

**Tips Up** 

Big Sky's retro ski bar shoves off

Socks for Skye = Cash for Eagle Mount

A focus on Big Sky's workforce housing

Lone Peak hoops sweep White Sulphur Springs

Plus: Word from the Resort

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#### ON THE COVER:

"Last Run to Tips Up," 24" x 36," acrylic on wood panel, by Sugar Ditch Design

"The inspiration for the series of skier paintings the "Last Run to Tips Up" came from our love of vintage imagery/style and our obsession with giving fresh takes on classic ideas," said Dalton Brink, cofounder of Sugar Ditch Design, which Tips Up commissioned for the paintings.

See pg. 10 for the story on Tips Up, the vintage ski bar opening in Big Sky.

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### Tips Up Big Sky's retro ski bar shoves off

The big, red, egg-shaped gondola hanging in Big Sky Town Center won't take you up the mountain like it once did, but it will welcome you to Big Sky's newest ski bar. Tips Up brings live music, good eats, games and a unique décor that reflects the ski town's history.

#### **Socks for Skye**

Sky Aurora Swenson loved her socks. To honor Skye's memory, just a year after she passed, her friends and family are designing custom socks to sell and raise money for Eagle Mount, the nonprofit that allowed her to ski.

#### A focus on Big Sky's workforce housing

The Big Sky Community Housing Trust and Lone Mountain Land Company have partnered to build a complex on the former American Bank site exclusively for local workers. LMLC also recently acquired Buck's T4, River Rock Lodge and the Powder Light parcel next to Ace Hardware.

#### Lone Peak hoops sweep White Sulphur Springs

Both the Lone Peak boys' and girls' varsity basketball teams defended their homecourt with victories over visiting White Sulphur Springs Hornets. With their respective wins, each team is making early-season moves.

#### Plus: Word from the Resort

This issue's special section is packed with ski tips and resort beta to prep you for your next day on the hill. From a comprehensive Mountain Village dining guide, to Dan Egan's tips on maintaining stability in a fat ski, to ski race results, here's what's up at Big Sky Resort.



#### **Opening Shot**

**Lady Big Horn sophomore** Jessie Bough (10) takes aim at the basket against the Sheridan Panthers on Jan. 23. See page 26 for a full recap of the game. PHOTO BY LOREN BOUGH

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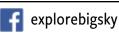
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## February is Black History Month and the theme this year is, The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity.

How important is diversity and cultural representation to you and how do you plan to engage with Black History Month?



**Polly Carter** Southern New Hampshire

"In the last couple of years, and especially the last year, if it's shown us anything it's that representation is very important. In terms of how I'll be engaging in Black History Month, as a white female I'll be taking it as an additional opportunity for further learning and awareness and listening. Listening to where I can educate myself more and how I can become a better ally. I think representation is really important and it shows what a society is valuing and what they're paying attention to and who they're listening to."



Molly Parish Asheville, North Carolina

"We raised our children in metro [Washington], D.C., and we loved all of the diversity that was there. The way that we will engage with Black History Month is, now we live in a small town that's not very diverse. I love showing my children the movies like "Hidden Figures" and "Remember the Titans." We don't just pick February to watch Black history movies, we celebrate Black history, white history, Asian history, all types of history every month of the year, so it'll be just like another normal month for us."



Hanna Powell
Big Sky, Montana

"It's more important than ever in our current climate of our very diverse country. We, as Americans especially, need to open up our hearts and minds to people that are different than us, and see the beauty of it, rather than being inspired by hatred. If there's anything I could do [to] celebrate Black History Month, it would be to speak on behalf of my African American brothers and sisters, my Native American brothers and sisters, that I love them and I support them and their cause and I believe that their lives matter."



**Josephine Erickson** *Big Sky, Montana* 

"I'm Filipino. I was born and raised in Hawaii and I lived there for 40-some-odd years before coming here. Caucasians were one-third of the population, [and] two-thirds of the population were Japanese, Chinese, Samoan, Filipino, Korean and actually very few African Americans, until later on in [Hawaii's] history. Although we all realized that we were different ethnically, it wasn't anything deliberate that any of us did to mix and involve each other in our lives, there were so many of us that it just happened. ... When you live in a really diverse culture like that, it just happens naturally."



## BETTER TOGETHER

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a minute to introduce

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Relief.

Daniel Bierschwale | Executive Director

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A monthly District bulletin



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swim in
Favorita Food:
Jenny: Parin
Frankie: Payonn



FREE weekly Covid-19 testing for asymptomatic community members & local workers will continue through the winter season. Pick up test kits at our new drive-thru location: 1700 Lone Mountain Trail

Please visit BigSkyRelief.org for details.

## Did you know...

Businesses retain 5% of their tax collections as an Administrative Fee for their time spent collecting and remitting Resort Tax.







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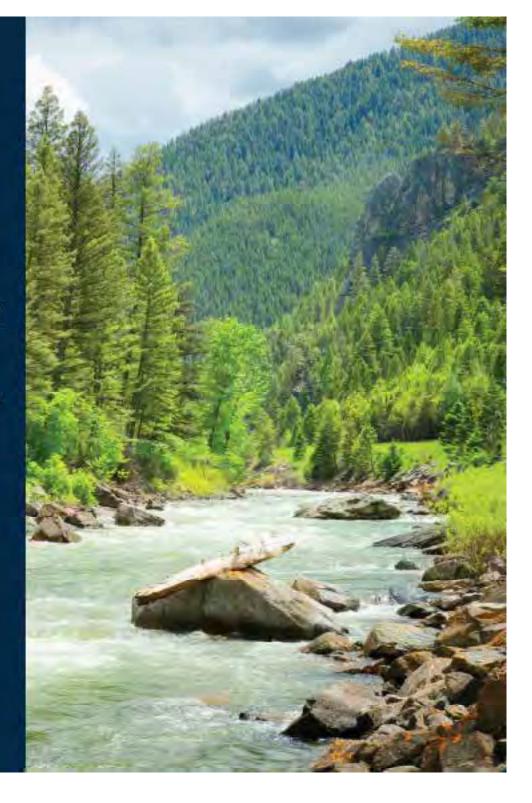
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# BSSD updates timeline for return to in-person learning

#### **EBS STAFF**

BIG SKY – During its Jan. 19 meeting, the Big Sky School District School Board voted unanimously to approve a report from the School Reopening task force that recommended a delay in returning to 100 percent in-person learning.

The new timeline shifts the return to February, with Ophir Middle School returning first on Feb. 9, followed by Lone Peak High School on Feb. 15. Before students return, OMS and LPHS teachers will hold a workday on Feb. 8 for teachers to prepare the facilities.

Part of the rationale for the delay, according to the task force report, is to give the administration team more time to facilitate testing and contact tracing.

According to the report, testing is up to 65 percent for both OMS and LPHS which will aid administrators in monitoring the situation.

The return will place OMS and LPHS in Learning Model Three, which will feature 100 percent of students on campus Monday through Friday during regular school hours. When possible, social distancing guidelines will be adhered to, and, if not possible, plexiglass will be erected as a barrier between students at their respective desks.

Additional precautions include staff and administrators monitoring hallways between classes, limited public restroom use, and that students will never share materials, according to the task force report.

"We are doing everything we can to make this the safest experience for the kids with the testing, and the PPE, and the distancing that we're going to set up in the classrooms," said Dr. Marlo Mitchem, secondary school principal. "Ultimately, we do believe kids learn best when they're at school, all the evidence and research show that. That's our mission to educate our kids to the best of our ability, so that they can reach their potential."

# Montana lawmakers react to Biden inauguration

#### EBS STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On the West Front of the U.S. Capitol Building, Joe Biden, the 46th President of the United States, looked out over a sea of American flags filling the National Mall instead of the usual crowds that traditionally flock to presidential inauguration ceremonies.

The 2021 inauguration of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris looked different from past years, lacking crowds, featuring heightened security and including attendees all sporting personal protective equipment. The president and vice president were sworn in shortly before noon EST and the president addressed the nation.

Montana politicians attending the event included U.S. Sen. Steve Daines and U.S. Sen. John Tester.

Sen. Daines offered his congratulations to the president and vice president. "I look forward to working with the Biden administration when we can find common ground for the good of Montanans, but I will also vigorously work against their agenda when I think it will harm our great state."

Sen. Tester released this statement regarding the inauguration:

"The peaceful transfer of power is the hallmark of our democracy, and it was a privilege to represent Montana at the inauguration of President Biden and Vice President Harris. Now it's time for Congress to come together and get things done for folks in Montana and across rural America. I will work closely with the new Administration—and I will hold them accountable—to make sure we quickly get this pandemic under control so we can reopen our economy and get Montanans back to work."

# Gianforte launches COVID-19 vaccine dashboard

#### OFFICE OF GOV. GREG GIANFORTE

HELENA – Gov. Greg Gianforte today announced the launch of Montana's COVID-19 vaccine dashboard.

"With over 77,000 safe and effective vaccine doses administered in Montana, we continue to make strides to protect the most vulnerable," Gianforte said. "We can make even greater progress if the federal government increases our supply. I encourage Montanans to use this dashboard to stay up to date on our progress to save lives and make the vaccine available to everyone who wants one."

The new dashboard includes information on total vaccine doses administered, Montanans fully immunized, and doses administered per 1,000 eligible people across Montana counties. Dashboard data will be updated to reflect the ongoing progress of vaccine administration in the Treasure State. To date, 77,739 vaccine doses have been administered in Montana, with 14,704 Montanans fully immunized.

View the COVID-19 landing page to view updated maps and vaccine information at: dphhs.mt.gov/covid19vaccine

# Water and sewer board reelects officers, approves contracts, talks with housing trust

#### EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – At a Jan. 19 board meeting, the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District made headway on several key projects and agenda items.

Big Sky Community Housing Trust: The water and sewer district board heard a presentation from the housing trust concerning its project to build more workforce housing on land by the old American Bank building. The project is still in its early stages, but the units will eventually need to be annexed into the district. Ron Edwards, general manager of the water and sewer district will send a letter in support of the project to the Gallatin County Commission to support the project through its next steps. (For the full story, see page 12.)

Canyon groundwater contracts: The board unanimously voted to approve two contracts for groundwater studies in the Gallatin Canyon area, awarded to WGM Group, a civil engineering company, and Mark Cunnane, owner of Western Groundwater Services.

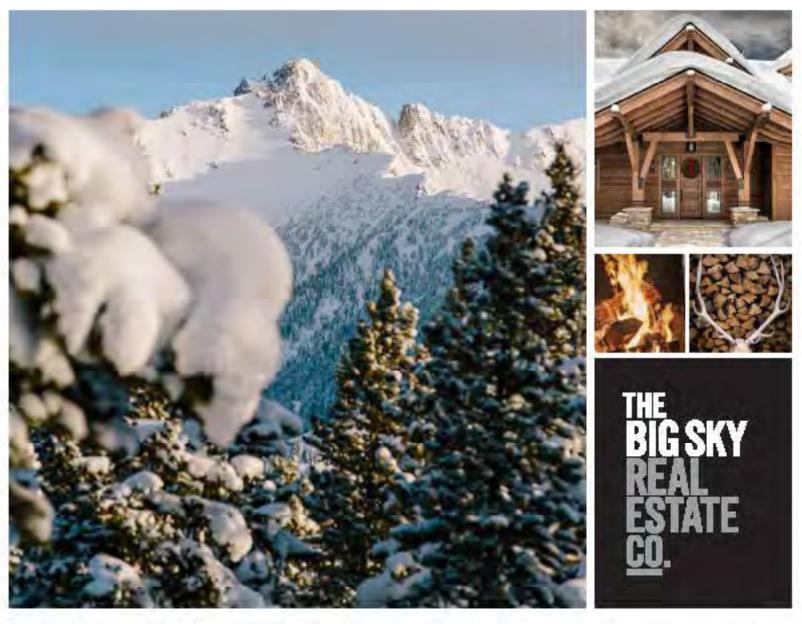
Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade and Expansion: After a bid period of 10 weeks, the water and sewer district will open bids for construction of the new facility on Jan. 29. The hope is to award a bid in March and break ground this coming spring. In an update on funding for this project, Dan Semmens, bond counsel to the district, explained some options including the ability to borrow \$4.5 million from the State Revolving Fund.

Water system capital improvements: Cunnane gave a report on the mountain well exploration project which has drilled seven test wells in an effort to find a water source in the Mountain Village area that would allow the water system to be split for efficiency. Thus far, well No. seven has been the most promising but needs to undergo further tests. The next step is to drill more wells in the Cascade area.

Board election: In a unanimous vote, all board officials were reelected to their same positions.

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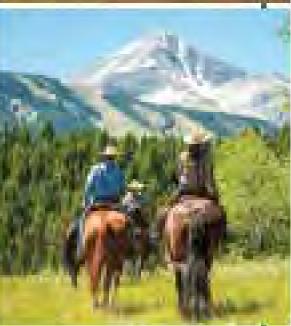












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## Morningstar restructures staffing, modifies scholarships

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – After a tumultuous turnover in staff and dealing with a global pandemic, Morningstar Learning Center is looking for new staff and restructuring its finances.

Currently, Morningstar is the only full-time daycare or preschool in the Big Sky community for infants to 5-year-olds, and its vision is to provide affordable childcare for families in the community. The center's nonprofit status allows it to offer low-cost services by supplementing operating costs with private donations.

