone (2 METOLMONARCH 48 Carriage 49 "Arabian Nights" A B A S O A R I I L I A words) 17 Alfonso's queen ABSCONDSAYID dervish 50 Loyal (Scot.) 18 Moses's spy in MARCHUD 51 Brick carrier Canaan 19 And other: abbr. FHA DEFER AUG Rivera, I A N A X L I I H A L F N O T E (2 words) (Lat.) 53 Berne's river 20 Pervade 23 Adjective-LAD PLO forming (suf.) 24 Bundle **DOWN** 16 Have (Scot.) 5 Hall (Ger.) 25 Abuse Victory site of 19 Sound 1 School course 30 Amazon Nelsón perception (abbr.) Brythonic sea tributary 31 Rom. province 20 In the same place (abbr.) 21 Symbol of Arabic (abbr.) Footlike 32 Tumor (suf.) gód N. Caucasian structure 33 Ebb Meloe (2 words) authority 35 Pretensions 36 Parrot language 10 Arm bone 22 Ebony (2 Save 11 Semitic deity words) 23 Thus (Lat.) 25 Sheep's cry 26 Amer. Cancer 12 Society (abbr.) 27 Repose 28 W. Indian hog 15 plum 29 Russian news agency 31 Goddess (Lat.) 34 Female ruff 35 Atli 28 37 Subjoin 38 Botch 39 Catholic book of feasts 33 40 Cranial nerves 41 Heroic 42 Timber wolf 36 44 Juice

# BIG SKY BEATS



43

48

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# Dolly Parton's "A Holly Dolly Christmas"

45 Field 46 Malay gibbon 47 Beer

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

Dolly Parton is an American singer, songwriter and actress primarily known for her work in country music. Outside of her creative pursuits, Parton is also a philanthropist and her Dollywood Foundation has donated millions to fire relief, literacy, and most recently, to COVID-19 research. Earlier this year, Parton donated \$1 million to fund research efforts on the virus and her donation was partly used to fund Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine. Alongside her philanthropic efforts to battle a worldwide pandemic, she also dropped her 47th solo studio album and first holiday album in 30 years, "A Holly

album was released on Oct. 2, 2020 and it includes timeless Christmas songs as well as a few original tracks written by Parton. The album also features duets with some of Parton's best friends including Michael Bublé, Billy Ray Cyrus, Miley Cyrus, Jimmy Fallon and Willie Nelson. There is also a special song with Parton's brother, Randy Parton.



# BACKUI

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"

### Here's the Scoop: I Hate Shoveling Snow

#### BY EDNOR THERRIAULT

Each fall, as the leaves begin to turn, and the smell of burnt dog hair tells me the baseboard heaters have come on, I go out to the garage to shut off the lawn sprinkler system. I gather the rakes to carry them back to the shed where I'll swap them for the snow shovels. It's a grim task. It feels like the Bataan Death March, this depressing ritual that signals the end of summer.

Don't get me wrong, I don't hate winter completely. If you're a regular reader of this fine publication you may have caught my snowboarding piece from 2018. And my injuries have healed completely, thanks for asking. Snow can be fun: there's tubing, sledding, throwing snowballs and building snow individuals. I also simply enjoy looking at it from the comfort of my cozy home, gazing at the soft beauty of a sparkling fresh snowfall.

I wasn't thinking such thoughts last fall as I rattled the rakes into the corner of the shed and grabbed the pair of battered snow shovels. I like snow; I hate shoveling it. I found myself rooting for climate change to somehow divert all precipitation away from my part of the state until May. I could feel the muscles in my lower back already tweaking just a bit, preliminary baby spasms that signaled several months of Bengay, Icy Hot, and enough moaning, grunting and whimpering to cause Siri to alert the authorities that I'm filming dirty movies in my living room.

Sure, I like to pull into a cleared driveway and climb the steps of a snow-free front porch as much as the next guy, but it's like that old Louis Jordan song, "What's the Use of Getting Sober (When You're Gonna Get Drunk Again)." I might spend an hour or more shoveling a few tons of Satan's dandruff off our driveway and front porch, only to go inside and crack a bottle of adult reward just as the radio tells me



another "snowpocalypse" or "blizzardmageddon" or "graupelpalooza" is bearing down on us. I might consider moving to Florida if it weren't for the giant pythons and crazy people.

As with many tasks in my life, pleasant and otherwise, I turn to music to help get me through. It might seem weird, but when it comes to the drudgery of shoveling snow, I'm oddly comforted and motivated by seemingly counterproductive songs pounding through my earbuds, not some Beach Boys jingle-jangle to take my mind off the situation. My shoveling playlist—entitled "%#?&! Snow"—includes such drivewayclearing anthems as "Working in the Coal Mine," "Sixteen Tons" and "Take This Job and Shove It."

One January, I was so entranced by Neil Young's guitar solo on "Cortez the Killer" that I finished the driveway and went on to shovel the backyard.

Music helps ease the burden of shoveling, but there's an evil lurking out there beyond the driveway, a malignant soul-crusher that can send me into a shovel-slinging, beanie-tossing tantrum of blood-spitting rage. I'm talking, of course, about the snowplow.

It's happened to all of us: we finally get our driveway cleared, and suddenly we hear it coming from down the street—for me, it's usually accompanied by the Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil." Your stomach drops, and you choke back a couple of sobs as you hear the roar of the engine, the scrape of the blade. The sickening whoosh grows louder as a breaking wave of filthy snow is hurled from the road, burying every parked car in a berm of slush and shoving a massive foothill of Beelzebub's Bisquick onto the foot of the driveway you've just finished clearing.

Even though this is the same person you'll later thank for making sure you can get to work, and your kids safely make it to school, at this moment we hate the snowplow driver. Snow shovelers wouldn't like this guy even if the plow left a trail of candy canes and 30-year-old scotch. If you live in the Northern Rockies and park on the street, having to dig your vehicle out of a man-made snowbank is probably the second most popular excuse for being late on a winter workday, right after the Fresh Powder Flu.

A couple of years ago, my neighbor across the street bought a snow blower—a big, gas-powered beast that chewed the snow off his driveway like a starved sheep on an overgrown lawn. It looked like fun. It also looked expensive, and I am what some might call "thrifty." My neighbor is a good guy, and we've loaned each other tools and things over the years.

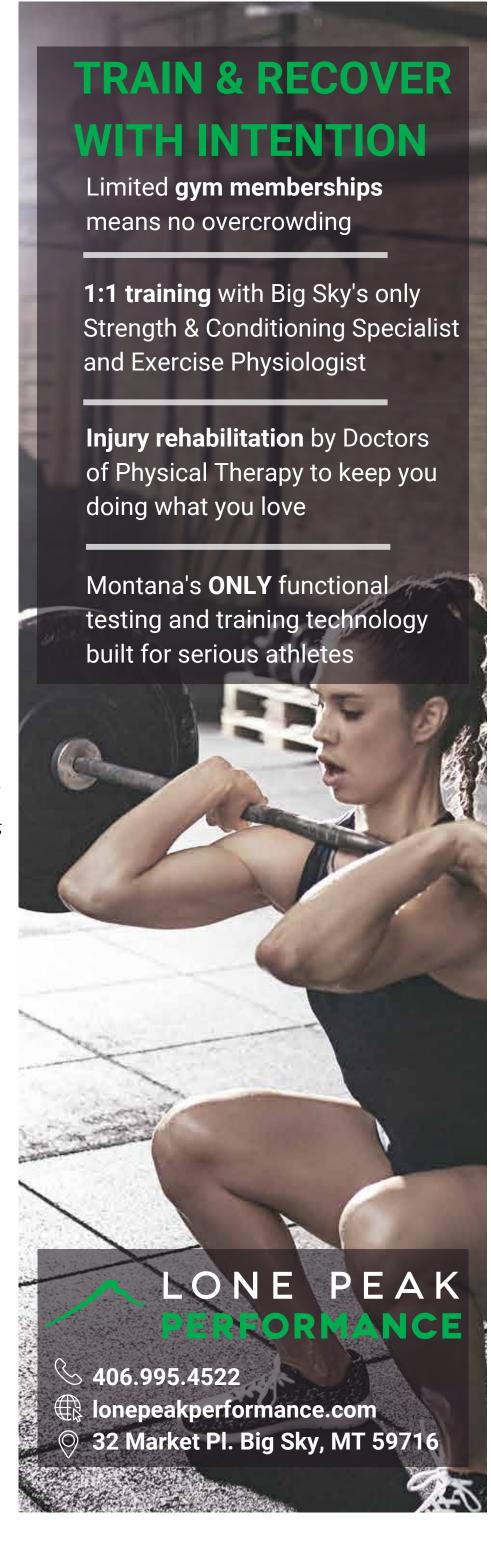
Surely he'd watched me over here struggling with the shovel, slipping and falling on the icy concrete, shaking my fist at the sky and cursing the snowflakes while they filled in the spots I'd already shoveled. He may also have heard me singing the refrain from "Sympathy" as the snowplow approached. Surely he'd want to offer up his powerful snow throwing machine and end my suffering. But I lacked the pride and patience to wait for him to make the offer, so I trudged across the road one day after an apocalyptic snow dump and knocked on his door.

"Hey, Joel," I said, "I was just wondering if you ever returned my lawn mower you borrowed last summer."

He looked at me like I had an ear growing out of my forehead. "Your lawnmower? Yeah, I even put it in your shed, remember? Back in that corner by the rakes."

The rakes. To his credit, he offered me the snow blower and didn't even ask about the frozen tears on my cheek.

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





Merry Christmas

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In a year plagued by immense hardship and toil, the Big Sky community turned out in record numbers to show love, support and appreciation for their favorite businesses, people and community bright spots for the eleventh annual Best of Big Sky round-up. This year's Best of Big Sky is not only a compilation of outstanding local anchors but a collective expression of gratitude—from the people of Big Sky to those who keep it going. Writer Orson Scott Card said every person is defined by the community they belong to. Here's the best of ours.

-The Editors













### **BEST BUSINESS**



Ace Hardware has been a Big Sky staple, from its small location on U.S. Highway 191 to its upgrade along Lone Mountain Trail. Despite pandemic challenges, ACE has remained open and helpful to the community throughout 2020. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

### 157: ACE HARDWARE

While the typical visit to the hardware store is usually an in-and-out forgettable affair, anyone who frequents Ace Hardware in Big Sky knows it can be so much more than that. Upon each visit, customers are greeted without fail by a friendly red-vested hardware helper. You'll never leave empty-handed because the attentive staff will also help you find what you need, and you'll likely enjoy some pleasant banter to accompany your shopping.

True to its reputation of reliability, Ace is one of the few Big Sky businesses to have stayed open without exception throughout the entire pandemic thus far, making sure that Big Sky has everything that it needs to 'Stay strong.' Though it's not been without challenge, Ace has been a community anchor in the face of rough waters.

"Being selected Big Sky's Business of the Year has really put an exclamation point on this year for us," said owner Kevin Barton. "Our staff has been working long hours under some adverse conditions in a very scary climate at times. It's a nod to their professionalism that they are being recognized in this way." A humble and well-adored employer, Barton said he considers his staff "the backbone of Ace Hardware." acebigskytools.com

### **2ND:** TWO PINES PROPERTIES

Two Pines Properties, also named Best Property Management by Best of Big Sky voters, has quickly become a community favorite. Local owners Alex and Wes Hoecker bring a true family spirit to business, from staff to clients. It's no wonder they continue to rank among the top Best of Big Sky. **twopinesvacationrentals.com** 

### EDITOR'S CHOICE: BIG SKY NATURAL HEALTH

Dr. Kaley Burns and her new Big Sky business have proven that it doesn't take much time to become a community staple. During a time where health is of the utmost importance, Dr. Burns' holistic approach to healthcare brings an outstanding option to those looking for a healthcare experience rooted in a strong and compassionate relationship with their provider. bigskynaturalhealthmt.com

### **BEST GREEN ENTITY**

### 157: RECYCLING CENTER

In 2015, Big Sky went six months without any recycling. Six years later, after the town's recycling moved from Aspen Leaf Drive to the east side of U.S. Highway 191 south of town, the Recycling Center has been voted the Most Sustainable/Green Entity by Big Sky residents. The move, and continued operation of the Recycling Center, is made possible by a long list of people including, John Haas, who donated his land, Haas Builders, Mike McDaniel, Alan McLain, Jeremy Harder, Justin Rau, Kevin Barton, Dave Leverett, John Delzer, Jim Simon, Moonlight Painting and Simkins-Hallin.

"It takes a lot of very giving people to make a community project like this possible," said Haas, founder of Haas Builders. "I am extremely grateful to all the people who have, and continue to, give of their time for such a great community asset. And especially to all the people of Big Sky, who utilize this asset, to help keep our world a cleaner and better place. I believe I speak for everyone (listed above), we are honored to receive such recognition by the community. Thank you." werecyclemt.com & gallatinsolidwaste.org



John Haas donated his land south of town to be the new home of the recycling center.  ${\tt PHOTO\,BY\,GABRIELLE\,GASSER}$ 

### 2ND: GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

Named Big Sky's best nonprofit in 2016, the Gallatin River Task Force has been active in the Big Sky community since 2000 when a group of passionate community members wanted to stop the release of treated wastewater into the Gallatin River. Since its inception, the Task Force has monitored the Upper Gallatin River Watershed and created a valuable database. Their current projects include water conservation, river restoration and a water management forum to help plan for growth and development in Big Sky. gallatinrivertaskforce.org

### 3Kか: YES COMPOST

As the only composting service offered in Big Sky, Karl Johnson's one-man show allows businesses and households in the community to minimize food waste and help provide the fuel for food growth. **yescompost.com** 



### BEST RESTAURANT



The Best Restaurant in Big Sky serves up quality sushi and an authentic dining experience. PHOTO BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

### 2ND: GALLATIN RIVERHOUSE

If you know Gallatin Riverhouse Grill owners Greg Lisk and Kyle Wisniewski, you'll know that seeing them on the side of the road in their respective cow and pig costumes isn't out of the ordinary. The flavorful duo have been at the helm of the Gallatin Riverhouse Grill since 2013 with a fiery passion for dry-rubbed, slow-smoked meats, craft beer and a panoramic view of the Gallatin River. **riverhousebbq.com** 

### 157: BLUE BUDDHA SUSHI

Blue Buddha has been the backdrop for many Friday Afternoon Club live music events over the summer, providing pandemic-safe entertainment—and phenomenal sushi rolls and cocktails—to the Big Sky community. Troy "Twist" Thompson, founder and owner, has over 15 years of sushi rolling under his belt, as well as thorough training at the Sushi Chef Institute in Los Angeles under America's legend of sushi rolling, Andy Matsuda. After opening his first restaurant in Page, Arizona, in 2007, Thompson and his family looked to Big Sky for their next venture, opening Blue Buddha in Town Center in the summer of 2019.

