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Big Sky Resort kicks off ski season

Big Sky Relief launches weekly COVID-19 surveillance testing

Artist Lisa Gleim captures surrounding contours

LPHS fall athletics All-State, All-Conference honorees

Hannahs leaving his mark at BSSD



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ON THE COVER:

Big Sky Resort. More than 250 days

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Big Sky Resort kicks off ski season

Thanksgiving Day marked more than turkey, mashed potato and stuffing-filled tables, it was also Big Sky Resort's opening day of the 2020-2021 ski season. After an extended layoff between seasons due to COVID-19, skiers and riders were eager to indulge their craving for the slopes.

Big Sky Relief launches weekly COVID-19 surveillance testing

Beginning Dec. 7, the partners of Big Sky Relief are offering weekly COVID-19 surveillance tests to members of the Big Sky community. Surveillance testing will be available until spring and results are anticipated to be available in a day or less.

Artist Lisa Gleim captures surrounding contours

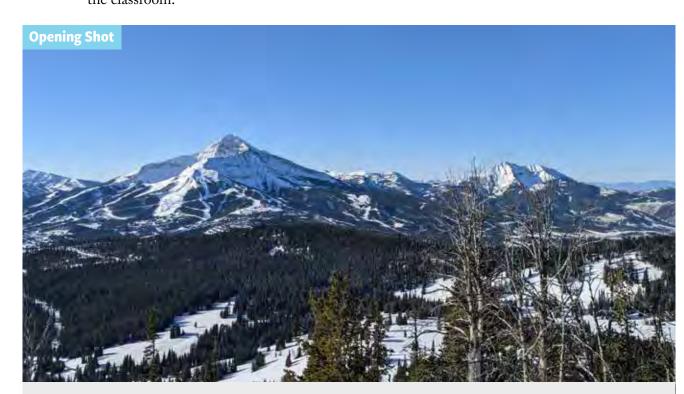
Imagine painting a landscape, more specifically, the natural beauty of the mountainous terrain southwest Montana has to offer—all while experiencing it firsthand. That's the experience artist Lisa Gleim immerses herself in as she creates her stunning paintings.

LPHS fall athletics All-State, All-Conference honorees

Fifteen Lone Peak High School fall athletes were selected to postseason honors at season's end. Each of the four fall LPHS varsity athletic teams had at least one player receive All-State or All-Conference honors.

Hannahs leaving his mark at BSSD

A Montana native, Big Sky School District athletic director and middle school English teacher John Hannahs was raised in Parkman, Wyoming. The three-sport athlete attended Montana State University before accepting a position at BSSD supporting students on the court and in the classroom.



The vantage point from Beehive Basin provides stunning views of all the mountains in and around Big Sky. Standing on a ridge that marks the beginning of the Spanish Peaks range, a subrange of the Rocky Mountains, provides a view point of Lone Mountain on the left and Fan Mountain on the right. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

EDITORIAL POLICIES

EDITORIAL POLICY

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EBS welcomes obituaries written by family members or from funeral homes. To place an obituary, please submit 500 words or less to media@theoutlawpartners.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

For the December 18, 2020 issue: December 9, 2020

CORRECTIONS

Please report errors to media@outlaw.partners.

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Highlands Neighborhood

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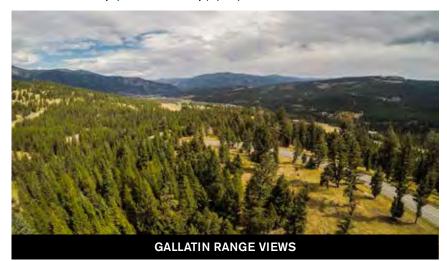
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Summit View Lot 7, Phase 2

MOUNTAIN VILLAGE

COMES WITH WELL INSTALLED | 2.062 +/- ACRES | \$400,000



32 Market Place, 1A

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Why work from home? 5 Suites with reception and waiting area, bathroom and steam shower located in the meadow center.



The North 40

GALLATIN CANYON

3 BED + 3 BATH | 2-CAR GARAGE | 2,742 SQ. FT. | 41.92 +/- ACRES | \$4,500,000





LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

In the most recent edition of EBS we are urged by Mike Scholz to support new "Wild and Scenic" legislation being proposed by Montana Sen. Jon Tester that would provide such designation for 39 miles of the Gallatin River. What am I missing here?

When I consider "wild," or wildness, I seldom think of huge gravel trucks and construction vehicles speeding up or down the road at excessive rates of speed, belching exhaust fumes and producing enough engine noise to obliterate the sounds of moving water or bird life. Where "scenic" is concerned, I do not often seek out views of bumper-to-bumper vehicles filled with impatient people jostling for position so they can pass any vehicle that dares to be driving the posted speed limit. Most of my wild destinations do not include seeing people flipping each other off or hearing vehicle occupants shouting profanity at people walking along a highway.

I also seldom seek out rivers that have hordes of fishermen competing for places to fish and I certainly do not look for views of stacked lines of rafts filled with bobble-headed paddlers who shout and cheer loudly as they survive each run through life-threatening Class 2 rapids while waving at fishermen who now must hope the fish will start feeding again before the next flotilla arrives. And I generally prefer water free of algal blooms and having shorelines that are not littered with plastic bottles, aluminum cans and toilet paper.

Designation as a "Wild and Scenic River" would certainly provide protection for shorelines that are public land. No oil derricks allowed. No gas wells or fracking permitted and no nasty cyanide-leach operations to recover gold and perhaps endanger the river. Dams would be prohibited too but only as far as the confluence with Spanish Creek, which is wise because the city of Bozeman will likely be forced to dam the river and capture water emerging from the canyon when their city footprint expands to cover all land between Three Forks and Livingston. (Please

read Todd Wilkinson's excellent article "Is Bozeman losing the nature of its place?" in the most recent edition of EBS).

Designation would certainly ensure that more people from outside Montana would visit the valley. Look at what happened following the designation of the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River: party boats by the score hoping for an authentic Lewis and Clark experience. Try finding wildness or solitude or a campsite on the Missouri these days during peak season.

But wait ... designation would certainly bring more dollars into the area. Maybe this is precisely why Mr. Scholz is urging support. Every commercial venture that relies on the river could advertise the river's new status and bring forth even more dollars. Impact on the river be damned.

Designation does nothing toward restoration unless all the new dollars are so directed. I won't hold my breath on that one. We can watch the algae bloom expand and the volume of trash on the shoreline increase.

Continue to use up the resource, wildness or whatever it may be ... use it up, exploit it, despoil it and then look for the next best place. Abandoned mines and superfund sites tell us that this has mostly been the Montana way. If we fail to plan, if we fail to recognize limits and if we fail to protect the things that make Montana so special, everything we cherish about the place will vanish. Respect for the qualities of place is always a better choice than trying to restore a compromised ecosystem.

Robert M. Hamilton West Yellowstone, MT

Retired Educator (Teacher and High School Principal), 30 years Former National Park Ranger (Yellowstone and Big Bend National Parks), 12 years Former Backcountry Volunteer (Yellowstone National Park) 3 years

OP-ED:

Conserving grizzly bears takes self-responsibility

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

Randy Newberg doesn't carry a sidearm. Clocking some 100 days every year exploring the unbound—and often bear-laden—pockets of the American landscape, Newberg says when it comes to a bear attack, he'd leave his trust in an aerosol rather than a piece of lead.

It's a personal decision, one that is the right of each individual who steps foot in the woods, but for Newberg, carrying bear spray is a no-brainer.

Newberg is a hunter who calls Bozeman, Montana, his home. He is the producer of two popular TV shows, "Fresh Tracks" and "On Your Own Adventures," as well as the "Hunt Talk Podcast," where he advocates for sportsmen and public land access.

The first time Newberg encountered a grizzly bear at close range, he says drawing a sidearm, aiming, and then placing an accurate shot would have been near impossible. He was on an archery elk hunt in Southwest Montana, full of anticipation after spotting a herd of cow elk. As he crested a small hill, he came head-on upon a boar grizzly, maybe 12 yards away. Luckily, the boar turned and ran away.

Carrying bear spray is one of a handful of behaviors that have become customary for Newberg as he ventures into areas that are home to grizzly bears. Newberg chooses to take these precautions out of a sense of self-responsibility for the conservation of grizzly bears and he hopes other people who find themselves in bear country will consider taking proactive steps as well.

Our behaviors and choices all play in to the larger picture that is the future of grizzly bears in Montana. And a future that is bright for both grizzly bears and people depends on the actions of local communities, businesses, nonprofits and individuals.

"I'm really proud that Montana is one of the places that grizzly bears have always been. It's an example of the conservation ethic in Montana," Newberg says.

The essential role of stakeholders is emphasized in the work of the Montana Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council and its recommendations for how wildlife officials should manage bears. These recommendations, released on Sept. 8, will provide a starting point for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks as the agency drafts a new statewide grizzly bear management plan that will address grizzly bears as an endangered species and their management after delisting.

MT FWP Director Martha Williams says this statewide approach is an important step in continued grizzly bear conservation at a time when bears are beginning to expand into areas outside the original recovery areas.

"Regardless of whether the grizzly bear is listed and covered by the Endangered Species Act or not, we all have a responsibility to understand what is needed to help people and bears and take actions to help both," she says. "We at MT FWP recognize that a robust public engagement process helps inform a thoughtful approach to grizzly bear management. It does not replace science, as science informs and serves as a critical foundation to our actions. Yet, much of grizzly bear recovery centers on conflict prevention, conflict reduction, and information, education and outreach. Those require working with people and communities."

To view the council's recommendations visit fwp.mt.gov/gbac. To learn more about Randy Newberg's approach to elk hunting in grizzly country, or to learn more about the Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council, visit https://grizzlybearcollective.com/living-with-bears/building_solutions/.

Jessianne Castle *Marion, Montana*

Jessianne Castle lives west of Montana's Flathead Valley. She is a freelance writer, range rider and founder of the Grizzly Bear Collective.



Have you taken an avalanche education course before? Will you this year?



Tanya Johnson *Big Sky, MT*

"I have not taken an avalanche course and I'm probably not going to, but my husband has taken many avalanche courses ... I just ski when I have a chance."



Shannon Glenn *Bozeman, MT*

"No, I have not I just moved here about three months ago from Oklahoma. [I] haven't skied in a while, I wouldn't mind try[ing] it again if I don't hurt myself."



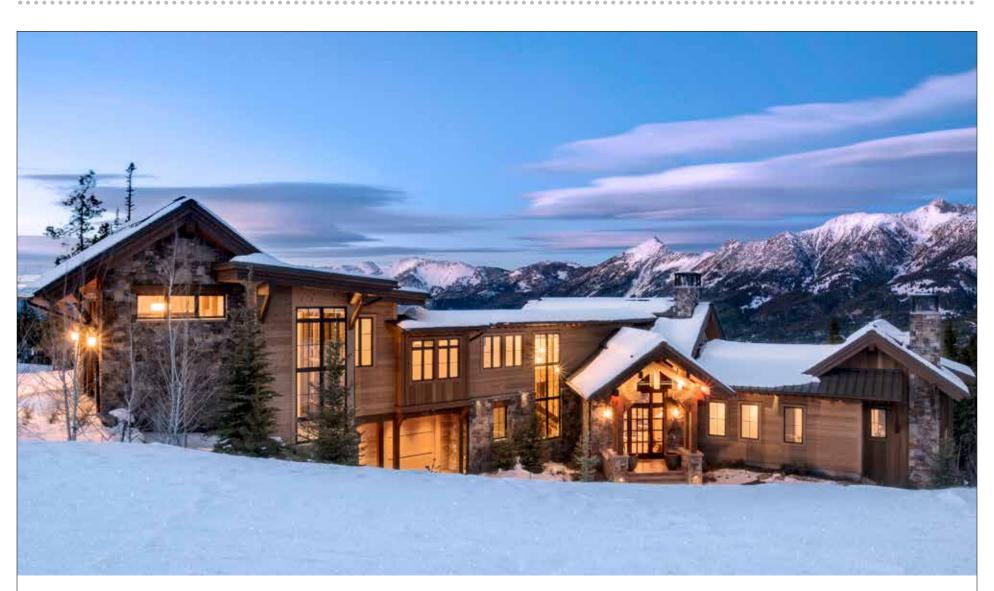
Anna Alvin Big Sky, MT

"Yes, I had avalanche education in fifth grade from Mr. Neal. I would seek further education. I don't go in the backcountry, and part of that is feeling like I have inadequate avalanche education."



Kirby Grubaugh *Big Sky, MT*

"I have done two Avalanche one classes through Mountain Madness out of Seattle, Washington. I grew up in Washington, got pretty involved into the country scene in college. I felt like it was something that was important to me to know and Mountain Madness is a great school and I feel very informed."





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VOTING PERIOD: NOV. 29 - DECEMBER 6



Gov. Bullock announces new crisis counseling hotline

OFFICE OF GOV. STEVE BULLOCK

HELENA – On Dec. 1, Gov. Steve Bullock announced a new crisis counseling hotline funded by a \$1.6 million federal grant is now available to aid Montanans struggling with their mental health due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19.

"We know Montanans in every corner of the state have been impacted by this virus in various ways and I'm pleased this hotline is available to support anyone in need," Bullock said. "I encourage Montanans to use the hotline now to receive confidential assistance and get connected to the appropriate services in their community."

The grant is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as well as the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

The Montana Crisis Recovery hotline is funded and available for at least the next nine months. Montanans in need of crisis counseling can call 1-877-503-0833 to receive free and confidential counseling services from trained crisis counselors Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. DPHHS is contracting with Mental Health America of Montana to manage the hotline, which will include 12 trained crisis counselors.

Skyline modifies late night service

BIG SKY TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

BIG SKY – Due to Gov. Steve Bullock's directive that bars and restaurants must close at 10:00 p.m. due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Skyline Bus Service has decided to modify its late-night service, which will end in Big Sky by midnight.

These changes will be implemented on Saturday, Dec. 5 and affect the Link Express Service, as well as Routes One and Two. There are no changes to Routes Three and Four.

According to David Kack, coordinator with the Big Sky Transportation District, these small changes should not have an impact on anyone's ability to get where they need to go. If Gov. Bullock modifies his directive in the future, Skyline will have the ability to re-add the late-night service, Kack said.

For more information and full bus schedules, visit https://skylinebus.com/.

Montana Headwaters Legacy Act reaches U.S. Senate

GREATER YELLOWSTONE COLAITION

BOZEMAN – Today, Montana Sen. Jon Tester introduced the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act into the U.S. Senate. The Montana Headwaters Legacy Act is a made-in-Montana bill that protects 336 river miles in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the Smith River watershed.

The Montana Headwaters Legacy Act will designate 17 stream sections as a part of the National Wild and Scenic River System, the highest form of river protection in the U.S. Montana only has 388 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers, compared to 891 miles in Idaho and 1,916 in Oregon. The most recent Montana addition was the East Rosebud Wild and Scenic Act, passed in 2018. The addition of 336 miles represents less than 0.25 percent of Montana's 177,000 miles of streams. It is the result of over a decade of collaboration and outreach in Montana.

"This is a historic day in Montana river conservation," said Charles Drimal, waters conservation coordinator at the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. "The Montana Headwaters Legacy Act will ensure a lasting future for many of Montana's wildest rivers. Montanans rely on these streams economically and love them recreationally. We thank Senator Tester for championing this bill and prioritizing Montana's river heritage."

Christmas Stroll 2020 will look slightly different

BIG SKY TOWN CENTER

BIG SKY – In the interest of safety during COVID-19, the annual Big Sky Christmas Stroll will look different this year. That being said, Town Center, Meadow Village Center, Westfork Meadows, Visit Big Sky and our community partners are not about to let the holiday lights go out on over 22 years of tradition.

The 23rd Annual Big Sky Christmas Stroll is scheduled for the week of Dec. 7-13. This year's event will feature a variety of festive online offerings and inperson activities focusing on community, giving and the holiday spirit.

Santa's Visit Big Sky Holiday Checklist

- Holiday Film Festival presented by Arts Council of Big Sky
- Big Sky Virtual Kitchen: Christmas Stroll Special
- A Christmas Carol By Manual Cinema presented by WMPAC
- Holiday Pop-up Card Workshop presented by Arts Council of Big Sky
- Ugly Sweater Photo Contest
- Christmas Stroll Scavenger Hunt
- Holiday Public Art Walk presented by the Arts Council of Big Sky
- Holiday Display Contest
- Holiday Round Up
- Giving Tree presented by Big Sky Rotary Club
- BSCO's Winter Parks & Trails Event

Check the Big Sky Town Center's website or Big Sky Town Center's Facebook page for more information.

The Town Race Series shredding back to town

OUTLAW PARTNERS

BIG SKY – In partnership with Outlaw Partners, publisher of Explore Big Sky, Big Sky Resort is pleased to announce that the Town Race Series is shredding back into Big Sky, starting Jan. 13 through March 3 (no race Feb. 17) on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The on-slope competition, open to skiers and snowboarders, encourages teams of up to eight people (minimum one female per team), to compete on Big Sky Resort's NASTAR course on the Ambush run. Following each race, participants are invited to convene outside, with social distancing practices in place, at Vista Hall for a free beer, raffle prizes and revelry as results are announced. The top six finishers from each team will score each week.

NASTAR, or "National Standard Race," is the world's largest public grassroots ski racing program, developed by Ski Magazine in 1968, according to the NASTAR website. Through a handicap system, participants can compare their times to competitors across the country, regardless of when or where they race.

Participants earn a handicap when they race, which represents the difference between their race time and the par time, which is set by U.S. Ski Team alumni. Each competitor is then able to measure how close they were to the "fastest possible time" set by the U.S. Ski Team pace-setter for that course.

Registration is \$75 per person and is now open. Racers will need a lift ticket or season pass to ride up the lift, which are not included in registration price. Team captains must reach out to register team names via email at lucia. damberg@bigskyresort.com. Once the team name is in the system, the resort will send a registration link to each participant. Grab your favorite snow bunnies and register before Jan. 3.

Visit bigskyresort.com/raceseries for more information.

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 to implement new surveillance testing program

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – A new COVID-19 surveillance testing program will officially launch in Big Sky on Dec. 7.

In the midst of a spike in cases in Big Sky and greater Gallatin County, and on the heels of Big Sky Resort opening for the season, stakeholders pointed to the importance of making efforts to keep the community healthy.

Tests will be free and selfadministered, and made available to the Big Sky School District, individual community members, small businesses, healthcare and public safety employees, and large employers, according to a Nov. 25 press release from Big Sky Relief.

The 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.

Big Sky Relief is a partnership between BSRAD, Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, Moonlight Community Foundation, and Spanish Peaks Community Foundation, formed in March of

2020 to support COVID-19 relief efforts in Big Sky.

"The program will be adaptable to meet the ever-evolving impacts of the pandemic," said Ciara Wolfe, committee chair of Big Sky Relief and V.P. of philanthropy for the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, in the press release. The YCCF is part of the collaborative that organized the program and is also helping to fund it. "Partners have been and will continue to be committed to provide the support this community needs for the duration of this pandemic and through unexpected challenges yet to come," she said.

Of the \$4.5 million commitment to fund the testing program in Big Sky, 50 percent is funded by private employers who desire to go above and beyond their existing allocation from public dollars, according to Danny Bierschwale, executive director of BSRAD. The philanthropic community in Big Sky will contribute 25 percent of the 4.5 million and the last 25 percent comes from public funds, Bierschwale told EBS in a Nov. 25 interview.

"From the start of the pandemic, our community has come together to provide financial, behavioral, and health resources for those in need and we are honored to play a role," said Matt Kidd, managing director of CrossHarbor Capital, the largest financial backer of the community testing effort, in the statement. "We are committed to providing the resources our community needs to weather the pandemic, however long that takes."

Big Sky Resort is another large employer in the community that is supporting the community testing program and paying extra to test its employees beyond the capacity of public funds.

"Big Sky Resort is investing in weekly surveillance testing for both symptomatic and asymptomatic employees beginning in early December," said Troy Nedved, general manager of Big Sky Resort. "These efforts will help our team isolate any potential outbreaks and alleviate pressure on community testing capacity. We are prioritizing testing for employees whose roles include exposure to guests at the resort ... Surveillance testing is one of the key tools we need to control infection rates and keep our employees safe and our resort open."

Bozeman Health is also a partner in the collaborative effort. The organization is already offering symptomatic testing at the Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center and will also oversee clinical elements of the testing program, as well as provide support for contact tracing.

"Since the COVID-19 pandemic reached southwest Montana, Bozeman Health has worked diligently to help keep our staff, employees, and community safe and healthy through multiple infection prevention measures," Bozeman Health President and CEO John Hill said in the statement. "We're proud to be a trusted partner in this project to help curb the spread of COVID-19 within Gallatin and Madison Counties."

According to Bierschwale, Big Sky is unique in that we are the only place in Montana implementing a program like this. As a community that relies on

income from tourism, Big Sky had to be innovative in the ways that we keep our community safe and healthy, Bierschwale said. Big Sky Resort will have an average of 6,000 visits a day this winter, according to Bierschwale and the new surveillance testing will help to ensure the health of residents as well as the economic health of the community.

All components of the testing program have been designed in close collaboration with Big Sky Relief, Bozeman Health, county and state officials, and other local partners, and will be administered by this consortium, the press release said.

During the first week of the program, 1,000 tests will be made available to the community in the hopes of gathering a baseline of data. After the

first week, 450 tests will be available every week for community members. The testing starts in December and will continue through the end of the ski season.

The pickup location for tests is yet to be determined, but those being tested can drop off test kits at a mobile lab that will be located in the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District parking lot.

The lab will be provided by the organization LetsGetChecked, a private health insights company contracted by BSRAD, that will provide lower nasal-swab kits and serve as the on-site lab, processing the test results in 24 hours or less, the press release said.

A main concern when BSRAD was considering contracts for labs was how to supplement the existing capacity of Montana, according to Bierschwale. The mobile lab stationed in Big Sky will have two polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, testing machines used for PCR tests, also known as molecular tests, which are considered the gold standard of tests, Bierschwale said.

The donation of mail-in testing kits to BSSD kicked off the surveillance testing program at the school, according to Bierschwale, and BSSD will continue testing students as part of the program. That testing is being funded through the Big Sky Relief fund.

"We have been focused like a laser on providing a safe and healthy learning environment for our students, teachers, support and administrative staff," Dr. Dustin Shipman, BSSD superintendent said in the statement. "This widespread testing effort will be an important tool in helping us continue to keep those in the school district healthy and safe."