Morningstar offers locally employed families a \$10 discount per child, per day through the Tuition Reduction Plan funded by the Big Sky Resort Area District. In addition, Morningstar offers a Family Assistance scholarship, to which families can apply and receive additional funds outside of tuition reduction. These two programs will soon be rolled together into one scholarship application process, according to Stephanie Kissell, secretary of Morningstar's board of directors.

Morningstar has remained open throughout the coronavirus pandemic, and while the virus presented challenges and reduced classroom size, Kissell says a lack of staffing also contributed to issues that arose over the past year.

"In 2019, we had 100-percent staff turnover and those trends continued in 2020," she said.

Currently, Morningstar is again operating at full capacity and Kissell says the only restriction remains staffing shortages since the organization must adhere to state-mandated teacher-to-student ratios.

As a result, the learning center is restructuring by splitting the executive director role into two positions—center director and executive director—and thanks to a Big Sky Relief grant, Morningstar can now offer competitive wages.

"I came up with a communitywide wage-and-benefits comparison spreadsheet to determine and compare other similar jobs in Big Sky," said Kissell, who was involved in requesting the grant for Morningstar. We're looking at the same pool of workers with the same credentials and seeing the discrepancy between entry-level positions in those jobs versus what we were paying."

After running the numbers, which she called "shocking," Kissell presented a final determination to the Big Sky Relief advisory committee outlining the amount Morningstar needs to pay employees in order to provide a livable wage in Big Sky. The center director position is currently being advertised with a base salary of \$60,000.

Morningstar applied to Big Sky Relief for a grant in September 2020, which started a conversation around the center's sustainability and its services. Then in October 2020, it submitted another request for funds that Big Sky Relief granted with the understanding that five short-term goals would be accomplished.

"We recognize that equitable access to quality childcare is really part of a community's infrastructure," said Ciara Wolfe, who sat on Big Sky Relief's advisory committee at the time Morningstar submitted the grant applications and who, last November, became vice president of philanthropy at Yellowstone Club Community Foundation. "The childcare industry was so under resourced prior to the pandemic and it's also been one of the industries that's been hit the hardest due to this pandemic."

Wolfe also stressed that providing affordable childcare is a national issue, not just a Big Sky issue.

After receiving the grant, the Morningstar board split into subcommittees in order to meet the goals within a six-month time frame, Kissell said.

One subcommittee is focused on ensuring that Morningstar is a financially sustainable operation and is seeking input on the scholarship programs and a tuition increase. Historically, the learning center has raised tuition every two years, according to Kissell, but after revamping the wage structure it would need to increase tuition by 32 percent to cover operating costs which were previously covered by tuition revenue. That increase would be cost prohibitive to families, Kissell said.

As part of the financial revamp, BSRAD is helping Morningstar restructure the Tuition Reduction project based on a sliding scale, meaning a flat rate will not apply to every family and tuition assistance will be need-based, according to Kissell.

"Resort tax along with the foundations, in partnership with Morningstar, have been fairly actively trying to figure out how we can collectively

help the organization move forward for future success and supporting them financially to do so," said Daniel Bierschwale, the executive director of BSRAD.

According to Kissell, the hope is to fill the center director position in the next six months and hire for three open teaching positions. Hiring a center director will help Morningstar implement short-term and long-term goals, she said.

Results from an August 2020 Family Survey that Morningstar showed that 63 percent of respondents said they would quit their jobs or move if they couldn't afford childcare.

Currently, Morningstar has a second survey out to the community—the Community Youth Care and Program Needs Assessment—which is a collaboration with Big Sky Discovery Academy, the Big Sky School District, Big Sky Community Organization and the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce.

"We want to stay open," Kissell said. "We want to create avenues that meet the needs of our families and offer them quality, comprehensive childcare and early learning education services."



Children at MLC practice their fine motor skills by stacking and building with blocks. PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE KISSELL



Cruz Contreres, founder of the Black Lillies was the first musician to grace the stage in a private New Years Eve party. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAYARD DOMINICK

## Tips Up!

## Surrounded by memories past, new ski bar gathers all walks of Big Sky life

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – In 1973, Big Sky Resort installed the Gondola I, a ski lift whose capabilities boasted a four-skier capacity and 1,525 feet of elevation gain. It whisked visitors from around the world to survey and ski the Big Sky landscape where it dropped skiers at 9,040 feet.

Today, one of the red, egg-shaped gondola cabins hangs at 76 Town Center Avenue at the entryway of Tips Up, the community's new ski bar and live music venue.

After you shake off the nostalgia of the gondola gatekeeper, wondering in awe how skiers used to load themselves and their gear into one of those cabins, the full impact of Tips Up's interior menagerie will hit you.

At first, you won't notice first the striped wood bartops, handcrafted shuffleboard tables, or the row of beer taps behind the bar that occupies much of the room's south end. You won't even notice the stage, a handpainted mural behind, or the acoustic-padded ceiling and carefully placed stage lighting.

Before all of that, what will catch your eye are the walls.

Colorful memorabilia of skiers and ski bums past cover the interior: old Montana road signs, resort maps, signed Warren Miller posters, a Budweiser Clydesdale, an old baseball scoreboard—which at Tips Up will compare daily snow totals at Big Sky Resort and Bridger Bowl—and skis, hundreds of skis that transcend generations.

Much of this memorabilia came from Big Sky Resort, says Bayard Dominick, who helped conceptualize Tips Up and is also VP of Planning and Development at Lone Mountain Land Company, which developed many of the buildings along Town Center Avenue. But the Tips Up crew also reached out to folks in the area.



An old baseball scoreboard will display daily snow accumulations of Big Sky Resort vs. Bridger Bowl as a friendly sign of competition. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

"We [were] randomly pulling stuff out of people's garages," Dominick said, adding that he's been collecting skis for 15 years. "We traded skis for beer chips. I think there are seven pairs of my old skis in here."

The gondola, which had been living a lofty retirement in Ennis, he found on Facebook. But the full effort to make Tips Up a reality was a collaborative one between Okay, Cool Management along with Lone Mountain Land Company and Abby Hetherington Interiors.

"We love the community up here and we said let's create exactly the bar that we and our neighbors want to hang out at," said Nicole Morgan, president of Okay, Cool, a Bozeman-based business management company who also oversees Copper Whiskey Bar and Grill, among others.

Morgan thought up the idea for Tips Up with business partner Casey Durham, who will be serving as the bar's manager. "We just really wanted to create a place where it's a love letter to the locals, but certainly a place where visitors can come and have a great, unique, enjoyable experience."

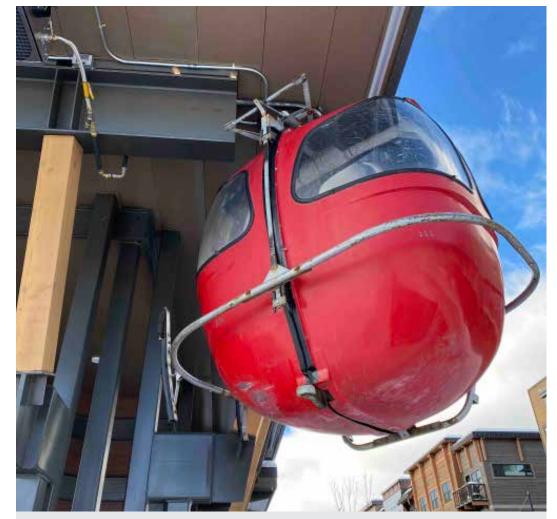
The contrast between old and new is stark and comforting, and all part of the plan for interior design extraordinaire Abby Hetherington, who owns her design firm as well as the Architect's Wife in Bozeman. Hetherington reached out to all corners of the state—Livingston, the Flathead, Ennis—in search of memorabilia.

"We didn't want it to feel brand new," Hetherington said. "We wanted to tell the history of Big Sky so when you walk through the vestibule you can see all the maps on the wall. Their big goal was to create a space where the whole community would come in, whether you're visiting or been here for 20 years."

Tips Up will be open seven days a week for lunch and dinner, year round. Executive Chef Eric Gruber has fine-tuned a menu starring a pickle-brined, bone-in fried chicken as well as other craft bar food, such as chicken strips, a spicy chicken sandwich, a variety of burgers, salads, grain bowls, vegetarian options and a kid's menu.

The pub will also feature live music five days a week, making it Big Sky's first dedicated music and restaurant venue. So far, they've had no trouble booking artists.

"As soon as we get the go ahead, were going to have everybody's favorite acts ready to go that they miss seeing around Gallatin County," said



At Tips Up, you'll be welcomed at the door by one of Big Sky Resort's original egg-shaped Gondola I cabins. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

Brian Stumpf, the booking agent for Tips Up. "Then, as soon as we can expand, we're going to bring in some really exciting and bigger acts and it's just going to be the spot for live music."

The size of the venue has allowed Tips Up to stay compliant with the county health's 50-percent capacity requirement and it will open with a 100-spectator capacity. A state-of-the-art sound system provided by Jereco Studios will make for solid acoustics, and while Stumpf says he wants Tips Up to be a place touring acts can stop by, his focus is set on getting local musicians back to work and on the stage again.

In addition to music and fried chicken, the bar also features a casino, TVs to catch sporting events, and shuffleboards handcrafted by Josh Skoglund of Xplorgames. Just behind the shuffleboards two garage doors can open into a large, corner-lot porch that looks out into the park and plaza behind the Wilson Hotel.

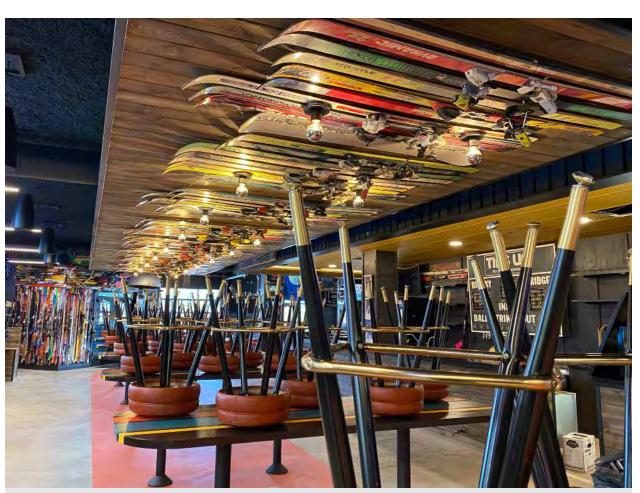
"We want it to be a real gathering place for all walks of life in Big Sky,"

Dominick said. "The conversation about this building has been kind of building a downtown for Big Sky because no one really used to stop here on their way home ... Now they can and there's somewhere to do that after skiing."

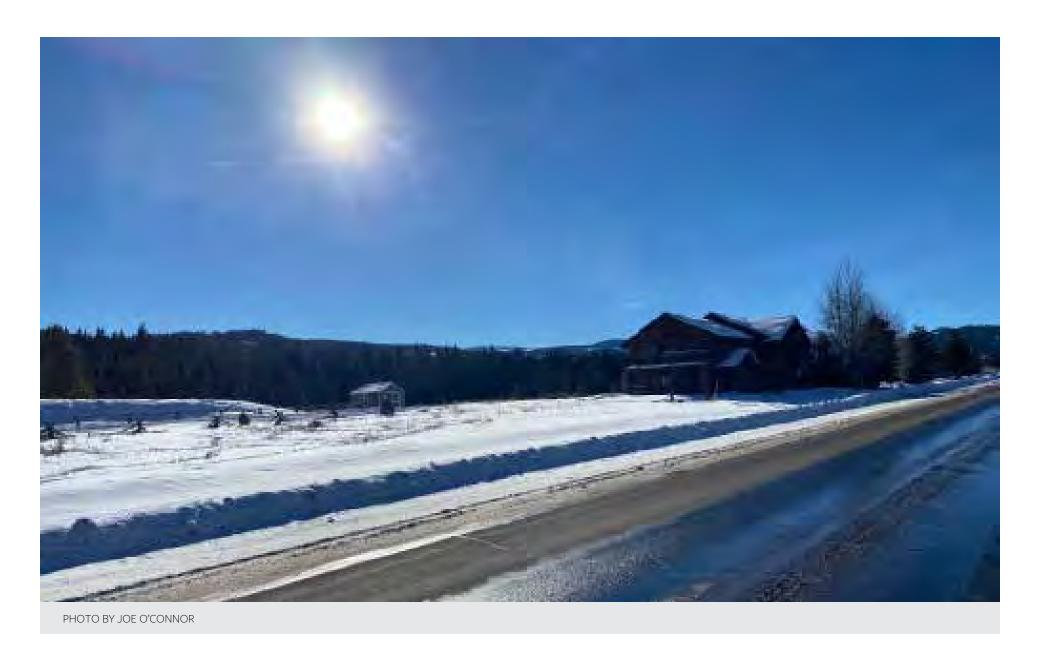
In conception, the group drew inspiration from renowned ski town dive bars such as the Great Northern Bar and Grill in Whitefish and the Mangy Moose Restaurant and Saloon in Jackson Hole.

According to Dominick, Tips Up is opening on Monday, Feb. 1 with a full lunch and dinner menu, as well as online ordering, takeout and a full liquor license. Okay, Cool Management's commitment to reliability, says Morgan, is key to building Big Sky into a community beyond just a seasonal resort town, but into a year-round home.

The bar provides "something for everyone," Dominick says, whether that something is a plate of crispy fried chicken, your favorite local act on a Friday night, a post-slope brew or to show your friends and family your old pair of K2s nailed to the ceiling. Just be sure to keep those tips up.



To design the inside, the Tips Up team collected antiques and old skis from all over the state, resulting in generations of used skis. If skis could talk... PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



## **Housing Trust, Lone Mountain Land Company join forces**

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – In an effort to solve Big Sky's workforce housing shortage, the Big Sky Community Housing Trust and Lone Mountain Land Company have partnered on the latest housing development project.