Although many of Blue Buddha's rolls come with a contemporary twist, Thompson is determined to honor sushi rolling as the respected, timeless art it is. "Don't come here expecting fast food," he told EBS just before they opened in August 2019. "That's not what we do. We're crafting an experience, from start to finish. Enjoy yourself." bigskybluebuddha.com

#### 3KD: OLIVE B'S

Last year's crowned victor, Olive B's Big Sky Bistro, claimed another spot in the Best Restaurant category this year due to their consistent and delicious menu that has secured a loyal patronage over the years. The next time you're craving a meal crafted with care and experience, pop into Olive B's. **olivebsbigsky.com** 

### BEST LOCAL MEAL DEAL

### 157: BLUE MOON BAKERY

Christian and Amy Johnsen moved to Big Sky under the trance of Lone Mountain and became Blue Moon Bakery's third owners, evolving the foundation set by the previous owners into a community staple. Known for their fresh-baked muffins, pastries, lunch sandwiches and pizzas, the Johnsens' focus is on customer relationships and establishing a familiar community gathering place for both residents and visitors alike. Once professional ski bums, and now parents to two college students, the Johnsens are proud Big Sky residents who cherish the ability to wave hello to passerby.

"We love Big Sky," they told EBS for an interview last fall. "Some people would be driven crazy by small town living, but we've taken to it. We feel very fortunate to be successful here." **bigskybluemoonbakery.com** 



The pizza lunch special is just one of the many affordable and delicious options at the Blue Moon Bakery. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

### 2ND: GALLATIN RIVERHOUSE

The Gallatin Riverhouse knows that respectable barbeque doesn't come fast. Every piece at the Riverhouse is dry rubbed—with their house mix, of course—and slow cooked for 12-18 hours over hand-cut mesquite wood. Whether your love language is finger-licking ribs, steaming hot cheese curds, crispy onion rings or that classic \$7 fried chicken dinner, swinging by on your way to or from your favorite fishing hole or ski run is a no-brainer. riverhousebbq.com

### 3ペタ: MI PUEBLITO TACO BUS

Don't let the immobile school bus fool you—Mi Pueblito Taco Bus is as authentic as you can get while still within earshot of Lone Mountain's avalanche TNT. Stop by or call in ahead for a side burrito, taco plate or heaping platter of nachos and you'll always be greeted by a friendly "hola" at the bus window.

ordermipueblitotacobus.com



### BEST BURGER



The bywom burger continues to reign supreme in Big Sky, with all the fixings of your favorite burger loaded up with the bistro's secret sauce. PHOTO COURESTY OF JOHN FLACH

### 157: BYWOM

Every local knows the craving—the craving for a bywom burger. It's no wonder the addiction has swept the town. What do you expect when you sandwich two juicy patties, caramelized onion, pickle and lettuce between fresh Montana buns and pack the punch with a secret yet tantalizing sauce? For 25 years, the family-owned restaurant has been serving up delicious bistro-style dishes, but for regulars and newbies alike, the burger (Best of Big Sky winner for \_\_\_\_ consecutive years) reigns supreme.

"We just really appreciate all the locals and visitors that have supported us for all these years," said Pam Flach, bywom co-owner. "It is definitely a great burger!" In addition to thanking the community, Flach and her husband, John, offer thanks to "Big Boy" for the inspiration for Big Sky's Best Burger. bywombywordofmouth.com

#### 2ND: COPPER-BIG SKY

While Copper is new on the Big Sky gastronomic scene, the Bozeman restaurant's newest location has wasted no time sweeping up local fans, especially with their irresistible burgers. The Slushman's Burger, named for the Bridger Bowl chairlift called, by one writer, "the greatest chairlift ever," is packed with crowd favorites, from bacon jam to the Swiss and blue cheese duo. Pair that with one of their craft cocktails, each infused with the rugged yet refined taste of Montana, or a cold beer and you have yourself a meal to remember. **coppermontana.com** 

#### 3ペタ: LONE PEAK BREWERY

Not to be excluded from the menu of best burgers in town, Lone Peak Brewery's award-winning ground round has been a favorite for years. Don't forget to thank one of the owners when they swing by your table for a friendly check-in! **lonepeakbrewery.com** 

### **BEST PIZZA**

### 157: OUSEL AND SPUR

Since 2012, Ousel and Spur has been serving up high quality pies with an extra dash of sophistication. More than just a standard pizzeria, Ousel and Spur also brings to the table a wide selection of authentic Italian dishes.

Owner Jennifer Kettleridge places a heavy emphasis on high quality, locally sourced ingredients to craft her delicious pizzas. With fresh house-made sauces, hand tossed crust, vegetables from Montana farms and toppings like elk sausage, Ousel and Spur's gourmet pizzas are sure to tickle your taste buds.

"Everyone's working so hard right now, and everyone's doing their best effort," Kettleridge said. "I would really like to share this award with all the restaurant owners out there. It's been a really hard year for everyone, and I know how challenging it's been. ... It seems every day there's some new restriction or something we have to abide by so it's been real challenging, but I look forward to getting past COVID and hopefully getting back to normal sometime soon."

Kettleridge also offered a big shoutout to her staff. "We might have the best pizza, but we definitely have the best staff." **ouselandspurpizza.com** 

High- quality locally sourced ingredients elevate Ousel and Spur's gourmet pizzas. PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER KETTLERIDGE

### 2ND: BLUE MOON BAKERY

For over 25 years, Blue Moon Bakery has kept Big Sky residents well-fed for every meal. A variety of baked goods, pizzas made from scratch, sandwiches and the famous "Benny" round out the wide variety of offerings from this family-owned bakery. **bigskybluemoonbakery.com** 

### 3KD: PINKY G'S

A staple in Jackson Hole, Wyoming since 2011, Pinky G's expanded to Big Sky in 2019 and the pizzeria specializes in New York style pizza with a variety of other comfort food offerings. **pinkygs.com** 





### **BEST BAR**



Beehive Basin Brewery, voted Best Bar, is conveniently located in Town Center and offers a roster of some of Big Sky's most stellar brews. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

### 2ND: THE ROCKS TASTING ROOM AND LIQUOR STORE

Celebrating Montana for its treasured flavor, The Rocks is a must for picking up a Montana-made ale or spirit. Whether you're swinging by to grab a unique bottle to bring by a friend's or sticking around for the good service and a well-made drink, locals know that The Rocks has you covered. One of the newer bars in town, The Rocks is also stand-out for its hospitality and character. **the-rocks-tasting-room-and-liquor-store.business.site** 

### 157: BEEHIVE BASIN BREWERY

A favorite among all who grace its warmly lit, energetic space, Beehive Basin Brewery is a quick-pick for a quality beverage and quality company. When swinging by for a classic Green Bridge IPA or an imperial that will knock your socks off, take your pick between cozy heated outdoor seating or saddling up at an indoor table next to a buddy who's sure to be there. Be it summer or winter, Beehive is a great venue to kick back with your pals (and your dog) and enjoy a true taste of Big Sky. And as if their beer wasn't already good enough, the Town Center brewery also offers beer delivery.

"I would just like to thank all of our customers and employees for making Beehive Basin Brewery what it is," said owner Casey Folley.

Proven by a repeat appearance in the Best Bar category, there's no better place to sip a cold one in Big Sky. Cheers, Beehive! **beehivebasinbrewery.com** 

#### 3KD: THE BROTHEL

Where else can you get your bike tuned and grab a drink? For those looking for the true local experience, The Brothel's it. (406)-995-7896

### **BEST APRES**

### 157: SCISSORBILLS SALOON

A 'scissorbill' is an old western term for a less-than-skilled laborer—someone who didn't know what they were doing or didn't care. Although the name of Scissorbills Saloon has changed alongside the owners through its history—which dates back almost to the beginning of Big Sky Resort—the haunt has always celebrated those looking for a good après. Keith Kuhns, the operating partner, bought the restaurant 10 years ago and has been behind its success ever since. scissorbills.com



Scissorbills Saloon has been an après favorite for boarders and skiers alike for decades. PHOTO COURTESY OF KEITH KUHNS

### 2ND: BEEHIVE BASIN BREWERY

Whether you have an old favorite, such as the Working Guys Cream Ale or Green Bridge IPA, or are the kind of person looking for something new upon every visit, Beehive Brewing is the ideal après for you—and your pup. The staple of Town Center has been in business since August 2015 and since then, they have made a name for themselves, including a "best beer" win at the 2016 Big Sky Brewfest. beehivebasinbrewery.com

### 3KD: CARABINER

Located in the Summit Hotel, skiers can practically ski into the Carabiner Lounge's newly renovated patio directly from Tippy's. They offer live music, fresh brews, craft cocktails and a global-inspired menu. bigskyresort.com/resort-dining/carabiner



### **BEST COFFEE**



Katherine Berceau mans the counter at Caliber Coffee. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

### 157: CALIBER COFFEE

As Big Sky's only local roaster, Caliber Coffee offers some of the freshest beans around. Caliber boasts house roasted whole bean coffee as well as a variety of traditional espresso drinks, pour overs, drip coffee and a small selection of nibbles. Not only does the Westfork Meadows coffee shop offer some of the best caffeine in town, the location is a great spot to meet a friend for coffee, perhaps to get some work done in a relaxed atmosphere. Caliber has two locations throughout Big Sky, one in Westfork Meadows and one along U.S. Highway 191. Caliber owner Stephanie Alexander, who bought and took over the business in 2017, has a professional and dedicated staff to carry out her vision. calibercoffeeinc.com

### 2ND: ACRE CAFE

The new kid on the block, ACRE café, replaced Toast and is led by General Manager Adam Harman. Not only does ACRE offer a wide variety of traditional espresso drinks with many customizable options, the café also boasts a daily menu featuring healthy meals suitable for vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, keto and paleo diets. acrebigsky.com

## 3KD: THE HUNGRY MOOSE MARKET & DELI

Conveniently located in the Town Center, The Hungry Moose can fulfill all your cravings, including one for a hot cup o' Joe. **hungrymoose.com** 

### BEST ARTIST

### 157: HEATHER RAPP

No matter where you go in Big Sky, the vibrant world of Heather Rapp is everywhere you look. The utility box on Ousel Falls Road, the walls of Beehive Basin Brewery, even on the faces of passersby in the form of her unique Lone Mountain face masks. To say she's in love with the surrounding landscape would be an understatement—in addition to her familiar Lone Mountain scene, she estimates she's painted Beehive Basin at least once a year, yet each version is unique. The Colorado Springs, Colorado native made Big Sky her permanent home in 2007 and, like her colorful palette, works to bring joy to those around her. During the COVID-19 shut down, Rapp brought her paint parties to the virtual platform, encouraging empowerment through the arts.

"Trying to paint even when you have no formal training can really empower you," she told EBS in an interview in March. "You can see them light up as they connect with other people as they're creating together. Art allows them to express themselves in a positive way." heatherrapp.com

### 2ND: SHELLY BERMONT

Shelly Bermont has worn a lot of hats in her lifetime—flight attendant, realtor, caterer, baker, chef and full-time mom—but she



Artist Heather Rapp loves to paint the landscape around her and her work can be seen throughout Big Sky. PHOTO COURTESY OF HEATHER RAPP

seems to have found her calling right here in Big Sky at her jewelry store, Shelly Bermont Fine Jewelry. Whether casual or sophisticated, Shelly and her team of Geologist Institute of America-certified employees work one-on-one with every customer to find that perfect piece of handmade jewelry. **shellybermont.com** 



### BEST PHOTOGRAPHER



Photographer Ryan Turner has lived in Big Sky for 22 years and his work has been featured in 60 publications. PHOTO COURTESY OF RYAN TURNER

### 157: RYAN TURNER

Capturing the mountain lifestyle is a "takes one to know one" form of art, one that Ryan Turner has mastered in his 22-year residency in Big Sky. He names renowned Jackson, Wyoming nature and wildlife photographer Thomas Mangelsen as an inspiration and was fortunate to be able to hone his craft in places like France and Alaska before settling here. His work has been featured in 60 different publications through the years, including Powder Magazine and Big Sky Journal. He finds himself drawn to the light, the way it ignites a situation, brings focus to something and creates a mood.

You can find Turner's work at the Wilson Hotel and the Yellowstone Conference Center, and he's currently working on his first photography book.

"We have an opportunity as artists to be able to grab people's attention quickly, and it draws us to it over and over again," Turner said to EBS back in June, when discussing the role of art in the community and its ability to communicate to viewers. "It can make you feel happy and sad and calm." **ryanturnerphotography.com** 

### 2ND: DAVE PECUNIES

Upon your arrival to Big Sky, just before the imposing silhouette of Lone Mountain appears in the frame of your windshield, you'll see Dave Pecunies'

gallery where Lone Mountain Trail meets U.S. Highway 191. Driven by his passion for skiing, the photographer and videographer has made Big Sky his home since 2015 and the landscape, as well as it's structures and people, his primary subject matter since. **davepecunies.com** 

### **BEST TOURIST ATTRACTION**

### 157: BIG SKY RESORT

Conceptualized by Chet Huntley and Big Sky Inc., Big Sky Resort was established in 1973. Big Sky is the largest of 12 Boyne Resorts and offers 5,850 skiable acres suitable for all skill levels and through a clear vision of the future and the implementation of new amenities, Big Sky Resort continues to grow and improve to serve skiers far and wide. Among the newest additions are Ramcharger 8 on Andesite Mountain, the most technologically advanced chairlift in North America, and a newly renovated base lodge now called The Exchange. Not only does Big Sky offer a unique skiing experience, the resort has many summer activities on the docket as well. With 40 miles of mountain biking trails, a network of hiking trails and many other outdoor recreation activities to choose from, there is never a dull moment at Big Sky Resort.