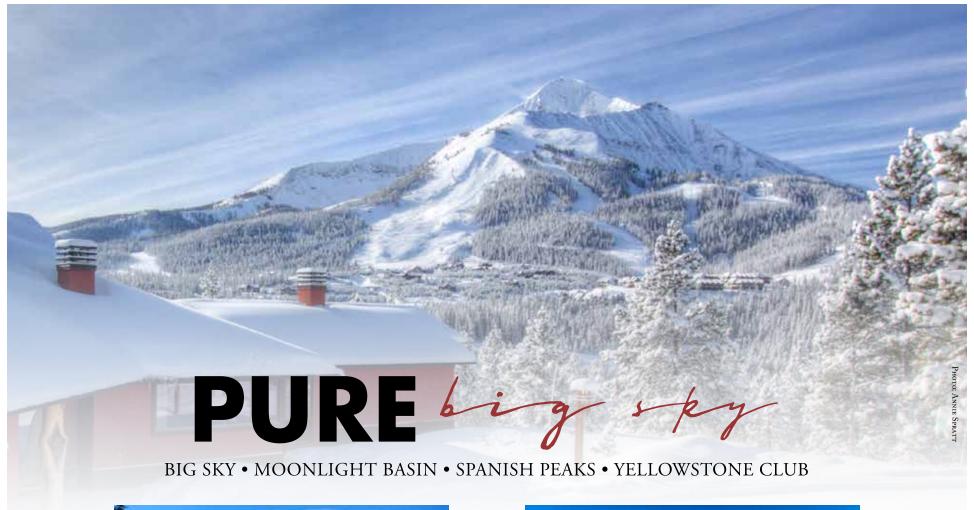
The plan is adaptable, and the community partners will continue adjusting based on the needs of the community, Wolfe said.

While Bierschwale and Wolfe say the surveillance testing program will be a useful tool to help keep the Big Sky community healthy and the resort open, they said everyone must still exercise caution.

The surveillance testing program is in place to help flatten the curve and stop the spread of COVID-19, but it's still important to continue wearing masks, maintain social distancing and follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, they said.



A new community-wide surveillance testing program will begin in Big Sky on Dec. 7. During the first week, 1,000 tests will be made available to the community to gather a baseline of data. PHOTO COURTESY OF MUFID MAJNUN ON UNSPLASH





47 SADDLE HORN ROAD | \$9,250,000

This grand and impressive custom residence in Moonlight Basin's Diamond Hitch community offers 7 bedrooms, and 10 bathrooms (8 full and 2 1/2 baths) in 8,686 square feet of livable space. The home boasts fantastic ski access and provides the unique ability to ski to the base of Big Sky's Mountain Village along the Bozeman Trail. The home includes 3 living rooms, a large dining room, spacious chef's kitchen, a home theater room, a home gym, 2 bunkrooms, a main level master bedroom with a fireplace, an upper level master bedroom with a separate sitting area and a fireplace, 3 additional large bedrooms, and one of the best game rooms in Big Sky! // 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 skiing 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



499B SPRUCE CONE | \$875,000

This 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom condominium is a peaceful getaway for you in beautiful Big Sky! Located in South Fork just minutes from all Town Center amenities and attractions, it is an easy walk to dining, shopping, the farmer's market, music events and the ever popular fire pit. The main level features the kitchen, dining and living areas, which open with two different sets of sliding doors to a patio, open backyard, and adjacent open space complete with trails. The upper level contains all three bedrooms, including the master, and two full baths, along with a charming vaulted loft bonus area. // MARY WHEELER | 406.539.1745



TBD GALLATIN ROAD, MM66 | \$3,495,000

Endless Possibilities! 25± sprawling acres in beautiful Gallatin Canyon along US 191, the main corridor between Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport, Big Sky and West Yellowstone. Backed by Forest Service and offering Gallatin River views, this parcel is just 18 miles north of the entrance to Big Sky. No covenants and subject to North Gallatin Canyon Zoning, this parcel is an open slate to pursue your ideas. // LYNN MILLIGAN | 406.581.2848



60 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD, UNIT 10313 | \$595,000

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. Dining, shopping, spa services, ski storage/tuning, pool, hot tub, sauna, and fitness room are all within close proximity. 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 neighborhood! 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

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Follow the leader

Pt. 1: Big Sky community, experts question local leadership viability



BY BELLA BUTLER AND BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – When Chet Huntley wed his public name with what is now the burgeoning resort town of Big Sky, Montana, he had a vision—a self-governing, independent mountain-town paradise. That vision remains intact, but as Big Sky and the greater Gallatin County witness explosive growth, some in this unincorporated hamlet are raising questions about governance and leadership.

On Aug. 14, Josh Treasure, a seven-year Big Sky resident and general manager at Roxy's Market, posed a question about the prospect of local government on Facebook.

"Would you be in favor of incorporating Big Sky? Please comment yes or no," Treasure wrote. What Treasure described as an attempt to engage the community in constructive conversation quickly turned into a digital debate. Treasure's post received 97 comments.

"There just needs to be more education on if we were to incorporate what would happen," Treasure said during a Nov. 16 interview with EBS. "What are the pros and cons, and do the pros outweigh the cons?"

Treasure appreciates what he calls the "Wild West and libertarian feel" and absence of big government in Big Sky, but also recognizes growing issues in the community. And he says some form of centralized government could help. Workforce housing, a hot topic in Big Sky, is a major concern of his. Indeed, Treasure says he spends roughly 20 of his 80 weekly work hours laboring to secure and maintain housing for his employees.

Treasure gave a nod to the efforts of the Big Sky Community Housing Trust and its program supervisor, Laura Seyfang, but believes the trust could use support from a centralized government. He also believes that Big Sky's Zoning Planning Advisory Committee, of which he is an advising member, would "actually have some power to implement change in the community" in an incorporated Big Sky.

The committee advises Gallatin County on zoning decisions in Big Sky, a "census-designated place," or CDP, with a population of 2,300 as of the 2010 census (the current figure is likely closer to 3,100, according to the World Population Review).

Treasure says the people who live and work here want what's best for the community, though he doesn't purport to know whether that is incorporation or not. He does suggest that, whether it be a mayor, CEO or other authority guise, Big Sky deserves a person whose full-time job is to wake up every day and fight for the people of Big Sky.

"There needs to be someone to do that [who] is not influenced by developers or outside sources that is just paid through our tax dollars to wake up and [care] about people in Big Sky," he said.

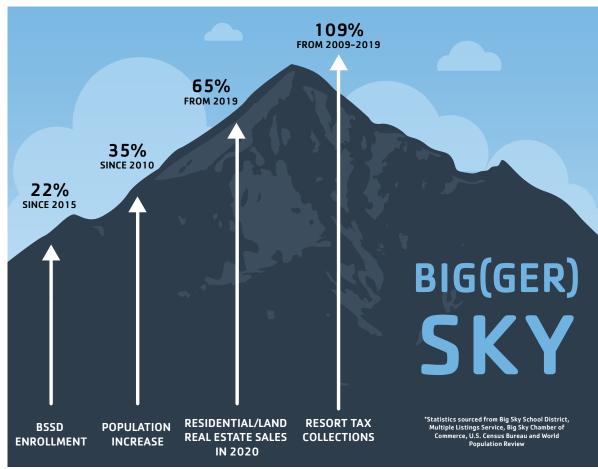
Today, much of Big Sky looks quite different from the undeveloped virgin land of Huntley's '70s, but it remains one of 184 unincorporated communities in Montana, according to the Montana Department of Transportation. For its part, the Montana Department of Revenue recognizes 10 resort areas that collect resort tax, four of which, including Big Sky, are unincorporated.

Without an official government, the current leadership in Big Sky is comprised of a patchwork of boards, committees, nonprofits, districts and associations, all operating with varying levels and limitations of leadership powers.

"We could indeed benefit from a locally elected governing body that could make decisions for the town itself," Steve Merlino wrote in a Facebook message to EBS. Merlino, a Big Sky resident since 2004, was one of the Facebook users to comment on Treasure's August post in favor of incorporating Big Sky and remains open to alternative methods of leadership.

"More importantly, you need representation from the workers that actually make the town run," Merlino wrote. "The perspective from the current workforce is important."

The fact that Treasure, Merlino and other community members are discussing structured government in Big Sky is nothing new; a number of groups have tussled with the controversial topic of governance in Big Sky for years.



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- Josh Treasure

In 2004, under a community planning initiative, the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce convened the Big Sky Community and Infrastructure Group, a subcommittee chaired by then-chamber board president Kate Ketschek. The group was formed to address the issue of local government.

The Big Sky Resort Area District has also dipped its toes into such exploration, soliciting an opinion from Montana's attorney general a few years following the subcommittee's creation.

In 2018, the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce hired Dan Clark, director of Montana State University's Local Government Center to "look at how we as a community could better utilize tools already available to us to facilitate more collaborative local governance on behalf of Big Sky," according to current chamber CEO Candace Carr Strauss. At the time, Carr Strauss asked Clark to omit incorporation from his report in order to limit the scope to resources already available in the community and to avoid duplicating past incorporation investigations.

Today, more than two years following the release of his report on potential leadership options for Big Sky, Clark said the topic is still simmering.

"You'll find in communities [that] there's an ebb and flow of issues," Clark said in a Nov. 11 interview with EBS. "And it seems that this is

probably one of those flow sessions where they're starting to have this conversation."

Clark said momentum due to growth and the pandemic has created a dynamic circumstance that may force the community to confront the future. Local population continues to climb in one of the fastest growing counties of its kind in the nation, and the Big Sky School District's enrollment has trended upward in the last five years, increasing by 22 percent since 2015. The district added 28 new students this school year, ballooning the enrollment from 380 to 408 students.

Perhaps a more accurate measure of growth, however, in a town that hosts a significant number of second homeowners, is real estate. So far in 2020, the collective Big Sky real estate market has raked in nearly \$600 million in residential and land sales, according to Multiple Listings Service, a 65 percent increase from 2019's end-of-year total of \$360 million.

Proportionately, business has been good. According to a 2019 report by the Big Sky Chamber, resort tax collections increased 109 percent since 2009, and visitation to Big Sky Resort and Yellowstone National Park continues to rise. Indeed, Yellowstone saw its busiest September and October on record. These numbers, in short, indicate that more people are coming to Big Sky—and more people are staying.

"You've got a tremendous community with strongly committed folks," Clark said. "A lot of tenacity, a lot of resilience. The question ... for the community to ask themselves is 'Can we sustain this model [in] perpetuity, or are we just going to exhaust ourselves trying to keep up?"

This is the first installment of a two-part story, and part of a larger examination of leadership and governance in Big Sky. Stay tuned to explorebigsky.com and pick up the next edition of EBS for the second installment.

TIGER grant roadway upgrades progress towards 2021 spring construction start

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Contracted by Gallatin County, Bozeman-based engineering firm Sanderson Stewart reports continued progress towards a 2021 springtime construction start date for upgrades to Lone Mountain Trail, also known as Highway 64, and other roadways in Big Sky thanks to the approximately \$10.3 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant the county was awarded in June of 2018.

Currently, Sanderson Stewart is awaiting approval of offer packages from the county, ahead of acquiring all necessary right of way easements for the planned roadway upgrades.

"... I think we're hoping to start sending out, at least some of [the offer packages], this week," said Sanderson Stewart Bozeman Regional Manager and Principal Danielle Scharf.

"One, I think it's exciting. Two, it is a relief that it is moving forward, [that] it is progressing," said Gallatin County Grants Coordinator Jamie Grabinski of the project's progress.

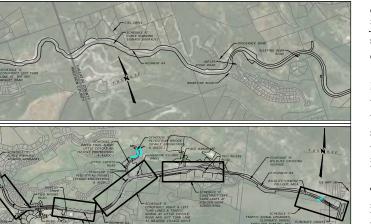
The offer packages were previously reviewed by the Montana Department of Transportation and Scharf said that Sanderson Stewart has already been in contact with the landowners

involved in the necessary right of way acquisitions. She is confident that if the offer packages are approved by the county, they'll acquire the necessary easements.

In December and January, following the acquisition of the right of way easements, Sanderson Stewart will enter the bidding process for the project, seeking bids from contractors. They currently estimate that the roadway improvements will cost roughly \$6.3 million with construction anticipated to begin in May.

According to Sanderson Stewart, planned roadway upgrades include: improvements and construction of eight left turn lanes at various intersections along Highway 64, a traffic signal to be installed at the Highway 64 intersection with Little Coyote Road, a pedestrian bridge and tunnel to be constructed near Little Coyote Road, vehicle pull-out areas, additional signage and recreation paths among other additions.

Discussions between Sanderson Stewart and MDT led to the conclusion that right turn lanes will not be included in the roadway improvements. The addition of right turn lanes would have required an amendment to the originally submitted grant proposal, according to Grabinski. While some of the right hand turns along Highway 64 have a high enough volume of vehicles executing right turns to justify a turning lane, it came down to a matter of visibility.



A Sanderson Stewart rendering of planned roadway improvements from TIGER grant funds along Highway 64 in Big Sky. PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDERSON

"Right turn lanes cause a sight distance issue often times, so they don't always put them in just because they meet volume warrants," Scharf said. "So they kind of review them on a case by case basis."

Scharf added that the project involves widening the roadway shoulders of Highway 64, saying that the additional traveling surface should allow vehicles that are slowing to execute a right turn to begin exiting the traveling lane without impeding traffic.

The dispersal of the TIGER grant funds still include approximately \$2.5 million allotted to the Skyline Bus system to acquire additional public transportation vehicles.

Scharf believes that while traffic will be slowed by construction, it should be possible to maintain the two-way flow of traffic throughout all or a majority of the project. She said the

installation of the pedestrian tunnel would be the only improvement that could alter that plan, but it is currently anticipated that a detour route will be implemented rather than a lane closure.

"Our intent is to tell the contractor that the goal is to maintain two-way traffic throughout construction and we feel that will be pretty doable because most of the work includes widening on the shoulders," she said.

The federal grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation was originally awarded to Gallatin County in June of 2018.

Sanderson Stewart estimates construction will take roughly two full seasons, meaning the project will conclude in the fall of 2022.

VBS board hires Colorado agency to promote Big Sky

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – On Nov. 19, Visit Big Sky held its first board meeting since being awarded more than \$350,000 for its Promote the Destination project, an effort to market the Big Sky area in outside markets.

VBS used the \$353,432 dollars apportioned by the Big Sky Resort Area District on Nov. 12 to hire Colorado-based advertising agency Karsh Hagan from Jan. 1 through June 30, 2021, in order to help market Big Sky as a year-round destination.

In a three-to-one vote, the resort tax board awarded VBS the money as part of its fall awards cycle. This year, VBS reduced its fall cycle request by \$41,000 and was able to relinquish \$160,000 back to BSRAD from their spring award. The organization wanted time to do the foundational research needed to inform bringing another agency on board, said VBS CEO Candace Carr Strauss.

According to VBS's resort tax application, the first quarter of the year, when ski season opens, generates approximately three times as much tax revenue as the summer.

"The goal is to support Big Sky's continued evolution from a destination ski resort to a sustainable, year-round community by flattening out the seasonality of our destination's visitation, shortening the shoulder seasons, building up summer to rival winter, and mitigating risks from weather by planning," the application states.

Carr Strauss said the idea of VBS working with an "agency of record" is not new. When Strauss joined VBS in 2017, the organization had just canceled its contract with FUSE Ideas out of Boston.

"It's always been the intent to work with ... an agency partner," she said.

This intent aligned with VBS's Imagine Big Sky Strategic Plan formulated back in 2017 and 2018, which included the decision to promote shoulder seasons as well as summer. Carr Strauss says VBS still plays "best supporting actor to Big Sky Resort for the winter." But, she added, the majority of VBS's paid media is earmarked for summer and shoulder seasons.

The goal is to bring a balance to tourism and tax collection between winter and the rest of the year and make businesses sustainable year-round, according to Carr Strauss. Currently, winter visitation numbers are significantly higher. Winter visitors also stay longer and are willing to pay a much higher price point on lodging and activities, Carr Strauss said.

"You can see that our winter tax collections for first quarter for 2019 ... were like \$1.7 million on that 4 percent of the bed tax, versus our summer that's only at about \$650,000 dollars," she said.

Carr Strauss pointed to a situation in Colorado a few years ago as an example of why promoting the destination year-round is so important. She said the snowpack in Colorado during the winter of 2017-2018 was significantly lower than the state's historical average and its visitation numbers that year dropped accordingly.

"I think we saw with COVID when we shut the ski resort five weeks early what could happen to us if we didn't have a winter," she said.

At its Nov. 19 meeting, the VBS board began the process of onboarding Karsh Hagan and to see an initial presentation. Before hearing from the agency, the board heard public comment. Eric Ladd, CEO of the Outlaw Partners—and the publisher of this newspaper—voiced concerns about how VBS is using BSRAD funds.

"My belief is that the time has come for Visit Big Sky to shift from destination marketing to destination management," said Ladd, suggesting that VBS should spend money in the Big Sky community as opposed to outside locales.

"This is not the most productive or effective use of your budget," Ladd said, urging VBS to rethink hiring an outside advertisement agency. "The money you have recently been awarded could be used right here in Big Sky and make a huge difference. Keep the money local, support our local businesses and create more resort tax dollars."

The rest of the VBS meeting included budget updates, information on additional VBS grant applications, an update on the Oct. 21 letter sent to Congress by a collective of western states asking to add a Gateway Community Dividend to the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program, and the presentation by Karsh Hagan's team.

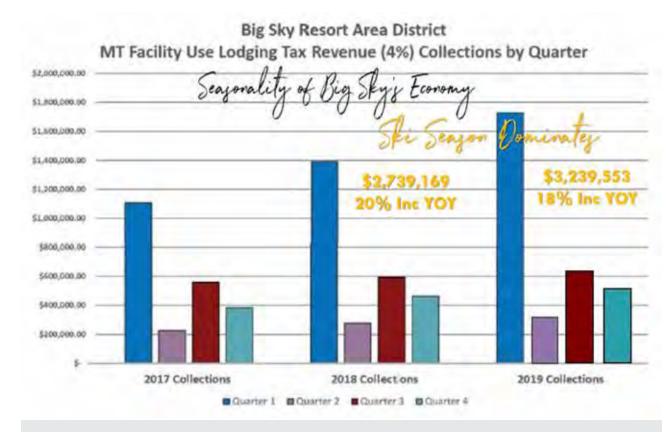
Founded in 1977 and based in Denver, Colorado, Karsh Hagan has worked with high-profile ski resorts including Aspen-Snowmass, Winter Park, Steamboat and Loveland.

The Karsh Hagan team introduced strategies as well as a brief concept for its Big Sky marketing strategy, and Carr Strauss emphasized the importance of the Promote the Destination project. "Just because you have tourism at the moment, when you stop putting out there that you're open for business, people stop coming and that economic loss is significant."

Some European resorts are considering temporary shutdowns or delayed openings. Carr Strauss said that if Big Sky had to shut down, the loss of winter resort tax collections would hurt the community.

"I think if we went a winter with no visitors, we would not be in a very good place next summer," she said.

Karsh Hagan and VBS will host a brand workshop on Dec. 9 to aggregate research from the 2018 Place DNA study, which looks at a destination from the inside out, focusing first on residents as well as summer research from 2019.



The Promote the Destination project from Visit Big Sky will focus on marketing Big Sky as a year-round destination. The hope is to bring a balance to tourism and tax collection between winter and the rest of the year in Big Sky. GRAPHIC COURTESY OF VISIT BIG SKY

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News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners



TEDxBigSky 2021 Speaker Lineup

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – On Jan. 30, 2021, nine speakers will gather in the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center to present speeches on the 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, there are many stories of how people changed their lives, businesses pivoted their plans and focus, and other incredible examples of humanity and community building.

The emphasis will be on presence or consciousness without thought and will feature stories about people helping each other, businesses changing their focus to help the greater good and perspective shifts in the face of need.

Before virtually attending the event, here's an opportunity to learn more about three of the speakers who will be presenting. Below are short biographies, photos and a Q&A session with three of the TEDxBigSky 2021 speakers.

Dr. Cathy Whitlock



Dr. Cathy Whitlock is a Regents Professor in Earth Sciences at Montana State University and a Fellow of the Montana Institute on Ecosystems. She fell in love with Yellowstone in the 1980s and, since then, has been doing research there as well as seeking comparisons in other parts of the world.

Whitlock is nationally and internationally recognized for her research and leadership activities in the field of climate and environmental change. She served as lead author of the 2017 Montana Climate Assessment, which has inspired climate-

change discussions across the state. In 2018, Whitlock became the first person ever from a Montana university to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

Explore Big Sky: Tell me about your research?

Cathy Whitlock: "Well, I've had a love affair with Yellowstone since I was a small child. My family used to travel from upstate New York, to the west coast to see relatives and we'd always go through Yellowstone so that got my interest in the park and then as I went to college, I realized that you could actually do research in Yellowstone. Now that I'm at Montana State University, it is a place where I can inspire students and help students do their own research in the park."

EBS: What does the theme of awakening mean to you?

CW: "The planet is experiencing a lot of change that's moving us into places we haven't been before, unprecedented areas. I think we're awakening to what that actually means for us as global citizens but also as people who live in this extraordinary ecosystem."

EBS: As a leader in the field of climate and environmental change, what goals are you working towards?

CW: "Well, the big thing we're working through now is we're actually finishing an assessment of what climate change means for Greater Yellowstone. This is really exciting because it's a partnership of people from three states, and also from federal agencies, and we're really looking at what it means for the different parts of the ecosystem in terms of how they will be affected directly by climate change and what it means for their water resources. I'm super excited about that it's going to be released May 2021, we've been working on it for a couple years now. ... I've been doing a couple of things. One of them is I've been looking at the ecological impacts of hydrothermal activity in Yellowstone, and other parts of the West. So that's a matter of looking at the impact of hydrothermal explosions, big geyser events, and that kind of thing, how does it affect the ecosystem. The other project I've been working on is in Argentina, which is looking into the history of the lower forests the dry forest and how that's changed through time."

EBS: What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk? **CW:** "Yellowstone is an extraordinary ecosystem that is of global importance. It's the last intact pristine ecosystem in the middle latitudes of the world. We have a responsibility to understand it but also to protect it."

Rob Balucas



Rob Balucas is an 'every-man joe' who was thrust into extraordinary circumstances in 2015 when a cycling accident rendered him paraplegic. At the time he was training for his first half IRONMAN triathlon, which was supposed to take place the very next weekend. He vowed to return to triathlon within a year and raced in three sprint-distance triathlons the next year following his injury.

Since then, he's competed in five half IRONMANs, including the 2019 half IRONMAN World Championships in Nice, France.

His next goal is to qualify again for the Kona (full) IRONMAN World Championship and race on triathlon's biggest stage as a paratriathlete.

Outside of paratriathlon, Balucas resides in Southern California with his partner, Erika, and their dog Chloe. He is a small business owner at babaLucas Creative, serving the branding, marketing, and website needs of small businesses and nonprofits.

Explore Big Sky: What does the theme of awakening mean to you? **Rob Balucas:** "There's a parallel for me that a lot of people are awakening to the idea that our freedom and liberty are so inalienable and it's kind of like what people in my situation go through all the time, you learn really quick it's not guaranteed. There's nothing you can do, and you have to figure out how to accept your circumstances and live a particular way that is confined from what you thought it should be."