The collaboration between the two entities was announced in a Jan. 19 press release along with their intention to develop and build a new housing complex exclusively for local workers.

"In order for the Big Sky community to thrive, it is imperative that local workers have access to quality, affordable housing," said Matt Kidd, Managing Director of CrossHarbor Capital, parent company to LMLC. "We are thrilled to be working in conjunction with the Big Sky Housing Trust on this large-scale initiative that will benefit the Big Sky community for years to come."

LMLC recently closed on the former American Bank property along Highway 64 and hopes to close on the adjacent parcel soon. The land was purchased with workforce housing in mind and, in addition to the aforementioned parcels, LMLC also recently acquired Buck's T4, River Rock Lodge, and the Powder Light parcel next to Ace Hardware.

"Big Sky Community Housing Trust is pleased to be collaborating with LMLC on this project that will add desperately needed housing for the workforce in our area," said Laura Seyfang, Big Sky Community Housing Trust Executive Director in the press release. "As a nonprofit, partnerships like this allow us to move forward with our mission of creating secure housing for the people who support this community through their employment."

The American Bank land and adjacent parcel are earmarked for one-, two- and three-bedroom units as well as some dorm-style designs. The mix of unit types and rental rates would be deed restricted to prohibit short-term rentals, according to the press release, and will also likely be rent-restricted units in order to make them affordable to the local workforce in perpetuity.

Currently, a consulting team is conducting a market survey to gather data on the number of people and income levels in Big Sky as a way to determine the best use of the parcels in terms of number of beds and units.

The existing American Bank building on the land already has three units and the commercial space will likely be converted in the future to offices for the housing trust.

On the same day LMLC and the housing trust announced their partnership, both organizations gave a joint presentation on the project to the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District at its Jan. 19 board meeting.

Seyfang and LMLC Vice President of Development Bayard Dominick addressed the water and sewer district board with an informational presentation as a precursor to their application to the district for annexation and an allotment of Single Family Equivalents.

As part of the 1 percent for infrastructure interlocal agreement between BSCWSD and the Big Sky Resort Area District, a measure that Big Sky voters approved in May of 2020 as a means to gather additional tax revenue by increasing the resort tax amount from 3 percent to 4 percent on luxury goods, 500 SFEs were set aside to serve workforce housing. Eventually, the new workforce housing units will need to be annexed into the water and sewer district and the recent presentation was a precursor to an official application for an estimated 100 SFEs needed for the new development.

Discussion during the meeting covered various aspects of the project including the potential for federal funding in the form of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, density bonuses from the county, and deed restrictions on the units, among other topics. While many details still need to be fleshed out, Seyfang said it's important for the housing trust and LMLC to garner support from the water and sewer district so they can begin discussions with the Gallatin County Planning and Zoning Commission.

In order to move the process forward, the water and sewer district agreed in the meeting to submit to the commission a high-level letter of support for the project. According to Seyfang, the hope is that this proof of support will galvanize the county into a discussion that will help identify how many and what type units can be built. Most importantly, Seyfang said, initial discussions will assist in determining if the project will receive any density bonuses.

A density bonus, according to the Montana Department of Transportation website, is "an incentive-based tool that permits developers to increase the maximum allowable development on a property in exchange for helping the community achieve public policy goals." In the case of the Big Sky Community Housing Trust and LMLC development project, the county will potentially award density bonuses that, if awarded, could help to maximize the number of units that can be built.

"Until we can understand what density bonuses will come from the county, and also what setback relief we might get, we really can't be sure how many units will fit on the land," Seyfang told EBS in a Jan. 19 interview.

The way forward is not simple and Seyfang said it has been difficult to hammer out details and answer questions until she receives some answers from the county.

Part of the clarification will be how the interplay of the public and private sectors will work in the partnership between BSCHT and LMLC. According to Seyfang, final partnership details, including future ownership and administration of the housing units, are still being fleshed out.

"The bottom line is, we want to take advantage of the development skills and experience of Lone Mountain Land Company, as well as the funding they have available, to focus on creating a lot of workforce housing for our community and partner it with the nonprofit side of things, which makes sure that we really represent the views of the entire community in this project," she said.

Seyfang added that the partnership has a number of additional benefits. "It allows us, being a nonprofit, to get access to some federal funds that help actually make this thing affordable to build. That's what we each are

bringing to the table that we think is a win-win situation for the overall community."

Another key component of the project is potential funding from BSRAD.

The housing trust applied during BSRAD's FY21 fall allocations cycle for funding to support a project called Future Property Development to the tune of \$1.4 million. The board placed the request in "pending" status and a subcommittee was formed to gather more information on the project and how exactly the funds would be used.

BSRAD and the housing trust are working together to ensure that all public funds will support the community at large, according to the press release.

"Because these are public dollars and private entities are engaged and involved, we are ensuring that all details for the project are provided," said BSRAD Executive Director Daniel Bierschwale.

Leading up to a Jan. 27 BSRAD board meeting, BSCHT did provide the project subcommittee with a budget for the project and the subcommittee has requested further details. For now, the BSCHT request to BSRAD for funds to develop new workforce housing on the American Bank land remains in a pending status.

"The fact that a developer is working with the housing trust is a win, because they have experience in that," Bierschwale said. "I'm hoping that they can really hit their stride here with this project, working with a local community partner that has experience in development, and really bring their talents to the table in an equitable way that supports the community at large. However, the reason we are asking for budget and project details is we need to make sure that public dollars are being used legally and for broad public benefit."

## American Legion hosts sixth annual oratorical contest

#### BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – American Legion Post 99 hosted its sixth annual Oratorical Contest at Lone Peak High School on Jan. 26 at 5 p.m. in the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center. Four students competed in the event, which offered \$500 cash for first place, \$300 for second place and \$200 for third place, along with advancement to the district competition for the first-place winner.

Each participant was asked to prepare a speech at least eight minutes in length and no longer than 10 minutes. Points were deducted for violating time constraints. The topic had to address some aspect of the U.S. Constitution showcasing each individual's interpretation of the document.

The students not only faced the daunting task of speaking to an audience for eight minutes, but they were not allowed notes onstage, the use of a podium or microphone, and were being scored by three judges.



Ella Henslee and Avery Dickerson return to the stage for the awards ceremony. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

"The fact that they got up there and did what they did is impressive enough," said Tony Coppola, the master of ceremonies for the event. "I don't think anybody in that room, besides the four kids on the stage, could have done what they did. I'm definitely proud of their grit and their resiliency and then just the dedication to it. This was all voluntary."

The four participants were all sophomores, though any student in high school is welcome to participate. Coppola explained that although this is a required assignment in 10th grade U.S. Government, participation in the competition portion is voluntary.

The American Legion Oratorical Contest has been a tradition since 1938 with the goal of developing a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Participation in the contest is intended to teach leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of American citizenship.

At the Jan. 26 competition, each Lone Peak High School student presented a talk on their chosen topic and applause was held until the award ceremony. Coppola presented the final awards after a brief break where judges collaborated with tabulators to finalize their score sheets.

In first place was Ella Henslee for her speech on Polarization in the American Public. Second place went to Avery Dickerson for her speech on Liberty in the Second Amendment. Third place went to Max Romney for his speech on the American Vote. In fourth place was Jessie Bough for her speech on the Political Influence of Rural States and Farmers.

As well as receiving a \$500 cash prize, Henslee will also have the opportunity to compete at the district competition in Bozeman on Feb. 27. She will present the same speech she gave at the Jan. 26 contest and is expected to have four other speeches prepared for the assigned topic section of the contest.

Coppola expressed pride in all four students for choosing to participate and said, "I think they all did very well. It was a close competition as far as the scorecards went."

He wrapped up the evening, addressing the assembled parents and members of the American Legion with congratulations for all students and some powerful food for thought.

"America's future rests on the success of today's youth."

## NHS fundraiser 'Socks for Skye' raises money for Eagle Mount

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – It was not uncommon to hear Sky Aurora Swenson say "Hey... Check out my socks" on her augmented communication system. According to her father, Paul Swenson, it was one of her favorite sayings.

"She definitely loved her crazy socks," Swenson said in an email.

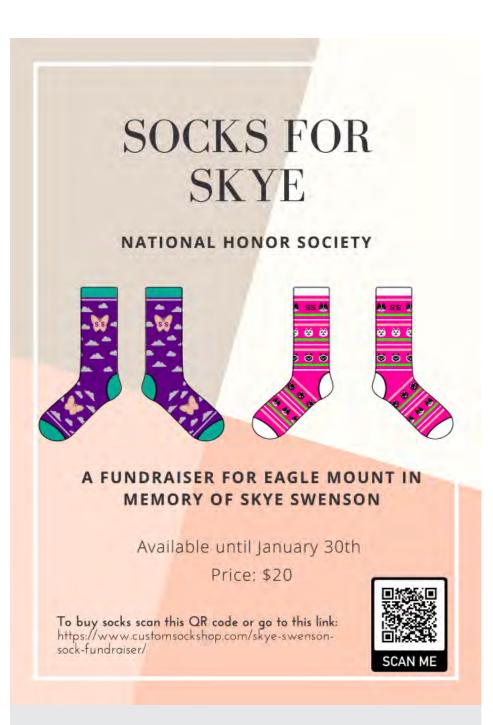
To honor Skye's memory, just a year after she passed away, the Lone Peak High School chapter of the National Honor Society is running a fundraiser with custom socks available to purchase and all proceeds will be donated to Eagle Mount, a nonprofit that provides adaptive outdoor programs for those with physical or mental limitations.

Starting in first grade, Eagle Mount volunteers took Skye skiing every ski Friday.

"After seeing Skye screaming with enjoyment coming down the mountain in her sit ski and laughing her head off at the stories and songs that were told to her on the chairlift, we decided to ask Eagle Mount to work with her on some weekends over the next few years," Swenson said.

Skye Aurora Swenson had been a member of the LPHS Class of 2021 since Kindergarten. She passed away Feb. 20, 2020 from complications of congenital cytomegalovirus, a leading cause of hearing loss which can cause other long term neurologic disabilities. Her memorial services were postponed due to shutdowns caused by COVID-19, but, according to her father, Skye's classmates wrote letters, made a video, then finally had the opportunity to attend her memorial in September 2020.

"To see Skye's memory live on in her senior class this year is very special and heartfelt," Swenson said.



The proceeds from the fundraiser will benefit Eagle Mount. Volunteers from Bozeman took Skye skiing during ski Fridays. PHOTO COURTESY OF LPHS NHS



The hand drawn designs on the socks were inspired by Skye and words her classmates associated with her including pink, purple, butterflies and cats. PHOTOS COURTESY OF LYLI MCCARTHY

Live on it does, in the special designs created by Skye's classmates for the fundraiser. There are two designs to choose from—purple with butterflies, or pink with cats. Two talented artists in the senior class, Amelia Fischer and Brooke Meredith, created the designs based on ideas generated during a special meeting of the senior class.

"When we thought of Skye, some of the words that people came up with were laughing, cats, smiling, pink and purple, butterflies, colorful and happy," said senior Lyli McCarthy, a member of NHS and leader of the fundraising effort.

McCarthy came up with the idea for the fundraiser when NHS was looking for more COVID-friendly projects to do last fall.

"A wonderful girl named Skye Swenson passed away last February and I want to make sure that her memory was not forgotten in our school and community," McCarthy said. "She loved to talk about her fun and colorful socks, and I thought a sock fundraiser would be a great way to honor Skye. All of the profits will go to Eagle Mount, which helped Skye with all the outdoor activities we get to enjoy here."

McCarthy approached Mr. Swenson in the fall of 2020 and asked for permission to organize the fundraiser in Skye's name. He immediately gave permission and expressed excitement over the project.

The fundraiser has been a team effort with several senior students pitching in. Carly Wilson was in charge of coordinating with Eagle Mount, Samantha Suazo helped to advertise the fundraiser and get the word out, and NHS president Michael Romney provided support for the project.

The faculty advisor for NHS, Dr. Kate Eisele, explained that McCarthy has been leading the charge on this project with the help and support of the entire senior class. She said her main contribution as advisor was to help McCarthy find the website Custom Sock Shop, as she was struggling to find a site that could accommodate the needs of the project.

Once she was in contact with the company, McCarthy was able to send in the custom designs for revision and the site provided a proof with the patterns. The socks are \$20 a pair and sales close at midnight on Jan. 30. After that, production of the socks will start, and they will all be shipped to LPHS. When the socks are received by Dr. Eisele, emails will be sent out with dates and times to pick up the socks at LPHS or at Eagle Mount in Bozeman.

Skye's memory lives on in the thoughtfulness of her classmates, and through the socks, she will be with them for their high school graduation.

"My class plans to wear the socks at graduation to honor Skye while we are on our way off to college," McCarthy said. "We hope this project will continue in the years to come with the NHS to carry it out."

Visit customsockshop.com/skye-swenson-sock-fundraiser to purchase socks.

## **Gallatin County extends mask mandate**

## Board to vote on business restriction amendments at Feb. 4 meeting

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – The Gallatin County Health Board at a Jan. 20 meeting extended the countywide mask mandate, which was set to expire today, and discussed an amendment that would allow bars, restaurants, casinos, breweries and distilleries to remain open until midnight. The amendment will be further discussed and voted on at a Feb. 4 meeting.