"We are so grateful for the support of the Big Sky community," said Troy Nedved, general manager of Big Sky Resort. "Here's to a safe, healthy, long, and snowy ski season ahead!" **bigskyresort.com** 



The resort offers 5,850 skiable acres as well as a wide variety of activities for every season. PHOTO BY JON RESNICK

### 2ND: YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Founded in 1872 as our nation's first national park, Yellowstone fascinates millions of visitors every year. With over half the world's

geysers within its boundaries, the park offers many geothermal wonders, scenic views and wildlife to enrapture visitors. The park is just a brief and scenic drive south from the town of Big Sky.

nps.gov/yell



### **BEST HOTEL**



The Wilson Hotel has been operating in Big Sky for two years and provides a gathering place for the community. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

### 157: THE WILSON

In its second year in Big Sky, The Wilson Hotel has moved up in the ranks, providing not only top-notch lodging in Big Sky Town Center, but a gathering place for outdoor music, yoga, the Farmers Market and a place to play in the park, drink some coffee or juice, and soak up the sun after a day on the mountain. At the helm is General Manager Mandy Hotovy, a Maine native, who moved out West to earn her turns and gain some knowledge in the hospitality industry. She has been in Big Sky since 2018 and hasn't looked back since. Despite COVID-19, The Wilson has maintained high occupancy numbers throughout, serving both seasonal workers as well as visitors to the area. **thewilsonhotel.com** 

### **BEST RANCH**

### 157: LONE MOUNTAIN RANCH

Lone Mountain Ranch is no stranger to the Best of Big Sky. As 2019's "Best Hotel" winner, and with over a century of experience providing the most authentic experience of Yellowstone Country, LMR has earned its stripes as a world-renowned establishment. On a single property, visitors can experience horseback riding, cross-country and downhill skiing as well as lodging and fine dining all surrounded by some of Big sky's most breathtaking vistas. **lonemountainranch.com** 

### 2ND: 320 GUEST RANCH

At the 320 Guest Ranch, and McGill's Restaurant & Saloon, business is a family affair. General Manager Amber Brask was raised on the property nestled in Gallatin Canyon, after her father bought it in 1986. "I'm just trying to think back on things that my dad tells me and one thing that always sticks with me is follow winners," Brask told EBS last month of her father's most notable business advice. "... just keep following winners and you're going to be successful yourself." 320ranch.com



Ranch, hotel, restaurant cross country skiing area and more, Lone Mountain Ranch is one of National Geographic's Unique Lodges of the World. PHOTO COURTESY OF LONE

### KID OF THE YEAR

### **LOGAN BARKER**

In honor of our younger champions of Big Sky and with the help of the Big Sky School District, Explore Big Sky is recognizing Logan Barker, LPHS freshman, as Kid of the Year. Barker, who has lived in Big Sky her whole life, is described by both her parents and teachers as being a compassionate young woman.

"Her passions motivate her in everything she does," said Barker's mom, Nicole.

Tony Coppola, the Social Studies teacher at LPHS, said Barker is an exceptional student.

"She is very involved in both the Big Sky community and the culture of the school district," Coppola said. "Logan is well deserving of this opportunity and will continue to thrive as a model student for years to come."



Logan Barker, a freshman at Lone Peak High School, is recognized by her school and family as being both an exemplary student and young community member. PHOTO COURTESY





### **BEST SPA**



Santosha Wellness Center was founded by Callie Stolz in 2012. PHOTO COURTESY OF CALLIE STOL7

#### 2ND: OZSSAGE

Owner Jacquie Raeger and her staff pride themselves on helping the active community of Big Sky stay well and enjoy all that the

### 157: SANTOSHA WELLNESS CENTER

For the last eight years, Santosha Wellness Center has offered a space for various practices of health and wellness to the community of Big Sky, becoming a go-to place for yoga and other spa services. Founded by Callie Stolz in 2012, Santosha Wellness boasts 20 teachers during their busy season, and has a wide variety of classes for all skill levels. The offerings include a variety of massage practices from around the world and holistic healing services.

"I am honored to have won [best spa], I think it's great," Stolz said, "I think it's been an interesting year and we've been doing the best we can, as I think everyone else has as well. I'm stoked and honored."

Santosha Wellness had to pivot this year and find a way to offer their services in a COVID-friendly way.

"I feel like it really made us, step up, and think about all the protocols and ways in which we could keep people coming in safe and keep one another safe," Stolz said. "It's been an interesting process and helping us to shift gears to figure out more technology and ways in which we can offer all of our classes and workshops virtually, has been an interesting challenge but I think it's gotten pretty smooth overall. I feel really grateful for everyone on our team that has really helped make that all possible and easy." santoshabigsky.com

mountain landscape has to offer. Operating in Big Sky since 2001, Ozssage has been serving clients for 20 years with a quality healing experience that leaves customers feeling rejuvenated. **ozssage.com** 

### **BEST SALON**

### 157: TRIBE SALON

Hanna Powell opened up The Tribe Salon behind the post office in Meadow Village four years ago and has since provided many glow-ups for Big Sky residents. Book an appointment with Powell or Erin Mulhern and leave the chair revitalized and ready for your close-up. Powell specializes in creative coloring and Balayage, a French coloring technique that leaves the hair looking natural and sun kissed, according to the Tribe's website. Mulhern prioritizes pursuing continuing education so her guests always leave feeling and looking beautiful.

"We would like to thank our amazing community and clientele for their continued support of Tribe," said Powell and Mulhern. "This has been a tough year for us all but we feel incredibly privileged to live and work in a place like Big Sky where people look out for the neighbors safety and well being. Thank you for voting us Best Salon two years in a row! Happy holidays and stay safe!" **tribesalonbigsky.com** 

### 2ND: HAIRNINJA SALON

The three ninjas, or stylists, at Hairninja offer a full range of services, from hair coloring, eyelash extensions, manicures/pedicures and full body waxing. Hairninja will also get any client and their party fully beautified for their wedding day. **hairninjasalon.com** 



Hanna Powell and Erin Mulhern show off some of the products they offer at Tribe Salon. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER



### BEST ANNUAL EVENT



At just 20 years old Dalton Kasel rides Keno for 88 points on the final night of the Big Sky PBR in 2019. There's nothing quite like watching a bull ride under the Big Sky. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

### 157: BIG SKY PBR

Not only is the Big Sky PBR a consistent top contender for the Best Annual Event in Big Sky, the Outlaw Partners event (publisher of this paper) won the Professional Bull Riders' Event of the Year for the seventh consecutive time in 2019.

Though unsafe pandemic conditions forced the postponement of the community favorite, Big Sky PBR will be back in 2021 for its 10th anniversary—and it's sure to be a party like no other. From the biggest bucking bulls to world class music and company, the summer event is a regular talk of the town all year. Don't miss Big Sky's Best Annual Event when it rolls back into town—the 10th anniversary shouldn't be missed. bigskypbr.com

#### 2ND: MUSIC IN THE MOUNTAINS

Music in the Mountains, the Arts Council of Big Sky's premiere annual event, has become a favorite not only among locals but visitors too. Every Thursday night in the summertime, just about everyone in the community and the surrounding area come out to hear big names rock under the Big Sky. **bigskyarts.org** 

### EDITOR'S CHOICE: BIG SKY FARMERS MARKET

Not even COVID-19 could stop the Big Sky Town Center from facilitating a safe and treasured summertime favorite. The Big Sky Farmers Market has been providing a chance for locals and visitors to source fresh produce from local farmers, support community craftsmen and get a taste of some of southwestern Montana's finest street-side cuisine. **bigskytowncenter.com** 

### BEST OUTDOOR RETAILER

### 157: GRIZZLY OUTFITTERS

Best Outdoor Retailer defending champion Grizzly Outfitters is a well-equipped outdoor retailer located deep in the heart of bear country. Grizzly has everything you could want and more for the wide variety of outdoor ventures in the Big Sky area. Whether you are looking to buy new gear, rent or get a tune up at the ski shop, Grizzly is your one-stop-shop. They will even custom fit your gear to make it suit you perfectly. Grizzly boasts two locations, one just off the Town Center and one near the Gallatin River just off of U.S. Highway 191. Not only does Grizzly offer ski, snowboard and bike rentals, they also offer casting lessons and guided fly-fishing trips since their expansion in 2014. For the past 20 years, the local favorite has served the Big Sky community with a talented and knowledgeable staff of customer service professionals.

If you stop by the ski or bike shop, don't be surprised to see a few young apprentices looking over the shoulders of Grizzly's skilled technicians. The shop is known as a favorite among little shredders in Big Sky! **grizzlyoutfitters.com** 

### 2ND: GALLATIN ALPINE SPORTS

For over 25 years Gallatin Alpine Sports has been keeping Big Sky residents equipped for the ski slopes and the bike trails. Owner Tom Owen wants to get people outside in summer and winter and with options for rental, delivery and purchase, GAS has Big Sky covered for a myriad of adventurous needs. gallatinalpinesports.com



Nate Baker and Ryan Taylor thread straps into ski poles behind the counter at Grizzly Outfitters. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

### 3KD: EAST SLOPE OUTDOORS

Voted Best Business of Big Sky in 2016, East Slope Outdoors is now comfortably positioned as one of the best outdoor shops in Big Sky, offering a wide range of gear, rentals and guiding services. **eastslopeoutdoors.com** 



### BEST SHOPPING



Montana Supply offers a wide variety of products, Morgan Boatner and Brianna Winter show off some of the options. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

### 157: MONTANA SUPPLY

A men's and women's mountain lifestyle shop located in the Town Center, Mountain Supply offers a wide variety of clothing, accessories, bags, books, and a multitude of other fun tchotchkes. The clothing and accessories all exemplify a modern, Western-chic style well-suited for our little corner of southwest Montana. The store is run by Josh Tozier and his wife Alaina Stinson, who co-own the shop together. Montana Supply officially opened its doors in 2017 after the third re-brand since Stinson and Tozier started the business. Shoppers at Montana Supply can easily find selections from their favorite brands and will often discover new ones. No matter the season, Montana Supply has the items to cover the residents of Big Sky head to toe.

#### 2ND: ACE HARDWARE

Ace Hardware has been an integral part of the community in Big Sky for nearly two and a half decades. As part of a corporation with the slogan "The Helpful Place," Ace has a business model focused on the nuts and bolts of customer service. Whether you need a 16-millimeter wrench, a new snow shovel or kitchenware, the helpful staff will greet you and help you find exactly what you need. **acebigskytools.com** 

### 3Kか: SKY BOUTIQUE

A women's clothing and accessories boutique, Sky boutique offers a hand-picked selection of high-quality clothing, jewelry, shoes and accessories from local artisans as well as designers across the country. **shopskyboutique.net** 

### BEST FISHING OUTFITTER

### 157: GALLATIN RIVER GUIDES

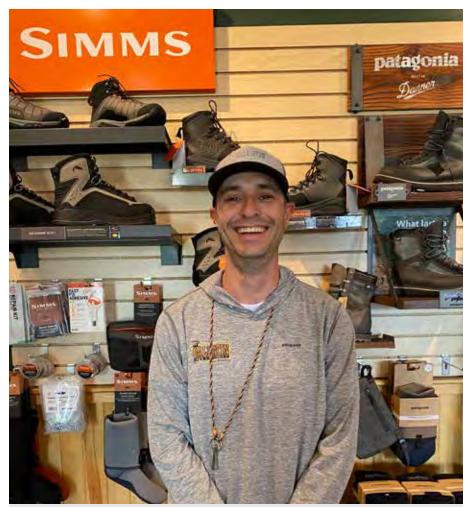
For more than three decades, Gallatin River Guides has been fishing four rivers in the Big Sky and Bozeman area. Their services are available year-round, and their guides have the best inside info on when and where fish will bite in this fisherman's paradise. GRG hosts the Montana Fishing Guide School and the Montana Women's Fly-Fishing School, as well as guided fishing trips all year round. If you're hooked on fishing, like many voters in the area, GRG can help you land the big one.

Owner Mike Donaldson grew up fishing in southwest Montana and pursues his passion every day.

"It's been a pretty crazy year, and this means the world to all of the guides and staff over here at Gallatin River Guides," Donaldson said. "We are really proud of how our community handled the peaks and valleys of 2020 and want to thank Big Sky for the continued support of all the local businesses." **montanaflyfishing.com** 

### 2ND: EAST SLOPE OUTDOORS

East Slope Outdoors, a staple in the Big Sky community for 35 years, offers guided half- and full-day fly-fishing trips, floats on the Madison and Yellowstone Rivers, and essential gear rentals. **eastslopeoutdoors.com** 



Owner Mike Donaldson grew up fishing in southwest Montana and pursues his passion every day. PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE DONALDSON





### BEST REAL ESTATE COMPANY



Currently representing one of every three real estate listings in Big Sky, Big Sky Real Estate Company is a stand-out firm in the competitive Big Sky market. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY REAL ESTATE COMPANY

# 157: BIG SKY REAL ESTATE COMPANY

Big Sky Real Estate Company is indisputably a stand-out firm in a town full of tough competition. According to the company with an all-star line-up of brokers, Big Sky Real Estate currently represents one of every three listings in Big Sky, or \$249 million of the total \$640 million in listings in the Multiple Listings Service.

Big Sky Real Estate's staff is peppered with seasoned veterans of the real estate market who have been around Big Sky long enough to know how to sell it. From the prestigious Spanish Peaks Mountain and Moonlight clubs to down in the meadows, Big Sky Real Estate has made an impression in all corners of Big Sky. **bigsky.com** 

#### 2ND: L&K REAL ESTATE

As the demand for real estate in Big Sky and Bozeman continues to trend upward, locally owned L&K Real Estate, named for co-owners Eric Ladd and Ryan Kulesza, has been a go-to for those looking to sell and buy in the popular area. The dedicated team is committed to matching a piece of beautiful Big Sky with the many who continue to fall in love with it. **Ikrealestate.com** 

### **3**ペタ: BIG SKY SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

2019's best real estate company, Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty has been a locally owned community favorite since its beginning in 1992. **sothebysrealty.com** 

### BEST ARCHITECT

# 157: CENTRE SKY ARCHITECTURE

For 16 years Centre Sky Architecture has been crafting custom residential, ranch, resort and commercial architecture across the Rocky Mountain West. Since 1998, Principal Architect Jamie Daugaard and his team have been turning dream homes into a reality, with four offices sprinkled throughout the Rocky Mountains. Centre Sky has completed projects in the prestigious private communities of the Yellowstone Club and Spanish Peaks Mountain Club. An emphasis on sustainable design, client needs and site integration combined with Centre Sky's unique flair produce specifically tailored designs sure to be a sight for sore eyes.