EBS: How have the challenges you have overcome as a paratriathlete changed you? **RB:** "For me it was a big switch because I lived until like 38. I pretty much, you know, lived life for arguably half my life and then all of a sudden it changed completely. ... It's a new perspective, literally, because I'm standing up at five foot eight but I'm now four foot. So, it's literally a different perspective. I think there's a lot of things it confirms for me, like, the importance of people and relationships in my life. I always invested a lot of time building strong connections and bonds with people in my life and it paid in spades, if you will, when I got injured because there were a bunch of people who came to my side and helped me when I needed it."

EBS: What does the goal of qualifying again for the Kona (full) IRONMAN World Championship mean to you?

RB: "It was just kind of like the Super Bowl of triathlon and it was just some nebulous thing out there that I never really had an ambition for because quite frankly, I'm really average as a triathlete. ... I have always liked to challenge myself and not just settle for where I'm at. There's not a lot of paratriathletes trying to go to Kona relative to the able-bodied people. ... A big part of it was when I got the chair, it's kind of like the gloves came off in terms of what's important in life."

EBS: What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk? **RB:** "The big thing is, we're far more capable than we generally think we are. I hear people tell me that they could never do a triathlon able-bodied or not, and I know they're wrong because I've seen everything cross the finish line. I've seen overweight, I've seen thin, I've seen old, I've seen young, I've seen people with severe disabilities being tethered or carried by their parents. ... I've seen everything cross the finish line of a triathlon and it just goes to show that we're far more capable if we just hunker down and went and did it went after it, and worked for it. We can have it. We can weather bigger storms than we think we can."

David Leuschen



David Leuschen is the Co-Founder and Senior Managing Director of Riverstone Holdings, LLC, one of the world's largest energy investment firms, as well as the largest independent investor in renewable energy. He sits on the Investment Committees of all the various Riverstone investment vehicles, and on a number of boards of directors of Riverstone portfolio companies.

Prior to founding Riverstone, Leuschen was a Partner at Goldman Sachs and founder and head of the Goldman Sachs Global Energy and Power Group. He is also president and sole

owner of Switchback Ranch LLC and on the Advisory Board of Big Sky Investment Holdings LLC.

Leuschen serves on a number of nonprofit boards of directors, including: as a Trustee of United States Olympic Committee Foundation, a Director of Conservation International, a Director of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a Founding Member of the Peterson Institute's Economic Leadership Council, a Director of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, and a Director of the Montana Land Reliance.

Explore Big Sky: What does the theme of awakening mean to you? **David Leuschen:** "Doing things in a new way – especially as it applies to the disruptive technologies that will cure climate change."

EBS: What inspired you to build a career in renewable energy?

- DL: "Part necessity, part dedication to doing the right thing.
- 1) Necessity capital is no longer available to fund fossil fuel investments.
- 2) Doing the right thing we are perfectly positioned to move the needle on climate change."

EBS: What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk? DL: "An understanding of what the decarbonization future looks like."

For more information on speakers, their topics, and updates, please visit the event website: tedxbigsky.com

O U T L A W...

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Recap: Big Sky Town Hall, session 16

Panelists talk COVID-19, mental health, surveillance testing and the new normal

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – The U.S. is breaking records as COVID-19 cases steadily rise and the holiday season looms around the corner.

On Monday Nov. 23, Explore Big Sky hosted a Town Hall featuring four panelists: Daniel Bierschwale, executive director of the Big Sky Resort Area District; Laura Sebulsky, director of admissions and clinical outreach with Charlie Health; Gary Rieschel, founding managing partner at Qiming Venture Partners; and Dr. Eric Lowe, emergency department physician for Bozeman Health and part of its COVID-19 Response Team. The 16th session of the town hall was once again virtual and moderated by EBS Publisher Eric Ladd and EBS Editor-in-Chief Joe O'Connor.

Lowe expressed concerns about the healthcare system he described as, "running a marathon for nine months ... Now it's getting bad nine or 10 months in and there is not an end in sight."

The current spike in COVID-19 cases trumps the spikes from earlier in the year and, according to Lowe, Bozeman Health is dealing with its highest caseload to date. He added that Gallatin County has been consistently setting records with large amounts of community spread, and that the current strain on healthcare resources is only increasing with the steady climb in hospitalizations.

Asked to debunk any popular myths surrounding the coronavirus pandemic, Lowe warned everyone to be wary of the statement: "I don't have COVID, I just have a cold.' Watch out for that, there is no way to tell and be certain," he said, adding that the amount of available information is in flux and everyone should be open to new data and listen to the experts. But he also expressed optimism for vaccines that have been tested and are expected to become available in the coming months.

"I worked a shift and came out of the shift and it felt like there were two new vaccines that had been approved with great numbers and all this news to catch up on," he said.

Rieschel brought his business knowledge and prowess to the table to discuss COVID-19's effects on the real estate market and small businesses. He expressed surprise that there are already three vaccines reporting 90-plus percent efficacy saying that by springtime, "you could have hundreds of millions of people who received the vaccine."

In this unique situation, Rieschel pointed out how well governments and pharmaceutical companies have worked together, even fast-tracking regulations to do so. But he also pointed to the issues that have been revealed by COVID-19 in various systems such as education and the new telehealth industry.

He also noted substantial changes in the real estate market with massive property appreciation and a mass exodus of people from cities to rural areas like Montana. While some view the influx of residents as a negative, Rieschel offered a positive spin. "The good news is, because people came here in the midst of the pandemic... I think they have an appreciation that they want it to stay safe," he said. "People appreciate where they are going and want it to be a safe place for them to stay ... and I think you will see the behavior reflect that."

In addition to the impacts of COVID-19 on healthcare resources and systems, the pandemic's toll on the collective mental health of Montanans was addressed by Sebulsky.

Sebulsky works for Charlie Health, an organization offering video-based outpatient therapy and behavioral health services for teens, young adults and families. According to Sebulsky, in the large rural population of Montana, 93 percent of those don't have access to behavioral healthcare.

She emphasized how the collective trauma of COVID-19 has exacerbated issues in young adults and seniors and that Charlie Health's mission is to ensure that healthcare is in the hands of all Montanans.

Sebulsky's mission at Charlie Health is to educate Montanans, to destigmatize mental healthcare and to change healthcare in the state. She is optimistic that things will change with the election of Greg Gianforte as the next governor of Montana, calling him a champion of rural healthcare.

Her advice for people in this difficult time was three-fold: to bring your central nervous system back to a baseline, get outside and stay active, and finally to consider a new hobby. Sebulsky also suggested that starting book clubs or other groups, playing games and checking in on loved ones can help stave off isolation.

In Big Sky, Bierschwale, the BSRAD board, large employers, private sector partners and Big Sky Relief partners have been working tirelessly to implement surveillance testing in the community, and his efforts are about to come to fruition.

"We really forged a unique partnership with all the Big Sky Relief partners and we really focused on three different components," Bierschwale said. Those components included a response component, a recovery component, and a resiliency and preparedness component for the winter season.

The Big Sky Surveillance Testing Partnership will launch Dec. 7 and offer 1,000 tests at first to create a baseline of data in the community, Bierschwale said, then 450 tests per week after that. Testing will continue throughout the winter and focus on three key areas: identification of positives, isolation and quarantining with positive identification, and contact tracing, he added.



mental health of Montanans, surveillance testing in Big Sky and the virus' effect on businesses.

GRAPHIC BY EXPLORE BIG SKY

Bozeman Health will complement the asymptomatic testing offered by other partners with its own symptomatic testing at the Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center. As part of the partnership, a traveling lab will be stationed in Big Sky to supplement the capacity of the state and is estimated to turn around test results within 24 hours.

Bierschwale is also a part of Governor-elect Greg Gianforte's new COVID-19 Task Force, which includes approximately 30 representatives from around the state. "I'm really excited...to dive in and see where I can help to provide some layer of support and bring the perspective of a resort community and tourism-based community to the table for the Task Force." Bierschwale said.

Rieschel ended with advice for small business owners, namely, to believe in technology. He cited the popular platform Zoom and curbside delivery, explaining the reasons businesses are utilizing those technologies and that they aren't going away.

"Invest in the technology and the fact that that's probably the way things will stay, he said. "Things won't go back to normal; there is no normal."

The town hall ended on a more heartwarming note with panelists and interviewers expressing what it is they are grateful for ahead of Thanksgiving.

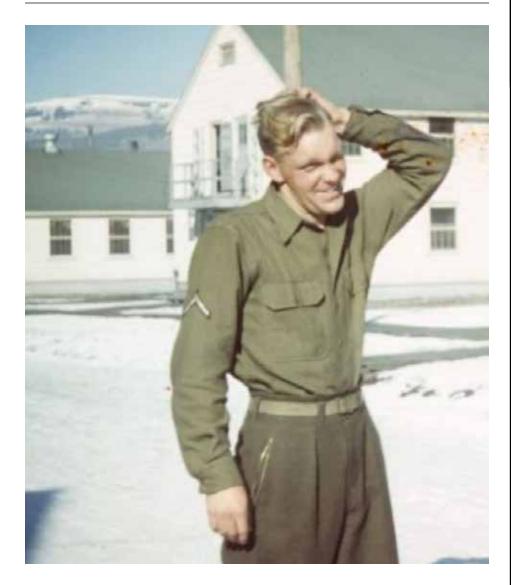
Lowe recognized the broad range of efforts underway in Montana and in Gallatin County. "I'm grateful for the support of the whole community and all the sacrifices that everyone across the board has made to get our community to that finish line of those vaccines that we keep talking about."

Sebulsky is, "I'm super thankful to be on this panel and also for the amount of support and positivity and encouragement that I've gotten from Montanans for changing what mental health platforms look like in Montana."

Finally, Bierschwale rounded off gratefulness with an inspiring sentiment:

"Big Sky Resort has some of the biggest skiing in America, and I think this community has some of the biggest hearts," he said. He praised the way southwest Montanans have banded together and called for extra kindness and patience.

"Let's not forget to support each other," he said. "We are all human beings, and we all live in a wonderful place that we to call home here in Montana ... Let's make sure that we continue to do that graciously together as we go into this winter season."



Ralph Albert Harder

Ralph Albert Harder, dairy farmer, public health professional, World War II combat veteran, and a long-time participant in the civic life of Holland Township, New Jersey died Nov. 19, 2020 at Hunterdon Medical Center from complications of COVID-19 virus infection. He was 97.

Born Feb. 21, 1923, in Yonkers, New York, Ralph attended Yonkers schools before graduating from Horace Mann Academy in 1941. After one year at Rutgers University, he enlisted in a special forces unit of the U.S. Army that became the 10th Mountain Division. He trained in high altitude mountain warfare at Camp Hale in the Colorado Rockies prior to service as a heavy machine gunner in the 3rd Battalion's campaign to drive the German's out of northern Italy at the end of the war in Europe. Wounded at Torbole in May of 1945 just prior to the German surrender, he was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

During military training, before shipping out to Italy, Ralph married his high school sweetheart, Virginia (Ginna) Vail also of Yonkers. After the war he and Ginna returned to Rutgers where Ralph resumed his studies. They started a family and in 1950, moved to Holland Township where Ralph began dairy farming, fulfilling a boyhood dream.

He farmed for 10 years then started a career with the New Jersey Department of Health that lasted over 20 years. During a sabbatical year in 1965, Ralph and Ginna moved to New York City where Ralph attended Columbia University graduating with a Master's in Public Health.

While raising their family on the farm, Ralph and Ginna both believed in contributing to the life of their community. Ralph served on the Holland Township School Board and the Holland Township Health Board. He was a Boy Scout leader and for many years secretary of the Milford Lion's Club. He was a founding member of the Oak Hill golf course. This gave him entry into an informal group of enthusiasts, "The Rock Pickers", so named for their early efforts at turning farmland into fairways.

Ralph always kept a large vegetable garden. His skill as a gardener invariably produced many over-sized zucchinis. That a golfing buddy might find a large zucchini surreptitiously placed in his golf bag, was a testament both to Ralph's sense of humor and his waste-not-want-not approach to gardening.

In retirement, Ralph and Ginna enjoyed family time, travel, New York City theater, contract bridge, winters in their condo in St. Martin, and an active social life.

Although only visiting Big Sky a few times, Ralph was well known locally through his involvement in Big Sky's American Legion Post 99 and his service in the 10th Mountain Division of WWII.

He is survived by his children and their spouses: Margo and Richard Lawless of South Easton, Massachusetts, Ralph and Melinda Harder of Auburn, Maine and David and Linda Harder of Milford, six grandchildren Jeremy "JJ" Harder (Big Sky, MT) and nine great-grandchildren- Elijah Harder (Big Sky, MT).

For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to the Sons of American Legion, Box 160584, Big Sky, MT 59716, Doctors Without Borders or a charity of one's choosing.

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For more information and complete details on methodology, go to www.shookresearch.com

SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT







THE NEW WEST

First deer in last light: A hunter turns 21



BY TODD WILKINSON

It was his 21st birthday on the second to last day of big game hunting season in Montana.

A few years earlier, his father said the afternoon before he passed on: "Keep an eye on the boys. Do me a favor and expose them to the things you love to do."

The boys were his two sons—the oldest having become an accomplished skier, college graduate and, entering his mid-20s, likely destined to become an engineer. The other brother, younger, and who, finding his own way in the world, is attracted to a career in landscape conservation, just like his late Dad had been.

And so, reaching one of those chronological mile-markers to which humans assign more significance, this second "boy," now a young man, is ready to mark the occasion with elders who wish to escort him on his first deer hunt.

During the fall, the brothers together had become adept in honing the instincts necessary to stalk game birds—grouse in the mountains; sharptails, Huns and pheasants out on the high prairie of their state. Putting oneself in position to have white-tail meat in the freezer is a different matter.

Hence, on a late November day, the young son finds himself in a deer blind with a pal of his father's and another man whom the pal had, for decades, regarded as both a friend and mentor. He owns a farm. As the strange whims of fate have it, the son and mentor share the same birthday, with the elders hoping to give the youngster a day he might remember and draw upon.

For young hunters and anglers, the waiting is always the hardest part. Old hunters and anglers know this—they were once impatient too—but having been guided by the elders of their generation, they understand that hunting is about far more than taking the life of another animal for your own sustenance; rather, it often involves everything else going on before and after a shot is taken.

The ambiance of light, for instance; the quietude, wind direction and distinct autumn smells. The learning to detect subtle movements. The ability to think about deer, for example, not where they are, but where they might be going. The joy of comradeship and sense of belonging. These are things the dad understood.

Assessing the young man while sitting behind him in the blind, and without speaking it aloud, observing the wide smile and knowing the feisty irreverence that lay behind it, you see the face of his father. And though his physical self has departed, you feel his spirit.

You look upon his son, sitting in the blind, waiting, heeding the body language of patience, and you'd like nothing better than to channel the pride that his parents would possess but might not be able to adequately express, because that's the way it sometimes is.

As a hunter, you live for "the magic hour," which usually doesn't involve an hour at all, but comprises compressed moments of a day, at dawn or dusk, when in a short span of mere minutes everything important about being outdoors converges and reveals itself.



Two birthday boys—mentor and young hunter—share a moment after the latter harvests his first deer on the day he turned 21. For many who go afield, it's experiences like this that serve as a sacred rite of passage. PHOTO BY TODD WILKINSON

With time ticking away, perhaps 15 minutes remaining before sunset and the legal end of the hunting day, some deer are visible but far away. Then, in the dimming light with the young man having given up hope, animation commences. More deer emerge and they move in nuanced ways.

Stay still, the elders say. Don't move. Wait.

The drama is heightened by a spectacular lightshow hanging just above the horizon but rapidly fading, with a beaver moon, unseen, that will rise in the other direction. There's maybe 10 minutes left. Deer move closer. They drift near the blind. The young man makes a single clean, excellent, well-placed shot and the animal falls.

The day is not over. In the twilight of the magic hour, the senior elder, on his own birthday, takes aim at a buck with irregular antlers that he has been tracking visually for weeks across the habitat labyrinth of his farm. Expert at longer range, he fires and the buck drops.

Soon the animals are tagged and being field dressed, the boy-turned-young-man becoming mentored by a farmhand in the ritual of preparing it for the trip to the processor.

As they stand together in the blackness back at a barn, the night bringing a cold sting to the hands, they raise a beer in toast, along with a remembrance of the father, whose passion for conservation the son is, at 21, already emulating.

This moment, which the elders live to grasp and clutch a little while longer is perfection in a rite of passage. With the beaver moon now hovering over the Bridgers, there's the song of vocalization—a single coyote yip which leads to a canid group howl filling the space where the hunt happened. It echoes across the valley. Feasting on the remains of the field dressed deer, there is celebration.

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



BY DAVID TUCKER

EBS CONTRIBUTOR

The eagle is exactly where an eagle ought to be, perched high in a dying streamside pine along the Gallatin River. It's likely perusing the breakfast menu—brown trout, whitefish, rainbow. The scene is simultaneously iconic and common place, inspiring enough for me to pull over but something I have witnessed countless times before.

Nevertheless, the eagle's presence is reassuring. It's an indication that the Gallatin is still doing its job. There must be food in the clear shallows below this apex predator, or else she would be somewhere else. She doesn't have time to waste sightseeing—there is a purpose and she has a goal in mind.

On this cold November morning, I fumble with my camera in the front seat of my car, thinking that one can never have too many photos of eagles in trees hunting Montana's rivers. As I kill the engine and get ready to open the door, a coyote lopes through a frost-covered field and makes the treeline just before I can adjust my lens's zoom. Just a coyote, I think, not a wolf or bear.

I cross the highway, dodging concrete trucks and pickups. I finally reach the other side, but the eagle is long gone and I have missed my shot. Not to worry, there will be other eagles.

Rolling south now, back on Highway 191, a bend in the river reveals a bull moose mid-current. No animal can appear quite as indifferent as a moose. The ungulate's hulking frame and massive rack suggest its nonchalance is appropriate. He has earned his right to relaxation, and knows that hoof-deep in the Gallatin, he is safe.

Again, I search for a pull-out in the hopes of capturing a photo, but this attempt is more hopeless than the first. When I safely get to the side of the road, I am a mile from the moose and there is no hope of turning around quickly in the sea of vehicles.

Disappointed but not discouraged, I look down and notice I am parked above a deep run of crystal-clear water. It is cold and ice lines the riverbank, but this is exactly where trout would hold on a chilly day like this.

Sure enough, upon closer inspection, a school reveals itself, glued effortlessly to the riverbed where the current is weakest. There they wait, saving energy through the lean months of winter. If I had my rod, I might try to hit one in the nose with a zebra midge, but the odds of stirring them at this hour of the morning are slim, and I am a terrible fisherman. I spare myself the rejection and get back on the road.

By the time I reach my office in Big Sky, I have wended my way through the wildlife-laden Gallatin Canyon, stopping when the inclination struck to attempt a photo or scout for trout. The drive that should take under an hour door to door has required almost two, meaning I am just in time for a meeting instead of well prepared.

As I fiddle with my headphones and try to find the combination of mute and unmute that will stop the incessant echoing of my colleagues, I'm struck by the drive I have just taken—the same drive I take twice a week when commuting from Bozeman to Big Sky.

All of this, and so much more, is right here. These iconic mammals, birds and fish are right here, and in droves. We see them so often and in such familiar contexts that it is easy to take them for granted.

On my drive from Bozeman, I see bison, elk, mule deer, whitetail, hawks, eagles, bighorn sheep, moose, coyote and trout. Where else in the world is that possible? I have seen black bear and river otter, and the luckier ones see wolf and grizzly. We are living in a singular ecosystem, and we cannot forget that.

While I see the wildlife and marvel, I also see the roadkill. I see the traffic, the roadside trash, the subdivisions and the algae blooms. There is so much good in Gallatin Canyon, but we cannot forget about the bad.

Access to this place is a privilege. It is an extraordinary opportunity to live, work and play within the Gallatin River watershed, on the doorstep of Yellowstone National Park. Doing so requires special attention to our impacts, and a deeper understanding of the bad that comes along with something this good.

Foundational to this understanding is water. We are here because of the Gallatin's clean, cold water, but our presence here threatens the very resource we depend on. How can we reconcile these two realities?

First, we must acknowledge that there are already serious problems facing this ecosystem that we are causing. The three tributaries of the Gallatin River flowing through the town of Big Sky are impaired. They contain too much pollution, and we are causing that pollution.

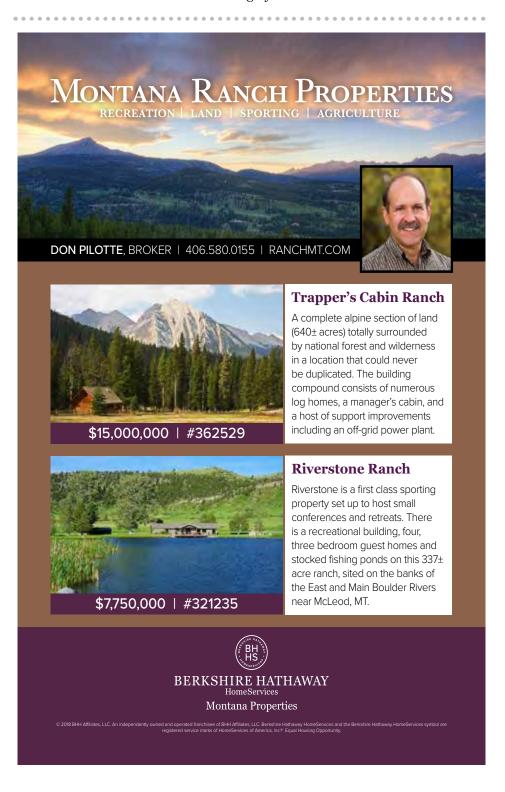
While this is an inarguable fact, it is also true that we can mitigate these impacts through better resource management and targeted restoration of degraded habitat. That work is underway and has been ongoing for some time, but we must scale up the effort.

Second, we must prioritize water conservation with every decision we make from now on. If we want clean drinking water for our families, we must conserve water. If we want ample flows for healthy trout, we must conserve water. If we value the wildlife in Gallatin Canyon, we must conserve water. In our case, the cliché holds true—water is the lifeblood. We cannot exist without it and we cannot continue taking it for granted.

Back on the road after a long day in the office, I join the line of cars headed north. When I can, I catch glimpses of the river flowing by. I wonder if the deep runs hold trout, if the eagle ever ate and where the moose wandered off to. I think about how central the Gallatin is for so many species, and for so many people.

We as a community have the opportunity and privilege to protect this invaluable natural treasure. Let's wade a little further, let out a little more line, and adjust our back-casts slightly—a clean river and healthy Big Sky depend on us getting this just right.

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



It's time to come to the aid of wildland firefighters



BY HARRISON RAINE WRITERS ON THE RANGE

By mid-September, there was no one left to call. The West, with its thousands of federal, state and local fire engines and crews, had been tapped out.

Wildfires across the West had consumed the labor of all available wildland firefighters, and though there were fewer fires burning, those fires were larger and more difficult to

contain. They consumed 13 million acres—an area almost the size of West Virginia.

In the midst of the 2020 wildfire season, John Phipps, the Forest Service's deputy chief, told Congress that this "was an extraordinary year and it broke the system. The system was not designed to handle this."