Gallatin Health Officer Matt Kelley presented scientific data and epidemiological studies that support that the county's current health rules slow the spread of COVID-19. Because the virus is spread through respiratory droplets and half of all transmissions are from asymptomatic individuals, face coverings greatly reduce sick individuals, hospitalizations and ultimately, fatalities.

The health department also conducted a preliminary study that interviewed those who had recently tested positive for the virus. It revealed that a significant number of those individuals had visited a restaurant, bar or gym beforehand.

"It's important to understand that that the purpose—the intention—of these rules in many cases as they relate to businesses, is to allow a situation where businesses can continue to operate in the long term," Kelley said. "If we have a hospital system that is overwhelmed, if we have a populous that is afraid to go out into public ... that's not good for any businesses."

In addition to data, Kelley extended the local health rules over concerns that the health department may not be able to acquire enough vaccines as well as on the new, more contagious COVID-19 variant, which has the potential to greatly overwhelm our healthcare system.

On Tuesday, Jan. 25, Gallatin County reported 88 new cases of COVID-19, 354 current active cases and 6 hospitalizations. A total of 45 residents have died related to the virus, just as the U.S. passed a grim milestone on Jan. 19—400,000 total deaths, a number, Kelley notes, is likely underestimated.

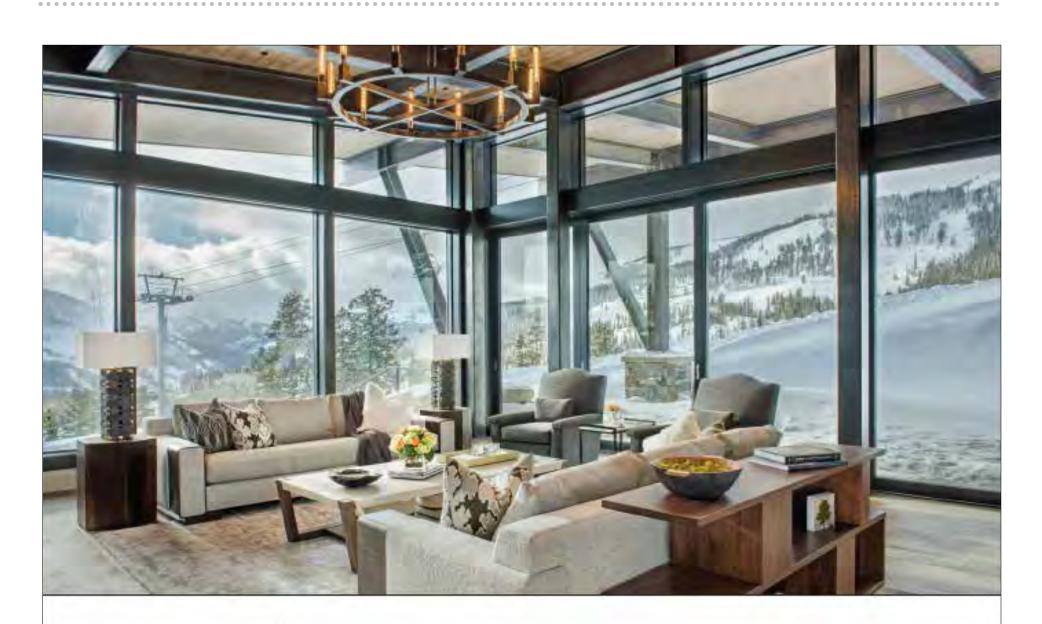
While Gov. Greg Gianforte rescinded business restrictions on Jan. 13, Montana's local health boards are allowed by law to contain of the spread of communicable diseases in their county by issuing more restrictive health rules. These local health rules take precedence over state mandates.

The board also voted to continue a suit against Rocking R Bar following a Jan. 14 request from Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen to drop the case. After a Nov. 6 health rule requiring bars and restaurants to close at 10 p.m., Rocking R Bar did not comply for "quite some period of time," according to Marty Lambert, who represents the Gallatin City-County Health Department in the case. The court ruled in favor of the county.

Health Board Chair Becky Franks said she is in support of continuing the case because, like all health rules, businesses are not allowed to pick and choose which rules they want to follow.

"Sanitary measures and health rules are in place for a reason and [businesses] do have to follow them," she said.

The health board also voted unanimously to extend two additional local health rules that have been in affect since the beginning of the pandemic: restricting visitation in nursing homes and long-term care facilities, and requiring a 10-day quarantine period for those who test positive for COVID-19 or those in close contact with a positive case.





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SECTION 2: ENVIROMENT & OUTDOORS, SPORTS, HEALTH







## THE NEW WEST



## BY TODD WILKINSON EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Less than a year ago, before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived en force sending Americans scrambling for the hinters and wealthy citizens to second or third homes located far away from cities, financial analysts predicted America was headed for a devastating recession potentially verging on a Depression.

Then, as coronavirus brought social distancing and sequestering in place, the forecasts turned even more

grim. Realtors and those involved with the regional tourism economy braced for the worst, except, as we now look back with hindsight, the expected disaster that was mitigated somewhat by spending habits of refugees.

While the U.S. officially entered a paralyzing recession in February of 2020, between last spring and the end of year, literally billions of dollars' worth of property changed hands in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, punctuated by land and home purchases in Bozeman, Jackson Hole and Big Sky, with strong sales also registering in more rural hideaways.

To most observers, the magnitude was jaw-dropping, with the pace of deed transfers and development outpacing the amount of business typically generated in half a decade.

Today, one of the questions being asked, to put it bluntly, is why the mobile ultrawealthy aren't more generous when it comes to supporting conservation, particularly in a region like Greater Yellowstone that, in terms of its high wildlife values, is unsurpassed in the Lower 48 and across much of the world?

It's a ponderance made by Justin Ferrell in his critically acclaimed book, "Billionaire Wilderness: The Ultra-Wealthy and the Remaking of the American West." Ferrell, who grew up in Wyoming and was educated at Yale, pulls no punches in calling out what he says is a profound irony, if not hypocrisy.

The very people with means, who are capable of helping save Greater Yellowstone's natural environment, and who themselves are causing its land fragmentation with their own resource consumption, refrain from giving back by supporting conservation efforts.

While some observers will tell you that the affluent don't care, I have a different take. Be it Big Sky, Jackson Hole or Bozeman, I think it's also a matter of many not realizing what's at stake or knowing how they can make a positive difference. This ain't the Hamptons. We're talking about this country's version of the Serengeti.

Some thought leaders have devised ways that big-hearted folks can make business investments in conservation. One of them is Robert Keith, graduate of the Stanford Business School, who oversees Bozeman-based Beartooth Capital.

Beartooth uses impact investing to advance ecological restoration, strategic environment-friendly entrepreneurship and, with its investors and clients, espouses place-based education.

While the company doesn't promise to deliver the kind of sky-high returns that hedge funds claim to make—and which are both risky and unsustainable—Beartooth's approach enables investors to yield modest dividends and glean huge satisfaction realizing they are contributing to Greater Yellowstone's wildlife persistence. They also can boast they're leaving a better world behind for their kids and grandkids.

A few years ago, Keith delivered a TED talk that has been widely circulated. At the time, more than 18,000 investment firms in the U.S. managed more than \$16 trillion and invested \$500 billion a year in new projects. Many of them are tied to resource consumption and sometimes environmental degradation.

# Why don't more wealthy second homeowners support wildlife conservation in our region?

"What if we could take a tiny sliver of that investment capital and put it to work for a good cause, in our case restoration and protection of the American West?" Keith asked.

While some cynics regard "capitalism" as an enemy of environmental protection, Keith and others say it's more a challenge of turning capitalism into being an ally for nature.

While I was researching my book on Greater Yellowstone media-pioneer-turned-bison-rancher Ted Turner, "Last Stand: Ted Turner's Quest to Save a Troubled Planet", my thinking about landscape-level conservation began to shift, particularly in pondering the critical intersection of public and private land.

Many people are talking about the notion of the "triple bottom line,"—i.e.: maintaining a measurable ledger sheet that accounts for three different kinds of values factored into business decisions.

The first is the factual reality that in order for the dividends of private lands conservation to persist into the future, being passed along from one generation to the next, they need to be economically sustainable. That is, conservation which functions only as a net debt proposition or liability heired to future generations cannot and will not last, no matter how solid the intentions.

Secondly, as Turner has put into practice, the ultimate goal is to leave land in as fine a condition, ecologically speaking, as one found it, or to do no harm, and, whenever possible, to use proceeds to heal past abuses and restore ecological function. This is the ecologic leg and achieving this can be accelerated if incentives are provided that help alleviate the costs of doing good.

Thirdly, decisions should be done in a way in which humans are approached with dignity. It means treating employees well and paying them a living wage, treating your neighbors with respect and working constructively across fence lines to preserve the values both sides hold dear.

Many environmental problems inherited from the Old West are the result of not adhering to those principles. If well-to-do individuals collectively contributed just a tiny fraction of their individual fortunes to protecting wildness in Greater Yellowstone, it would be a game changer. The real question is: Why wouldn't they?

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



A farm and part of a wildlife corridor protected by a conservation easement in southwest Montana. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN VALLEY LAND TRUST

## BY DAVID TUCKER EBS CONTRIBUTOR

At the Jan. 19 Big Sky County Water and Sewer District board meeting, when the topic turned to water-supply exploration on Lone Mountain, Mark Cunnane of Western Groundwater Services uttered a sentence that caught my attention.

"Conservation is our best option," Cunnane said.

While that's a slight paraphrase, you can see why my ears perked up. As the district searches for additional sources of fresh water, it's becoming increasingly clear that there isn't much to go around.

The upper Gallatin River watershed's topography and geology make finding and accessing water very difficult. The region's rock layers have folded, bent, compressed and protruded. Water doesn't flow easily through this maze, and what water has been discovered is laced with harmful chemical elements like arsenic. This water could be treated and used for household consumption, but that process would be expensive and is less than desirable.

Water supply in Big Sky is directly tied to whatever is available in these underground aquifers, which refill over time through snowmelt and rain. To this point, water users on the Big Sky Water and Sewer District system have gotten their water from shallow aquifers in the meadow areas near the Town Center and the Meadow Village, and wells higher up on Lone Mountain. Residents and businesses on private water systems or individual wells draw from a variety of sources, but all are underground and recharged by natural precipitation.

The water in these aquifers is extremely high quality, but the supply is limited and likely to dwindle as climate models predict less snow in the



## **Water Wisdom:**

## Where Is the Water?



The Middle Fork of the West Fork of the Gallatin River flows beneath the gaze of Lone Mountain in Big Sky. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

years and decades to come. While more rain is predicted, much of this quickly runs off to surface waters before penetrating into the groundwater aquifers, thus future recharge may be inadequate to satisfy demand.

Because groundwater like our aquifers is inextricably linked to surface water like the Gallatin River, household water supply and use have profound impacts on river water quality and quantity. Many water-quality issues are caused by or compounded by inadequate in-stream flows, and inadequate in-stream flows can be caused by excessive groundwater withdrawals. Already we have seen evidence of withdrawals in the Meadow Village minimally impacting in-stream flows of the upper West Fork.

One way to keep the Gallatin healthy is to, as noted above, conserve—and not just in our homes. Residential conservation efforts are critical to keeping water in the ground, and by association in the river, but more actions need to be taken across Big Sky's water-management infrastructure.

Leaks are a major source of water waste, and something that is relatively easy to fix. For your home, the Gallatin River Task Force can issue leaktesting kits that can identify problem areas in your household fixtures. On the community-system scale, operators should be regularly checking for and repairing issues as they arise. Some are already doing this, such as the Big Sky's water and sewer district and the Yellowstone Club, but efforts should be expanded to capture as much wasted water as possible.

In addition to better leak management, we need to adopt efficiency standards on an industrial scale. The Task Force offers residents cash rebates for swapping in-home fixtures like toilets and showerheads for more efficient models, but all new development should be required to incorporate these standards. Destination visitation is still our only major industry here in the upper Gallatin watershed, and large hotels and hospitality businesses can make a significant difference.

While some view water conservation as enabling more development—the argument being that the more water we save, the more we can use—the truth is that even at the current build out of Big Sky, we will need to adopt significant water-conservation policies to keep the Gallatin River clean and our drinking water healthy.

As it stands, we are likely using more than the Gallatin can spare, and a Gallatin devoid of clean, cold water is no Gallatin at all. It can't sustain wild populations of trout. It can't support downstream agricultural operations. And it can't drive our robust outdoor-recreation economy. To give it a fighting chance, conservation is our best option.

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

## Grain by grain

## Farmer, author talks regenerative, organic agriculture in 'Gallatin Valley 2040' series

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

GALLATIN VALLEY – After taking a break in December, Gallatin Valley Earth Day is back with a new installment in its virtual event series, "Gallatin Valley 2040."

Gallatin Valley Earth Day is an organization of volunteers started by Anne Ready in 2019. Ready grew up on a small farm in the Midwest and later moved to Pennsylvania, eventually landing in Bozeman in 2015. After retiring from being a computer programmer, she became active in climate change volunteering and recognized the need for an Earth Day celebration in Bozeman.

At the beginning, GVED's mission was to simply plan an Earth Day festival at the Bozeman Public Library. When 500 people turned out for the festival, which included talks, exhibits, food, music, dance, art and theater, Ready decided to go even bigger.

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 concerns over COVID-19. Since then, GVED has adapted and is finding new ways to hold virtual events.

One example is the "Gallatin Valley 2040" event series which was inspired by a screening of the 2019 documentary "2040," an upbeat look at how the climate crisis can be addressed and Earth improved by the year 2040.