"Centre Sky Architecture congratulates all recipients of this cool award and is grateful to being voted by our community, clients, friends, builders, subs, artisans and consultant team members as 'Best Architect in Big Sky'!" Jamie Daugaard, Principal, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP said in an email. "In this time of Covid our offices in Big Sky, Bozeman, and Park City have been empty due to social distancing, however our work continues with communication, collaboration, presentation and development of projects. We are also thankful to Big Sky for believing in us and giving us the opportunity to demonstrate our talents as a firm." **centresky.com** 



For 16 years Centre Sky Architecture has been crafting custom residential, ranch, resort and commercial architecture across the Rocky Mountain West. PHOTO COURTESY OF CENTRE SKY ARCHITECTURE

### 2ND: BECHTLE ARCHITECTS

Bechtle Architects is a small company comprised of outdoors-oriented, passionate people. The company works on a wide range of projects from small residential remodels to million-square-foot, mixed-use town center. Bechtle Architects have deep roots in Big Sky as they have designed many of the buildings throughout Town Center and Big Sky Resort. **bechtlearchitects.com** 

### 3ペタ: REID SMITH ARCHITECTS

Reid Smith Architects is focused on the use of local and natural materials to create unique designs for residential and commercial projects. **reidsmitharchitects.com** 





### BEST PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



Wes and Alex Hoecker, owners of Two Pines Property Management, bring family values to all parts of their company, Two Pines Property Management. PHOTO COURTESY OF WES AND ALEX HOFCKER

### **2ND:** ALPINE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Alpine Property Management is a truly local, veteran-owned property management firm that stands out for being steeped in all things Big Sky. The Alpine team is made up of experienced professionals with proud ties to the local community and aged knowledge in protecting and managing Big Sky properties—their team members average more than 10 years of property management experience in Big Sky. alpinebigsky.com

# 157: TWO PINES PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Following a Best of Big Sky win from 2019, Two Pines fans have perhaps more to recognize this family-owned operation for this year. In mid-March, on what co-owner Alex Hoecker remembers as one of the most difficult days she and her business partner and husband, Wes, have ever experienced together, the duo witnessed an outpouring of support from both their clients and the Big Sky community as a whole.

The Hoeckers are proud to have fought to keep their valued staff employed and were able to reopen after a brief two-week closure. As they learned to navigate property management in a tricky time, Wes says their clients stepped into a partnership role, offering help, advice and strategy—a welcome gift, as the Hoeckers noted many of their clients are esteemed and accomplished business folk themselves.

"Alex and I have always said that we love Big Sky because when the going gets tough, the community really circles their wagons and looks out for their own." A community, he added, that he realized was bigger than he ever thought before.

The Hoeckers humbly share their Best of Big Sky win with all of the other people who make their work happen, from cleaners to owners to staff and everything in between.

"For us this year, [the win] just feels really welcomed," Alex said. **twopinesvacationrentals.com** 

### **3**たか: HAMMOND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Another valued, family-owned property management firm, Hammond is not only a respected business but a network of friendly familiar community faces. **hpmmontana.com** 

### BEST INTERIOR DESIGN

# 157: ERIKA AND COMPANY INTERIOR DESIGN

The reigning champ from 2019, Erika and Company Interior Design continues to add the best aesthetic touch to Big Sky homes. Owner and designer Erika Jennings worked under the distinguished Carole Sisson for 15 years before rebranding her Big Sky location in 2017 as Erika and Company. A proud community member, Jennings emphasizes the importance of relationships in her business.

Jennings said that while 2020 has not been easy on small businesses like hers, she is excited to be coming out on the other end with new projects. "To have the support of our awesome small town makes me want to keep pushing forward even on the loneliest day," Jennings said. erikaandco.com



Erika Jennings, owner of Erika and Company Interior Design, is excited to have braved many of the challenges this year posed to small businesses and will come out on the other end with new projects. PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIKA JENNINGS

### 2ND: ALDER AND TWEED

With decades of quality experience to boast, the family owned and centrally located Alder and Tweed is an easy pick for one of Big Sky's best in interior design. With a special focus on customer service and exceptional design, Alder and Tweed is a great choice to spice up any room. alderandtweed.com

### 3KD: TATOM DESIGNS

One of Big Sky's best designers and friendliest faces, Kathy Tatom brings experience in a range of styles and a curated design experience to fit your home and budget. **tatomdesign.com** 





### **BEST LANSCAPING**



Big Sky Landscaping had a humble beginning in the early 2000s but now has 50 employees, a landscaping operation and a retail garden center. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY LANDSCAPING

### 157: BIG SKY LANDSCAPING

During the warm months, landscapers donning Big Sky Landscaping shirts fill almost every yard and community greenspace in Big Sky. Local Alan McClain started the company in 2003 with a few tools, a homemade trailer and a 1982 Dodge truck. Today, the company operates with 50 employees, offers residential and commercial landscaping services and a retail garden center.

With a strong work ethic and an emphasis on customer service, it's no wonder Big Sky Landscaping prides itself on having a high retention rate—for both employees and clients.

"Thanks to Big Sky for voting BSL as the best landscape company for 2020," McClain said. "My awesome crew of hardworking, dedicated people and our great clients are what makes it possible." **bslmt.com** 

#### 2ND: WILDWOOD NURSERY

Wildwood Nursery is not only notable for quality of work, but also what they're working with. The nursery and landscaping service only use organic and microbe-based products to support the wellness of Big Sky's native plants and ecosystem. wildwoodbigsky.com

### BEST BUILDER

### 157: BIG SKY BUILD

You may not have been able to tell when spotting their logo floating high above the canyon in the clouds on a crisp summer day, but Big Sky Build is a staple of the community. Funnily enough, owner John Seelye came out there by chance after college, driven by the prospect of a Lone Mountain Tram.

Seelye started Big Sky Woodwork & Design in Big Sky in 1997 and over two decades later, it has grown into a company that specializes in all aspects of the building process. He believes that the company's success can be attributed to the quality of the men and women who work for him as well as the community's unwavering support over the years. And support they do: Big Sky Build is on its sixth consecutive win for Best of Big Sky. bigskybuild.com



John Seelye started Big Sky Woodwork & Design in 1997. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN SEELYE John Seelye started Big Sky Woodwork & Design in 1997. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN SEELYE

### 2ND: BLUE RIBBON BUILDERS

Before the hustle and bustle of today's Big Sky, there was plenty of open space, and Blue Ribbon Builders. Owners Doug and JoDean Bing started their life, and business here 45 years ago and are still going strong today, earning them second place in this year's Best Builders of Big Sky. They stand by their core values and recipe for success: open and honest communication, exceeding customers' expectations, quality craftsmanship and safety. **blueribbonbuilders.com** 

### 3KÞ: HAAS BUILDERS

John Haas founded Haas Builders in 1989 in Park City, Utah moving the business to Big Sky in 1998. They follow the philosophy that every project deserves the full attention of their hardworking staff and is a beautiful finished product. **haasbuilders.com** 



### BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION



First Security Bank remains a local favorite among Best Financial Institution. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

### 157: FIRST SECURITY BANK

Another collector of Best of Big Sky awards, First Security Bank has won over many clients' hearts and trust with the friendly faces behind the counter, involvement in local events and most recently, the adoption of their new paperless statement program. For every customer who signs up for paperless banking statements, First Security partners with the National Forest Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service to identify areas in our neighboring forests where additional growth is needed, and works to plant new trees. **ourbank.com** 

#### **2ND: AMERICAN BANK**

Although they've had to put the lobby popcorn on hold through the pandemic, American Bank, and Ross Pfohl, the branch manager at the forefront, is still in the top-tier as far as local banking goes. Patrons can bet on being greeted by friendly, familiar faces upon every visit, americanbankmontana.com

### BEST NONPROFIT

# 157: BIG SKY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

The BSCO is continually improving Big Sky's trails and parks, offering many fun programs and now, building the new BASE community center. Big Sky residents have even more reasons to get outside and connect with others with BSCO around to organize a great docket of summer and winter outdoors activities. Wondering how to participate? Just go watch a softball game, take a hike on Beehive Basin Trail #40, or Glide Big Sky on the many cross country skiing trails.

"BSCO is honored by the community to be named best non-profit," said Michelle Kendziorski, BSCO communication and development director. "We appreciate the support of our work with parks, trails and recreation programs. Wising everyone a happy, healthy and outdoor fun winter season!" **bscomt.org** 

### **ZND**: EAGLE MOUNT

Eagle Mount strives to enrich the lives of children and adults who are differently abled through activity and adventure. The organization offers programs such as skiing and snowboarding with volunteer guides, cross country skiing and snowshoeing, cycling and more. eaglemount.org

### 3KD: BIG SKY COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

The Big Sky Community Food Bank strives to make Big Sky a livable year-round community by enhancing food security in the community. **bigskyfoodbank.org** 



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BIG SKY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

### EDITOR'S CHOICE: WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The curtain rose on the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center in 2013 and it has been entertaining Big Sky ever since. The 280-seat venue boasts state-of-the-art technology that engages the senses and creates an intimate experience for the audience. WMPAC brings innovative performance art and entertainment to Big Sky year-round as well as supports community art events and education. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, WMPAC has miraculously continued to deliver the arts to entertainment-starved, stir crazy residents of Big Sky.

"We were just coming to the end of our best season yet when COVID hit, and while it has been an incredibly challenging year, we are proud to have adapted to the times and continue serving our community of artists and audiences here in Big Sky and beyond," John Zirkle, the executive and artistic director of WMPAC, wrote in an email to EBS. "Thank you from the whole team at WMPAC for this honor, Explore Big Sky!" warrenmillerpac.org





### **COMMUNITY MEMBER OF THE YEAR**



While not a resident of Big Sky, Montana Gov. Steve Bullock worked day and night throughout the year to make sure that Montana communities, of all sizes, received resources necessary to survive a challenging year. PHOTO BY FRIKA PETERMAN

#### 2ND: JOSH TREASURE

The friendly face you see at Roxy's Market is not only the grocery store's general manager. Josh Treasure, Big Sky local of seven years, is a committed community member who dedicates his free time as an advocate for the people of Big Sky, volunteering on many boards and committees.

### 3ペタ: KRISTIN KERN

Niece of the famed newscaster and Big Sky Resort founder Chet Huntley, Kristin Kern is about as steeped in the community of Big Sky as it gets. After taking ownership of the Hungry Moose Market and Deli, Kern has played a vital role in transforming the essential grocery spot into a burgeoning community hub.

### 157: GOV. STEVE BULLOCK

While not a resident of the town of Big Sky, Gov. Steve Bullock has played a monumental role in maintaining both public health and economic welfare during an unforgiving pandemic.

"Every week was different challenges, from getting the supplies to standing up the testing to some of the efforts of asking fellow Montanans to take this seriously," Bullock told EBS. Of his 12 years in public office, the governor said this has been the most intense time in office he's had. From imposing mask mandates to establishing a crisis hotline to using federal dollars to support both businesses and the unemployed, Bullock's been hard at work protecting Montana communities this year.

"The economic programs that we created weren't tailored toward one specific either region or urban density, we tried to make an availability of opportunities for everything from the public health to the investments in education to the investments in all businesses to try to provide assistance to our smaller towns as well as our big," Bullock said.

After 12 years (and one especially wild one) of public service, Bullock, in the final year of his term as governor, has earned a breather.

### EDITOR'S CHOICE: OUR LOCAL HEALTHCARE WORKERS

In an act of true heroism, southwest Montana health care workers joined the national ranks of selfless citizens who put themselves on the frontlines of the largest health crisis in a century through daily offerings of bravery, empathy and labor.

Despite the mounding physical and mental health risks, those working to protect our communities have never given up. From nursing homes to hospitals, we will never truly be able to thank our healthcare workers adequately. Thank you for holding our hands while we struggled to breathe, for gearing up in full personal protective equipment to administer tests, for being our family when we can't see ours and for taking care of our loved ones. While this challenge is unprecedented, our healthcare workers rose up in an unfaltering effort —and it will never be forgotten.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed what it means to be a healthcare worker," Dr. Kathryn Bertany and Taylor Rose of Big Sky Medical Center and Deaconess Hospital wrote in a statement. "The mental stress and fatigue that the [BSMC] staff encounter on a daily basis goes beyond what they have ever imagined. However, they show up every day and are happy to care for whatever comes into that facility with ongoing compassion."

### **2020 COVID MVP**

## 1ST: BIG SKY MEDICAL CENTER

While the COVID-19 pandemic brought much challenge to the Big Sky community, it also revealed many bright spots, namely the Big Sky Medical Center. With public health being the top concern, the Bozeman Health-run medical center did everything possible to prepare for the virus' spread in our community. With the help of Big Sky Relief, the Medical Center acquired additional supplies, ventilators and testing equipment and, with impressive haste, underwent a facility expansion that increased the hospital's bed count by four.

"Every day the staff at Big Sky Medical Center have arrived ready to care for any new curve ball this pandemic has thrown their way. They have cared for COVID and non-COVID patients in a COVID world," said Dr. Kathryn Bertany and Taylor Rose of Big Sky Medical Center. "We are truly appreciative of this award and the support we have received from the community. Thank you Big Sky!"

### 2ND: BIG SKY RELIEF

Conceived with the very purpose of supporting the Big Sky community during a time of unprecedented challenge, Big Sky Relief was formed in rapid response to the pandemic by Big Sky Resort Area District and the Yellowstone Club, Spanish Peaks and Moonlight community foundations.



The Big Sky Medical Center acquired supplies, technology and additional beds in order to prepare for the virus' spread in the community. PHOTO COURTESY OF BOZEMAN HEALTH

### **EDITOR'S CHOICE: BRIAN STUMPF**

Nothing soothes a weary soul like the sound of music—especially when Big Sky favorite, and former Dirtbag King Brian Stumpf, is playing it. Throughout the pandemic, Stumpf broadcasted live shows on Facebook as a way to reconnect for all who were in need of a show...and those who were willing to keep up with the hourly shots!

"With all of the change that this town is seeing, the one thing that has stayed the same is the wonderful people who call this town home," Stumpf said. "After we started doing the Sunday live streams, suddenly there was food and gifts showing up at our door. It's what community is all about. Plus, we were doing way too many shots by ourselves. Big Sky Dirtbags forever!"

# **SECTION 5:** ATHLETICS TOP STORIES 2020







### A coach's lesson

### Local Buzz Tatom: Sports more than simply a game

Editor's note: We've compiled a list of the top athletics stories of the year in an unprecedented time for sports. Enjoy the best EBS athletics articles of 2020.