Draining the national wildland firefighting pool was why my fire crew and I had to work longer and harder than usual on the Idaho-Oregon border. We were fighting the Woodhead fire, which had peaked at 85,000 acres and threatened to burn the developed areas around the towns of Cambridge and Council, Idaho.

With only three crews to try to contain a fire that required probably ten crews, it meant day and night shifts for 14 days. Each crew found itself with miles of fire line to construct and hold. With not enough person-power, we were always trying to do more with less, and it was no comfort to know that what we faced was not unique.

Across the nation, the large fires meant working in hazardous conditions that called for far more workers than were available. For those of us on the line, it came down to little sleep and a heavy workload, combined with insufficient calories and emotional and physical exhaustion.

Fighting wildfires week after week takes a toll on the body. Smoke contains carcinogens, and firefighters spend days exerting themselves immersed in air thick with ash. We all figure that the long-term health effects cannot be good.

One of my co-workers confessed that he goes to sleep "with pain in my knees and hands," and added, "I wake up with pain in my lungs and head." Over a six-to-eight month fire season, minor injuries can become chronic pain.

Wildland firefighters are also vulnerable to suicide due to job-related stress and the lack of resources outside of the fire season. Long assignments put a strain on firefighters' families and can damage relationships. A 2018 psychological study, conducted by Florida State University, reported that 55% of wildland firefighters experienced "clinically significant suicidal symptoms," compared to 32% for structural firefighters.

Wildland firefighters who work for federal agencies, such as the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management, are classified as "Range" Technicians" or "Forestry Technicians," a title more suitable for golf course workers than people wearing heavy packs and working a fire line.

Calling them "technicians" negates the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to work with wildfire. Most firefighters sign contracts as seasonal "1039s," agreeing to work 1,039 base hours for \$12 to \$16 an hour. This is one hour short of being defined as a temporary worker who is eligible for benefits such as retirement and year-round health care.

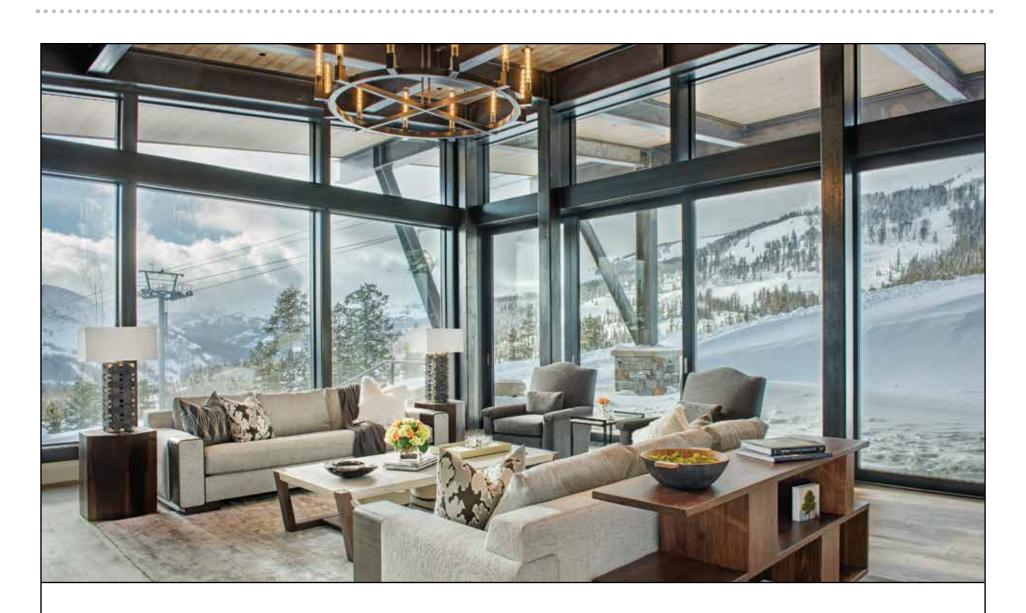
Overtime work is what allows "technicians" to pay the bills, but once they reach 1,039 base hours some firefighters are laid off even while the fire season continues and their regions continue to burn.

There is a remedy in sight: the Wildland Firefighter Recognition Act, which formally identifies wildland firefighters as exactly that, tossing out the technician term and recognizing the "unusual physical hardship of the position."

Montana Republican Sen. Steve Daines introduced the bill last year, and recently, California Republican Rep. Doug LaMalfa introduced the bill in the House. Cosponsored by California Democratic Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, the bill currently sits with the House Oversight and Reform Committee. This is a nonpartisan bill that deserves support from every Westerner.

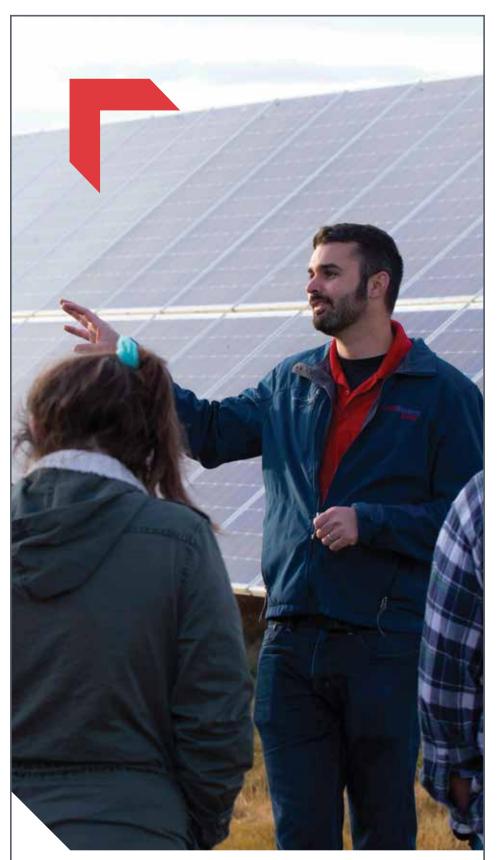
We all know fires will continue to burn throughout the West, but right now many of the men and women who fight those fires on our behalf are suffering from burnout. Addressing wildfires as a national priority starts with recognition of the profession fighting them.

Harrison Raine is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. He started fighting wildfires in 2016 and is a recent graduate of Colorado College.





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Big Sky artist captures the land's connectivity, purpose with pastel-strokes

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – "En plein air" is French for "outside"—where acclaimed artist Lisa Gleim prefers to be when positioned in front of her palette of pastels along one of the area's many mountain-scapes or rivers. The Atlanta, Georgia native has been living in Big Sky part-time for the last four years, and spends her time capturing the region's stunning beauty, both in landscape and fauna.

Gleim comes from a family of successful Southern artists, is a graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and has earned awards in her profession



Lisa Gleim paints "en plein air," (French for "outside") whenever possible. PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA GLEIM

from the Audubon Artists, and Artist of the Year from the Atlanta branch of the American Pen Women. Right now, her work can be found locally in the Courtney Collins Fine Art gallery, PureWest Real Estate office and Lone Mountain Ranch.

"My mother was artistic and my father was very ... he could make anything and build anything," Gleim said. "All I could remember doing as a kid before I could even write my name is drawing pictures on paper. I always was drawing and just can't even think of a time when I did not draw. It's one of those things that's like breathing."

Gleim says she was lucky to have parents who encouraged her artistic abilities. Today, she works in both

pastel and oil, and captures her subjects outside whenever possible, whether by photograph or plein air, which she says helps her to focus on one important element: light.

"Painting en plein air is really about paying attention to light," Gleim said. "The light changes all day and you really have to pay attention to what it is you want to focus on. You're capturing the mood at the moment and to do that you really have to be out there to capture that."

By using both the foundation she painted outdoors, and the photographs she takes, Gleim is able to better merge those tiny milliseconds in time into what she calls a "mental bank." Each year, Gleim comes out to Yellowstone National Park with a painting group and spends a week doing plein air paintings, one session in the morning and one in the afternoon, when the light is best, then they return to the studio and work from their smaller samples to create something bigger. They'll then hang their paintings up on a wall and critique.



Lisa Gleim paints using pastels, a stick of powdered pigment, which produces vibrant color strokes. PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA GLEIM

"It's the area," she says of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. "It's not lacking in any inspiration. The rivers are a big inspiration ... as an artist there's so much out there that's so inspiring that it can be kind of overwhelming."

Gleim, her husband Bill Jonas, daughter Libby Jonas and three rescue dogs enjoy traveling and coming out to Big Sky whenever they can—more so, Gleim says, after Libby graduates from high school in a few years. Bill, on a post-college ski trip with his buddies, drove from Pennsylvania, stayed in Big Sky and ended up, like many, falling in love with the area and taking a summer job in town. It wasn't until he took the family out in 2016 that they made the leap and bought a place—Gleim jokes that she's out here more than him.

When she's not painting in Southwest Montana's great outdoors, Gleim serves as the secretary for the American Women Artists, an organization dedicated to the advancement of women in the fine arts, and volunteers with Meals On Wheels.

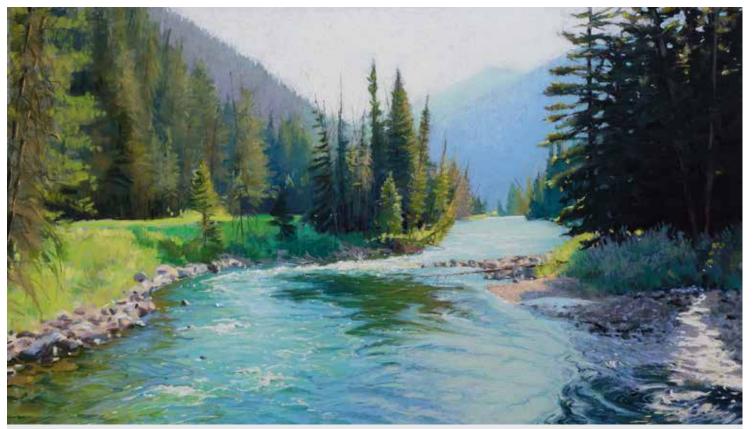
Whether Big Sky, the Gallatin River or Yellowstone National Park, spending so much time out in such striking landscapes among the wild animals and elements is always a priority and has taught Gleim lessons on purpose and connectivity along the way.

"Everything has a purpose, even down to the earth worms," she said. "I think being out there and being around nature and seeing all the nuances that feed

the landscape ... I've become more knowledgeable about the environment. I've always been an environmentalist, and always been a lover of nature but I think being out there and spending so much time out there and seeing it in action ... everything has a purpose and everything is affected by everything else, everything is connected."

Included in this relationship is the artist, and viewer of the finished product as well and the connection it forms. A painting is a translation of a scene, from the artist, presented to a viewer, therefore forming an emotional connection.

"With a painting it's something that's coming from my soul, through my hand, to the paper, to the viewer," Gleim said. "There's something about ... it's almost like a piece of artwork has a life of its own and a soul of its own because it comes from someone's hand."



Lisa Gleim's pastel landscape titled, "Where It All Begins." PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA GLEIM

Gallatin Valley Earth Day kicks off a monthly virtual event series

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

GALLATIN VALLEY – Gallatin Valley Earth Day recently launched a new event series, "Gallatin Valley 2040" inspired by the 2019 documentary 2040.

The new event series will feature free, monthly online events and it was kicked off by the Nov. 10 event "How (and why) to Put Local Foods at the Center of your Thanksgiving" which focused on exploring the tradition of Thanksgiving and discussing ways to source foods locally and regionally.

Gallatin Valley Earth Day is an organization of volunteers started by Anne Ready in 2019. At the beginning, their mission was to plan an Earth Day festival in Bozeman. In 2019, 500 people attended the festival at the Bozeman Public Library which included talks, exhibits, food, music, dance, art and theater.

After the success of the 2019 festival, GVED decided to honor the 50th anniversary of Earth Day with a larger event, the 2020 Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival, but the event was cancelled due to COVID-19. Prior to the cancellation, GVED had one and a half blocks outside of the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture reserved as well as participation from 50 local businesses and the partnership of the City of Bozeman.

The theme of this event was, "Climate Action for the Last Best Place," chosen by local high schoolers and the proceeds would have benefited the Bozeman High Solar Schools Club, allowing them to put solar panels on Bozeman's two high schools.

Although the in-person festival was canceled, GVED was still able to hold two online events which were attended by over 1,000 people. Films for the Earth, on April 23, featured a livestream screening of two films and a discussion following each. Music for the Earth, on April 24, featured a live stream concert with local musicians.

"And then we realized we had lots more that we didn't get a chance to share or to pursue," Anne Ready, the chair of the GVED committee said.

In an effort to promote the climate plan that the City of Bozeman is working on, GVED organized a showing of the documentary 2040 on Oct. 5. The film is an upbeat look at how the climate crisis can be addressed and the globe bettered by the year 2040.

"We were so inspired by the movie that we thought, wouldn't it be neat to use the 2040 theme, with blessings from the filmmakers and say, what could we do in Gallatin Valley in the different areas that are outlined in the Bozeman Climate Plan," Ready said.

Thus, was born the "Gallatin Valley 2040" event series, which, according to Kate Burnaby Wright, a non-profit Consultant and Open & Local Coalition Chair, "help[s] people explore solutions, allowing us to imagine and create a healthier and vibrant future by 2040."

The first event, "How (and why) to Put Local Foods at the Center of your Thanksgiving" featured three panelists, Lindsay Ganong, a registered



Chef KayAnn Miller virtually teaches attendees how to cook Thanksgiving dishes with locally sourced ingredients. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN VALLEY EARTH DAY

dietician nutritionist at Alternative Energy Resource Organization, Dr. Shane Doyle, a Hopa Mountain Board Member and KayAnn Miller, the executive sous chef for Montana State University dining. Ready kicked off the event with a quick introduction and Wright took the reins, serving as moderator for the remainder of the evening.

Wright began with a definition of local saying, "As a starting point for how we will use the word tonight, I want you all to think of local as a catch-all for crops that are raised, animals grown and foods wild harvested thoughtfully at smaller scales, more equitably, and with less of a carbon footprint." She followed this up with the top 10 reasons why people should care about local food.



Chef KayAnn Miller's recipe for juniper berry Lake Trout with huckleberries is a great alternative Thanksgiving recipe with all locally sourced ingredients from Montana. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN VALLEY EARTH DAY

The final point Wright used to frame the evening was that "giving thanks, sharing bounty and honoring the harvest are timeless traditions practiced by peoples throughout time and around the world around the globe."

Wright introduced Ganong and then Doyle, giving each panelist time to discuss their topic and educate attendees. Then, Wright played a video of Miller teaching the viewers how to make two locally sourced Thanksgiving dishes, juniper berry Lake Trout with huckleberries and Hidatsa stuffed sugar pumpkin.

The event wrapped up with a discussion portion where panelists asked each other questions and attendees were able to submit questions to panelists. According to Wright, 114 people registered for the online event and 69 were able to attend.

"This event was so interesting because it wove together community and local food and why local food matters with a beloved holiday, beloved by some, and really brought a new perspective into it because we did have one individual who's Apsáalooke from the Apsáalooke nation, Dr. Shane Doyle, and then chef KayAnn Miller is, you know, she's been deeply involved in the MSU indigenous food initiative," Wright said.

The event series will take December off because of the holiday season but will resume in January. In her introduction to the Nov. 10 event, Ready gave a sneak preview of the January event by sharing a video of Bob Quinn, an organic farmer in Montana and author of the book "Grain by Grain," who will be speaking about climate change and its effect on soils and foods.

Ready expressed a desire to expand GVED's reach across more of Gallatin Valley, including to Belgrade and Big Sky. She added that it will be much easier for people across the valley to tune into GVED's virtual events moving forward.

The debut event in the 2040 series focused on local foods and how everyone can adapt this Thanksgiving.

"We're adapting and everyone's adapting," Ready said. "Everyone is sort of changing up their Thanksgiving. So why don't you think changing up what you're going to serve? Everyone has their traditional dishes, but then maybe add in a new dish that and think about something that's using, you know, locally produced Montana foods."

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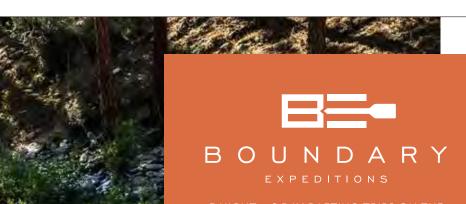
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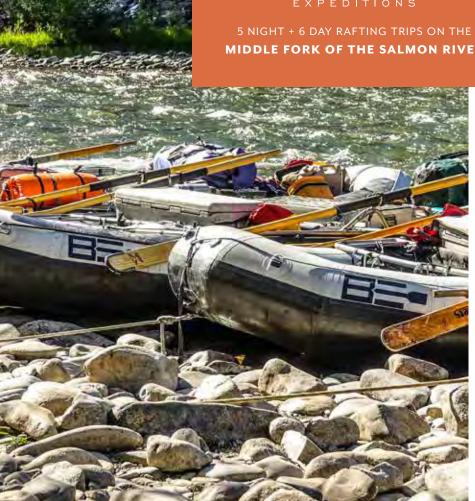






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WMPAC season kicks off Dec. 5

WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

BIG SKY – While the annual winter season at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center will look and feel a little different this year, the caliber and quality of events offered hasn't diminished at all. The Center's eighth winter season will start a little earlier than usual this year, with Broadway star Bobby Conte

Thornton taking the stage Saturday, Dec. 5 at 7p.m.

Thornton's Broadway debut was as the star of the musical "A Bronx Tale," which was directed by Robert De Niro and Jerry Zaks. Until Broadway shut its doors in March, he was performing in "Company." Thornton, who has spent much of the pandemic quarantining in Big Sky, will appear in person to sing a selection of Broadway classics, accompanied by music director James Sampliner on piano and Michael Steele on bass.

As with virtually all WMPAC shows this season, audience members have the option to attend the performance in-person or to watch it virtually from home. The theater is filling only 25 percent of its seats, all of which have been socially distanced, ensuring that no groups are seated within six feet of each other. Masks are required for the duration of the performance, and all shows have been streamlined to eliminate an intermission, minimizing audience traffic in the lobby.

Over the summer, WMPAC has released a new, high-quality streaming platform, wmpac.live, for those who prefer to enjoy the performance live from home.

"It was important to us to ensure that everyone can stay engaged in the arts world this season, so we leaned into being flexible," said John Zirkle, WMPAC's executive director. "If you're quarantining or don't feel comfortable in a theater yet, you don't have to give up on seeing the arts this year. In a funny way, the pandemic has actually made WMPAC more accessible, in that we've launched a service where you can tune in from anywhere."

> The following Saturday, Dec. 12, WMPAC will broadcast a performance of "A Christmas Carol," performed live for us from their Chicago studio by the theater collective Manual Cinema. Audiences are again welcome to the theater to view the show on the big screen, or they can livestream it directly to their homes. This is a quirky, family-friendly, 2020 interpretation of Dickens' classic Christmas tale, performed by the Emmy Award-winning group. Manual Cinema combines handmade shadow puppetry, cinematic techniques, and innovative sound and music to create immersive stories designed for both stage and screen.

> Dec. 19 at WMPAC brings a radio broadcast of "Hamlet," performed live by Montana Shakespeare in the Parks at 7 p.m. The talented actors will undertake a dramatic reading of the play, which is often considered Shakespeare's best and most emotionally

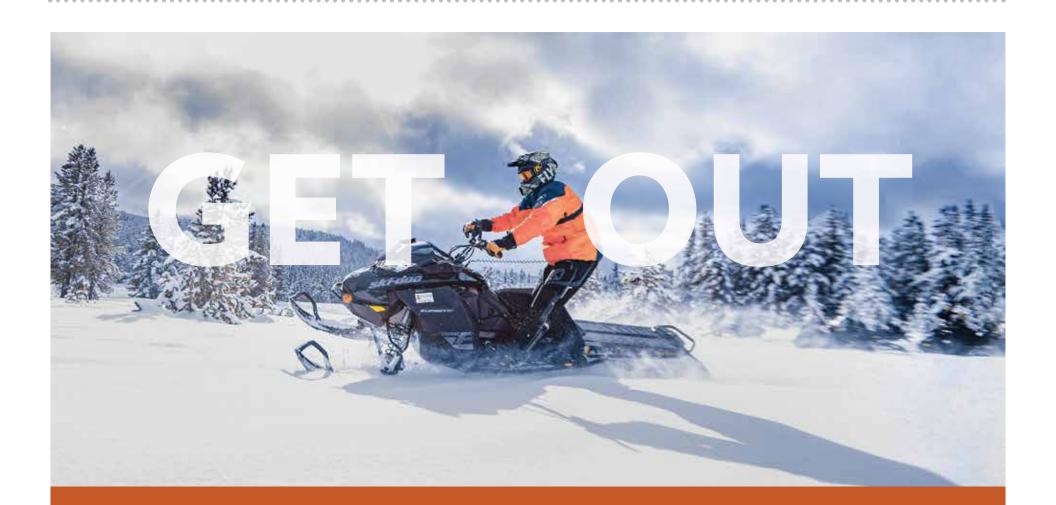
complex. This performance will be livestreamed on wmpac.live for audience members to listen to at home, rather than attending in the theater.

"We envision this as a soundtrack to a classy evening at home," Zirkle said. "The backdrop to your dinner is a professional Shakespearean theater group probing the same questions that have kept this play relevant for centuries."

In-person and virtual tickets are on sale now at warrenmillerpac.org.



Broadway star Bobby Conte Thornton will be kicking off WMPAC's winter season on Saturday, Dec. 5 at 7p.m. PHOTO COURTESY OF WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



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Even with vaccine news, venues are struggling

BY SAMUEL ORAZEM EBS CONTRIBUTOR

It has now been over nine months since every event we planned to attend was cancelled. For a while, with cases of COVID-19 exploding across the

U.S. and health officials claiming no end in sight, it seemed futile to hope for the return of large-scale events in the near future—that is, up until just a few weeks ago. The recent news about a handful of effective vaccines being approved or entering final stages of trials is a small piece of good news for the struggling events industry. However, the timeline is still unclear and the world of events might still look very different upon their return.

Live Nation and AEG are two of the largest players in the live events industry and have publicly stated back in August that they expect concerts to return at scale in 2021. In November, just as news about the efficacy of various vaccines came pouring in, Live Nation moved their prediction of outdoor

events returning to next summer. This news came just before the U.S. case numbers began to spike again, but no revisions to this estimate have been released.

There is a reason that Live Nation specifically noted summer of next year. The consensus among experts is that full deployment of the vaccine will not come until later in 2021 and Dr. Anthony Fauci, the world's leading expert on infectious diseases, has stated be believes that it will be second or third quarter before things truly start coming back to normal. This is a ray of hope

for our many local, Montana venues that are outdoor if Live Nation and Dr. Fauci's statements about the summer prove true.

The flipside is things are still not looking great for many smaller, independent venues. A few months into the pandemic, the Nation

Independent Venues Association pushed for the Save Our Stages Act which would have given venues across the U.S. a lifeline during shutdowns. Their initial warning was that many independent venues, including those across Montana, were at risk of shutting their doors by year's end.