The monthly event series aims to help attendees imagine, explore, and work towards a brighter, healthier, vibrant 2040.

"We hope to inspire people to think about and work towards transforming our community to improve our climate and create a strong foundation for growth in jobs, and improve our health based on a more sustainable model," said Ready.

The Jan. 20 event, entitled "Good seeds in healthy soil for a healthier us," featured speaker Bob Quinn, a Montana organic farmer and author of the book "Grain by Grain," along with surprise guest Montana Sen. Pat Flowers.

Quinn works his organic farm near Big Sandy, Montana, and is a progressive leader in promoting organic and sustainable agriculture throughout the state and beyond. In 1990, he founded Kamut International, a company that exclusively grows organic KAMUT Khorasan wheat, an ancient strain of wheat from Egypt known for the large grain size and prized for its nutrition, firm texture, sweet nut-buttery taste and ease of digestibility.

During his talk, Quinn shared his personal journey from Montana to University of California-Davis where he earned his Ph.D. in plant biochemistry, back to Montana to work on his family's farm. He discussed his introduction to the ancient wheat that is now trademarked by his company, and the early experiments he conducted in organic growing methods.

Quinn also shared information from "Grain by Grain," discussing why ancient wheat might be the solution to gluten sensitivity, and how timetested farming practices can replace toxic pesticides and fertilizers, among other topics.

"It's time to turn the ship around," he said. "We are headed for the iceberg pell mell, and it will be a high price to pay if we don't turn it around quickly."

Quinn emphasized the need to grow quality food using sustainable practices, which he said will in turn revitalize local communities and promote individual health.

After a short Q-and-A session following the talk, Quinn yielded the floor to Sen. Flowers who briefly discussed how to support healthy soil in Montana and detailed various legislative efforts he has been involved with to support this goal.

Good seeds in healthy soil for a healthier us

- how regenerative organic agriculture can heal our farms, our planet and our people

Welcome!

Our presentation will begin shortly.

POSTER COURTESY OF GALLATIN VALLEY EARTH DAY

Quinn's succinct closing statement captured the theme of the evening in a few powerful words.

"The future is organic; the future is health."

Visit bobquinnorganicfarmer.com to learn more about Bob Quinn's story and his book.

Visit gallatinvalleyearthday.org for more information on the organization and to access the entire "Gallatin 2040" event series.







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SUMMER 2021 LINEUP

## FRIDAY, JULY 15

3-Spm - Bly Sky Art Austion Previous / PBR Base-camp Tout in Town Conto r Plaza

6am - Big Sky Community Rodes / Big Sky Erests Areas

Spin - Street Dance / Town Contar Plans

## SATURDAY, JULY 17

4-7pm - Bly Sky Art Assilon / PBR Base camp Test in Town Caster Place

## SUNDAY, JULY IN

TBA - Misting Synthy Pro-Bido Computition / Big Sky Espain Anna

Spin - Big Sky Bingo Wight / PBR Buse cump Teat in Town Contac Pinza

## WEDNESDAY JULY 21

Ham-Sam - Big-Sky PBB / Wasters Sports Foundation Galf Toursement

Sam - Farmors Market

Sam - Golf Townsoy Recogilism

7pm - Bly Sky PBR Moball / PBR Base camp Test in Town ConterPlace

Nam - Live Monto / PBR Basecamp Test in Town Center Place

## THURSDAY, JULY 22

12-6pm - Bly Sky PBR Base camp Weader Village Open / Yown Center Plaza

2pm - PBR Mast & Breat / FBR Bases amp Test in Town Center Place

Apm - Live Marsic / PBB Base camp Test in Town Center Place

7pm - 18th Annual Big Sky PBR Wight 1 Bull Riding / Big Sky Events A reas

TEA - Music in the Mountains Consort

## FRIDAY, JULY 23

12-Spm - Blg Sky PBR Bussecamp Vendor Willage Open / Town Contar Pleas

2pm - PBR Mast & Great / PBR Buse camp Test in Town Caster Plans

Ann - Hen Manie / PSR Bases any Test in Town Conter Plans

7mm - 10th Annual Bio Sky PBR Might 2 Boll Million / Bio Sky Events Annual

Fails wing Bull Billing - Japan Beland & The Stragg is m

## SATURDAY, JULY 24

12-Spm - Bly Sky PBH Busine amp Wonder Hillago Open / Town Center Pit 20

2pm - PBB Mant & Grout / PBR Base camp Tent in Town Center Plane

Jane - Dies Manie / PBR Reportant Test in Town Center Plans

Total - 18th Annual Bly Sky PBR Championship Might 3 Ball Billing / Big Sky Events Are as

Fellowhy Bull Riding - Robert Fort Konn

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# Welcome to the backcountry: Bring snacks and be a sought-after partner

BY DAVE ZINN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

**22** Jan. 29 - Feb. 11, 2021



Show up on time, break trail all day, always wear a big smile and bring snacks for everyone in the group—these are some specific steps to becoming a desirable backcountry skiing and riding partner. Many people are considering the backcountry as a fun alternative to local ski areas, accelerating a trend that began well before COVID-19. Unlike sliding around a ski area, winter backcountry travel requires avalanche related skills and a team-oriented mindset. More important than snacks, becoming a good partner on a backcountry tour requires mental and physical preparation and a curious mind.

The fundamentals matter in skiing and riding, and they matter in avalanche safety. Flashy new touring gear is nice, but

modern rescue equipment is essential. Every person in the team must have a 3-antenna digital beacon, an avalanche probe and a metal shovel designed for avalanche rescue. Avalanche accidents become tragedies every winter because the victims or their partners do not have the essential avalanche rescue tools or training. Your local shop can help you make the appropriate selections.

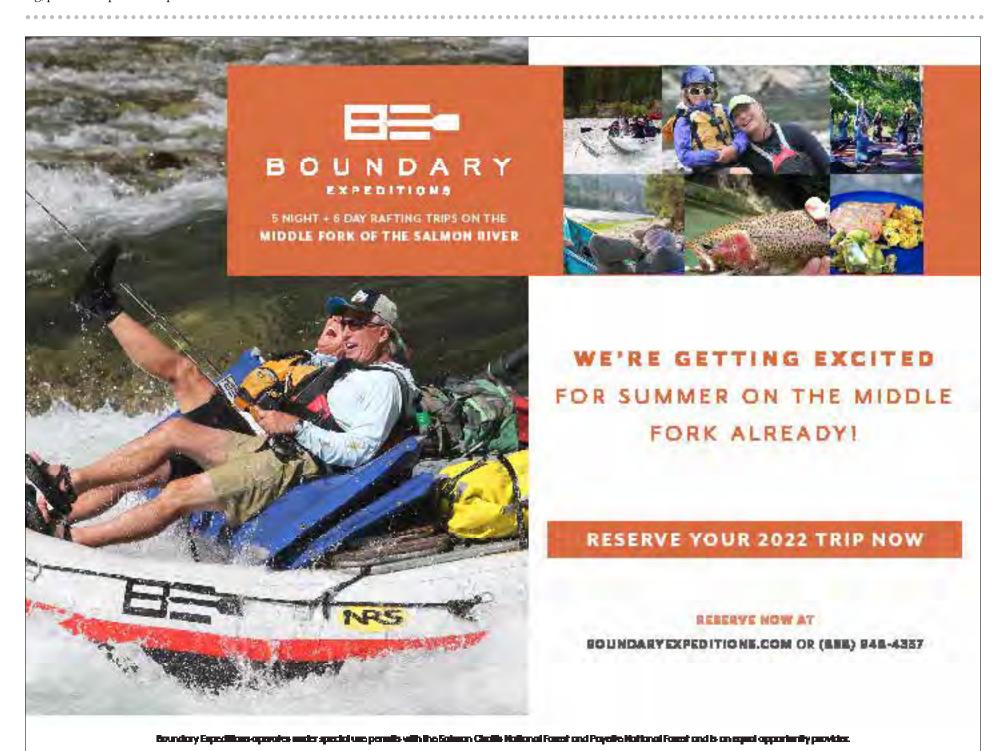
After getting the proper gear, an avalanche course can teach you how to use it, how to identify terrain where avalanches occur, interpret the local avalanche forecast, search for instability with snowpack assessment tools and make appropriate plans so you can avoid getting in trouble in the first place. Completing an avalanche class is the start of a lifetime of learning. Practice until these critical backcountry skills become second nature.

If you complete the prerequisites for a day in the backcountry and all the subtleties of the snowpack still escape you, don't worry. These subtlies are what make a lifetime of learning about snow so interesting. Develop the vital skill of curiosity by asking questions of your partners and yourself. If a friend tells you a slope is "good to go" or "it feels good," ask them to explain their reasoning. Asking the "expert" in the group to show their work helps them learn too. So … jump in the snowpit, find low-angle slopes to explore and assess on danger days when the rating is Considerble or higher, question, dig, prod and tap the snowpack to learn and evolve.

A day in the backcountry is exhausting when everything goes well. Responding effectively when the brown stuff hits the fan requires physical and mental toughness. You are your partners' only chance of survival if an avalanche buries them. Outside help is too far away to change any outcomes. Becoming the partner we all deserve requires a professional mindset, staying calm(ish), staying in shape and diligently practicing rescue skills. Your team's lives depend on it.

Before venturing out, consider the gear, skills and fitness you need before standing at the top of a backcountry run. The mental and physical health benefits of exploring our public lands in the winter are great, but the consequences of mistakes can be high. Preparation and a conservative mindset can smooth the learning process as you enter the world of backcountry skiing and riding. And, please, don't forget the snacks. Dave Zinn is the Avalanche Forecaster for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center.







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## **Cone, Lady Big Horns hold off Hornets**

#### BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Lone Peak sophomore Maddie Cone scored a game-high 16 points in three quarters of play to help guide the Lady Big Horns past the White Sulphur Springs Hornets 41-39 in a tightly contested matchup at the Bough-Dolan Athletic Center on Jan. 26.

"Pieces of the puzzle are starting to come together," said first year Lone Peak head coach Taylor Cummings. "[We're] starting to look better all-around ... They played a complete game together."

Cone scored six of the team's 10 first-quarter points, including a right-handed layup off a feed from senior Ivy Hicks following an offensive rebound to give LPHS an early 8-1 lead. The Hornets stung back, closing the gap to 8-7 after a 6-0 scoring run of their own. The teams traded baskets to end the quarter, leaving the Lady Big Horns with a one-point lead.

Due to foul trouble, Cone sat out the second quarter of play and LPHS missed the forward's presence, according to Cummings. The Hornets took advantage offensively, outscoring the Lady Big Horns 16-7 in the quarter and staking themselves an eight-point lead at halftime, 25-17.

Coming out of the half, Cummings said LPHS implemented a new offensive method to combat the varying zone defenses the Hornets were throwing at them. "... We just went with an offense that kind of would go against any type of zone and also help us determine what exactly they were in," she said.

The adjustment worked. The Lady Big Horns outscored the Hornets 18-7 in the third quarter thanks to six points from Cone, four from senior Lyli McCarthy and 3-pointers from both Hicks and sophomore Jessie Bough. The strong third quarter resulted in a three-point lead for LPHS as the teams entered the fourth in the close matchup.

The fourth quarter proved to be a defensive battle as both teams applied heavy pressure on and off the ball and neither reached double-figure scoring totals in the quarter. LPHS struck early, tying its largest lead of the game that came early in the first quarter, thanks to buckets from freshman Vera Grabow and Cone, to take a 39-32 edge.



Lady Big Horn sophomore Maddie Cone (31) dribbles to the basket against Sheridan on Jan. 23. LPHS was victorious, 44-33, and won their following game on Jan. 26 against White Sulphur Springs as well. PHOTO BY LOREN BOUGH

Four consecutive points from the Hornets closed the gap to just three but coming out of a timeout with less than four minutes to play, Cone grabbed an offensive rebound under the basket and quickly laid the ball in for a five-point Lady Big Horn advantage.

Lone Peak was held scoreless the rest of the way, but thanks to a strong defensive effort, were able to outlast the Hornets. White Sulphur Springs drew to within two points with 33 seconds to play, but a last second shot from beyond the arc fell short, leaving the Lady Big Horns victorious.



Lone Peak senior Sara Wilson (4) guards a Sheridan Panther athlete on Jan. 23. The Lady Big Horns won the contest by an 11-point margin and also won their latest game on Jan. 26 against White Sulphur Springs. PHOTO BY MICHELLE HORNING

Grabow and McCarthy each finished with six points and Hicks chipped in five for Lone Peak in the team's first home win and its second overall in the young 2020-2021 season.

Kenzie Hereim paced the Hornets with a team-high nine points. The visitors also received strong contributions from Vickie Massee and Natalie Fisher, who scored eight points apiece.

LPHS now sports a 2-2 record this season and has won two consecutive matchups. The Lady Big Horns defeated Sheridan on Jan. 23 by 11 points after falling to Manhattan Christian and Twin Bridges to begin the year.

"I'm most excited about [the team] recognizing their potential and starting to string together complete games," Cummings said.

Lone Peak was in action again on Jan. 28, after EBS press day, when they traveled to face the Manhattan Christian Eagles. The Lady Big Horns returned to the Bough-Dolan Athletic Center on Jan. 30 to host the Gardiner Bruins.

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## Second-half surge sparks Lone Peak to second victory

#### BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – The Lone Peak High School boys' varsity basketball team rode a strong second half performance outscoring the White Sulphur Springs Hornets by 22 points after the break to win its second contest in a row.

A trio of seniors—Mikey Botha, Michael Romney and Jackson Lang—reached double-figure scoring totals to lead the Big Horns offensively and help the team win its first game at the Bough-Dolan Athletic Center this season 67-43.