#### BY BRANDON WALKER

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

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

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

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

Tatom came to be an Eagle of Richardson high school; the rival school of his junior high school. Not knowing anyone, the tight end and outside linebacker had to



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

grapple with being the youngest athlete on the team. He also remembers being late to practices as he was provided transportation by bus every day.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

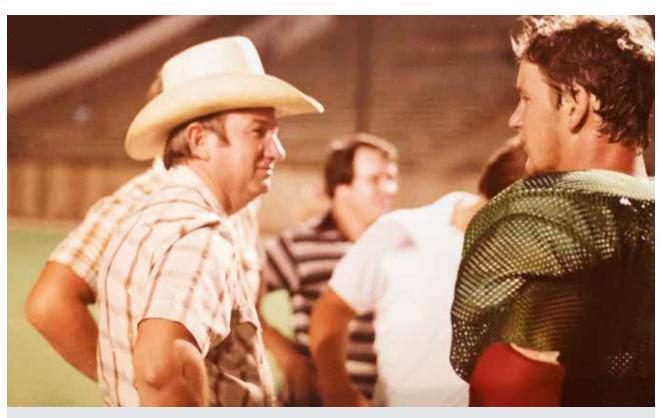
"It taught me how to be a leader and that it's not about you, it's about the team," he said. "... I ran a pretty good-sized business in Dallas. I would've never been able to grow it, I would've never been able to lead a team, employee wise or sports wise, without that experience. It just had such a huge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

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

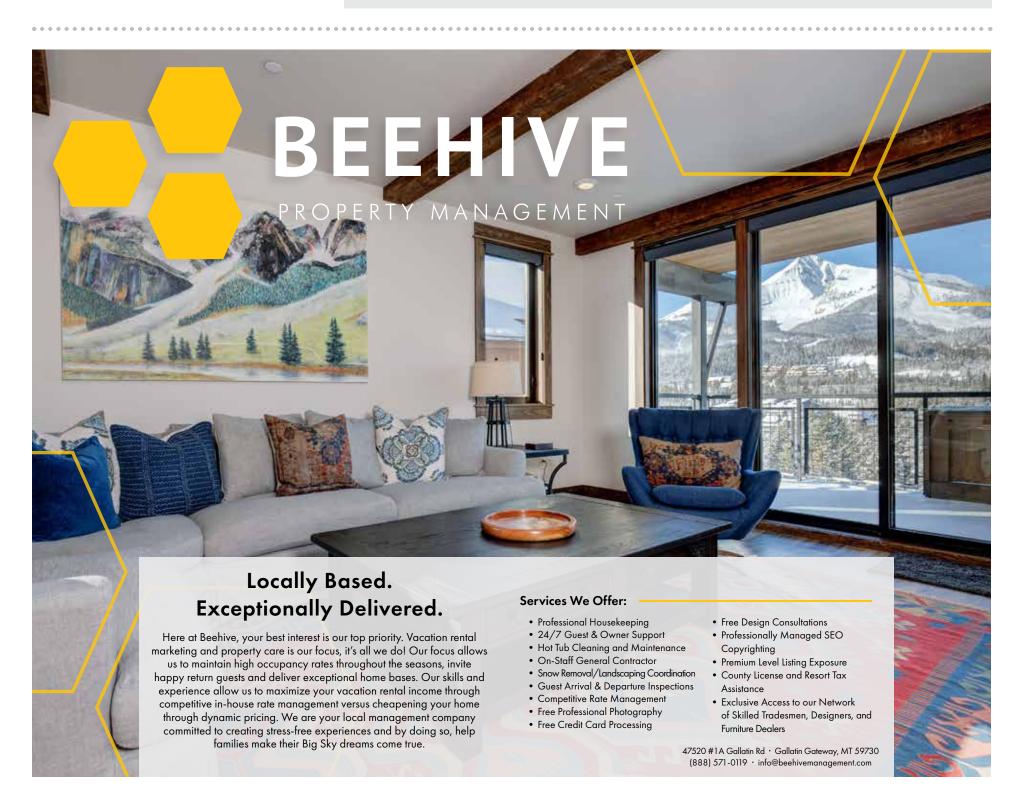
even attended some of Tatom's collegiate games. Duke passed away recently and Tatom said over 400 of the coach's former athletes attended his funeral.

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

A version of this story appeared in the March 27 - Apr. 9 2020 edition of the Explore Big Sky Newspaper.



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





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# Backcountry hazards heightened with spring temps and heavy traffic

#### BY BELLA BUTLER

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other threats particularly partial to the warming season are cornices. While the big overhangs of snow are dangerous throughout the entire year, they reach an ominous phase in the spring after building up all season and weakening with the warming temperatures. According to Chabot, new backcountry travelers have a tendency to underestimate how



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

far back a cornice's breaking point extends. This is a hazard that demands acute attention and consideration so as not to send a bomb-like cascade of snow down on others, Chabot said.

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

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

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

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

A version of this story appeared in the March 27 - Apr. 9 2020 edition of the Explore Big Sky Newspaper.





VOTED BY THE READERS OF EXPLORE BIG SKY BACK-TO-BACK YEARS (2019 & 2020)

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### MT high school sports hit the field

#### BY BRANDON WALKER

MONTANA – Break out your stadium seats, foam fingers and masks—high school athletics are slated to resume this fall in the state of Montana. On July 27 the Montana High School Association released tiered methods and requirements for high schools throughout the state to resume athletic activities this fall.

MHSA consulted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Federation of High School Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, as well as health officials at various levels throughout MT, while also factoring in all directives from Gov. Steve Bullock in their requirements.

MHSA Executive Director Mark Beckman said it is important for student athletes to return, citing personal growth, plus emotional and mental wellness as some key beneficiaries of athletic activity.

"That seems to be a real issue after spring sports," Beckman said. "When you take a look at the studies that're being done that there was a lot of issues with the mental and emotional wellness, so we think that's important and then of course it's important for their physical safety too and that's why the restrictions and requirements and considerations were put into place."

Athletes will not be required to wear masks while competing on the field of play, however MHSA is consulting the governor's office regarding any possible mask requirements for athletes on the sidelines. Beckman did clarify that cross country athletes will wear masks in all staging areas prior to the start of a meet. Additionally, MHSA has left the decision to permit fans at athletic contests in the hands of each individual school, while abiding by any restrictions and receiving input from local health officials.

"I think it's so important now [for us] to follow through," Beckman said. "Some of these things may not be what somebody wants to do, but hopefully they will do it so that those individuals on the floor, on the court, on the course will be able to continue to play."

"Being physically active and developing a competitive mindset is extremely important in my opinion, but probably the most crucial element is student athletes learning what it means to be a part of a team and creating camaraderie with their peers," said Lone Peak High School Athletic Director John Hannahs. He continued to state that the safety and well-being of student athletes will come before anything else as athletics resume.

MHSA's aforementioned requirements include: social distancing when feasible, frequent hand washing, sanitizing of equipment including the ball, no shared drinks, eliminating contests with out-of-state schools, limiting group sizes at practices and eliminating competitions that would draw multiple teams outside of golf and cross country competitions.

"This pandemic certainly has made everything much more complicated, but I am confident that we will be able to work together with our staff and make the best of it," Hannahs said.

LPHS varsity football coach Adam Farr is eagerly awaiting the season. He said summer workouts have drawn the largest participation that he has ever witnessed during his tenure with the Big Horns.

"I'm super excited, you know our squad is definitely on the younger side but there's some excellent athletes amongst the group and they're all dying to actually have a season so it's outstanding to hear that it's currently on schedule," he said.

While Farr recognized there will be some hurdles to overcome, including instances such as dressing before a game in a locker room setting, he doesn't believe it will significantly impact competition on the playing field.



LPHS junior TJ Nordahl (5) spikes the ball in a match against the West Yellowstone Wolverines last fall. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

"They're ready to get out there and do something," Farr said. "They're tired of being cooped up."

Farr's sentiments about his teams' anticipation were echoed by LPHS varsity volleyball coach Missy Botha: "The girls are over the moon about actually getting to play. They understand it won't be a traditional season, but their enthusiasm hasn't waned."

Botha recognized that restricted crowd capacities will be an adjustment, but she believes it will work in the Lady Big Horns favor this season. "... They have to be their own No. 1 fans," she said. "Positivity within themselves and with their teammates is something I stress on a regular basis. That mentality is going to pay off for us especially in tight matches."

Of the five tiers that MHSA outlined in their plan, the fall athletic season is set to commence at Tier 1 and Beckman noted that MHSA had received mainly positive commentary on July 27, the day that the plan was released.

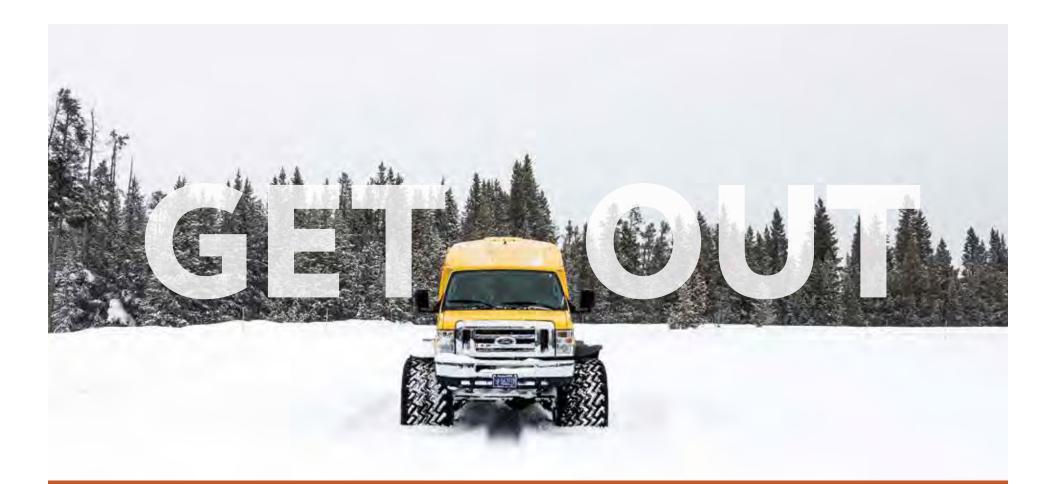
Tier 1 entails schools beginning their athletic practices and game schedules when originally planned. As a result, LPHS is slated to host their first athletic contest on Aug. 28 as the varsity boys and girls soccer teams take on Hamilton, followed by a home contest for the varsity girls volleyball team on Aug. 29 and a road varsity football matchup on the same day.

The other four tiers of MHSA's plan all involve a delayed start to the season or a disruption in competition during the course of the athletic season. Beckman noted that these tiers would likely only occur due to another stay-at-home order or similar shutdowns as directed by the Governor.

The National Federation of State High School Associations requires coaches to complete certain coaching training courses through their online education system prior to coaching high school athletes. NFHS recently released a free COVID-19 coaching course on their website, which Beckman said he will strongly encourage all coaches to complete, but it is not required at this time.

"But I think that we have to make sure we focus in on what the most important thing is, that they're playing out on that field or playing out on that court or running out on you know the course," Beckman said. "I think that's probably our most important thing, so even though it may feel a little different at least those kids are getting that opportunity."

A version of this story appeared in the July 31 - Aug. 13 2020 edition of the Explore Big Sky Newspaper.



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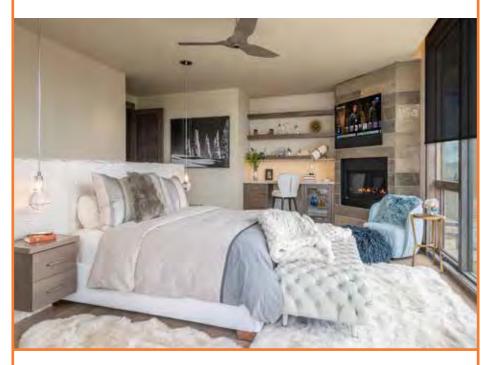






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# Community rallies for Best in the West skijoring



A record number of competitors, such as skier John Anderson and rider Audrey Williams pictured here, took to the course for the third annual Best in the West Showdown. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

### BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Mother Nature did not cooperate for the third annual Best in the West Showdown skijoring event on March 7 and 8 in Big Sky Town Center. Hovering around 50 F, the warm conditions were less than ideal for maintaining snow on the racecourse, but, thanks to an impressive community effort, the event went off without a hitch.

After six other skijoring events were canceled across Montana this season, some worried the Best in the West Showdown would join the growing list—events in Butte, Helena, and Whitefish, were all nixed due to a lack of snow—but the Big Sky Skijoring Association wouldn't hear of it.

That said, the Best in the West required hefty amounts of effort and support from local companies and community members to pull off according to BSSA race organizer Justa Adams.

"I'm overwhelmed with the community' generosity," Adams said in a phone call with EBS after the event. "My entire team's effort to ... divide and conquer ... made this a successful event. My volunteers that showed up stayed there and stuck [it] out through the mud."

Area businesses supplied a loader, rock truck, dump trucks and operators free of charge to ensure enough snow remained on the 800-foot course to make it suitable for competition. Dick Anderson Construction, Rent Biz, TMC Transport and American Excavation each donated supplies and labor, moving 300 loads—or 2,000 yards—of snow onto the track over the week leading up to the event.

The effort equated to about \$25,000 for the Best in the West Showdown. "I wouldn't have been able to do any of it without our original sponsors, but specifically [without] the additional \$25,000 in time and donations last week, we wouldn't have had a race," she said.

A record 120 teams came out to compete, up from the 92 that raced in last year's event, according to Adams. Six different levels of competition were on display and competitors had to navigate through 15 to 20 gates on the course, dependent on their level of competition. Each gate a team missed resulted in penalties that added time onto their run.

Safety was paramount for the BSSA team throughout the weekend. Former skijor competitor-turned-BSSA member and course designer Colin Cook, volunteer equipment operator Patrick McVey and

veterinarian Jacy Cook were constantly surveying the course to ensure it was safe to race on. The competition was stopped a handful of times for fresh snow and salt to be added to the course, and for a groomer to scrape away excess slushy snow as temperatures rose.

In the highest level of competition, the Open Division, skier RJ Klotz and rider Josh Abbott stormed back to claim the top spot in the overall results, with a combined time of 33.87 seconds between the two days, just ahead of Aaron Griffen and Claudia Schmidt, riding Clyde, who finished at 33.99 combined.

A difference of nearly two full seconds between Klotz and Abbott's Saturday run compared to their time on Sunday made up the ground that they originally trailed. Griffen and Schmidt also took home third place overall with a combined time of 34.02 seconds riding Schmidt's other horse Zeek.

"It's awesome because this is only the fourth race I've made it to this year," said Schmidt, the 2019 National Skijoring America Champion, of competing at the Best in the West Showdown. Schmidt, who lives in Gallatin Gateway, competed

in 11 competitions last year. "We just don't have any snow and it's been really hard for a lot of races trying to make it work," she said.

Adams, grateful to have held the Best in the West Showdown in the spring-like conditions, is already looking toward next season and perhaps some cooler weather.

"White and fluffy snow and no mud," she said. "Hopefully."

A version of this story appeared in the March 13 - March 26 2020 edition of the Explore Big Sky Newspaper.



# **DIVISION WINNERS**



Open

Skier - RJ Klotz Rider - Josh Abbott **Horse – Elvis** 

**Combined Time: 33.87 seconds** 

Skier – Lang Schuler Rider – Dennis Alverson

Combined Time: 35.03 seconds

**Novice** 

Skier - Cole Pampe

Horse - Sheeza

Rider - Brittany Delehant Combined Time: 44.20 seconds

Women

Skier – Alina Gemza Rider - Monica Plecker Horse - Zeta

Combined Time: 42.45 seconds

**Snowboard** 

Skier - Kalei Pitcher Rider - Kristen Beck Horse – Lefty

Combined Time: 56.82 seconds

**Junior** 

Skier – Russell Douglas Rider – Arley Douglas

Horse – Dead Line

Combined Time: 50.91 seconds

# 100-hole golf marathon benefits local nonprofit

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – The day began at 7:30 a.m. as Mark Wehrman teed off with his driver, slicing through the slight breeze of the cool morning air on the first hole of the Big Sky Golf Course and concluded at 8:30 p.m. with Brad Rierson's putt on the 100th hole, completing the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country golf marathon.