However, due to stalls in broader relief negotiations, Save Our Stages has still not passed but NIVA has made some substantive progress. They have launched the NIVA Emergency Relief Fund which provides support through private philanthropy to venues at risk of imminent closure. This small step is likely all the aid many venues can expect with federal relief expiring within a month.

With a COVID-19 vaccine on the horizon, what does that mean for the live entertainment industry? PHOTO BY JOHN MCARTHUR VIA UNSPLASH

It is not only small, 500-person rooms that are independent—NIVA's largest member has a capacity of 18,000. Many of the tickets you buy through sites like Ticketmaster are for independent venues who pay a commission for access to artists, not just the ones that you get handed from a quaint box office. If relief negotiations resume after the congressional recess, Save Our Stages has the sponsors needed to pass. If it does not, local favorites like the Rialto and 18 other Montana stages will have to continue to fight tooth and nail to stay afloat with a significant or total loss in revenue.

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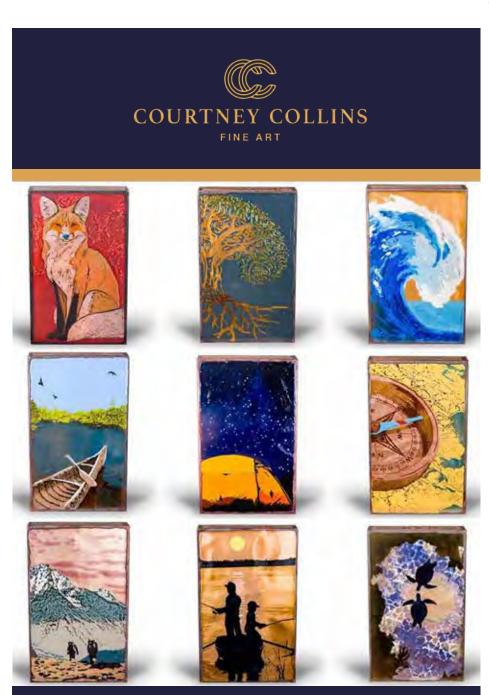
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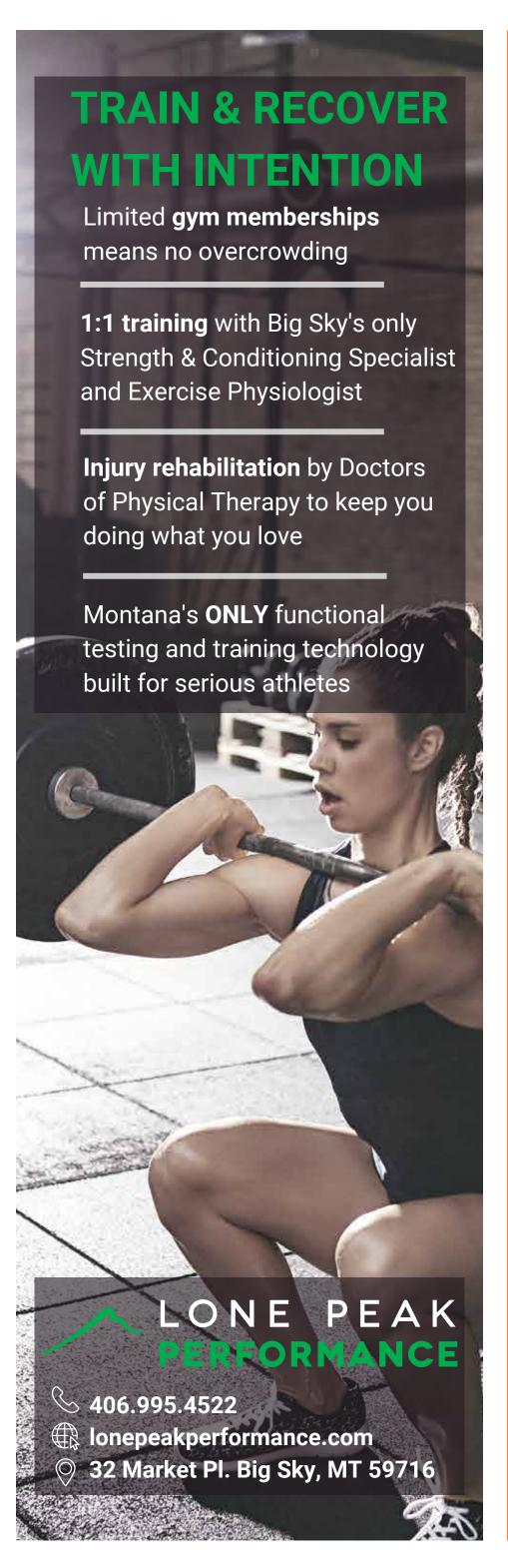


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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, Dec. 4 - Thursday, Dec. 17

If your event falls between Dec. 18 and Dec. 31, please submit it by Dec. 14 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

Friday, Dec. 4

Lillie's Garden Evergreen Wreaths Lillie's Garden, Bozeman, 9 a.m.

Open Skate

Haynes Pavilion, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

Saturday, Dec. 5

Santa Paws

Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter, Bozeman, 12 p.m.

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, Big Sky, 8 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 6

Afternoon Tea at Starlite

Starlite Bozeman, 1 p.m.

Holiday Shoppe

Iron Maiden Welding, Bozeman, 9 a.m.

Monday, Dec. 7

Holiday Film Festival

Online, check https://www.bigskytowncenter.com/ for more info

Virtual Kitchen

Online, 4:30 p.m., join here: https://www.visitbigsky. com/events/big-sky-virtual-kitchen/

Tuesday, Dec. 8

Holiday Art Walk

Big Sky Town Center, all day

Learn to Skate

Haynes Pavilion, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 9

Pop up Holiday Card Workshop

Online, 6 p.m., Register here: http://bigskyarts.org/events

Post #14 Bingo

American Legion, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 10

Hopa Mountain Human Rights Day Conversation Online, 6 p.m., Join: tinyurl.com/Hopazoom

Thursday Night Ice Climbers

Hyalite Canyon, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 11 BSCO's Winter Parks & Trails Event

Big Sky Community Park, 5 p.m.

Music and Margaritas

Santa Fe Reds, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 12

Manual Cinema's Christmas Carol

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 6 p.m., In person or online: https://warrenmillerpac.org/

Bozeman Winter Farmer's Market

Gallatin County Fairgrounds, Bozeman, 9 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 13

Bozeman Curling Club

Haynes Pavilion, Bozeman, 1 p.m.

Live Poker

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

Monday, Dec. 14

Bozeman Taproom, 7 p.m.

Sunrise Karaoke

American Legion, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 15

Science Class

Montana Science Center, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

Live Music - Rich Mayo

Kountry Korner Café, Four Corners, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 16

Blood Drive

Montana Science Center, Bozeman, 10 a.m.

Trivia Night Molly Brown Bar, Bozeman, 8 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 17

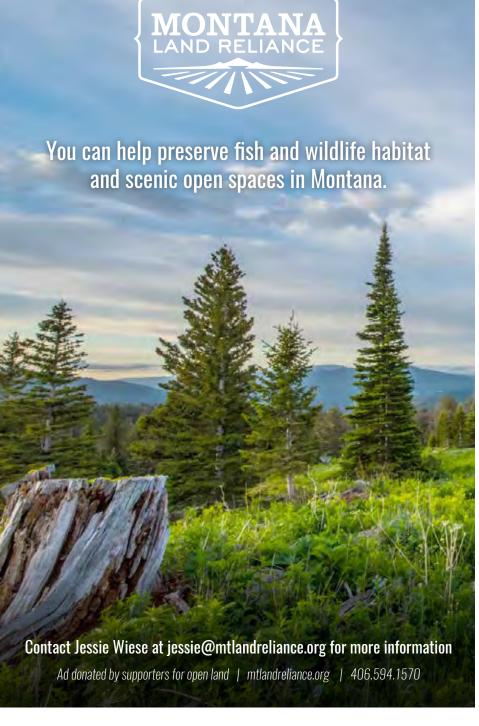
Thursday Night Ice Climbers

Hyalite Canyon, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

Online Art on the Rocks

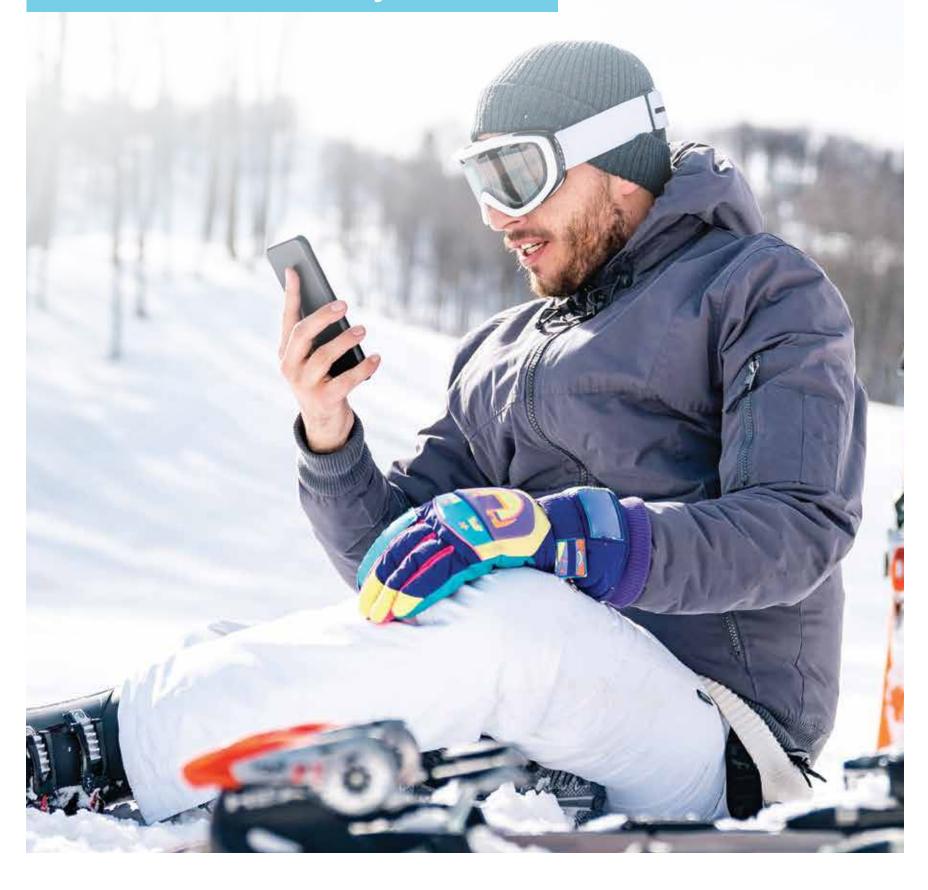
Virtual Event, 6:30 p.m., register: theemerson.org/events/ virtual-art-on-the-rocks-dec-17/





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SECTION 3:SPORTS, HEALTH, BUSINESS & FUN







Hannahs' widening impact at BSSD

Athletic Director and teacher aims to positively influence students, athletes

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – To many, the duties of an athletic director are relatively misunderstood. From the outside looking in, it may appear simple: schedule contests, ensure athletes submit required paperwork and take a front row seat to all home games. In reality, the role requires much more than that and is typically paired with another source of income. Just ask John Hannahs, athletic director and middle school English teacher for the Big Sky School District.



Hannahs pictured coaching the 2019-2020 LPHS varsity boys basketball team. PHOTO BY KENE SPERRY

Hannahs is a Montana native. He was born in Billings but at the ripe age of one, his family relocated to neighboring Wyoming. There, in the "census designated place" of Parkman, Hannahs and his elder sister Meghan were raised. Their parents, Kathy and David, still manage a ranch there to this day. It was there that he developed his love for athletics.

"My dad taught me so much and spent a lot of time in all aspects of my athletic endeavors," Hannahs said. "He was supportive but also held me accountable for mistakes and never sugarcoated anything which I now realize was extremely valuable."

The 29-year-old was a three sport high school athlete, playing guard

on his high school basketball team, roping for the county rodeo team and golfing each spring. Hannahs witnessed great success during his time as a high school athlete. Three of his four seasons, his basketball team reached the Wyoming state tournament, while as a member of the golf team, he captured a state title.

After high school, Hannahs followed his parents footsteps, attending Montana State University from 2009 through 2013. Kathy and David first met at the Bozeman campus and Hannahs took part in several basketball camps sponsored by the school before choosing to enroll.

As a child, Hannahs pondered the possibility of becoming a veterinarian, but he ultimately elected to earn a degree in elementary education. "... I was lucky enough to have some amazing teachers and mentors that I loved and respected growing up," he said. "I eventually decided that if I could be that for somebody that would be pretty special."

Upon graduating, Hannahs searched for a place to begin his career. While working at the Bozeman based kindergarten through eighth grade Anderson School, networking led him to an opening at the Big Sky School District.

"Their principal was good friends with Jerry House who was the superintendent in Big Sky at the time and he helped me get my foot in the door," Hannahs said. "When I was interviewing I just got a great feeling from the students and staff who showed me around, it seemed like everyone was really happy and glad to be there."

Shortly following that 2014 interview, Hannahs was presented a job offer. He taught second grade for five years, adding the responsibilities of athletic director three years ago, and transitioned to the role of middle school English teacher last year. He said his favorite aspects of teaching and overseeing athletics are interacting with and impacting his student's lives in the classroom while witnessing their drive to compete on the field or court after their countless hours of preparation. Seven years, thousands of lessons and hundreds of games later, it's two days each school year that always stand out to him—the first and last day of school.

"For some reason I remember every first and last day of school each year really well. You get to meet your class for the first time and start forming a relationship and then all of a sudden it is June and you have to say goodbye," he said. "It's like the before and after snapshot of the entire school year. There are so many things in each role that I will hold onto and cherish for a long time."

With the passing years, Hannahs' duties and reach at BSSD continue to expand, influencing more students in a variety of ways. After coaching at the middle school ranks and assisting the varsity boys program, he was granted the position of head coach for the 2019-2020 Lone Peak High School varsity boys basketball team. He described his first campaign at the helm as "humbling" and a "learning experience" and he eagerly awaits the coming season.

On top of coaching, teaching and the aforementioned and unmentioned duties of an athletic director, Hannahs has self-imposed his own goal for all BSSD athletic programs.

"Building a culture of pride and tradition has been an ongoing goal for us," he said.
"... But the big picture goal is one that we have every year and that is for each program to kindle the love for the game and give our student athletes valuable skills to take into life."

Factor in the COVID-19 pandemic and you may have one of the most challenging situations that any coach or teacher could imagine. Students aren't afforded the same opportunities that they otherwise would be in a "normal" year—something that Hannahs recognizes.

"Seasons have been shortened or just eliminating them altogether, and balancing that with keeping everybody safe and healthy has been a huge challenge," he said. "With teaching, as good a job as everyone has been doing with the online model, it has been challenging not getting to connect and get to know kids as effectively."

Though the experiences for students may differ from that of their predecessors, the passion that Hannahs has for BSSD students and athletes is unwavering. Like his childhood teachers that left a strong impression on him, even in the toughest of times, Hannahs continues to strive to positively impact the lives of each and every student that he encounters.



Hannahs (21) competes in his high basketball days. His high school basketball team reached the state tournament in three of his four seasons. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN HANNAHS

LPHS athletes well represented in post season awards

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – In an unprecedented year for high school athletics that saw athletes and coaches wearing masks on the sidelines, limited attendance at games and contests cancelled, the Lone Peak High School varsity athletic teams all completed successful seasons in their own right. Adding to that success, 15 LPHS athletes were recently selected to various All-State and All-Conference teams at the conclusion of the athletic seasons.

Big Horn Football Honoree

Juliusz Shipman - 2nd Team All-Conference - Special Teams

Big Horn freshman Juliusz Shipman totaled four touchdowns during his first varsity campaign, leading to his selection as an All-Conference honoree for the 2nd Team. The kicker was praised by LPHS Head Coach Adam Farr for his kicking abilities, referring to him as "... one of the only kickers that reliably makes field goals, during games, in our division." On top of multiple kickoffs that the freshman returned for scores during the season, he also hauled in a tipped pass, catching it for a touchdown as time expired to conclude a game versus Absarokee. Shipman and the Big Horns will return to the field next fall with only one senior departing from this year's squad.

"Juliusz at no time during the season appeared to be a freshman, even though he is, and [I] was truly impressed with his toughness and speed, agility and [he's] definitely deserving of that special teams honor that he got," Farr said.



Freshman Shipman on the field this season. PHOTO BY KIM HOLST

Lady Big Horn Volleyball Honorees Ivy Hicks – All-State, 1st Team All-Conference

Senior captain Ivy Hicks showcased superb leadership and passing skills all season for the Lady Big Horns, earning her the distinction of both an All-State team selection and 1st Team All-Conference honors. The setter led LPHS with 418 assists over the team's 19 game schedule, an average of 22 assists per game. She added 15 aces to her stellar parting act, helping lead the Lady Big Horns to make a deeper postseason run than any other Lone Peak volleyball team ever had.

"Ivy's ability to run down every second ball and get it precisely to a hitter is what earned her a spot on first team," said LPHS Head Coach Missy Botha via text to EBS. "She was able to spread the hitting around to keep the opposing blockers guessing."

Chloe Hammond – 1st Team All-Conference

Senior caption Chloe Hammond wore the libero jersey for Lone Peak for the past two seasons and earned the 1st Team All-Conference distinction this year. In her final campaign, Hammond paced the Lady Big Horns with 205 digs, adding 32 aces to accompany her defensive prowess. She average nearly 11 digs per game and is one of six seniors departing the program from this season's team.

"Chloe kept us in more points with her digging ability. She was relentless in tracking down every ball and getting it to target. Her perfect passing on serve receive, sets up our offense," Botha said through text. "It all starts with a good pass and that's what she does best."

Maddie Cone – 2nd Team All-Conference

Sophomore middle hitter Maddie Cone made a name for herself in her first full varsity volleyball campaign. Cone missed four games due to an ankle injury, but still racked up impressive statistics with less matches to do so. She finished her season with 154 digs, 23 aces and 20 blocks. Her presence at the net was invaluable to the Lady Big Horns, while adding more than 10 digs per game. She, along with five other returners, will look to build off this season's historic campaign.

"Maddie Cone just kept getting better and better with every game she played. She definitely should have been chosen to be on the 1st Team All-Conference. Unfortunately there were coaches that weren't able to see her play when she was out injured. Those lost votes had her on second team, which for a sophomore is huge anyway," Botha said through text. "This will fuel her to be even more of an offensive threat next year."



Senior captain Hicks competing this season. PHOTO BY MICHELLE HORNING

Big Horn Soccer Honorees

Evan Iskenderian – All-State, 1st Team All-Conference

Senior captain Evan Iskenderian manned the midfield position for the Big Horns on the field this season and earned the distinctions of All-State and All-Conference 1st Team selections for his efforts. He led the team, netting three goals on the year and added an assist to his statistics. Iskenderian was also recognized by LPHS Head Coach Tony Coppola and Assistant Coach Jeremy Harder as the team's "Offensive MVP" in the Big Horns inaugural soccer season.

"... His play was consistent and he played at a level that stood out—much higher than most of the players on our team," Coppola said. "... He was our captain; he was our leading scorer and I'd say that it was rightly deserved."

Michael Romney – 1st Team All-Conference

Senior goalkeeper Michael Romney was a constant presence in the net for LPHS in 2020 and was chosen as a 1st Team All-Conference selection in the post season awards. Praised by his coach for his leadership abilities, Romney, also a captain, had 81 saves over the course of the season, including two shutout performances and was chosen as the "Team MVP" by Coppola and Harder.

"He was the general back in the defense and yeah that's what a solid goalkeeper has to be right, is able to direct the orchestra back there and he definitely did that and not to put down his skill level because he is definitely one of the best goalkeepers in the state," Coppola said.

Tony Brester - 2nd Team All-Conference

Junior Tony Brester will become the lone returning senior from the 2020 LPHS varsity boys soccer team next season. The defenseman was honored for his play this year when he was selected as a member of the 2nd Team All-Conference honorees. Brester and six other returners will look to build on the team's 2-4-2 regular season record in 2021.

"I think that he obviously was one of the only non-seniors that stood out, that I thought ... deserved being on the second team. I'm going to look to him to be one of our leaders next year, as probably our only senior and he will definitely step up to the role and become one of our captains next year," Coppola said.

Nolan Schumacher – 2nd Team All-Conference

Senior Nolan Schumacher was selected as a member of the All-Conference 2nd Team honorees. The defenseman received praise from Coppola for his non-verbal leadership capabilities and was chosen as the team's "Defensive MVP" by Coppola and Harder. Schumacher and the 2020 Lone Peak Big Horns earned a playoff berth in their inaugural season, losing to the Whitefish Bulldogs who went on to claim the state title.

"So I would say Nolan is probably the most consistent defender on the team, right, he kept his composure [and] made very few mistakes," Coppola said. "... He definitely led by example and kept the line together, and it was always a treat to hear him pipe up and tell somebody [to] get in position."

Miles Hoover – 2nd Team All-Conference

Senior Miles Hoover was also selected as a 2nd Team All-Conference honoree for the Big Horns. The midfielder demonstrated his passing ability by dishing out two assists. Hoover also netted a goal for the 2020 Big Horns varsity soccer team and was chosen by Coppola and Harder to receive their "Coaches Award."

"Miles Hoover is the workhorse. The guy just goes and goes and goes, and he just throws himself at the game," Coppola said. "You know what I mean, he's not afraid of anybody. [He] doesn't step down from a challenge."

Jackson Lang - All-Conference Honorable Mention

Senior Jackson Lang rounded out the post season honorees for the 2020 LPHS boys soccer team, receiving a nod of honorable mention honors for the All-Conference teams. The midfielder helped guide his team in attempting 99 shots over the course of their inaugural varsity season.

"Jackson definitely is one of those kids that ... improved immensely and when he was out and not in the mix, you could tell there was a hole in the team and in his position," Coppola said.



Senior captain Iskenderian on the field this season. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

Lady Big Horn Soccer Honorees Sara Wilson – All-State, 1st Team All-Conference

Senior Sara Wilson was chosen amongst both the All-State and 1st Team All-Conference honorees for the 2020 Lady Big Horns. Playing center midfield for the team, Wilson was LPHS varsity girls Head Coach Jaci Clack's choice for the role of team captain and was one of two seniors on the team.

"She also, on the field as a player, gives 110 percent always and she never—regardless of the score or the challenge in front of her—that girl never quit," Clack said.

Sophia Cone – 1st Team All-Conference

Junior Sophia Cone was not only her teammates' selection for team captain this season, but she was also selected as a 1st Team All-Conference honoree. Clack described Cone as an athlete that leads by example and played midfield for the Lady Big Horns this season.

"She is my most skilled player—hands down most skilled player. She has very composed, refined movements. There's no bind she cannot get out of," Clack said.

Tristen Clack - 2nd Team All-Conference

Junior Tristen Clack was one of two Lady Big Horn athletes selected as a 2nd Team All-Conference honoree. Assuming the position of center back on the defensive line, Clack was typically tasked with guarding the opposition's best athlete for LPHS this season by her coach and mom, Jaci.