"Our defense improved in the second half," said Lone Peak Head Coach John Hannahs of his team's performance. "We started to do a better job of anticipating and playing more disciplined defense eliminating fouls."

LPHS came out of the gate with a flurry of buckets resulting in two separate 6-0 scoring runs, and an early 13-4 edge over the Hornets. White Sulphur Springs countered with a 6-0 run of their own to close the gap to just three points before Romney capped the first-quarter scoring by corralling an offensive rebound and laying up the ball, extending the Lone Peak lead to 15-10.

The second quarter proved to be troublesome for the Big Horns. After Lone Peak sophomore Gus Hammond converted a jump shot in the paint giving LPHS a 22-17 lead, the Hornets took control of the game.

With 2:09 remaining in the half, a White Sulphur jump shot gave them a 25-24 lead—its first of the night—and prompted a Big Horn timeout. The 9-0 run by the visitors was capped by a free throw to extend the Hornet lead to two points, but Lang later knocked down a 3-pointer off of a baseline inbounds pass from Romney to put Lone Peak back in front at the half 28-26.

Hannahs' halftime remarks to his team were to the point: "It was short and sweet," he said. "Just to play with a little more composure and look for better opportunities. We were playing anxiously and we just had to settle down a little."

The teams traded baskets in a back-and-forth, seesaw battle for part of the third quarter. The Big Horns caught fire though and strung together a 12-0 scoring run, highlighted by the Romney brothers combining for a 3-point basket when Michael dished to sophomore Max, and Hammond followed with a trey of his own to put LPHS in front 43-31.

The Hornets added a bucket before the quarter came to a close to leave the Big Horns up 10 points entering the fourth.



Big Horn sophomore Gus Hammond (o) defends a White Sulphur Springs athlete on Jan. 26. LPHS defeated the Hornets 67-43. PHOTO BY CHLOE HAMMOND



Lone Peak senior Mikey Botha (22) defends against a Sheridan Panther athlete on Jan. 23. The Big Horns beat the Panthers 54-36 and defeated White Sulphur Springs on Jan. 26 for their second victory in a row. PHOTO BY MICHELLE HORNING

Botha scored eight of his game-high 15 points in the fourth quarter, including two 3-pointers, to help keep Lone Peak in command. With 2:30 to play, White Sulphur Springs closed the gap to 12-points but that was as close as they would get.

Down the stretch, the Hornets tried to stay in the contest by fouling to send the Big Horns to the line, but LPHS converted a majority of its free throws and continue to grow its lead.

Michael Romney finished with a double-double: 13 points and 11 assists, while adding seven rebounds. With his 11 assists, Romney set another school record—he previously established a new single-game free-throw record on Jan. 23—breaking the previous mark of 10 set by LPHS graduate Kolya Bough on two separate instances in 2017. Lang ended his night with 11 points and senior Nolan Schumacher contributed seven points, seven rebounds and five steals.

"Any of these guys are capable of leading the team in scoring, and that was the most balanced offense we've had all year," Hannahs said.

The Hornets were led by Caden West's 14 points. Ethan Schlepp contributed 12 for White Sulphur Springs and Devon Novark scored 9.

The Big Horns' second consecutive victory improved their record to 2-3 this season. They recently also defeated the Sheridan Panthers on Jan. 23 but fell in their two prior matchups with Manhattan Christian and Twin Bridges.

The Big Horns were in action again on Jan. 28, after EBS press time, when they traveled to Manhattan Christian to face the Eagles. Two days later, on Jan. 30, LPHS returned home to host the Gardiner Bruins at 4 p.m.





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## How to manage stress and fatigue this winter with electrolyte supplementation

As winter kicks in, you may be experiencing fatigue in the afternoon, perhaps a headache, or even finding yourself stressed more easily. Turns out, you might simply be low in electrolytes.

Winter in our mountain towns finds most of us exercising outdoors—whether we're downhill or cross-country skiing, on backcountry treks, fat-biking, sledding, or trail running with the dogs, being active is crucial to good health.

But especially during winter, dehydration is an all-too-common problem. To start, the average person consumes less than an adequate amount of water. And while consuming more water is simple enough, it leaves the proverbial glass of healthy hydration only half full.

Drinking water alone leaves out critical electrolytes, denying your body its natural ability to perform well and even manage stress. Introducing electrolytes, such as those found in Drink LMNT's scientifically formulated product, might just be the missing piece.

"In particular, folks that eat whole foods and exercise regularly tend to be missing out on vital electrolytes," says LMNT CEO and Big Sky resident James Murphy.

And Murphy is not just talking about hard-charging athletes or endurance endeavors. Research has shown that simple cold-weather exposure can induce diuresis (the loss of electrolytes), in addition, an increased metabolic rate triggered to keep you warm plus a reduction in your thirst mechanism further compound the need for more electrolytes than you think.

You know how you can't feel your fingers from the cold? A similar thing happens to your thirst, so you end up thinking you're more hydrated than you actually are.

Replenishing lost electrolytes has a cascade of critical health benefits, one of which is helping your body maintain healthy levels of cortisol, the hormone most directly responsible for stress management.

To accomplish this, health experts like Dr. Kaley Burns and Kallie Harrison (Lac, LMT, RN) at Big Sky Natural Health, suggest incorporating an electrolyte solution throughout your winter activities or your daily routine.

"Choose an electrolyte solution that tastes good, works well, and is not loaded with sugar," Burns says, adding that many individuals struggle with staying hydrated in winter, and that applies to everyday living, not just during bouts of exercise.



Electrolytes are especially key during the winter cold and help maintain healthy stress and immune responses. PHOTO COURTESY OF DRINK LMNT

"Enter LMNT," she says. "It checks all my boxes as a practitioner, and patients really feel it makes a positive difference when it comes to their overall health. We can hardly keep it stocked."

Harrison, who has a background in acupuncture and herbal medicine, says that many of her patients are dehydrated without even knowing it. "Winter causes the symptoms of dehydration to worsen," she says. "I'm constantly reminding my patients to increase their water intake and add LMNT. LMNT is the first electrolyte I've felt confident recommending to my patients."

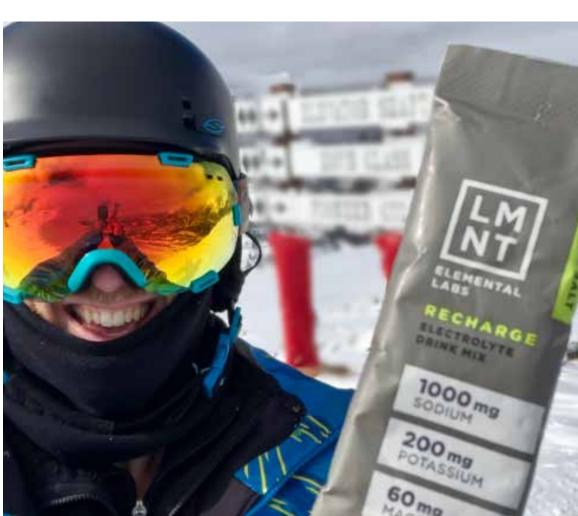
> Callie Stultz (CAS, LMT), founder of Santosha Wellness Center and a Big Sky resident for more than 20 years, says she finds LMNT to be a meaningful addition to her lifestyle and frequently recommends it to her patients.

"While electrolyte balance and supplementation is fairly simple, so many people forgo it," she says.

As winter holds its grasp on our region for the next several months, hydration is often overlooked. When the mercury is low, it's crucial we find a balance with our body's own chemistry.

"Balanced cortisol and electrolyte levels in the human body are vital to managing stress and even a healthy immune system," says Murphy, suggesting a DIY guide on LMNT's website. "We're not precious about how you get your electrolytes. If you enjoy the convenience, try tossing a packet of LMNT in a water bottle and see how it works for you."

LMNT can be purchased in single packs or bundles locally at Big Sky Natural Health in Big Sky, Santosha Wellness Center or online at drinklmnt.com, where you can also find research on the topic of hydration in cold weather.



LMNT's James Murphy at Big Sky Resort on an epic ski day. Small sips between runs helps keep the stamina up for a full day of skiing PHOTO COURTESY OF DRINK LMNT



## What you tolerate you cannot change



#### BY LINDA ARNOLD **EBS CONTRIBUTOR**

How many times have you found yourself listening to the same old story from one of your friends? Or from yourself? Relationships. Health. Finances. The story goes on and on ... yet nothing ever changes. That's because you've become conditioned. You're tolerating the situation.

Here are some ways to handle negative experiences.

#### Making choices

Whenever something negative happens, you have two choices: Tolerate it or accept it.

While they may seem similar, these are two very different things. Obviously, there are tradeoffs in life. You have to tolerate certain things, for example in situations where you have no control to change them.

In these cases, it's healthy to make a decision to accept the situation. And be OK with that. When you stay on the fence, though, you make yourself miserable.

On the other hand, if you're mired in the muck—complaining about a scenario when you could actually do something about it—you're tolerating the situation.

#### Rewinding

What keeps you stuck? Often, it's not a conscious thing. You could be reacting to behaviors that occurred years ago. If you had a traumatic childhood in which you were neglected or abused, you may feel this is what you deserve. Obviously, some issues rise to the clinical level and in those instances a therapist may be needed.

In other situations, there are just ingrained habits that need to be unlearned. Self-worth is at the root of so many issues.

#### Speaking up, baby steps

Maybe you've been in a situation so long it's hard to take the first step. It begins by using your voice and the small issues come first.

If a friend, family member or coworker puts you down or says something hurtful, use the opportunity to tell him or her, "This is not OK."

That puts them on notice, which can either open a dialogue or cause him or her to pay more attention. If neither of these things occur, at least your "resolve muscle" has been strengthened. And it will be easier to speak up the next time.

This will feel awkward at first, maybe even painful, but over time you build inner trust. Your soul begins to understand you're looking out for it, and that leads to self-confidence.

#### The 'misery index'

The more pain and suffering you endure, the more it's draining your energy. And energy is the ultimate currency. Not time. Not money.

How do you feel about your life—your relationships, your work, your finances, your relationship with yourself? Do you really have to keep putting up with situations that suck the living daylights out of you?

There's no right or wrong answer. And no judgment. You always have two choices, as pointed out earlier.

You can choose to accept the situation because of tradeoffs involved in the scenario, or if a situation is out of your control. And resolve to be OK with that. The alternative? Get into action to make a change.

Both decisions are valid. Choosing to tolerate the situation, though—and ruminating over it—keeps you stuck. Cue the "misery index."

#### Bloom where you're planted

As you take baby steps to set healthier boundaries, your self-confidence will grow. Your capacity to experience more joy expands, and the better it gets, the better it can get. You'll know when you know. Author Anais Nin describes this perfectly.

"And the day came," Nin writes, "when the risk to remain tight in a bud became more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

©2021 Linda Arnold Life 101, all rights reserved. Linda Arnold, M.A., M.B.A., is a syndicated columnist, psychological counselor and founder of a multistate marketing company. Reader comments are welcome at linda@lindaarnold.org. Visit lindaarnold.org or amazon. com for information on her books.

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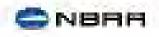












## **SECTION 3:**

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT, BUSINESS, DINING & FUN







# WMPAC.live allows comfort, safety and high-quality entertainment

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – Curl up with a bowl of popcorn, a hot toddy and your dog. The entertainment is presented by the Warren Miller Performing Art Center, but tonight you'll have the luxury of experiencing the local arts from the comfort of your own pajamas, on the couch, favorite snacks in hand. WMPAC. live delivers local performing art center-quality entertainment without leaving your home.

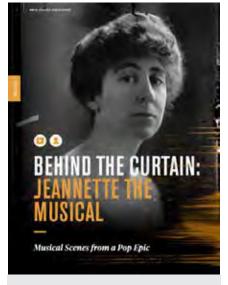
On Jan. 23, WMPAC presented "Behind the Curtain: Jeannette the Musical," a pop musical based on the true life events of Montana's most prominent female figure, Jeannette Rankin. Rankin was a fearless trailblazer, diehard suffragette, and she was elected to Congress in 1916, three years before women earned the right to vote in the U.S. Imagine that: earning votes before your own demographic could cast one.

"Jeannette the Musical" is a unique experience, a behind-thescenes musical with actors on-stage, reading scripts-in-hand, with behind-the-scenes clips that reveal exactly how a musical comes to life on a Broadway stage.

Written by prominent playwright Lauren M. Gunderson and pop singer Ari Afsar, "Jeannette the Musical" follows Rankin's journey to Congress, her undying need to fight for the rights of those without them, and her family's struggle to accept her against-the-grain beliefs during a time when women were expected to be seen and not heard.

Between on-stage scenes, Gunderson appears on a screen and narrates the backstory of Rankin as she progresses as the first-ever woman to speak in the Montana Legislature to a room full of men, and Afsar, also on-screen, provides strong musical numbers.

At first, the performance appears like a historical enactment, but we learn quickly that Rankin's struggle to earn rights for women is one still being fought by many in the



Each WMPAC.live event is accompanied by a digital program.

U.S. On-stage actors present their own stories of voicelessness: voter suppression, gerrymandering and Jim Crow tactics prevent many minorities from casting their vote to this day.

On Jan. 20, Kamala Harris became the first woman, person of color, including of African and South Asian decent, to be sworn in as vice president of the United States. This was 100 years after women earned the right to vote, a span of time not lost on the theme of the musical—change can sometimes take a very long time. Despite its sometimes-slow progress, Rankin truly believed in the power of a single vote.