On July 13, 10 golfers combined their efforts over the course of the 13-hour day, hitting the links to participate in the BBBS of Big Sky Country golf marathon fundraiser.

"We had some spectators cheering us on and watching us as we were getting ready to go," said Wehrman, the Head Golf Professional at the Big Sky Golf Course and one of the participants in the golf marathon, adding that the atmosphere of the marathon even rivaled that of a traditional golf tournament.

The group accomplished their goal of completing 100 holes of golf for the day—aided by a slight modification in play after 54 holes when two groups split up, rather than the original lone group of rotating players, to double their efforts and complete holes at a quicker pace due to the impending darkness.

"It was one of the most enjoyable days of golf that I have ever had," said John Hannahs, one of the 10 participants in the golf

marathon. "Uniting for a noble cause that does so much for our community and playing a game that I love with my dear friends is my idea of a great day."

The golf marathon took the place of the traditional BBBS of Big Sky Country celebrity golf tournament, which would have been entering its 19th year but was canceled this year as a precautionary measure due to COVID-19.

"It feels good just to be able to say this is for a really good cause and this is really helping the kids," said Amy Hunter, the Big Sky Program Coordinator for BBBS of Big Sky Country.

The golfers: Dylan Hall, Hannahs, Al Malinowski, Andy Nystuen, Betsy Nystuen, Carl Nystuen, Jeanine Palma, Reierson, Jerry Scott, and Wehrman all completed at least one full round of golf on behalf of BBBS of Big Sky Country's fundraiser. Carl Nystuen put forth a valiant effort, leading the charge with 77 holes completed for the day.

"[I'm] more just tired; not sore or anything like that," Wehrman said. "My body held up good and from you know the other guys I talked to, I don't think anyone's really necessarily sore, they're just more at an exhaustion level."

While not the traditional tournament that participants have come to anticipate each year according to Hunter, the marathon still provided an outlet for the golfers partaking in an activity that they enjoy for a good cause.

"It was refreshing to be able to take our minds off the current state of the world and just focus on playing golf and enjoying each other's company," Hannahs said.

BBBS of Big Sky Country's fundraising goal of \$65,000 wasn't quite met, with donations made on a per hole pledge basis, but the event raised over \$25,000. Hunter said that the fundraising webpage will be taken down on the evening of July 14, but individuals still interested in making a donation could do so on the BBBS of Big Sky Country website. She also said all funds raised will benefit BBBS of Big Sky Country programs.

"Being able to help with fundraising or do something that makes those programs possible you know is huge," Hunter said. "Because without fundraising, without these events, we wouldn't be able to have the programs."

She also described the toughest challenge surrounding the golf marathon was providing engagement for the community being that it was a downsized event in comparison to the usual golf tournament held by BBBS of Big Sky Country.

"No one was doing it because they had to," Wehrman said of the golfers enthusiasm to participate in the event. "Everyone was doing it [because they wanted to] and having fun doing it."

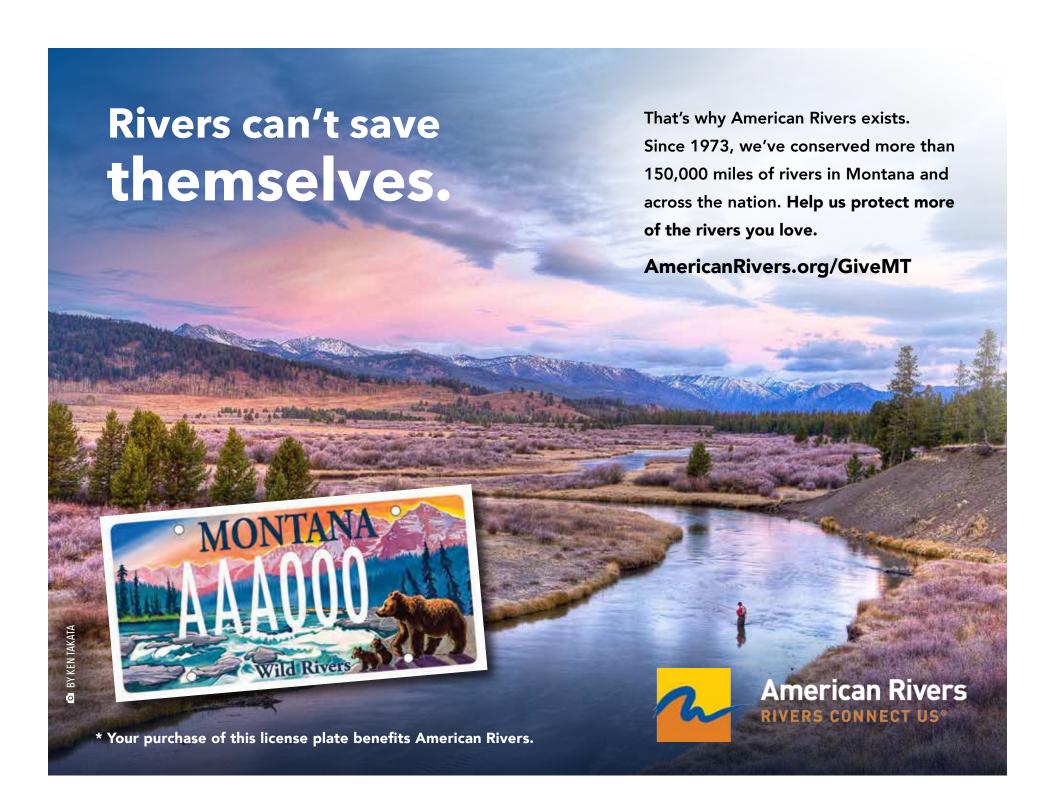
Wehrman said the two groups joined forces once again to complete the final five holes together, capping their tremendous effort on the day, all in the name of a good cause.

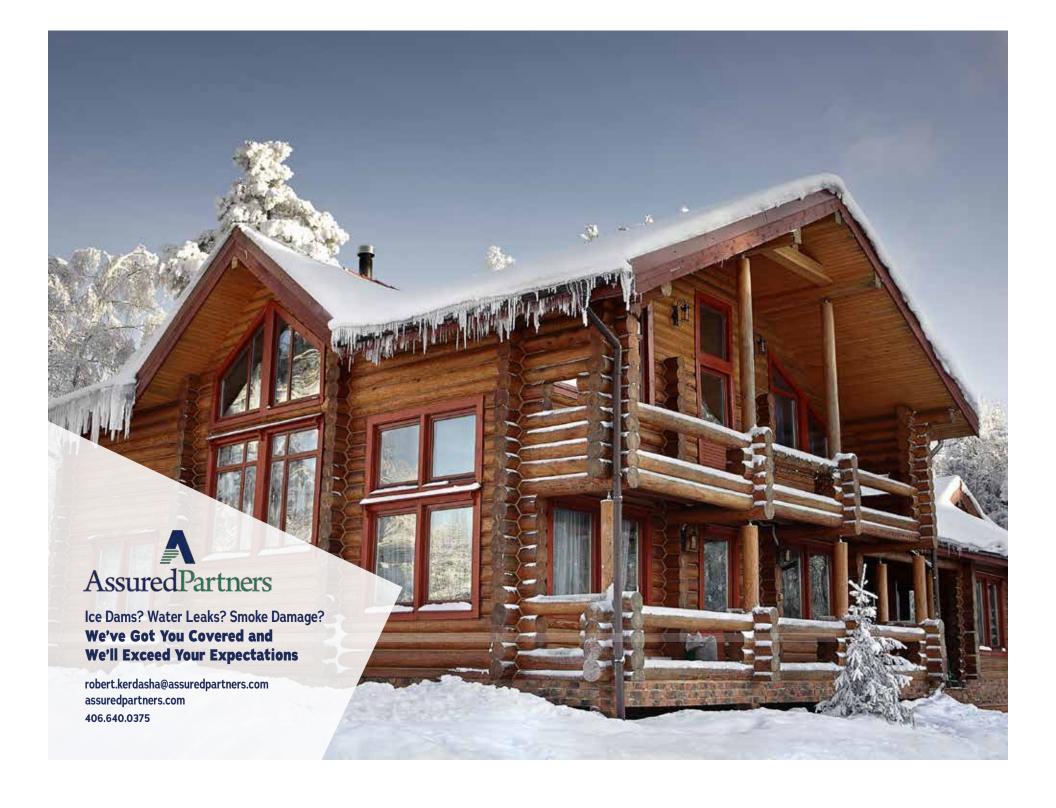
"These kids wouldn't be able to build those relationships and just strengthen their confidence and to better understand how to interact with people of different ages and ... just look beyond themselves and see the impact they can have on other people's lives," Hunter said.

A version of this story appeared in the July 17 - July 30 2020 edition of the Explore Big Sky Newspaper.



Brad Reierson, one of the 10 participants in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country golf marathon, tees off midday. Reierson completed 41 holes of golf on the day including sinking the final putt. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER





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# **OUTLAWS: GRATEFULNESS**

At Outlaw, we encourage one another to celebrate gratefulness. This holiday season, we're taking it a step further and expressing our gratitude by donating to a handful of worthy causes.





### Eric Ladd, Publisher

I am grateful for the ingenuity of my partners, teams and supporters during 2020 to be able to adjust, pivot and move through this tricky year. I am strongly supporting groups that work to conserve land, water and animal habitat, but for this holiday season I want to give some attention to the people in Nicaragua who are suffering from government oppression and now repeated hurricanes; These amazing people need help! A reputable charity I'd like to

support in Nicaragua is ANF. anfnicaragua.org/hurricanerelief



### Joe O'Connor, VP Media & Editor-in-Chief

I'm grateful for the empathy we had the opportunity to gain throughout an impossibly difficult year. We can still help one another even when we disagree. But I'm thrilled for 2021. I'd like to recognize Big Sky Search and Rescue this holiday season. This incredible team looks out for us when we need it the most. It will be a busy season in the backcountry this winter, so be prepared and safe when you go out - it will make their jobs easier. bssar.org



### Megan Paulson, Chief Operating Officer

I'm grateful for my family and the blessing of being a mom; seeing my two boys explore, grow, and discover life is one of the most rewarding things in the world!

This holiday season I would like to support Love INC, a nonprofit organization made up of a partnership of 49 Christian churches serving individuals and families throughout Gallatin County. Love INC serves as a link between church volunteers, social service agencies, and neighbors in need to provide them temporary

relief services like personal care items, clothing, automotive clinics, financial planning, and life skills classes, among others. **loveincgc.org** 



### Ersin Ozer, Media and Events Director

I am grateful for our family and the joy of raising our kids this season. The charity that I am proud to support is the Big Sky Youth Empowerment Project. I was fortunate to be a volunteer mentor for BYEP for three seasons during its infancy, and have seen firsthand what happens when you help youth grow inside by also getting them outside. byep.org



### EJ Daws, VP Sales and Marketing

I am grateful to wake up every morning and see the sun rise over the Rocky Mountains—the backbone of the world! We live in an amazing part of this country, and I am grateful for its abundance every day. This holiday season, I will be supporting Big Sky Bravery! I love the organization, the programs and the experiences they provide, and the Operators they help are heroes! bigskybravery.org/



# Treston Wold, Controller

I am grateful for the outdoors and in particular, the Gallatin River. I have found lots of peace fly fishing in the Gallatin River and have enjoyed bringing my family down to the river to fish and splash in the water. We need to make sure we protect this natural resource for the future generations and that's why I am donating to the Gallatin River Task Force. gallatinrivertaskforce.org



# Ennion Williams, VP of Events

This year I am grateful for the outdoors and rivers. Through the pandemic and lockdown, the outdoors and rivers gave me a place that I could be removed from all the chaos going on in the world. I am lucky to live in such a beautiful environment with nature and rivers to escape to. I am supporting the Gallatin River Task Force for all the work they do to protect and preserve the Gallatin River watershed. gallatinrivertaskforce.org/



### Blythe Beaubien, Chief Marketing Officer

This holiday season I'm grateful for my health and for my family. Even though I won't see them this year, they are in my thoughts. I'd like to support the **Leukemia & Lymphoma Society** in memory of my mom, Loydene. She always made the holidays so special for everyone around her.

lls.org





### Marisa Opheim, Lead Designer

This season I am grateful for my health and the great friendships I have in my life currently. I would like to support **Heart of the Valley** animal shelter because they are a leader in the community by providing programs and services designed to help bring people and pets together.

heartofthevalleyshelter.org



### Gabrielle Gasser, Staff Writer

I am grateul to live in such an incredible place with so many opportunities for outdoor recreation. I would like to support the Friends of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center because I rely on their avalanche forecasts and other resources to travel safely in the backcountry and I think that their work is important now more than ever with the increase in backcountry travel. charity.

gofundme.com/friendsofgnfac?lang=en-us



### Mira Brody, New Media Lead

I am grateful for good health, friends, family and dogs. I'm also thankful for where we live and the endless access to recreation. This season I'd like to donate to the Help Center. The Help Center provides free, 24/7 crisis counseling, therapist referrals and other mental health support services across the region and has seen over a 50 percent increase in calls since the pandemic began in March. bozemanhelpcenter.org



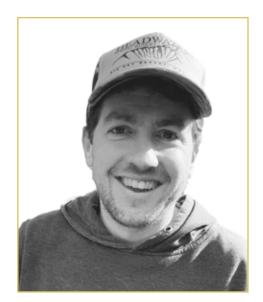
### Eli Kretzmann, Project Manager

This holiday season I am very grateful for health. At a time where Covid-19 has stolen the limelight, I would like to remember friends and family who are battling long-term diseases. I would like to support the overwhelming medical needs of my friend Hannah who has been battling Crohn's Disease since age 12. Her undaunted spirit is an example of strength to us all. gofundme.com/fsupport-for-hannah039s-healing



### Sam Brooks, Lead Business Development

This year I am grateful for concerts. Although we didn't really get to go to any this year, I have realized how important and amazing they are. Next year, we rock. I am choosing to donate to **Blankets of Hope** this year to support my friend and co-founder Mike Fiorito. He and his brother Nick have made a huge impact in New York and all over the country, and I am so excited to have them at the 2022 TEDxBigSky. **blanketsofhope.com** 



### Chris Kamman, Videographer

This holiday season I am grateful for good friends. It's been a tough year for everyone, but the company and support of friends and Big Sky residents have made it much better. I've always been fascinated by the history of this state and grateful to those who help preserve it. I'd like to show support to the Gallatin History Museum/Gallatin Historical Society for all the great work they do to preserve the incredible stories

and history of this area. As the Big Sky and Bozeman area see massive growth and changes, it is now more important than ever to preserve and remember it's history. gallatinhistorymuseum.org/



### Tucker Harris, Executive Coordinator

I am grateful to live in such a beautiful place that has access to wild and scenic spaces to recreate and enjoy every day. For this reason, I would like to support the Gallatin River Task Force this holiday season because they are a great team who do so much to help protect and preserve the Gallatin River. gallatinrivertaskforce.org



### Bella Butler, Staff Writer

As a university student in my last year, I'm especially grateful for the quality of education I've been afforded and the opportunities it's created for me. This year, I am choosing to honor the Wild Rockies Field Institute, a place-based school that uses immersive learning to foster connection to and understanding of the resilient yet fragile ecosystems we inhabit. wrfi.net



### Mary Elizabeth Brown, Graphic Designer

I am grateful to be spending the holidays with my family. This season I would like to support the **Big Sky Food Bank** for all the great work they do to support the community. **bigskyfoodbank.org** 



# WMPAC's winter season in full swing

# 'A Christmas Carol' kicks off holiday spirit

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – It's not uncommon to use paper to convey emotion—a letter, for example, a heartfelt journal entry, a play, a book or an illustration, maybe.