"She's extremely skilled and she has a great understanding of her job back there. The girls always say they're impressed by her composure, so she's very productive with the ball under immense pressure," Clack said.

Carly Wilson – 2nd Team All-Conference

Junior Carly Wilson joined her older sister, Sara, in receiving post season honors from the 2020 Lady Big Horns team. Wilson was chosen as a member of the 2nd Team All-Conference honorees and played striker for LPHS and Clack used terms such as "tenacious" to describe her play.

"... She craves coaching and she wants to learn always how to be better and whatever you ask her to do, she tries to apply it," Clack said.

Josie Wilcynski – All-Conference Honorable Mention

Sophomore Josie Wilcynski was the final honoree selected for post season honors from the 2020 LPHS varsity girls soccer team, receiving honorable mention for the All-Conference teams. Clack described how Wilcynski rose to the challenge of assuming the goalkeeper position for the Lady Big Horns and expended tremendous effort to improve.

"... She wanted to learn to be physical enough and the technical side of it and the rules and how to be the best she could be," Clack said. "That is the scariest position back there and she was extremely brave."



Senior captain Sara Wilson at the senior day ceremony this season. PHOTO BY VANESSA WILSON



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Lone Peak High School Basketball Schedule 2020/2021

December 7- First Practice | Athletic Paperwork Due

*Note- this schedule is still subject to change due to season restructuring and canncellations in response to COVID-19.

DAY	DATE	GAME/LOCATION	GAME TIMES	DEPART
Tues.	Jan. 5	@ Harrison / Willow Creek	4:00 / 5:30 / 7:00	
Fri.	Jan. 8	@ Lima	5:30 / 7:00	
Sat.	Jan. 9	Ennis	1:00 / 2:30 / 4:00 / 5:30	Home
Fri.	Jan. 15	@ West Yellowstone	2:30 / 4:00 / 5:30 / 7:00	
Sat.	Jan. 16	Twin Bridges	1:00 / 2:30 / 4:00 / 5:30	Home
Tues.	Jan. 19	Manhattan Christian	2:30 / 4:00 / 5:30 / 7:00	Home
Sat.	Jan. 23	@ Sheridan	4:00 / 5:30	
Thurs.	Jan. 28	@ Manhattan Christian	2:30 / 4:00 / 5:30 / 7:00	
Sat.	Jan. 30	Gardiner	1:00 / 2:30 / 4:00 / 5:30	Home
Tues.	Feb. 2	Shields Valley	2:30 / 4:00 / 5:30 / 7:00	Home
Fri.	Feb. 5	White Sulphur Springs	4:00/5:30/7:00	Home
Sat.	Feb. 6	Lima	4:00 / 5:30	Home
Tues.	Feb. 9	@Gardiner	2:30 / 4:00 / 5:30 / 7:00	
Thurs.	Feb. 11	West Yellowstone	2:30 / 4:00 / 5:30 / 7:00	Home
Fri.	Feb. 12	Sheridan Sheridan - Senior Night	5:30 / 7:00	Home

Juinior Varsity Boys | **Junior Varsity Girls** | **Varsity Boys** | **Varsity Girls**

Feb. 17-20 | District Basketball @ MAC in Butte | TBD Feb. 22-27 | Divisional Basketball @ MAC in Butte | TBD Mar. 11-13 | State Basketball @ Missoula | TBD

Ophir Middle School Girls' Basketball Schedule 2020/2021

Novmber 2nd- First Practice | Athletic Paperwork Due

DAY	DATE	GAME/LOCATION	GAME TIMES	DEPART
Thurs.	Jan. 5	vs. West Yellowstone	4:00	
Mon.	Jan. 8	@ Heritage Christian	4:00 / 5:00	2:30
Tues.	Jan. 9	vs. Monforton	4:00 / 5:00	
Thurs.	Jan. 15	vs. Home School	4:00	
Mon.	Jan. 16	@ Monforton	4:00 / 5:00	2:30
Tues.	Jan. 19	@ Petra Academy	4:00 / 5:00	2:30
Thurs.	Jan. 23	@ West Yellowstone	4:00 / 5:00	2:30
Mon.	Jan. 28	vs. Manhattan Christian	4:00 / 5:00	
Tues.	Jan. 30	@St. Mary's	4:00	1:45
Thurs.	Feb. 2	vs. Amsterdam	4:00	
Thurs.	Feb. 5	Rural District Tournament @ Ophir	TBD	



DID YOU KNOW?

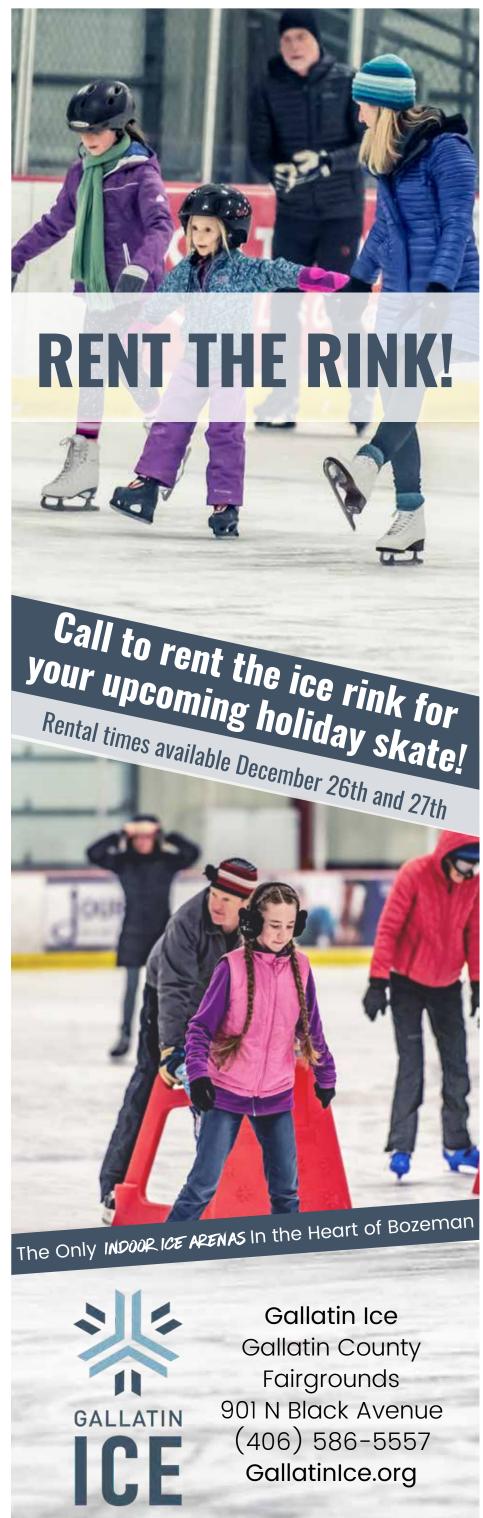
- 100 colonies estimated in 2015 in Yellowstone National Park
- One colony may support 2–14 beavers that are usually related. Six is considered average
- YNP's beavers escaped most of the trapping that occurred in the 1800s due to the region's inaccessibility

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

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Sustainable ag and a new food label

BY SIERRA CISTONE EBS CONTRIBUTOR

By this time next year, Prairie Grass Ranch in Havre, Montana, could become the first in the state to receive a new regenerative food label.

Known as the Regenerative Organic Certified, or ROC, the label is among the first of its kind and will certify food producers who not only grow organically, but who also use regenerative agricultural practices, including the use of compost, perennial crops, limited or zero soil tilling, and grazing cattle in a way that mimics natural grazing habits of native wildlife by rotating the animals through different pastures over time.

Each tool has its own merit and place within an individual's crop or livestock system, but they all aim to achieve a common goal: increase soil health and achieve sustainable food production.

Rarely has soil health been a priority in modern-day industrial farming, and it's something experts say has resulted in increasingly nutrient-deficient farmland. But research now shows that using regenerative methods to grow food creates healthier soil which, in turn, produces food that's more nutritious and can help buffer farmland against the effects of drought, pests and even climate change.

This increasing body of research inspired big companies like Patagonia and Dr. Bronner's to partner with the Regenerative Organic Alliance in order to launch this new food label in 2017.

Run by Jody Manuel and his wife Crystal, Prairie Grass Ranch has been using regenerative methods for over a decade. The Manuels began incorporating regenerative organic practices into their produce, grain and livestock production in 2007 and are confident that their products will easily meet the label's criteria.

"Back then, the term hadn't even begun to get thrown around yet," said Jody Manuel.

They started the process of switching to regenerative organic methods by first eliminating the use of chemicals on their crops and used their cattle for weed control. Along the way they made the switch from raising strictly grain-fed cattle to raising grass-finished cattle, which then required a bigger adjustment: they needed new cows.

The Manuels' early stock of cattle had large frames to support putting on a lot of weight very quickly, a design geared toward eating grain. Now, however, they've built a new herd with smaller frames able to tolerate a diet of grasses and legumes and spend more time grazing on the landscape.

Manuel says his cows play an important role in consuming plant matter and then returning those nutrients to the soil, which then supports the health of the microbiology that live underground.

For Manuel, the ROC label is a way to finally show consumers that as a producer he's committed to growing and raising food in a way that aids in planet and human health.

"The No. 1 benefit of the label is that it offers hard, definable parameters for the term 'regenerative,' so that when consumers see it on a label, they know exactly what it is that they're buying," he said.

Many people are familiar with the terms "organic" and "sustainable," but "regenerative" is not as ubiquitous. Manuel says that unlike regenerative methods, growing food organically is not a guarantee that the food is more nutritious or beneficial to the soil.

Bob Quinn, a long-time Montanan, regenerative farmer and coauthor of the book

"Grain by Grain," makes a clear distinction between organic farming and regenerative farming. He defines organic as a system of food production devoid of chemical, pesticides and additives, whereas regenerative agriculture, he says, focuses largely on

building healthy soil by recreating natural systems.

"You need both concepts to make the whole picture, the vision of mimicking nature, which is regenerative," Quinn said.

Many regenerative practices were used more widely before the rise of agricultural chemical companies, which offered easy solutions to common problems, while regenerative techniques were largely ignored or forgotten.

"Many problems are easily answered by ... buying a sprayer and it would be very easy," Manuel said. "But it's just not an option for us."

Now, however, as people are seeking answers to issues surrounding human health, climate and widespread soil degradation, big companies are increasingly turning toward regenerative practices in order to support producers using these techniques.

"Personally, I just think it is probably cutting edge right now, just like organic would have been back in the mid-'80s, or even early '90s," Manuel said.

Ryan Kulesza, founder of Regen Market, the up-and-coming online platform for regenerative farm products in Montana, says ranchers who use regenerative practices cannot always find a market through which to sell their products.

Kulesza said that the idea for Regen Market grew out of a realization that producers who were growing food regeneratively had limited networks for getting their food from farm to table, and the public's uncertainty about what "regenerative" even is made it especially challenging.

"There was nothing on the shelf that told the story of why it was different than another locally produced [product] sitting right next to it," Kulesza said.

Kulesza's hope is that Regen Market will not only provide the infrastructure for farmers and ranchers who are already producing food regeneratively, but that producers who are considering making the shift to regenerative will have peace of mind in knowing there is a market for their products. And Jody Manuel sees that benefit.

"It would be a dream come true for us to be able to market our entire herd through one Montana company," he said.

The ROC label is an important step for producers like the Manuels, who have spent years producing food with the health of the soil, land and consumer in mind.

"It seems like more and more consumers are wanting to know that they're part of, you might say carbon sequestration or part of a movement that's reversing effects that have come to be seen as detrimental to our world around us," Manuel said. He believes the ROC label will show consumers that he is doing just that.

Experts estimate that the U.S. has only 60 years of good topsoil left, but research shows that regenerative agriculture can reverse that trend.

While there may be an initial hump for producers looking to incorporate regenerative practices into their food production, Manuel offers advice for anyone thinking about navigating the bridge into the world of regenerative organic farming and ranching: "Just cross."



A perennial wheat and legumes after harvest on Prairie Grass Ranch in May 2020. PHOTO COURTESY OF JODY MANUEL



The Manuels' cows coming into pasture on Prairie Grass Ranch in Havre, Montana. PHOTO COURTESY OF JODY MANUEL



It's not always about you



BY LINDA ARNOLD **EBS CONTRIBUTOR**

How many times does the voice in your head cause you to second guess yourself? And then you end up replaying a situation over and over, agonizing over it. In these uncertain times of the COVID-19 pandemic, wires can definitely get crossed!

Well, here's a news flash: Nothing other people do is about you.

It's a Big World

Everyone is living in their own world, within their own minds. When you take something personally, you make the assumption they know what's going on in your world and you try to impose your world upon them. No wonder things get so convoluted!

Personal Importance

If you take things personally, chances are you're quite sensitive to others-very caring and compassionate—you bend over backwards to create harmony. If this sounds like you or someone you know, you may find it ironic that one of the theories behind this behavior is that of personal importance.

Personal importance, or taking things too personally, is the maximum expression of selfishness, according to author Don Miguel Ruiz. If you have these tendencies, you'd likely never consider yourself selfish. Quite the contrary, you go out of your way to make others happy.

Even when someone insults you directly, it has nothing to do with you. What they say, what they do and the opinions they give are in accordance with their own background programming and the drama that's going on in their world.

This is not to say that you have to "take it" and become a doormat. On the contrary, be sure to set healthy boundaries and stick with them. Just don't ruminate for so long over everything.

What Rings True?

This reminds me of a seminar exercise years ago that's still very vivid in my mind. The instructor had us line up and then, standing in front of each participant, said things like, "Anna, you're fat," and "Stephanie, you're stupid."

The instructor purposely picked people who were the opposite of these characteristics. Anna probably weighed 95 pounds, and Stephanie had advanced educational degrees. So, the comments didn't "ring true" for them.

Taking the Poison

On the other hand, if you hold a particular belief inside, someone else's comment may push one of your buttons. "How does he know? Can everyone else see how incompetent I am?"

You take it personally because, on some level (even subconsciously), you believe what was said. Another way of looking at the situation is to remind yourself that the other person is dealing with his or her own feelings, beliefs and insecurities. It's not about YOU. It's about THEM.

Taking things personally makes you easy prey. If you don't take it personally though, you start to build your immunities.

Breaking the Cycle

Rather than allowing yourself to stew, feel wounded or retaliate, try approaching the situation with a neutral question, "Hmmm ... I wonder why he hasn't returned my email. There must be a reason. Maybe he's sick or out of town."

I've actually experienced these exact responses. Once, when I thought I'd been slighted in a business situation, I learned the CEO was out of the country. I never even thought to consider that possibility.

What if the boss walks past you and doesn't speak? Do you immediately think you've done something wrong? Or do you wonder if something is wrong in his or her life? Depending on your mindset, your thoughts could fall into these categories:

"The boss sure seems upset with me. What have I done wrong?"

"The boss must be having a bad day. I wonder what's going wrong in his/her life."

Releasing Yourself

As you practice not taking things personally, you won't feel the strong need to seek approval from others. You'll learn to trust yourself and value your own opinion more and that will help you break free from the prison of approval addiction.

Depending upon the situation, you may need to set the record straight. However, you'll be doing it from a position of strength rather than weakness.

If this topic is a bit raw for you, take comfort in knowing it's a huge problem for many people. The more you practice those neutral responses, the better you'll be at inoculating yourself. Remember ... it's not always about you.

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

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4:15-5:15pm Apres Ski Yoga

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9:00-10:00am Warrior Flow Yoga

Noon-1:00pm Lunch Break

All Levels Yoga 5:45-7:00pm Heated Flow

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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

All Levels Kundalini Yoga

5:45-7:00pm

SATURDAY

9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga

5:00-6:15pm All Levels Yoga

In studio classes are limited. Pre-registration

Most classes available to LIVE STREAM as well. required for all.

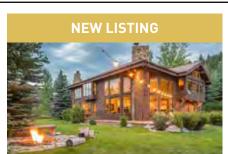
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The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 2A-1A 246.9 +/- ACRES / \$2.199M



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Ski Tip Lot 10 List Price: \$975K



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



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



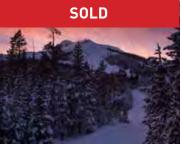
49820 Gallatin Road 3,677 +/- SQ FT / \$1.895M



Crail Ranch Unit 40 List Price: \$1.35M



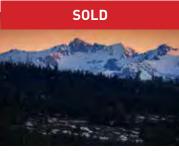
1955 Little Coyote Drive 3,100 +/- SQ FT / \$1.25M



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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Making it in Big Sky: Dave Pecunies Photography

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – For the greater part of six years, professional photographer and videographer Dave Pecunies has chronicled a multitude of subjects, namely the land, animals and real estate that Big Sky has to offer. Pecunies is a Portsmouth, New Hampshire native with a passion for skiing and the outdoors. Naturally, he found his way to Big Sky in 2015.

"My inspiration to start taking photos had a lot to do with just documenting

various skiing adventures around New England and Quebec and that led to shooting other outdoor sports," Pecunies said in an email to EBS.

Prior to his relocation to the Treasure State, Pecunies earned a degree in business administration from the University of New Hampshire. His photography career is partially rooted in a role he held on the opposite end of a camera lens.

"I skied as a photo model for several photographers and would always ask lots of questions," Pecunies said. "When they realized I was interested in photography they would show me what they were doing, how they were envisioning the action, how they were composing their shots."

Fueled by insatiable curiosity and drive, those questions and the knowledge he gained led to a management position at the Maine-based Sunday River Ski Resort for the Outside Television station.

After finding a new home for his gallery at the building previously occupied by the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce near the intersection of Highway 191 and Highway 64, Pecunies exchanged emails with EBS on a range of topics, such as photography for

demand versus enjoyment, and the progression of his imagery over the years to name a few.

Explore Big Sky: In your opinion, how has the photography industry changed over the years?

Dave Pecunies: "I think the main change that we have seen in the photography industry is how much easier taking photos and seeing your work has become. I started in the film days and you never knew if you got the shot until you got your film back from processing. Now it's instant. More recently, since most everyone has a camera on their phone, it has made photography accessible to most everyone."

EBS: As a professional photographer, has your business approach adapted over time? How so?

D.P.: "If you don't adapt in business then you will get left behind. I would

shoot skiing every day if I could but that is just not financially feasible at this point. However, I've taken my love of architecture and design into photography and can now afford to eat. Also, opening a gallery has been another creative outlet for me and has allowed me to share my art with more people. I think the other thing that I've adapted to is social media and its immediacy, especially in the marketing world. At least with skiing, nobody wants to see a photo from last week, they want something from today."

EBS: How do you prioritize shooting photographs for enjoyment versus shooting to meet demand?

D.P.: "I am fortunate in that I generally get to shoot what I enjoy. Certainly there are bluebird powder days that I am stuck inside but I love storm skiing so I can't complain. Because we live in such a beautiful area, I'm often lucky enough to capture great wildlife or scenic shots on my way to a paying gig."

EBS: Have you found yourself taking on new projects or coming up with new ideas as a result of the pandemic?

D.P.: "The beginning of the shutdown was certainly a time to reflect and reevaluate priorities and try and forecast what the business environment would look like in one month, six months, one year and beyond. I took on more video work at the beginning of the pandemic when there was some uncertainty. However since the Big Sky real estate industry had a record summer, I ended up having the busiest summer I've ever had shooting homes and other commercial projects."

EBS: What business changes or adaptations have you made as a result of COVID-19?

D.P.: "My job is pretty socially distant to begin with since I'm mostly shooting unoccupied homes or waiting in the wilderness for the perfect wildlife shot, so I

really haven't had to alter things too much. Just wearing a mask and being careful when I'm around others."

EBS: What advice would you offer aspiring photographers?

D.P.: "I always tell people that photography is like learning a language, playing a sport, or math—the more you practice the better you will become, so keep shooting. If you really want to get into a specific type of photography, find a professional photographer that will let you assist. You won't make much/any money being an assistant but the experience can

EBS: What's the best business advice you've ever received?

D.P.: "Choose a job you love, and you will never work a day in your life."
"If you don't do it this year, you will be one year older when you do." –
Warren Miller



Big Sky photographer and videographer Dave Pecunies relocated to Big Sky more than six years ago. His professional photography journey began, in part, on the other side of the lens while as a ski model in New Hampshire. PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE PECUNIES

be priceless."

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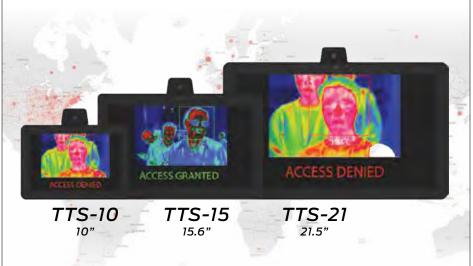


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AMUSE-BOUCHE

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

It was only a matter of time



BY SCOTT MECHURA EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

One of my favorite movies for a number of reasons, *The Matrix*, has a scene in which a villain has the protagonist in a compromising position. He delivers the line, "that is the sound of inevitability."

And when you hear the first nail hammered, backhoe digging, or beeping of a truck delivering lumber to build the forthcoming Whole Foods in west Bozeman,

that will be the sound of inevitability for our state and valley.

Do I like Whole Foods? Or as Austinites began calling it years ago, Whole Paycheck. You bet I do.

Addressed smack dab in the heart of downtown, I spent three years patronizing the Austin location in Texas, which incidentally is one of the cities most popular grocery stores. Sounds silly I know, but you have to remember that the Austin Whole Foods is the mothership. The original.

One foot inside on one of those 105 F, humid July days, when the boat or lake aren't an option and the instantly refreshing air conditioning, along with the spectacle laid out before you makes you think you've just entered the hip, hemp, and healthy version of Willy Wonka's chocolate factory.

I hope Montana's first will have the restaurants, bar, music, courtyard, and fountain and displays that Austin's does. But it's still a Whole Foods, nonetheless.

While this marks familiarity and comfort for some who've moved here from other locations, it invokes, "I remember when this town" for others. It all comes down to this: Bozeman is cementing itself as another micropolitan city, while trying to hold onto the notion of a small town with a big city identity.

Every phase of growth in Bozeman, from six floor hotels, box stores, and talented chefs to an ice garden and golf courses years ago, all speak to inevitable and predictable growth. Growth to feel like we belong, like we matter, like we don't have to travel to other larger cities for what urban residents walk down the block for. To say "hey, we aren't a one-horse agriculture town," which we were as recent as 25 years ago.

But Whole Foods is different. It speaks to lifestyle rather than just life. It speaks to transplants yearning for something they moved away from, yet want where they have now planted and fertilized new roots.

For example, when a Walmart opens in a rural or urban community, it figuratively shouts from the rooftops of buildings in super-sized fashion that it has arrived with prices and merchandise you no longer have to worry about.

Whole Foods, now owned by the logistical and merchandizing blitzkrieg that is Amazon, brings with it a certain mindset. It comes with a built in following who's loyalists rival those of Trader Joes.