Rankin was elected for two terms as a Republican representative, in 1916 and 1940. Both of her terms coincided with world wars and she was the only member of Congress who opposed the declaration of war on Germany in 1917 and the declaration of war on Japan following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. She was told by her family and constituents that if she voted not to go to war, "they would eat her alive," and that she'd "never be heard from again."

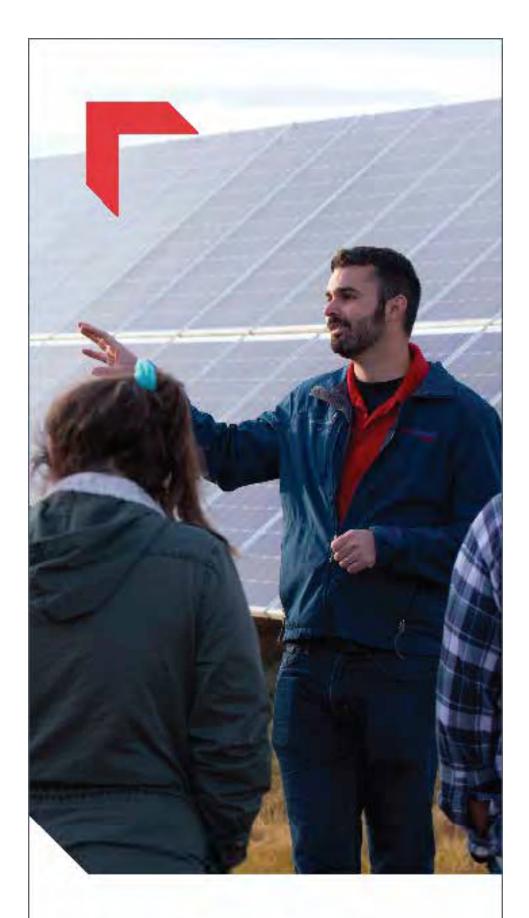
A devout pacifist, Rankin stood by her vote, famously citing that, "As a woman I can't go to war, and I refuse to send anyone else." Although her political career was over shortly after, her career as a suffragette and a warrior for those without a voice was not—and she never once regretted her vote. The performance concludes with each on-stage character casting their script into a lone ballot box.

Although WMPAC has invested in ensuring the utmost safety in their theater during the pandemic, WMPAC.live allows a great alternative for those with young children who are not yet able to sit still in a theater, those at higher-risk of COVID-19 or anyone looking to limit their exposure.

It's also just a great excuse for a quality date night without leaving the house. So order your favorite takeout, pop some popcorn and cozy up with your significant other, friends, family, dogs and cats, and be assured that the local arts are available to you, wherever you are.



Curl up with a warm drink and warm pet for WMPAC.live, streaming right from your living room. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



# Shining a light on the future.

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1733 Heavy Runner Road | Big Sky, MT | \$1,395,000 5 Beds | 4 Baths | +/- 2,915 sqft. | MLS# 350340 Stacy Ossorio, Broker | 406-539-8553 stacy.ossoriogevrealestaba.com



5 W Mendenhall #418 | Bozeman, MT | \$780,000 1 Bed | 1.5 Bath | +/- 1,256 sqft | MLS# 349016 Stacy Ossorio, Broker | 406-539-8553 stacy.ossoriogevrealestate.com Josh Vujovich, Hayden Outdoors REALTOR® 406-570-9536 | jvujo23egmail.com



14 Washaki Road | Big Sky, MT | \$2,995,000 4 Bad | 4 Bath | +/- 4,592 sqft | MLS# 342432 Stacy Ossorio, Broker | 406-539-8553 stacy.ossoriogevrealestate.com

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## Tickets available for weeklong Auction for the Arts

ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

BIG SKY – The Arts Council of Big Sky is hosting the ninth annual Auction for the Arts fundraising event on Feb. 22-27, in a new weeklong format that features an online auction, in-person art viewing opportunities and a livestream presentation. This year's event is again sponsored by Big Sky Sotheby's Realty.

Online bidding for the artwork will start at 9 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 22, and end on Saturday, Feb. 27 at 9:30 p.m. More than 70 pieces of art from local and regional artists will be available.

All of the artwork will be on display at the Lone Peak Cinema starting on Monday, Feb. 22, and will be available for free public viewing throughout the week. Limited capacity, in-person cocktail parties will take place during the evenings on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. These gatherings will allow small groups to share a signature drink, beer and wine, hors d'oeuvres and time to peruse all of the artwork in a COVID-safe environment. Guests will also have a chance to engage with an artist painting live on site during the parties. Each party is one hour long, and masks are required for entry. Attendance is by reservation only; tickets are \$75 each and can be purchased in advance at bigskyarts.org.

The week will culminate in an hour-long, live online broadcast at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 27. The show will feature many of the artists in the auction, and highlight the work that the Arts Council is doing throughout the community. Bidding for the online auction will then conclude at 9:30 p.m.

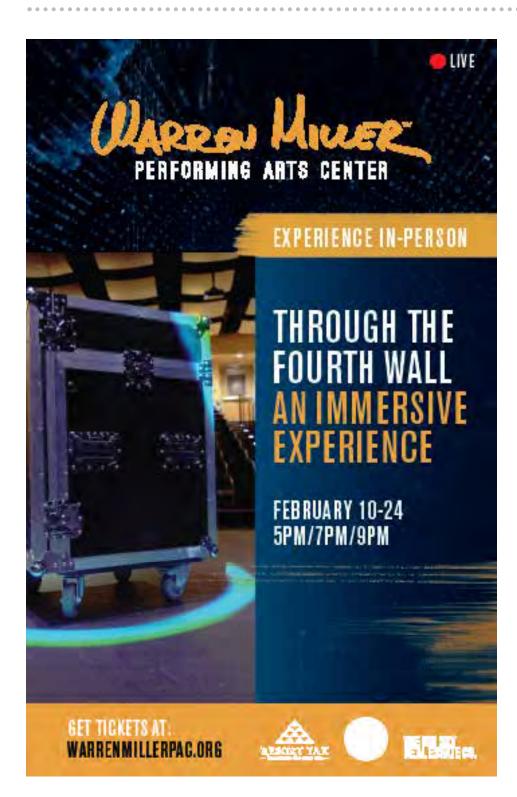
"Even though we can't host our usual large, in-person auction event this year, we're super excited about the new and creative ways that people near and far will be able to celebrate Big Sky arts together," said Katie Alvin, development director for the Arts Council. "It's going to be a great week for the entire community to rally support for the arts."

The online auction will feature paintings, pottery, photography, sculptures, jewelry and more, with prices that will allow everyone from the casual buyer to the discriminating collector to participate. Confirmed artists include Kevin Red Star, Carol Spielman, Kira Fercho, Tracie Spence, Amber Blazina, Julie Chapman, Ryan Turner, Heather Rapp, Jill Zeidler, Shelly Bermont, David Hooper and many more. Proceeds from the auction allow the Arts Council to keep the arts alive and accessible to Big Sky residents and visitors. Now, more than ever, we need the arts in our lives.

More information about the auction and a full schedule of events can be found online at bigskyarts.org. The Arts Council of Big Sky is a non-profit organization founded in 1989, whose mission is to enrich our community through artistic experiences.



Montana artist Kevin Red Star finishes a painting at the 2020 Auction for the Arts. PHOTO BY DAVE PECUNIES





## **BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR**

Friday, Jan. 29 – Thursday, Feb. 11

If your event falls between Feb. 12 and Feb. 25, please submit it by Feb. 10 by mailing media@outlaw.partners

## Friday, Jan. 29

Friday Afternoon Club: Jim Salestrom

ACRE Kitchen, 5 p.m.

Live Music

Rainbow Ranch, 6 p.m.

## Saturday, Jan. 30

**TEDxBigSky** 

6 p.m., Online: tedxbigsky.com/live-stream

**Saturday Sweat** 

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

## Sunday, Jan. 31

Saxy Sundays

The Standard: Cocktails and Desserts, 5 p.m.

Skin to Win: Randonee Rally

Bridger Bowl, 8 a.m.

## Monday, Feb. 1

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

Local's Night

Bunkhouse Brewery, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

## Tuesday, Feb. 2

Sunrise Karaoke

Bar IX, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

Bingo Night

Molly Brown, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

## Wednesday, Feb. 3

Glide Big Sky: Spruce Cone

Town Center Parking Lot, 2 p.m.

**Educator Wednesdays** 

Bunkhouse Brewery, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

## Thursday, Feb. 4

Thursday Night Ice Climbers

Hyalite Canyon, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

Weber State @ MSU Bobcats Women's Basketball

Brick Breeden Fieldhouse, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

## Friday, Feb. 5

Friday Afternoon Club

5 p.m.

Savvy at the Eagles

Bozeman Eagles Club and Ballrooom, 9 p.m.

## Saturday, Feb. 6

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

Caturday

Bunkhouse Brewery, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

## Sunday, Feb. 7

Saxy Sundays

The Standard: Cocktails and Desserts, 5 p.m.

Dance lessons: Supper Club

Starlite Bozeman, 5:30 p.m.

## Monday, Feb. 8

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

Trivia

Bozeman Taproom, 7 p.m.

## Tuesday, Feb. 9

Live music: Rich Mayo

Kountry Korner Café, 6 p.m.

Bingo Night

Rocking R Bar, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

## Wednesday, Feb. 10

**Town Race Series** 

Big Sky Resort, 11 a.m.

Game Night

El Camino Bar, Bozeman, 6:30 p.m.

## Thursday, Feb. 11

Thursday Night Ice climbers

Hyalite Canyon, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

Live Poker

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

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# Making it in Big Sky: ERA Landmark Real Estate

#### BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – ERA Landmark Real Estate has been serving the Big Sky community since 1999 when the Big Sky office first opened. The company was founded in 1976 in Bozeman, became an ERA franchise in 1979, and boasts four offices across southwest Montana in Bozeman, Big Sky, Livingston and Ennis.

Robyn Erlenbush, a broker and the owner of ERA Landmark Real Estate, joined the company in 1982 and she has owned it since 1990. Erlenbush is a Montana native; she grew up in Baker and she has lived in Bozeman since 1981.

A total of 59 agents work across their four offices, and deal with a variety of properties, including commercial, vacation and residential. There are nine agents at the Big Sky office, and almost all have been in Big Sky since the '70s.

EBS spoke with Erlenbush to learn more about ERA Landmark Real Estate's 40 plus years serving the Big Sky community.

**Explore Big Sky:** *Tell me why the Big Sky office is different?* **Robyn Erlenbush:** "I would call us a boutique team. We're not the largest office by any means, instead we are a very experienced group of brokers with many years of living in Big Sky. We serve clients in the entire Big Sky and Gallatin Canyon market. Our specialty is residential resale due to that fact that we have so many repeat clients and our agents who lived in Big Sky while those properties were first coming out of the ground. Our agents are very involved in the Big Sky community."

EBS: How has ERA Landmark grown with Big Sky?

RE: "ERA Landmark has been serving Southwest Montana since 1979. I joined the firm in 1982 and purchased the company in 1990. We have expanded to Big Sky, Livingston and Ennis. Our Big Sky office was established in May 1999. We rented a small space in Meadow Village and soon outgrew our location. We constructed our current office building at 36 Center Lane in 2004. The 7000+ sq ft two story building was built by Dennis Stoner. Through all the years, we've seen the ebb and flow of different developers and we have watched a few recessions come and go. As a team, we all share a huge love for Big Sky, the mountain, and mostly the people in the community. I was involved with Bozeman Health and the original steering committee that helped build the Big Sky Medical Center. I have served as co-chair on several Bozeman Health capital campaigns including "Caring Forward" which help secure funds for the expansion of services, equipment and sustainability of our local hospital."



Robyn Erlenbush has lived in Bozeman since 1981 and she has owned ERA Landmark Real Estate since 1990. PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBYN ERLENBUSH

**EBS:** What sets ERA Landmark apart from other real estate companies?

**RE:** "The longevity of our agents is crucial because they have expanded market insight and historical perspective. They've all been members of the community for quite some time and they understand the value of real estate as a long-term investment."

**EBS:** How has ERA Landmark adapted during the pandemic?

RE: "Our firm went 'paperless' in the fall of 2019. Since we are a multi-office company, we have corporate staff in Bozeman and additional staff in each of the offices. We already had good systems set up for remote communication. Because we went to a paperless platform for our clients and agents, it was very easy to do transactions electronically and digitally. Of course, we didn't plan on a pandemic... we just happened to be transitioning our firm, so we were very well suited to deal with "sight unseen transactions" for our out of state clients. The fact that we already

had systems and protocols in place, helped us to deal with the pandemic efficiently and effectively."

**EBS:** How has ERA Landmark Real Estate fared in the current real estate market?

**RE:** "We mirror the area market trends. When the resort closed abruptly, there was a time in the Big Sky market where sales came to a halt and created a dramatic downturn from the previous year. With the Governor's phase one implementation in June, we started seeing buyers return to Big Sky and the market rally in all areas. Probably the most poignant number out there is the change in the sales price in condos. The average year over year went up 65 percent. There's been a very large 'land play' this year with clients wanting to own a piece of Montana, with the security of a place like Big Sky that isn't dense, and that isn't highly populated."

**EBS:** What's the best business advice you have ever received? **RE:** "From a pragmatic perspective, I believe in not expanding into markets you don't understand, or into product lines where you don't have expertise." My own personal mantra which I practice every day is 'Do right, fear not.' This pandemic, if it has shown us anything, proved that leadership is an art and is about understanding how to care for people, community, and clients undergoing stressful situations. What we have seen in this past year is incredible compassion and resilience that makes Big Sky so special."