Manual Cinema, however, takes 2D art to another level, utilizing paper cutout puppets and slide projectors to tell a story. In this case, on Dec. 12 at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, it was their adaptation of the classic "A Christmas Carol."

Adapted from Charles Dickens' original, this version of the story included a character, Aunt Trudy, struggling to continue family holiday traditions following the death of her husband,

who we later learn passed away from complications due to COVID-19. Trudy begrudgingly puts on a pupper show of "A Christmas Carol" for the family members attending via Zoom call as she spends her first Christmas alone.

Similarly, attendees at WMPAC were also watching a virtual live show of the performance, broadcasted by Manual Cinema from Chicago, on the theater's screen.

"There are about 400 other people in the country sharing in this experience with you and I hope that we can just kind of know that that feeling is happening," said John Zirkle, WMPAC's executive director, ahead of the show. "Even though this is going to feel a little bit like a film because Manual Cinema does such an amazing job, this is happening live. All of the music that you hear, all of the performers, everything about it is live."

Manual Cinema is an Emmy-Award-winning performance and production company whose season of touring was interrupted by COVID-19. The Dec. 12 production was written by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, Ben Kauffman, Julia Miller and Kyle Vegter.

WMPAC's winter season is adapting to the current pandemic as well. Despite some changes for audience safety, the preforming arts center is open and in full swing. In addition to limited seating—Zirkle estimates the theater can safely fit 80 people—each group is spaced six feet from others, masks are required, hand



The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center's Executive Director John Zirkle introduces "A Christmas Carol" on Dec. 12. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

sanitizer is on deck and shows are shorter, limited to around an hour.

One of their more impactful investments has been the theater's air filtration system. WMPAC pumps in extra outside air, so rather than the average 300-400 cubic feet per minute, Zirkle says WMPAC averages 800 cubic feet of circulated air per minute.

"We're thinking about every single person who comes in here," he said. "We're not really holding that to chance."

Another big move is WMPAC.live, the theater's virtual streaming platform for those preferring to watch shows from home. Armed with a robust backend technology, WMPAC

can stream every show this season to provide a high-quality virtual experience.

"We've really started to think about how all those angles come together," said Zirkle, pointing out the numerous cameras throughout the theater. "It becomes almost like a television style experience."

On Dec. 19, WMPAC is partnering with Montana Shakespeare in the Parks for "Hamlet: A Radio Show," and on Dec. 27 and 28, are putting on "In A Landscape," which involves towing a nine-foot Steinway piano through the Lone Mountain Ranch cross-country ski course. Attendees will ski with headphones broadcasting the piano music and experience the performance through the landscape.

"It's a diversified approach, so every show is different," Zirkle said. "We're pulling a piano out into a golf course, Lone Mountain Ranch is going to do a custom, bi-directional cross-country ski course that has a 1,000-yard radius, and then we have all these Bluetooth headphones so people can experience it."

The main message, Zirkle says, is that WMPAC is open and operating, and it's being done in a safe manner.

"It's like we've accepted as a society that performing arts are kind of dead," he said. "WMPAC is open and it's safe. We've been very thoughtful and we've invested quite a bit to make it safe and ensure access for everybody."

# 2020 in music: Five albums you may have missed

BY SAM ORAZEM

I had the opportunity to review a handful of albums for EBS this year and enjoyed every second of it. With the year coming to a close, I realized just how much music I fell in love with that I did not yet have the chance to write about. Here are five albums you might have missed if you usually stick to a single genre, in no particular order, that you should give a try over the holiday season.



### Fleet Foxes – "Shore"

I missed the initial release of "Shore" and only found out about this fourth studio album from Fleet Foxes when I wanted to give their debut another listen. Their previous outing was met with mixed reception, but "Shore" is a return to what made so many people fall in love when Fleet Foxes first arrived on the scene. Their brand of folk feels like a perfect match for a pandemic whether you are listening with your morning cup of coffee or

sitting in your bed wondering when this will all be over.



### My Morning Jacket – "Waterfall II"

This follow-up album is another record that feels right at home during a pandemic. The ten-song collection is made up of unreleased tracks from their previous work, "Waterfall," that was released in 2015. They are good enough to merit the question: "Why were these ones cut?" A conspiratorial take would be that My Morning Jacket knew that a pandemic was going to hit in the next few years. That is how perfectly "Waterfall II"

seems to speak to the current situation. These songs simultaneously feel like they are speaking to the uncertainty most of us feel and the knowledge that thing have to get better at some point.



### Lewis Del Mar-"August"

The second outing from this duo from Queens is a more popular album than the prior two, but it still was not heard by nearly enough people. "August" puts the duo's inability to stick with a formula on full display. While the best genre categorization for "August" is experimental indie, it somehow feels like that designation is too narrow. This is an album that should be listened to actively and in full the first time through. Each song has a certain aspect or instrument

in the background and noticing those small, unique intricacies is a joy.



### RÜFÜS DU SOL – "Live from Joshua Tree"

This live album hit me with a gut punch of nostalgia for in-person events when I listened to it. Even if dance music is not your cup of tea, I implore you to give this album a shot. The ambience that this trio creates with their live performance and ethereal vocals might just change your mind.

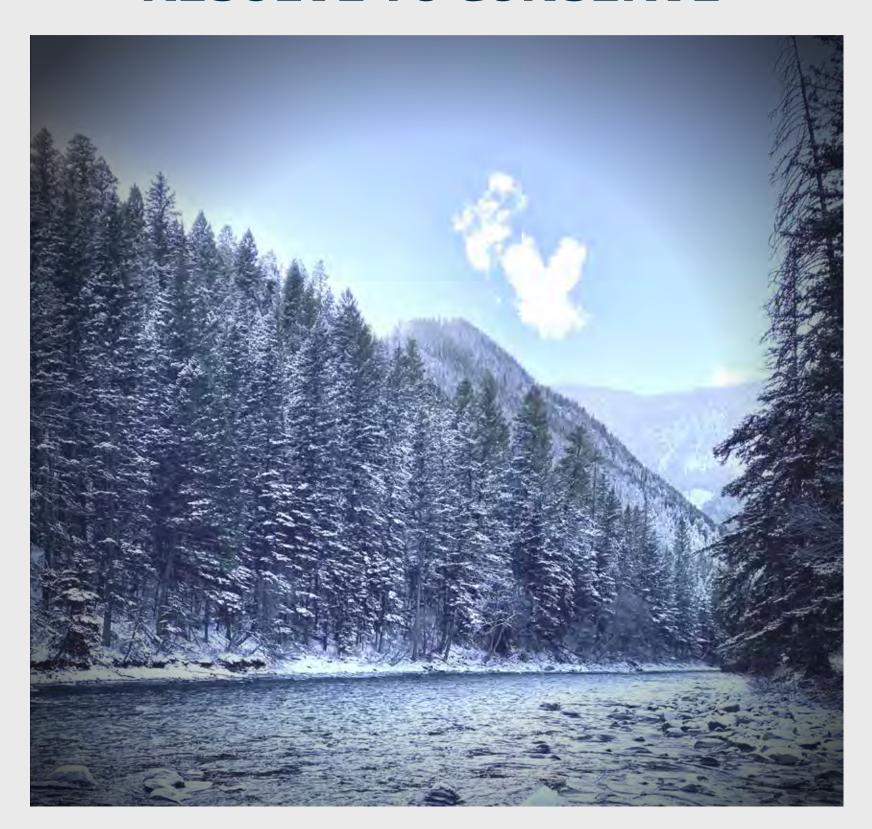


### Carly Rae Jepsen – "Dedicated"

Yes, this is the same Carly Rae Jepsen who broke onto the scene with "Call me Maybe" all those years ago. I wrote her off for the past ten years until a friend mentioned they were a fan. As it turns out, she has been making consistently good music since and my informal surveys concluded only about half of people knew that. "Dedicated" is not a masterpiece, but it is an incredibly diverse album with a song for most moods—whether it be dancing in your apartment

because no one can see you, wondering if they are going to call you back, or anything in between.

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# **Big Sky Bites: The Absolute Best Cinnamon Rolls**

### BY MIRA BRODY

If you've visited the grocery store recently, or ordered groceries for delivery, you're probably aware of the war zone that is the baking aisle. Finding a bag of flour that isn't the size of a small toddler or a single packet of yeast is a pilgrimage to rival the search for the holy grail, proof that people are using their stay-at-home orders to channel their inner Betty Crocker. Baker's yeast is an ingredient that converts sugars into carbon dioxide and ethanol, making the dough light and fluffy and is used in breads and pastries.

The Absolute Best Cinnamon Rolls require baker's yeast, which is what makes them melt in your mouth (the cream cheese helps with this as well). They also require a level of patience. If you have a hankering for delicious cinnamon and frosting smothered pastries right now, you may want to add that air-compressed roll of Pillsbury brand rolls to your cart instead. If you go the homemade route however, you will not regret it.

### **Dough Ingredients**

- 1 cup warm milk
- 1 tablespoon instant dry yeast
- 2 tablespoons white granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons salted butter softened
- 1 large egg
- 3 cups all-purpose flour

### Filling Ingredients

- 1/2 cup salted butter melted
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon

### **Glaze Ingredients**

- 4 ounces cream cheese softened
- 1/4 cup salted butter softened
- 1 to 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

• 1 to 2 tablespoons milk

Oven temp: 325 F Prep time: 3 hours

Cooking time: 15-20 minutes

### Instructions—First, the dough.

- 1. Warm the milk in a small bowl for about a minute in the microwave (you want it to be warm to the touch, but not hot or it will kill the yeast before it has a chance to rise). Add the sugar to the milk, carefully sprinkle the yeast in and let sit for a few minutes. The yeast should start to bubble.
- 2. Into a large bowl, measure the flour, salt, butter and egg, then slowly pour the milk and yeast mixture on top. Mix on low (or in a Kitchen Aid with dough hook) until combined. Once incorporated, move the dough to a flat, flour-covered surface and knead for a few minutes. The dough should be tacky, but not stick to your hands.
- 3. You'll want to create a warm, but not hot, environment for your dough to rise. This is where the yeast gets to work, feeding off of the sugars in the dough. I usually preheat the oven to 200 F, then turn it back off. Place the dough into a clean, lightly greased bowl that is big enough for the dough to double in size, cover with a clean towel, and place in the warm, but turned off, oven. Leave it alone to rise for at least an hour.



PHOTO BY UNSPLASH

### Now, the filling.

- 1. In a medium bowl, melt a half-cup of butter, then add the brown sugar and cinnamon and stir until combined.
- 2. Remove the dough from the oven—it should have doubled in size—and knead a few times on a large flour-covered surface. With a rolling pin, roll out the dough into a large rectangle until it is about ¼ inch thick (approximately 12 inches by 18 inches) and brush the cinnamon filling evenly on top.
- 3. Roll the dough lengthwise into a single, cinnamon-stuffed, log and cut into even cinnamon rolls—you should end up with about eight, 1.5-inch rolls.
- 4. Arrange the rolls in a greased, glass 8-by-8 inch pan and cover with a towel. Let the rolls rise for another half hour. Your patience will pay off soon.

### Finally, baking and frosting.

- 1. Preheat the oven to 325 F. Remove the towel form the rolls and bake for about 15-20 minutes, until the tops are slightly browned.
- 2. While the cinnamon rolls are baking, make the cream cheese glaze. With a hand mixer, whip together cream cheese and butter in a bowl until light and fluffy. Whip in powdered sugar and vanilla extract. Add milk until you reach the consistency of frosting
- 3. Frost and serve rolls warm.

A version of this recipe was published in an earlier issue of EBS.