Generally speaking, the Gallatin Valley is active. We recreate 12 months out of the year, fill our gyms and mostly try to eat healthy. It not only physically feels good, but it makes us feel whole (pun intended) as fellow shoppers to give our cart a nano second review as they pass in the aisle. We fill our shopping carts with Fit Wine, kale, almond milk, Greek yogurt, grass fed beef and any number of raw nuts and seeds because we can and now, we'll soon have access to the healthy, hip shopping equivalent to the promised land.

In other words, we'll have a Whole Foods.

But a word of caution. Whole Foods earned its nicknames, such as "whole paycheck", or "whole foods markup" for items such as the notorious six dollar head of cauliflower. With COVID-19 making our food banks more important than ever, can our valley afford it?

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

American Life in Poetry: Column 818

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

We have lots of poets who would enjoy being described as "a poet first, and a (fill in the job) second," as if for them writing poems is the most important thing in their lives. As I see it, Patricia Frolander is, instead, a widowed Wyoming ranch manager, a loving mother and grandmother first, and a poet, second. I like those priorities. Here's a poem about the loss of her rancher husband of many years. It's from her book Second Wind, from High Plains Press.

Dream Watch

I softly call your name as I slip into the stand of wheat, fifty-five acres of gold. Careful not to shell the seed, my aged hands push ripened stems aside.

You must be here for you love the fullness of a crop. Yards farther, I call again. The hawk above must wonder at the trails through the field.

Did you leave with the winnowing scythe, the burning heat of August? For some good reason, I cannot find you here, amid the nightly dreams and tear-damp pillow.

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Corner Quote

"For the great enemy of truth is very often not the lie--deliberate, contrived and dishonest--but the myth--persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic. Too often we hold fast to the cliches of our forebears. We subject all facts to a prefabricated set of interpretations. We enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought." — John F. Kennedy

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

M B A

ACROSS

- Kimono sash 4 Greeting
 7 Legal gambling
 (abbr.)
 10 Caliph
- 11 Brythonic sea god 12 Ode
- 14 Jet 16 Bath cake 17 Limited (abbr.)
- 18 Stage 20 Bitter vetch
- 21 Youngster 22 Blue Nile source lake 24 Photo-
- developing powder 30 Down with (Fr.,
- 2 words) 31 Rower

14

17

33

45

- 33 Flee 35 Arabian prince 36 Grape refuse
- Housing and Urban Development (abbr.) 38 Federal Housing Admin. (abbr.) 40 Put off 42 Month abbr. 45 Sayings (suf.) 47 Minim (2 words) 49 42 (Rom.

37 Department of

- numeral) 50 3 (Rom. numeral) 51 Malay title of respect 52 Stripling
- 53 Palestine Liberation Organ. 54 Heights (abbr.)

DOWN

1 Pass over

50

53

S A I S E L O I SOLA NARGHILE ERASEMALUS M|A|N|A|G|E| R|A|MALAOLPE LOTI EAT LADE
EWER SCAN BEN
BLS LEVANT
MARIESSIREN
ATALANTA DEAD
YOM SCAT ARIA
AMA TOBE ALS 10 Adjective-2 Poet forming (suf.)

Demon Baltic island Vein (Lat.) Kind of muscle

28

12

16

15 Loyal Wife of Saturn 19 Brown 21 Puccini opera Premature (2

23 Water nymph 9 Carry 24 Sheep's cry 25 Move back 26 Austral. island

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

27 Insane 28 102 (Rom. numeral) 29 Possesses

13 Miles per

second (abbr.)

31 Hep (2 words) 34 California base or fort 35 Breakers

37 Sunlight (pref.) 38 Tight spot 39 Passageway 41 Fall short 42 Fr. month

43 Eight days after feast 44 Clan 46 Help

48 Ultimate degree

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BIG SKY



Your next ski soundtrack

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

The bopping beats found in many ski movies today never cease to get me

stoked on skiing. Surprisingly, rock music the early days when Warren Miller was to use rock music in his films. That all



changed with Greg Stump's "Blizzard of Aahhh's" which featured

- "Escape from New York 2" by Nasty Rox Inc.
- "Butt Town" by **Iggy Pop**
- "Crazy" by Seal
- "Johnny Law" by **Slightly Stoopid**
- "Wake Up" by Pennywise
- "Fuel Injected" by Swollen Members
- "Zoo York" by Paul Oakenfold
- "Wiggiddi" by Kraddy
- "Ace of Spades" by Chimney Choir
- "We are the Future" by Wild Belle

BACKLI

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"

Featured Outlaw: Phil Capy

BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

It's been said that ski patrollers work long hours; that they ride chairlifts before dawn, in snowstorms pushed by 80-mph winds; that avalanche control and the term "blaster" are listed in the job description; that a safe return isn't guaranteed.

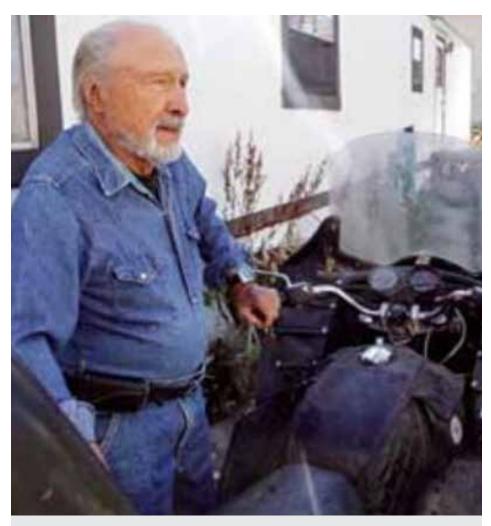
Phil Capy doesn't know for sure, but people have told him he's the oldest professional ski patroller in the country. This winter marks Capy's 20th season at Montana's Big Sky Resort, and he's been patrolling on and off for the last 54 years. He's 87.

When Phil Capy was born in April 1928, St. Moritz, Switzerland had just hosted the second Winter Olympic Games – without alpine events. That same year metal edges were first introduced to skis. And Herbert Hoover was elected president.

In 1961 Capy, a Texas native, began his ski patrol career in Vermont at Mount Snow and then at Haystack Mountain. After a decade writing in Hollywood, he moved to Oregon in 1978 and worked as a pro patroller and lead medic at Mt. Bachelor for 17 years. Then he found Montana.

"I love the mountains here," Capy says. "I can hike and I can ski, and I like looking at them. That drive from Big Sky up to [Bozeman], when you look at Castle Rock, that's the same beauty you get in Yellowstone. I don't get tired of looking at that."

Big Sky Resort employs roughly 105 paid patrollers and 140 volunteers, and this season will again find Capy alongside his comrades patrolling the slopes of Lone Mountain. Capy no longer runs avalanche routes but still patrols the ski area as a rover, checking sleds and rope lines, responding to incidents, and tracking medical supplies. He teaches mass casualty incident training at the resort, and helped write MCI plans for Oregon's Deschutes County and Gallatin County here in Montana.



Capy with his 1976 BMW motorcycle and sidecar. He still rides it in winter, occasionally, to ski patrol at Big Sky Resort. The sidecar, Capy says, is more for balance than function. PHOTO BY WES OVERVOLD.

While Capy hasn't dropped into the resort's famed Big Couloir since 2007, he's committed to the patrol at least through the 2015-2016 season. "It's year to year now," he says. "I just do what I like to do, [and] try not to fall. I'm getting too old for that."

As a measure of his calculated approach to skiing and life these days, Capy's only injury in more than 65 years of skiing was a torn thumb ligament after he was knocked over by another skier in 1990.

"Phil is just a legend," said Big Sky Ski Patrol Director Bob Dixon, who hired Capy in '95, the same year the Lone Peak Tram began hauling skiers to the summit. "He's very focused and very knowledgeable, and extremely experienced – a great role model for the ski patrollers coming up. He should probably be nominated for the [National] Ski Hall of Fame."

It's safe to say Capy has squeezed the most out of the last 87 years. He's been shot down while flying an Army plane in the Korean War; sang in a traveling jazz trio; sailed on the Navy's first Arctic Ocean icebreaker ship; wrote pilots for TV shows including "Gunsmoke"; and trekked to Everest base camp.

Capy claims he's no adrenaline junkie, but he still rides his 1976 BMW motorcycle to work in Big Sky Resort's maintenance department during the summer. He sometimes rides it to the patrol locker room in winter, affixing a studded rear tire to the bike.

"He's an all-American, professional badass," mused fellow Big Sky patroller Patrick Robbins.

Phil Capy answers the front door of his Bozeman home with a grandfatherly smile and a well-kempt white beard. Balding on top, Capy's snow-white hair is slicked back, feathery wisps peeking out from behind his ears. He stands 5-feet-6-inches tall, but claims he was once 5-foot-8. "I keep shrinking every year," he says, gripping my hand firmly.

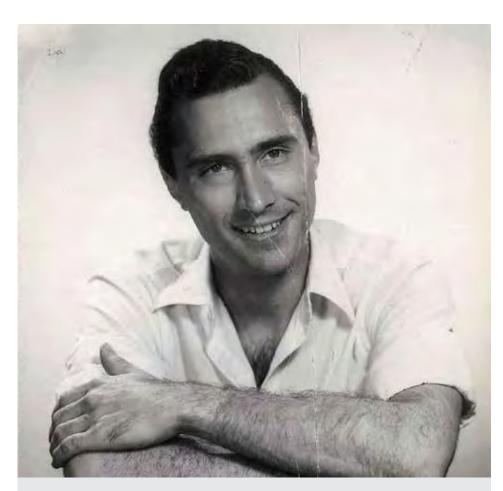
At home, Capy is more prudent than daredevil. He reads spy novels and history books, and listens to jazz and folk music with his partner of nearly 30 years, Linda Herrick. "He likes to cook and bake bread, and if he has enough time he likes to make his own yogurt," says Herrick, who met Capy in Oregon in 1987. "He's a very kind and caring person [and] very generous with his laughter. He laughs at all my jokes even if they aren't very funny."

Ornate knives and ivory statuettes of Ganesh from India and Nepal decorate a wooden shelf along one wall of the house. Capy, a 50-plus-year Hindu convert, has visited the region five times. He practices yoga. He's a vegetarian.

Photos of Nepal treks adorn Capy's walls – of trips to Annapurna and Everest base camps – along with ski patrol plaques marking 35 years of National Ski Patrol service, and 17 seasons as lead medic and patroller at Mt. Bachelor. A framed image of Lone Mountain, signed by the entire Big Sky patrol at Capy's 80th birthday celebration in 2008, hangs in his bedroom. In red marker across the top is written, "Phil, you inspire us all."

Capy had enlisted in the Navy after high school, with hopes of becoming an air crewman at the tail end of World War II. But in 1948, after serving as an engineer and member of the Scouts and underwater demolition team – precursors to the SEALS known as frogmen – Capy completed his service and returned stateside.

In 1950, Capy learned to ski at Vermont's Bromley Mountain at the age of 21. The Korean War started in June of that year. Capy had earned a



A young Phil Capy poses in New York City for a promotional photograph to accompany his musical acting portfolio, circa late 1950s. PHOTO COURTESY OF PHIL CAPY

pilot's license on his own, and with the hastiness of U.S. involvement in Korea, the Army was looking for every good man it could get.

During the war, Capy's Piper J-3 Cub fixed-wing was shot down mid-air. "I could hear the thump, thump on the plate," he said, referring to enemy fire hitting armored plates retrofitted under the plane to protect

the pilot. But as the bullet thumps moved forward, they began piercing the fuel tank and one hit Capy in the wrist. Luckily, he says, it only grazed him.

"I just said, 'I'm gonna die," Capy told me. "It was that serious. We were behind enemy lines."

As fuel poured out of the tank, Capy thought back on his extensive training in forced landings. He steered the craft back toward the battle line and landed safely in a South Korea field. "I was back flying the next day," Capy says, running an index finger over the scar on his right wrist. "It taught me an appreciation for life. I'm still alive; friends aren't. If you can walk away and nobody gets hurt, that's a good landing."

Camaraderie runs deep in the military. It's critical, as well, on any emergency response team. Capy sees these similarities in ski patrol. "What keeps me around is the family. Everybody looks forward to getting back to the ski area just because we get to see each other again."

It's 8:30 a.m. at Big Sky Resort, and the blowing snow from a rogue April storm stings the face. Phil Capy peers through yellow lenses and wipes melting snow from his goggles. "PHIL" is scrawled in black Sharpie on the index finger of his worn Kinco work gloves.

"This is what it's all about," he says, and, looking over his shoulder, shoves off down the fall line. "Public can't even get on the lift until 9 a.m."

With arms akimbo, and balanced on still-steady legs, Capy makes deliberate turns in the fresh snow, and disappears into the storm. He has sleds to check.

A version of this story was first published in the Winter 2016 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.



This winter we are playing it safe. It's important to know about our Winter Operational Plans before heading to the Resort. All full day lift tickets, ski school lessons, and snowshoe tours and rentals need to be booked in advance. Dress warmly and prepare to use your car as a basecamp, because indoor capacity resetrictions do exist. Scan the QR code to learn more. We apprecaite your team work in advance and look forward to seeing you on the hill this season!



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Mountain maps artist James Niehues releases notecard paintings

PALE MORNING MEDIA

PARKER, CO – With over 200 hand-painted ski maps to his name, James Niehues and the Open Road Ski Company responsible for the Man Behind the Maps, are releasing a selection of Niehues' best-selling trail maps as notecards. The notecards will feature the most popular maps, in a ready-to-mail package. Among James Niehues' greatest hits, across Utah and colorado, the notecards will feature Big Sky Resort.

"I've always been honored that skiers treasure my maps and use them every day during the winter," said Niehues. "But between the disposable maps at resorts, and my book and prints available online, there hasn't been a great way to share the art with friends further afield. The new notecards fill that niche, and are ever more important this year while many of us are unable to travel to visit these awe-inspiring mountains."

Each notecard painting is a trail map in use today from some of the most popular resorts in the United States. Niehues has hand-painted every

detail, down to the individual trees and bumps in the snow. Uninterrupted by lift lines and trail names, the notecards feature a distilled version of the final map, representing the stunning natural terrain in the same way that it feels to ski on the slopes.

"We were drawn to Nihues' paintings because their beauty captured our wonderful memories from so many ski trips," says Todd Bennet, co-founder of the Open Road Ski Company. "Like The Man Behind The Maps book, these notecards will help friends and family relive their favorite memories in a package that can be easily mailed and will also look good on display."

The 10 notecard set is available for purchase on jamesniehues.com for \$25 and will ship with an envelope.



Pale Morning Media has released a unique collection of James Niehues' best selling maps in note card form. PHOTO COURTESY OF PALE MORNING MEDIA



Big Sky Ski Resort welcomes skiers, riders to a unique season

GM Troy Nedved: "It felt amazing"

BY BRANDON WALKER AND MIRA BRODY

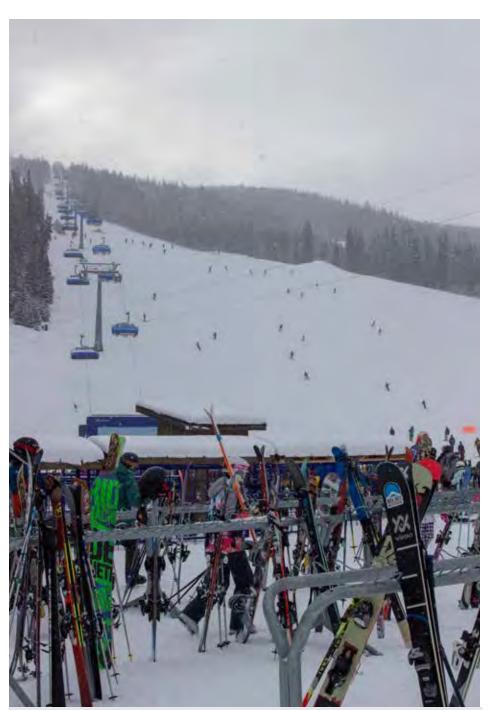
BIG SKY – On a crisp Thanksgiving morning, 257 days since mountain operations were forced to an abrupt halt by COVID-19 in March, Big Sky Resort opened for the 2020-2021 ski season. Chairlifts on Ramcharger 8 and Explorer hummed, while face masks and neck gaiters covered the faces of skiers and riders eagerly awaiting their turn to hit the slopes with the Swift Current lift opening later in the day at approximately 2:30 p.m. Opening day looked and felt a little different this year, but one thing remained the same: gratitude to be on the mountain.

Big Sky Resort General Manager Troy Nedved closely observed as the resort came to life, slightly earlier than anticipated—approximately 8:45 a.m. according to resort personnel—on Nov. 26 following a coating of six inches of fresh snow the evening prior.

"It felt amazing," Nedved said in reference to seeing the first chairs spin after the lengthy layoff. "You know after closing on March 15 in that fashion, I think everyone's been looking forward to this moment and it's been a lot of hard work to get to this point. Months and months of planning and figuring out systems that are going to make sense in this situation."

Prior to opening day, Big Sky Resort had been hard at work, compiling protocols and precautions for the season with the overarching goal of staying open and ensuring the safety of all who attend.

"Things have been going pretty well as planned. We're working to communicate all of our plans and requirements to keep us safe through



After an abrupt halt to last ski season, Big Sky Resort opened on Thanksgiving Day for the 2020-2021 winter season. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

the winter," Nedved said. "You know it's taking guests a little bit to wrap their brains around how this looks and feels at a ski resort, but people are happy to do what they need to, to keep us open."

Nedved's testament was echoed by some opening day guests. "We are so excited to be here," said Big Sky resident Lauren Knox. "We're so grateful for everyone getting this mountain open and getting us here, so we'll do anything to keep it open."

Boise, Idaho resident Evan Sprengel, joined by his daughters, Brinley and Ashlyn, described favorable snow conditions on opening day and said he wasn't bothered by face covering requirements.

"We're excited for sure," Sprengel said. "This is our first time out this year, like most people, and we're all the way from Boise, Idaho, so we came all this way to check it out."

Skiing with his family for the first time on Thanksgiving day, Sprengel said he'd like to make it an annual tradition. Ultimately, Evan, Brinley and Ashlyn all shared the same sentiment when asked what their favorite part of the day was—aside from the skiing: Family.

Nedved said that the resort's safety protocols and procedures will be reviewed and updated accordingly throughout the duration of the ski season. He didn't have an estimated total of how many guests were in attendance for opening day.

This season, visitors are encouraged to purchase lift tickets in advance, Ikon passholders are asked to make reservations prior to arrival and any area that does not allow for social distancing requires a facial covering. If they wish, parties who arrived together, may ride a lift solely with their immediate party, but there is also the option for skiers and riders to mount a lift with anyone in attendance.

Georgia native turned Big Sky Resort ticket checker for the winter season, Mason Puckett, exuberantly described his excitement and never having experienced the amount of snow that was present at the resort on opening day.

"Since it's my first year, I've heard it's a bit different from before," Puckett said. "So you know with all the things going on, the pandemic and such, and then [with] Swifty being closed, people are kind of sad about that. But overall it's been great. Our guests have been amazing."

The Swift Current lift was opened in the afternoon, after Puckett's interview with EBS. Resort personnel say the lift will be in operation on Nov. 27 as well.

"So far we've had [a] great vibe. People are pretty excited," Nedved said. "What I continually hear is congratulations on getting us open. People, they want to ski and get out there and enjoy this fresh snow."

According to a Nov. 25 letter from both Nedved and COO and resort President Taylor Middleton, the mountain has plans to offer, "a new bootpack route up Lone Peak, starting at the top of Dakota and heading up the skier's right side of Liberty Bowl to the Yeti Traverse, alleviating pressure on the Tram," the letter reads. In the letter, it was added that there are plans to add a skin track for morning use on the Hangman's run, that will open at 6 a.m. and is available until 8 a.m. Beginning at 8 a.m., there will also be a First Tracks pass option on Ramcharger 8, according to the letter.

Despite any wait to hit the slopes throughout the day, spirits remained high. Locals and visitors alike were happy to return to the mountain with friends and family and enjoy the quintessential pre-Thanksgiving Montana tradition of riding down the mountain.

"From a snow and operational standpoint, we couldn't be happier," Nedved said.



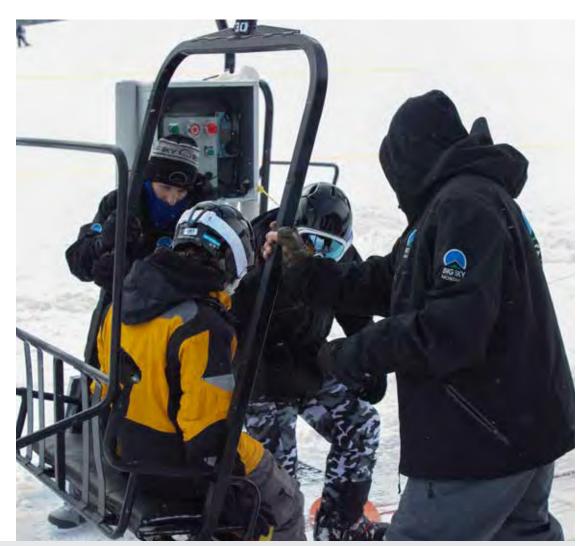












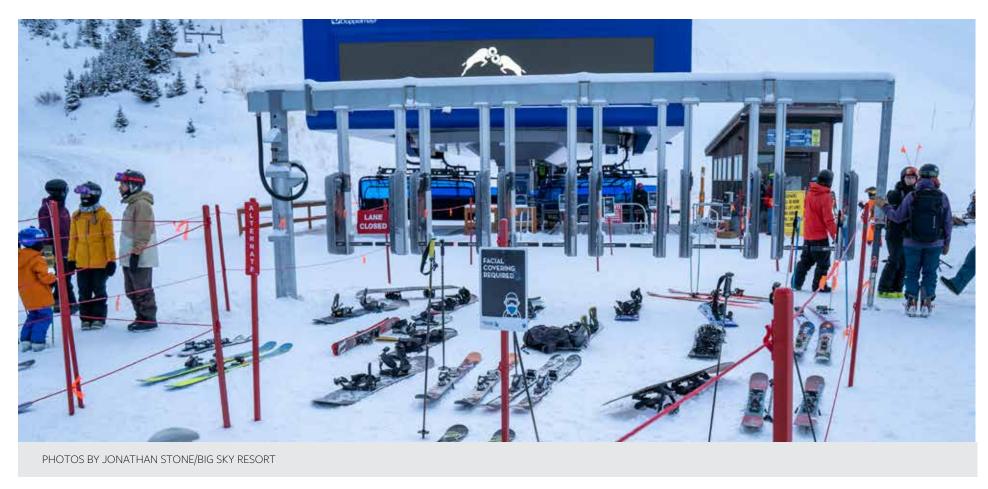
OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTOS











How They Ski It

Four ski areas in the Northern Rockies and the locals that define them

BY BAY STEPHENS

What defines a ski mountain? It's not just terrain and snowfall, but also the locals that populate the lift lines nearly every powder day.

People put down roots in ski towns for many reasons, but a loyalty to one mountain requires a certain resonance between an individual, the ski hill and the community that supports it.

We set out to find quintessential locals at four ski areas in the Greater Yellowstone: Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, Grand Targhee Resort, Big Sky Resort and Bridger Bowl. We spent a few days at each, scouring the slopes and hitting the après scene to find the everyday people that make these areas what they are.

While no rider can fully represent a ski hill's culture, they can offer a glimpse. The following stories paint these mountains with the lives of those who love to ski them.

BRIDGER BOWL



Caleb Arnold

Accessed with a transmitting avalanche transceiver and by hoofing your gear up a boot-packed trail, Bridger Bowl's ridge terrain has captured the heart of Bozeman skiers and snowboarders for decades. Caleb Arnold counts as one of these devotees.

His family drove out from Minnesota when he was 12 years old for a trip to Bridger, Arnold's first experience skiing a mountain over 200 feet tall. When they reached

the base, he couldn't even wait for his family to finish putting their gear on—he jumped on the lift and left them behind.

"I remember riding up the Powder Park [chairlift] that first day and just being blown away," he said. "It was a spring ski day and the mountain was just—I was just in heaven."

As soon as he graduated high school in 2000, he moved to Bozeman and has had a season pass ever since. A self-proclaimed "ridge rat," Arnold has watched the flow of Bridger's lower mountain change with the addition of new lifts, while his beloved ridge has largely stayed the same.

Arnold appreciates how Bridger Bowl functions as a nonprofit community ski area, operating for reasons beyond the bottom line.

"It's hard not to support a resort like that," he said. "That, and the terrain's phenomenal. Don't tell anyone." The humility of Bridger's diehards, despite their caliber, adds to Arnold's fondness of the resort.

"It never ceases to impress me," he said. "Everyone's kind of unassuming but everyone just shreds." And the nicest, newest gear doesn't seem to be that important to Bridger's enthusiasts.

"That's the core," Arnold said. "People are skiing to ski. They're not skiing for any other reason and that's kind of cool to see."

Chosen piece of gear: "I think a transceiver has always been an important part to the resort—it allows you to access so much more terrain, 'the goods.' You have to beep to play."



Audrey Morris

Shouldering skis or dragging boards, crews of college kids like architecture student Audrey Morris can be found beeping their transceivers at the gates, trudging up the boot pack above the Bridger Lift and silhouetted against the sky as they traverse the ridge to their chosen objectives.

Many of Montana State University's students came to Bozeman specifically to ride Bridger Bowl, which

hooks freshmen with discounted season passes if they're under 19. "I see Bridger as definitely a college kid's mountain," Morris said. "I think that's the main group there."

These young rippers tend to ski in groups, discovering the mountain together or being guided by older students to the hidden gems of the technical terrain.

That was the case for Morris, who hails from Durango, Colorado, and grew up skiing Telluride. Although Bridger's ridge initially intimidated her, Morris was lucky enough to have a fun and supportive group of friends that showed her the ropes of the area's gullies and couloirs.

"I think that's an attitude that a lot of people have: I want to show you ... and make you part of the culture," she said. "I just love how welcoming that was and how quickly I could become comfortable with this mountain."

She trusts her friends, even when she finds herself on the edge of daunting cliff bands, unsure how to get down. But they always find a line and when Morris peers from below at seemingly impassible portions of the ridge, she gets a special satisfaction knowing that she's skied it.

"It's so fun to have the rad skiing every single time you go up," she said. "If you come to Bridger, you're coming for the ridge."

Chosen piece of gear: "I would say that the number one piece of gear at Bridger is a beacon if you have the experience because it really opens up the mountain to a lot more super cool terrain that makes Bridger as fun of a mountain as it is."

BIG SKY RESORT



Jesse Knox

One more winter. That's what Jesse Knox kept telling himself when he moved to Big Sky from eastern Washington 20 years ago.

"Eventually, I gave up on that," Knox said. "[I] was just like, I'm going to live here forever."

A project manager for a local interior designer, Knox works so he can ski the days he has off. He met his

wife, Lauren, through a project in the Yellowstone Club, and the two joined the population of Big Sky skiers who used to say, "One more winter," and are now raising kids there.

As part of the "rad dad club," Knox will drop his 5-year-old son June off for ski school on weekends and set off with another father, or ski on his own until he bumps into someone he knows in the lift line.

Jumping in the 15-person Lone Peak Tram, they might check in at the small ski patrol hut on the summit dubbed the "Penalty Box," then disappear into sign-out only terrain like the rock-walled Big Couloir.

"It might be somebody I haven't skied with in two years, and [I'll] have a killer couple of runs with them," Knox said. He added that that's just how it is at Big Sky: Barely knowing somebody doesn't preclude having a great time tearing down with them from the 11,166-foot summit of Lone Mountain.

"There's no 'I'm-too-good-to-ski-with-you attitude' here," Knox said. "Some of the best skiers ski with people that aren't as good as them, but they'll still have just as good a day."

Chosen piece of gear: "A good friend."



Monica Thomas

Monica Thomas' original stomping grounds were the slopes of Lost Trail, a mom-and-pop ski area south of Missoula; she grew up in nearby Wisdom, population 98. Big Sky Resort's towering Lone Mountain became her new backyard in 2015, and she quickly found her crowd.

"If you come here with a good attitude and you ski every day, you're going to make friends, and that's what's so cool about this place," Thomas said. Big Sky has a

thriving ski bum culture, and every year the ski patrol hosts the Dirtbag Ball, which recognizes Big Sky Resort's most die-hard riders. In March of 2017, Thomas was awarded the prestigious title of "Dirtbag Queen."

She said she earned the honor because she skis nearly every day. One reason Thomas chose to live in Big Sky was that she saw the same crowd in the tram line as she saw at Scissorbills Saloon once the lifts stopped running.

"Everything's condensed, you get to see all your friends," Thomas said. "Plus, the skiing is out of this world." Lone Mountain offers unique terrain for the Lower 48—a large amount of it above tree line—with long, steep and technical slopes.

"You can ski 360 degrees off of this peak. There's always going to be snow somewhere," she said. "And if the peak's not open, we get a bunch of dirtbags together and go have a barbeque."

Thomas, who fights wildland fires all summer, is used to the boys' club. "As a chick, you get used to skiing with boys, but the girls here are fantastic." In the past two years, she thinks she's seen a spike in the population of female skiers.

"There are so many ladies here—ripping girls that you can ski with," Thomas said. "It's fun to get together with a bunch of lady rippers who are pushing each other."

Chosen piece of gear: "My favorite piece I guess are goggles with quick change lenses because it can go from the brightest sunlight you ever saw to low/no light in a matter of minutes."

GRAND TARGHEE RESORT



Tori Headerman and Peter Kelly

Peter Kelly and Tori Headerman found Grand Targhee Resort more than two decades ago. Both came for one season, and are still here raising their two daughters, Piper and Crosby. They've only lived on the Idaho side of Teton Pass since moving to the area, "which is a badge of honor, I think, because most people start in Jackson and roll over here," Headerman said.

She teaches kindergarten in Tetonia, where they live, while he's a builder and also shapes surfboards. Headerman breaks out her telemark skis for mellower days, as many of Targhee's longtime skiers do, slowing the pace for some old school turns.

"When we moved here, it was so special," Headerman said. Victor, Driggs and Tetonia, the small towns where Targhee's locals live, were typical Idaho agricultural communities, with small populations of skiers.

"You were either born and raised here or you moved here to ski," said Headerman, adding there was little of the pretense that's found in bigger, more affluent ski towns. "And that's kind of why we stayed."

Targhee riders learn to ski by faith and memory, useful for when visibility plummets due to fog—earning it the nickname "Grand Foghee"—or when big storm cycles bring over-the-head powder.

"It's a small enough mountain that once you get familiar with things, it's a pretty easy mountain with low visibility to work your way around," Kelly said. It's also a place where these two can raise their kids to appreciate the things they fell in love with decades ago.

"And like it or not, they become good skiers by the time they're six," Kelly said. "That's how it works here."

Although the resort's clientele has shifted to more vacationers since their arrival, Targhee's small-town roots remain intact. "People come to not have the resort [feel]," Headerman said. "There's nothing to do here at night. People ski, they go eat dinner and they go to bed and they wake up the next day to do it again."

"And that's what we like about it," Kelly said. "It's simple. It doesn't look like every other freaking ski resort in America."

Chosen piece of gear: the right goggle lenses to see well in the fog



Mark Ortiz

Mark Ortiz was sick of the rain at Oregon's Mount Hood, so he looked for colder ski areas with lots of snow, and found the Teton Range with Jackson Hole and Grand Targhee.

"I applied to them both, and Jackson said I had to get a haircut and Targhee just hired me," said Ortiz, who now works as a ski instructor. Bopping around the mountain, Ortiz crows to the lift operators, all of whom know

him; he begs ski patrollers by name—who are about to close a gate to hike-and-ski terrain—to let him head out one more time.

A ring leader of sorts, Ortiz brings the young ski bum community together, organizing on-mountain events such as the Chinese Downhill and a scavenger hunt, and excursions like an annual Montana trip that so many of Targhee's young dirtbags rave about.

"I think, in order to have fun with your friends, you have to facilitate things," he said. So, he helps set the stage. For last winter's Montana trip, he and his friends decided to only ski mom-and-pop resorts—max lift ticket price of \$40. He called resorts ahead of time to get group discounts and reached out to Bozeman-based Montucky Cold Snacks for free beer.

He also orchestrated the Chinese Downhill, which involves a keg at the top, two at the bottom, and a chaotic race at break-neck speed in between.

"I think probably half of the good ideas I have are probably from the Trap [Bar and Grill] or the [Royal] Wolf," he said, referring to two watering holes that help knit together this little community.

Chosen piece of gear: "I think the essential piece of gear is the right attitude—a little bit of fun, a little bit of party, a little bit of irreverence. We're not ski bums 'cause we're good at being told what to do, ya know?"

JACKSON HOLE MOUNTAIN RESORT



Ned Brown

They say everyone in Jackson is from somewhere else. In the '70s and '80s, a small population of skiers traded lives elsewhere for the Tetons. Many of these individuals own the coffee houses, retail shops and restaurants that make Jackson what it is, while others are retired. Either way, these long-timers hit the slopes daily, favoring bluebird mornings.

In the tramline you'll see these often-mustachioed men greeting each other, catching up on life, ribbing one another about older gear.

Ned Brown is one of these locals.

Riding the tram with Ned, he names every run, chute, glade, couloir—inbounds and out-of-bounds—and recounts stories like how St. Patty's Couloir on Rendezvous Peak got its name when he and four friends skied it on St. Patrick's Day nearly four decades ago.

"We'd been looking at it for a few years and decided the time was right," he said.

Brown's first turns were on a grass slope in southern California when the city's recreation department hosted a ski lesson. "An ice truck pulled up and they got a bunch of bags full of crushed ice and broke them on the slope," Brown said. The strip of ice was no more than 10 feet wide and 40 feet long, but enough for him to learn how to snowplow, stop and turn.

In 1978, when he visited Jackson during his senior year at University of Colorado Boulder, a friend took him down Tower Three Chute and the steepness blew his mind.

"I was amazed and stoked and couldn't get it off my mind," said Brown, and that September he moved to Jackson. His goal was to own a restaurant in a ski town, and not long after landing in Jackson, The Blue Lion went on the market. Brown pounced on the opportunity.

Only open for dinner now, the restaurant allows for a dream schedule: Brown skis whenever he wants, which is often to the tune of 75 to 80 days a year.

Chosen piece of gear: Transceiver for going out of bounds, fat skis, "a helmet is useful for me."



Kat Abrams

Originally from Atlanta, Kat Abrams is one of many young skiers drawn from across the country to live Jackson's adventure lifestyle. They charge at the resort, in the side country and on Teton Pass. They work somewhere that gets them a pass, and struggle to make time for being adults because they spend so much time in the mountains.

"You never want to take a day off," Abrams said. "You

feel guilty about it."

Abrams grew up visiting the West with her parents and moved to Teton Valley for the summers, but was soon roped into the winter sports by a crew of good friends—mostly guys—who taught her to ski.

"I picked it up pretty quickly, I would say, and just sort of fully embraced the ski culture that Jackson is," Abrams said. "With boys around, you kind of have to suck it up and just do it."

Hers is a posse that bombs and jibs down the hill to pile into a Bridger Gondola box eight-strong, pound beers, crush cans underboot, then unload and file over to the recycling bin to dispose of their aluminum.

They won't wait up, but for those who can keep up, a sense of comradery and belonging awaits. No surprise Abrams learned quickly.

Nannying for a Jackson couple provides her living wages, but Abrams also works at Teton Village Sports at the base of the resort with many of the friends who taught her to ski. Working together makes it easy to rally adventure buddies for outings any time of year.

"It's almost like this need and desire to keep going, which is great," Abrams said. "I love it."

Her crew's adventures are so constant that rainy days are often the only chance to catch up on life. "I'd rather go ski than go to the post office," Abrams said.

Chosen piece of gear: "I would say pow skis."

A version of this article originally appeared in the winter 2019 edition of Mountain Outlaw.



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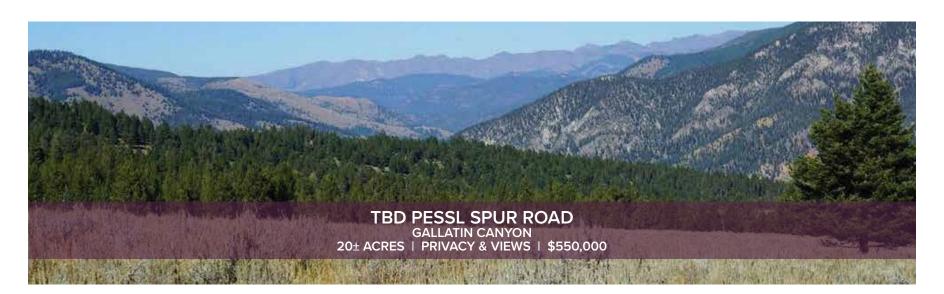
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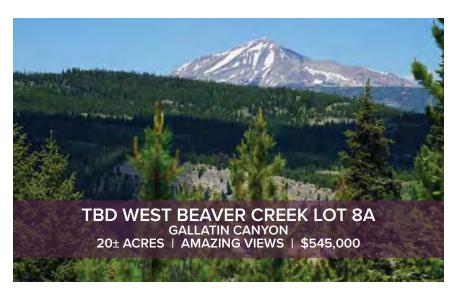


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Ski Tips: Time for a tune up

BY DAN EGAN

In the basement of my childhood home, we had the ultimate ski-tuning bench. It was wide and long and covered in P-tex, wax drippings, metal shavings and wax scrapings. We had files, scrapers, Mom's old irons, waxes of all colors, sticks of P-tex and corks for polishing the bottom of our skis.

It was our ski-testing laboratory and we experimented with wax combinations, mounting bindings in different positions and even making our own "mono" skis. The skis were stacked across from the bench. With seven kids and two skiing parents, we had a huge collection of boards from Rossignol Strato and Olin Mark IV, to Hexel Honey Comb and K2 Cheeseburgers, with some Head Standards in the mix.

I remember spending hours down under the hanging lights working away preparing the skis for the next adventure.

By the time I was 14, I was tuning skis at the local ski shop just 7 miles outside of Boston and learning the finer techniques of base and edge repair as well as mounting bindings without jigs.

The shop sent me to ski tuning clinics and I discovered what a base and edge bevel was, how to structure the base so it would hold more wax, and other useful tricks like how to



PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

get the carbon out of clear P-tex so the repair would blend in better with the base. The shop had a grinding machine to flatten the bases and sharpen the edges. It took great skill not to over grind the bottoms of the skis or burn the edges while swiping the ski across the belt on the grinder. This mechanical addition broadened my ability to fix core shots and flatten railed skis, and before long I was being called up to the sales floor to consult with customers on their damaged skis.

The result of all this ski repair knowledge helped me understand how a ski should perform when properly tuned. I could ski on a pair of skis and notice if the tips and tails were too sharp or the base was railed. Over time, I developed an appreciation for the manufacturing process and the difference between an injected construction and a layered or sandwich-built ski.

Understanding the construction, the flex, the mounting position of the bindings, plus how length plays into the arc of the ski all combined to ultimately allow me to pick the skis that would best suit my style of skiing in different conditions and situations.

With the many shapes, sizes, and types of skis on the market today, it's more important than ever to have a proper tune on the ski or snowboard you choose to ride. Some skis have early rise, some have no camber, others are rockers, and that is just the beginning. These products are engineered with a specific purpose. Shaped skis carve, fat skis float, rocker skis pivot, and some companies like Elan make a left- and right-footed ski. It only makes sense to tune these products to the manufacture's specs.

The key to a good tune is the ski shop. Get to know the crew behind the scenes who do the work. Explain to them the type of rider you are and where on the mountain you like to ski. Find out if they hand-tune or use a machine. Ask them about edge bevel and what their recommendation is for you at the level you ski.

Take a few days this winter and demo skis from different shops and see if you can notice a difference in the tunes or ask the shop to structure your bases or try a different bevel on your edges and discover for yourself how tuning can impact your skiing.

Extreme skiing pioneer Dan Egan has appeared in 12 Warren Miller ski films and countless others. He was inducted into the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame in 2016. Today he teaches clinics and guides trips at locations around the world including Big Sky. Find more information on Dan Egan camps and clinics by visiting skiclinics.com.

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BACK 40: Steep Skiing 101

BY DEREK LENNON

For many skiers, the challenge of skiing steep terrain and subsequent freefalling sensation drives them to push the limits. Going airborne on a steep slope is a heart-thumping experience that makes you feel alive. Steep skiing can become an obsession that will have you grinning from ear to ear, year after year.

Everyone has a different definition of steep, whether it's a terrifying black diamond run or a remote backcountry couloir with no-fall zones. This is what makes skiing a unique and magical sport. No one wants to fall, but steep skiing is often more a mental than physical game.

The one thing all skiers can control is their technique. Learning proper technique is a lifelong pursuit. The more you ski the better skier you'll be.

The next time you're feeling intimidated on a steep slope, take a deep breath, relax, and focus on these steep skiing tips:

Look two turns ahead. When you look to the bottom of a steep run, it's overwhelming. Try to focus on looking just two turns ahead, tackling the slope in increments.

Keep your "hands" on the "handlebars." When you have your hands on the handlebars of a bike you have control. When you're skiing, relax your ankles and maintain contact between your shins ("hands") and the tongues of your boots ("handlebars") at all times. Now you have the ability to steer.

Turn your feet. The fastest way to get your feet across the slope is to turn your feet. This pivoting movement comes from rotating your femur in your hip socket starting when your skis are flat. As you do this, maintain a quiet upper body with your bellybutton pointed downhill.

Hands up. Make sure you can see both of your hands in your peripheral vision at all times. Think about keeping your elbows in front of your spine.

Don't let your uphill pole drag. When your uphill pole acts more like a rudder than a ski pole, you'll feel it dragging on the snow surface. Hold your uphill pole parallel to the slope. This will help you to stay stacked and balanced over your outside ski.

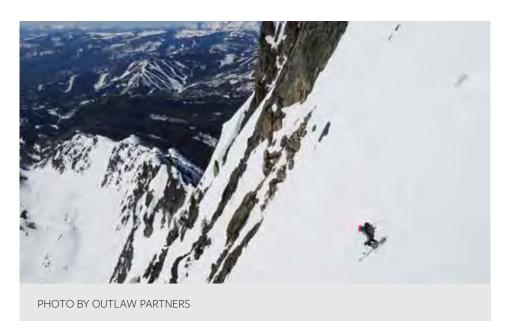
Bring your pole plant closer. If you plant your pole far down the hill, the result is a larger turn. Bring your pole plant closer to your ski, because it will shorten the radius of your turn and give you more control.

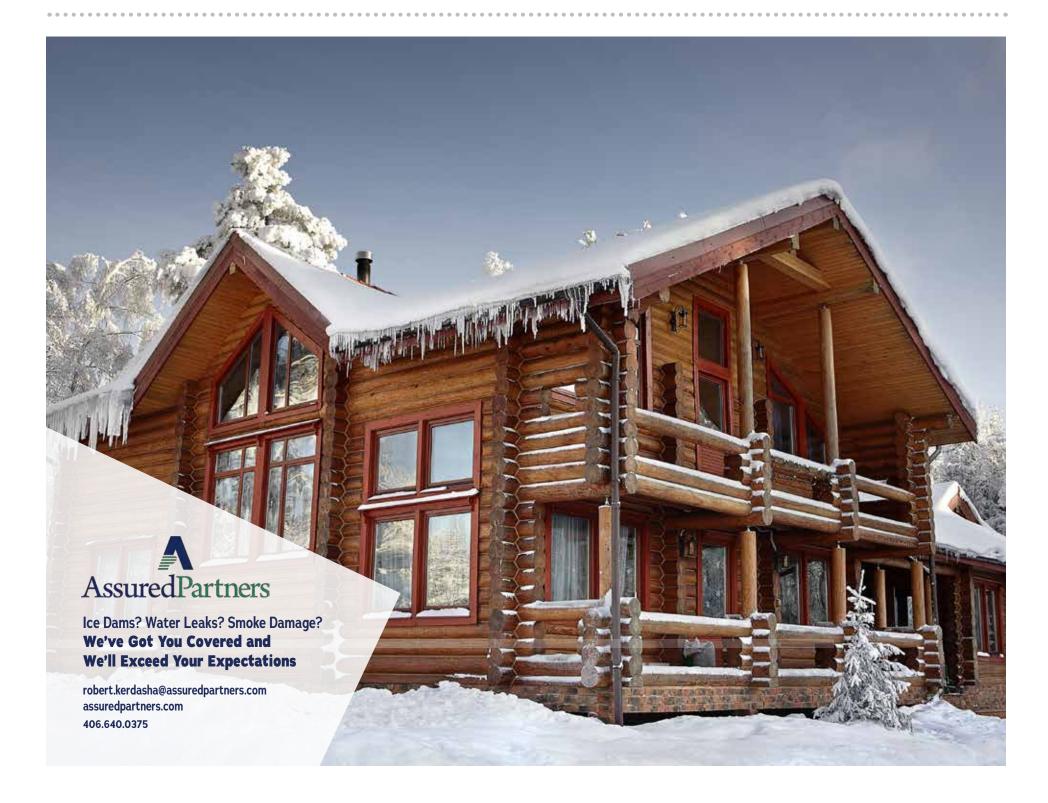
Take it one turn at a time. Committing to the turn is the most intimidating part of skiing the steeps. Relax, breathe, and make the first turn. Find your rhythm and you'll flow down the fall line.

Now it's time to ski. Take time to master the skills and dial in the techniques that you need to survive the steeps. Start on simple terrain and gradually increase the pitch of the slope. Be patient, be confident, and please wear a helmet.

Derek Lennon is a skier and writer who lives, works and plays in the mountains of the world. He chases the endless winter as a ski instructor at Big Sky Resort in Montana and as the lead guide at Ski Arpa in Chile. Follow Derek's backcountry adventures at AMountainJourney.com.

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