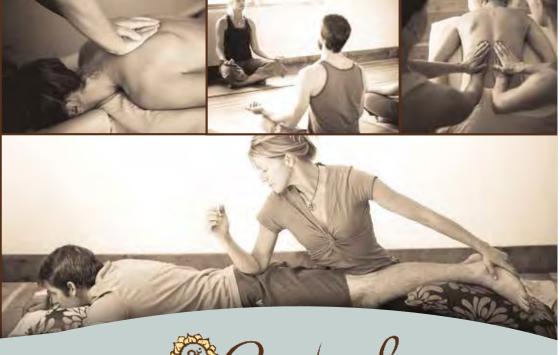


# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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7:00-8:00pm Body Melt

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9:00-10:15am Core Flow Yoga

4:15-5:15pm Apres Ski Yoga

5:30-6:30 SPECIAL VIRTUAL class with James Sewell through Dec. 21st

### TUESDAY

7:30-8:30am Rise and Shine Yoga

9:00-10:00am Warrior Flow Yoga

> Noon-1:00pm Lunch Break

All Levels Yoga 5:45-7:00pm Heated Flow

### WEDNESDAY

7:30-8:30am All Levels Yoga

10:00-11:15am All Levels Yoga

4:15-5:15pm

Apres Ski Yoga

### **THURSDAY**

7:30-8:30am All Levels Yoga

9:00-10:00am All Levels Vinyasa Flow Yoga

> Noon-1:00pm Lunchbreak

All Levels Yoga

5:45-6:45pm **Heated Flow** 

### **FRIDAY**

10:00-11:15am Core Flow Yoga

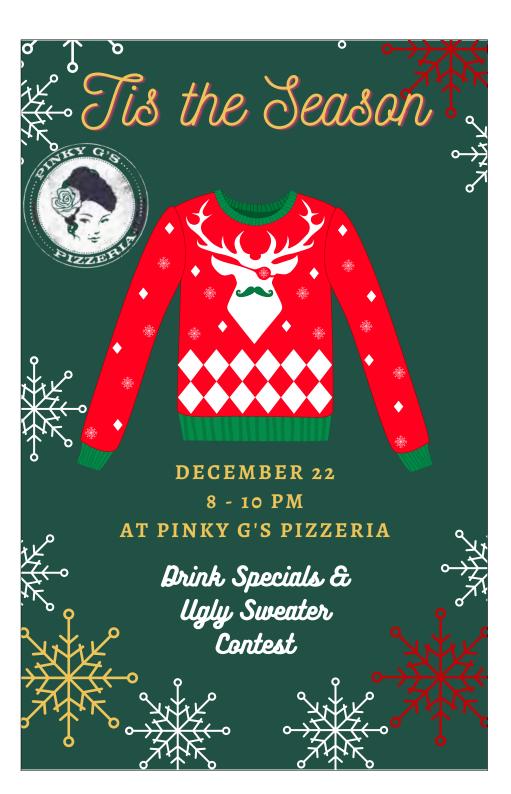
5:45-7:00pm All Levels Kundalini Yoga

### **SATURDAY**

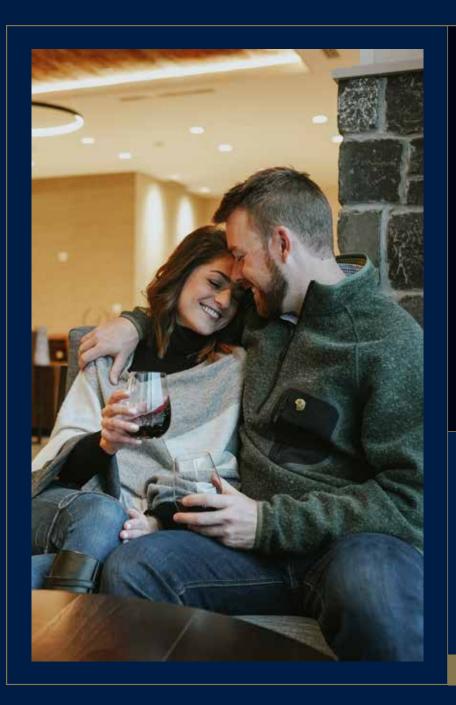
9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga

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# **Big Sky Bites: Crock Pot Apple Butter**

### MIRA BRODY

The uses of apple butter are endless. The fruit spread is a flavorful addition to English muffins, toast, crackers or a peanut butter sandwich, even adding a sweet kick to pork chops and chicken. With roots in Belgium and Germany dating back as far as the Middle Ages, apple butter isn't actually a butter at all, but rather a preserved fruit spread in the same family as jam. However, unlike jam, it does not need pectin, acquiring its butter-like consistency from the caramelization of the natural sugars in the primary ingredient—apples.

Another benefit to apple butter is its ability to be canned for an extended shelf life. Canning has long been a way to preserve foods, and while we limit our grocery store visits and discover family-friendly activities to pass the extra time at home, canning could become your new jam.

This recipe utilizes a crock pot, but if you don't have one a large pot on a stove works just as well. For this recipe, prep four 8-oz. jars. Gala, Fuji and Honeycrisp apples have great flavor and I added a few Granny Smith apples for tartness.

### Ingredients

- 6 pounds apples (about 20) peeled and sliced (an apple corer works great, if you have one)
- 3 cups white sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Crock pot temp: High Prep time: 15 minutes Cooking time: 4-6 hours

- 1. Place your peeled, cored and sliced apples in the crockpot and top with the sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Give it a stir, cover with a lid and set to high.
- 2. After about four hours (if your apple slices are thicker, you may need to cook longer) it's time to blend! You can use an immersion blender directly in the crock pot, or transfer in batches to a blender.
- 3. Once all your apples are blended smooth into an applesauce consistency, return to the crock pot and simmer on low with the lid off. This will help some of the moisture evaporate and thicken your apple butter.

Stir occasionally to prevent sticking and give it a taste! Now is the time to add your desired spices, if you wish. Some suggestions: clove, ginger or lemon juice.

Now, you are ready to can.

### Canning and Preserving

To properly can at home, you'll need mason jars, bands and new lids. While your jars and bands can be sterilized and reused, lids cannot, as the rubber only properly seals once. You'll also need a large pot and it is helpful, but not necessary, to have a canning rack, wide-mouth canning funnel, magnetic lid lifter and jar tongs. Keeping all of these tools and your canning area sterile is crucial—any bacteria in your cans will spoil your product!

- 1. Wash the jars, lids, and bands in hot, soapy water.
- 2. Fill your pot with water and bring to a steady boil. All of your jars should fit comfortably inside your pot and be covered by at least an inch of water. Using your canning rack, lower your jars and lids into the water and keep them in the boiling water until your apple butter is ready.

- 3. Once your apple butter is ready, remove the cans from the water and line them up on a clean towel. Use a funnel or ladle to carefully fill each jar with apple butter, leaving about a half-inch of space. Before placing the lids, ensure the lip of your jars are clean.
- 4. Place your lids and screw the bands on—do not over-tighten.
- 5. Once all your jars are sealed, return the filled jars into the boiling water and lower until they are submerged.
- 6. Bring the water to a boil and after an 8-10 minute bath, turn off the heat and let the jars stand in the water for 5 minutes.
- 7. Remove the jars from the water and set on a towel to cool.

Do not disturb your product while your jars are cooling—this is crucial to the sealing process. You will hear a "pop!" as each jar seals. This can take up to 24 hours and your success will be measured by testing whether or not your lid buttons pop back up when you press down on the top. Unsealed jars need to be refrigerated and used first or kept in the freezer and re-thawed for use. Store in a cool, dry place and remember to label your jars with a date. If sealed properly, many preservatives can keep for up to five years.

The best part about canning is that your product is sterile, so in a time where direct contact is forbidden, fresh preserves are the perfect salutation to drop at your neighbor's, friend's or family's doorstep to stay connected.

A version of this recipe was published in an earlier issue of EBS.



PHOTO BY OUTLAW PARTNERS

# **Big Sky Bites: Nana Lucia's Christmas Cookies**

### BY BELLA BUTLER

Roughly 100 years ago, my great grandmother stepped off of a boat on Ellis Island as an eight-year-old Italian immigrant. Despite leaving most everything behind, she brought with her one thing—the distinguishable culinary culture of her home country.

Growing up with her, I recall every meal as an extravagant production. Each ingredient was sourced from a particular and unique location; shopping alone was a few days' work.

In the face of her impenetrable gastronomic ethics, one recipe broke tradition: A popular treat of the mid-twentieth century, chocolate chip peanut butter cookies baked with cake mix were not Italian and not traditional, but their spongey texture and rich flavor assuaged Nana's discriminating palette.

This holiday season scrap the trendy, yet laborious, Pinterest recipes that tend to work tears of unmet expectations into the dough. Instead, opt for a simple recipe that is sure to please even the most critical of tongues.

### Recipe:

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 12 minutes

### Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/4 cup softened butter
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 12 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon vanilla

### **Instructions:**

- 1. Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees and grease baking sheet with a layer of butter
- 2. In a large bowl, beat eggs, water, butter, peanut butter and half of the cake mix until smooth
- 3. Add in vanilla
- 4. Incrementally add the remainder of the cake mix and chocolate chips until all ingredients are completely combined, avoiding mix too thoroughly
- 5. Portion into two-inch dough mounds and spread evenly onto sheet
- 6. Bake for 10-12 minutes
- 7. Remove, allowing to cool
- 8. Enjoy

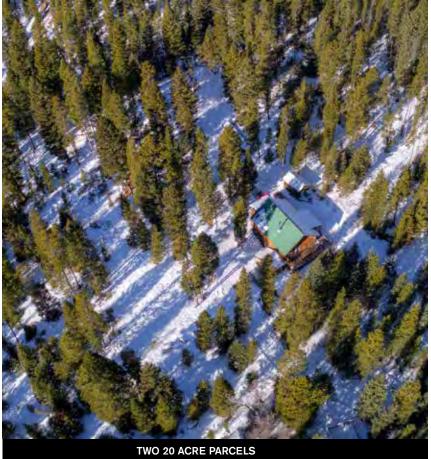
Chef's Tip: Don't roll or overwork the dough—an uneven texture is the mark of a homemade cookie. Leave out for Santa on Dec. 24.

A version of this recipe was published in an earlier issue of EBS.

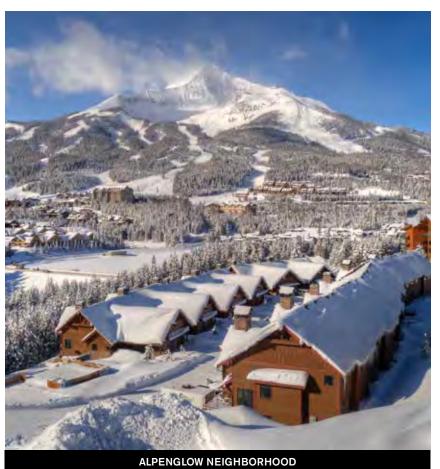


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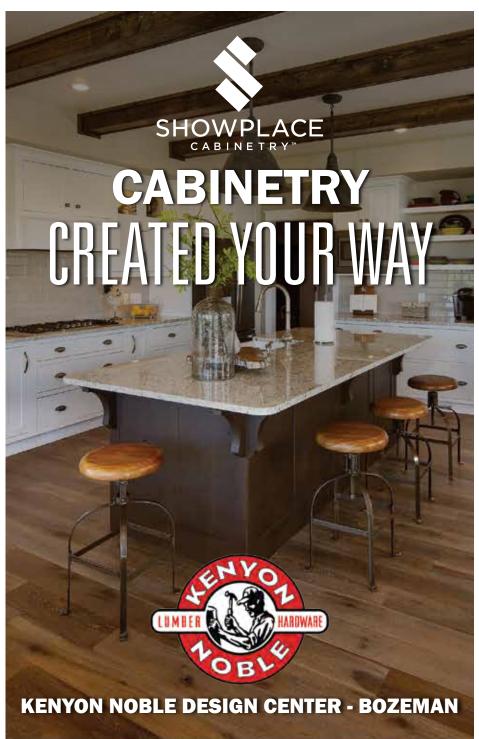


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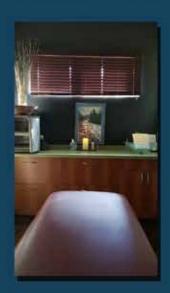
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# Big Sky Bites: The Spicy Goat dip

# Disclaimer: this recipe contains no goat



PHOTO BY OUTLAW PARTNERS

### BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

At Outlaw Partners, EBS staff included, we like to eat.

As proof, the office kitchen table is perennially topped with bags of chips and candies, dips and salsas, donuts and pieces of cake ready for the taking; we find these delights not only sweeten slower moments, but also render a bona fide family atmosphere, bringing us together for conversation and jokes.

But the team is also fiercely competitive in their gluttony, putting taste buds to the test in an annual cook-off. In November of 2019, coworkers cast their lots in crafting a champion dip in the pursuit of the hardware: a highly coveted token of culinary supremacy.

Last year's winner, ME Brown, graphic designer at Outlaw, effortlessly swept the competition with her "The Spicy Goat" dip, a delicious amalgamation of beef, bison, pork, red pepper jelly, Sriracha, brown sugar, cinnamon and a few other choice flavors.

For context, ME's dip received seven votes—the closest competitor received two.

Served with kettle-cooked potato chips, her spicy and sweet dip was easily among the best I'd ever had, if not the best.

Maybe it was the equal parts bison, beef and ground pork, or the liberal application of Sriracha sauce. Perhaps the mounds of goat cheese, scoops of red pepper jelly, and dashes of cinnamon and red pepper flakes were the deciding factors.

In all, this curious and novel synthesis of flavors captured attentions at the dip-off, fixing eyes to a crockpot of mysterious sanguine dip that perfectly complemented the crunchy saltiness of the chips. Some might even allege that collusion garnered votes for any dips other than ME's. One thing is certain, we are blessed the young design talent decided to share this recipe after graciously receiving her prize.

### Recipe:

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 20 minutes

Servings: 8

### **Ingredients:**

- 1/3 pound ground beef
- 1/3 pound ground bison
- 1/3 pound ground pork
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4 cup red pepper jelly
- 1/2 cup Sriracha hot sauce
- 1 tablespoon red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon cayenne pepper
- 1 cup goat cheese
- 1 large bag plain kettle cooked potato chips

### **Instructions:**

- 1. Heat the olive oil in a large sauce pan over medium heat
- 2. Add the meat, mincing as you cook until well-mixed and without clumps
- 3. Cook 6-8 minutes, until cooked-through and browned
- 4. Reduce to a simmer
- 5. Mix in brown sugar, cinnamon and red pepper jelly
- 6. Stir in Sriracha, red pepper flakes and cayenne pepper
- 7. Refrigerate overnight to allow flavors to settle
- 8. Reheat in a crockpot or on the stove, stirring in half the goat cheese
- 9. Top with remaining goat cheese, and serve with chips
- 10. Enjoy

Tip: Stir in more brown sugar and jelly to thicken dip further, and be mindful of the spice—add as much Sriracha as you can handle.



### **SPECIAL HOLIDAY HOURS**

**DECEMBER 21-23** 

7:00am - 6:00pm

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7:00am - 5:00pm

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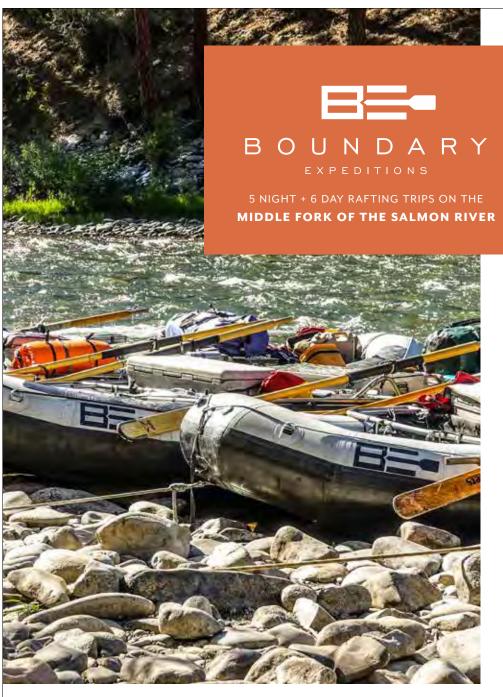
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