**EBS:** Is there anything else you would like the community to know? **RE:** "I would simply offer my thanks and gratitude to the community. I've spent many days here and have always found whether it's someone on a cross country ski trail or just stopping to be helpful and neighborly... it is the famous Montana hospitality that really shines through in Big Sky, and hopefully we at ERA Landmark are examples of that passion to newcomers and neighbors in the community."



# **Enjoying the Ride: Resolutions?**



BY SCOTT BROWN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Is it just me, or does the transition from 2020 to 2021 feel like the old saying "out of the frying pan into the fire?" Our country is arguably as divided as ever as evidenced by the recent riots at the U.S. Capitol. By most expert's assessments we have experienced a slower than expected roll out of the COVID-19 vaccines coupled with renewed lockdowns and quarantines.

On top of that we have a new Biden Administration in the White House which creates some uncertainty about the many policies to include tax, health care, immigration, energy, just to name a few. Will the changes be good or bad for the markets and the economy? It is exhausting isn't it? Other than the unique COVID-19-related concerns maybe it's simply that another four years has passed? But I digress. For most of us, those uncertainties I just rattled off are beyond our control. So, let's focus on things you can control like sticking to and achieving your New Year's resolution.

Interestingly enough, the history of making a New Year's resolution dates back 4,000 years to the Babylonians. At that time, they promised their gods that they would pay their debt at the beginning of the year. I'm not sure how often they lived up to their promises to those gods, but in modern times achieving your New Year's resolution poses a bit of a challenge for most people.

In fact, studies show that only 8 percent of people achieve their resolution and a full 80 percent lose their motivation by mid-February. The top resolutions, in order of popularity, include: diet or eat healthier, exercise, lose weight, save more spend less, learn a new skill or hobby, quit smoking, read more, find another job, drink less alcohol (especially after 2020), and spend more time with family and friends.

Since this column's focus is personal finance, we should focus on the fourth most popular New Year's resolution: save more, spend less. A good way to begin to tackle this goal is by updating or creating both your household monthly and annual budgets.

Annual budgets are important as they capture expenses that do not recur monthly like real estate taxes, some insurance premiums, licenses and registration costs. This will allow you to identify your free cash flow and prioritize your savings and debt payments. Now, let's look at ways to save more. January is a great time to review your employer retirement savings plans.

If you were fortunate enough to receive a raise and you're not already maximizing your contribution rate, consider increasing your contribution rate into your employer plan. This is also a great time to review the investments in your employer plan and potentially consider making changes or simply rebalancing your investment holdings.

If you're expecting a bonus based on last year's performance, consider saving that into your plan or elsewhere like a savings, brokerage or IRA account. Of course, you could also pay down some debt. Whether or not you have an employer retirement plan, this is a good time of year to consider making your 2020 Traditional IRA or Roth IRA contributions. You should also review your kid's college savings plan accounts.

When it comes to spending less, one consideration is to cut down on how many credit cards you use. A benefit to using one card is that you'll have one credit limit to worry about, so you won't end up maxing several cards at the same time. Another way to spend less is to aggressively pay down your recurring debt obligations like student debt, credit card debt or auto loans. As they're paid down, and eventually off, you have more free cash flow so you could then truly save more and spend less.

Another consideration is to look at refinancing debt to include home, auto and business loans, just to name a few. As a personal financial planner, I can tell you that every client I work with who's figured out the trick to saving more and spending less has definitely enjoyed the ride!

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

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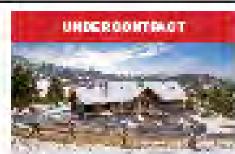


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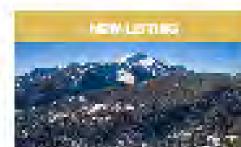
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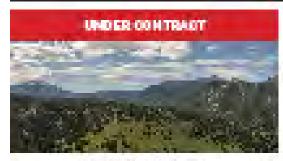


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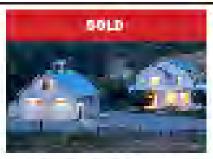
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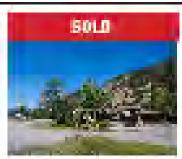
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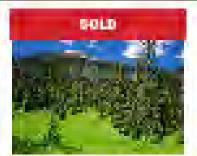
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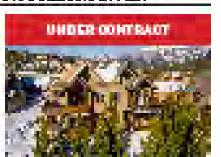
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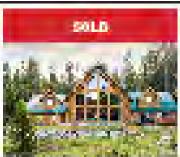
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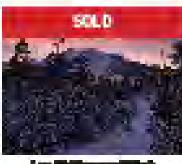
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2021 Economic Outlook Seminar



The Big Sky Chamber is proud to have hosted the Bureau of Business and Economic Research in Big Sky previously for their Annual Economic Outlook Seminar. This year, the event is a special two-day seminar highlighting the latest economic trends for local economies and the state of Montana. Join them on their new platform this year that includes the ability to network and connect with other attendess, presenters, and sponsors. This seminar is also eligible for continuing education credits.



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## **NOTICE**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ELECTION TO EXPAND THE BIG SKY TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

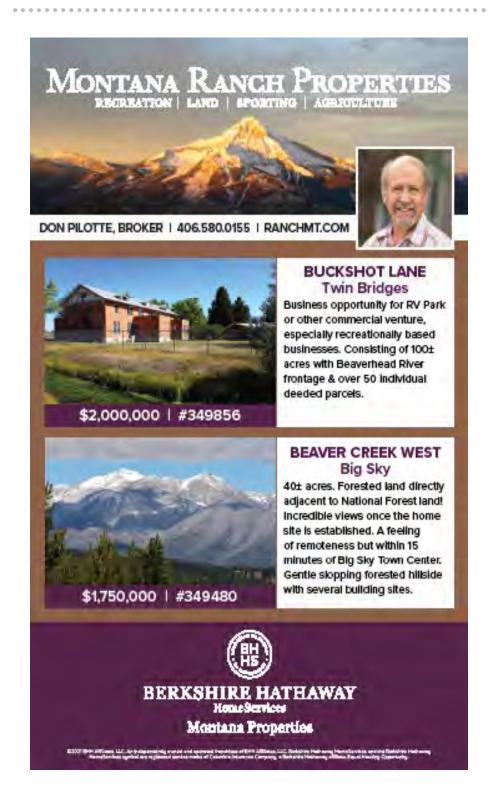
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Gallatin County Commissioners shall conduct a public hearing on February 4, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. at the Community Room, 311 W. Main, Bozeman, Montana, to hear all testimony offered in support of and in opposition to the petition for addition to the Big Sky Transportation District. The boundary of the proposed addition is described as follows:

That portion of the Big Sky Resort Area District in Gallatin County that is not currently included in the Big Sky Transportation District located in the following townships: Township 6 South, Range 3 East; Township 6 South, Range 4 East; Township 6 South, Range 5 East; Township 7 South, Range 3 East; Township 7 South, Range 4 East; Township 7 South, Range 5 East M.P.M. Gallatin County, Montana.

The commissioners, on completion of the public hearing required by 7-14-207, shall proceed by resolution to refer the addition to the district to the persons qualified to vote on the proposition by election to be conducted on May 4, 2021. Any person requesting further information on the action to be taken may contact County Commissioners Scott MacFarlane, Zach Brownor Joe Skinner at the Gallatin County Courthouse, 311 West Main, Room 306, Bozeman, Montana, 59715, telephone: 582-3000.

Done by order of the Board of County Commissioners this 26th day of January, 2021.

Eric Semerad, Clerk and Recorder Gallatin County, Montana



# Niseko Ramen brings taste of Japan to Big Sky

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – The newest ramen restaurant in Big Sky serves up tasty, steaming bowls of ramen along with a selection of starters, cocktails, and most importantly, mochi for dessert.

In addition to keeping locals and visitors fed, Niseko, which opened its doors in the Marketplace Building in mid-January, has a name that evokes the largest skiing in Japan, and the Ja-Pow that comes with it. Located in Hokkaido, Niseko United is a group of four ski resorts that comprise the biggest skiing in Japan, a fitting comparison with Big Sky Resort, the self-styled Biggest Skiing in America.

Bryan Dayton, one of Niseko Ramen's four owners, explained that the name was sparked by a ski trip to Niseko where he and some friends indulged in delicious ramen from food trucks.

Walking into the new Big Sky restaurant on a snowy evening, my glasses fogged up completely heightening my sense of smell as rich aromas wafted over me. The décor is simple and fun and a vintage film—my best guess is "Seven Samurai"—plays above the bar.

From a menu including five different ramen options, I order the spicy ramen and begin snapping food photos before chowing down. The hearty ramen bowl was delicious, but in order to save room for dessert, I get a to-go container. To finish the evening, I sample the mango and green tea mochi, a cold treat after the warm ramen.

While I was partial to the spicy ramen, Dayton said his favorite is the curry, though the spicy takes a close second.

Dayton hails from Colorado and owns Niseko with three other partners, Melissa and Chase Devitt and Will McCollum. All four take turns commuting to Big Sky from Colorado, a tad longer than their usual 30- to 45-minute commute, to oversee the restaurant.

While the decision to open a ramen restaurant in Big Sky was inspired by the Japan ski trip, it was cemented when McCollum and Dayton toured the space in Big Sky. Dayton explained that the timing seemed right and that he felt it was a good fit for tourists and locals alike.

"We wanted to do something fun and authentic, he said, "something that brings really great nourishment to the body and to the soul."

Niseko Ramen originally opened on Jan. 1 before closing again after just five days due to COVID-19 regulations. The restaurant reopened on Jan. 15 and offers dine-in seating as well as take-out options and online ordering.

For a taste of Japan, Niseko Ramen's website encourages diners to "Catch us where the snow falls and the bowls are hot."

 $\boldsymbol{A}$  self-described restauranteur, Dayton explains why Niseko is different.

"We like to do restaurants, we don't like to do concepts," he said. "So there's an air of our heart and soul in [Niseko]."

Niseko Ramen is open seven days a week from 3 – 9 p.m.



Niseko Ramen offers a variety of ramen bowls as well as starters, cocktails, and some sweet treats. PHOTO COURTESY OF MELISSA DEVITT

# **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.

# Beyond the pale



# BY SCOTT MECHURA EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

Though they all produce the same beverage, chemically speaking, breweries are very different throughout the world.

From five of the six Trappist monasteries in Belgium, to Cantillon Iambic on the outskirts of Brussels. From the Anhauser Busch headquarters in St Louis, MO, to

historic breweries like Schmidt in St Paul, MN, and Schell Brewing in New Ulm, MN, often described as Americas most beautiful brewery. I've toured many.

But I have had the pleasure of two visits to an American brewing pioneer that stands out among all others. And it is perhaps the most technologically advanced brewery in the Western Hemisphere.

I'm talking about Sierra Nevada Brewing Company.

Located in the arid banana belt of northern California amongst mile after mile of almond and walnut groves, lies this pioneer in the otherwise nondescript town of Chico.

An avid homebrewer—before beer was legal to brew, and before he was of legal age to drink it—and tinkerer, Ken Grossman founded his tiny brewery in 1978 and sold his first Sierra Nevada Pale Ale in 1980. A beer that would set the tone for quite literally every American Pale Ale from that day forward.

And by 1983 he was already shopping Germany for a larger copper brewing kettle. Much larger.

And an important factor that made that rapid growth even more impressive was that in 1982, he thought he may need to close due to financial and marketing challenges, were it not for some traction after a little old restaurant by the name of Chez Panisse decided to carry it.

From homegrown hops for specialty beers, to beef cattle raised for the adjacent restaurant and fed with spent grains from the brewing process, Ken does his best to complete the circle of sustainability.

But it doesn't stop there.

As far back as 2008, Sierra Nevada was already generating so much solar energy that it was actually selling power back to the state of California.

And it was the rapid and successful growth of Sierra Nevada that caused the licensing of breweries to be redefined. They created a third, middle category, of brewery that fit between the under 10,000-barrel microbrewery, and the alternative legal distinction of macro brewery.

From a state-of-the-art bottling and labeling facility, to a giant control board in the brewery that looked like it could have only been designed by the finest of the fine in Silicon Valley, this is a brewery like no other.

It doesn't take long to walk the grounds or make your way through their buildings to see that everyone, from brewer to line cooks, to the people working in the retail shop, all "drink the pale ale," so to speak. It's an environment where a large percentage of staff have been employed there for well over a decade, and that doesn't happen by accident.

To this day, Ken still describes himself as a hippy with an adventurist spirit and a big heart. Though ironically, he is now in the very elite club that is American billionaires.

Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. has a special place in my hoppy malty heart, and though it could be described as the West Coast version of Ben & Jerry's, I know which one I'd choose every time.

Scott Mechura has spent a life in the hospitality industry. He is a former certified beer judge and currently the multi-concept culinary director for a Bozeman based restaurant group.

# American Life in Poetry: Column 826

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

Arizonan Alberto Rios probably observed this shamel ash often, its year-round green leaves never changing. On this particular day, however, he recognizes a difference—a yellow leaf. In doing so he offers us a glimpse of how something small yet unexpected may stay with us, perhaps even become a secret pleasure.

Editor's Note: This column (40) is a reprint from the American Life in Poetry archive as we bid farewell to Ted Kooser, and work to finalize the new website and forthcoming columns curated by Kwame Dawes.

#### A Yellow Leaf

A yellow leaf in the branches Of a shamel ash In the front yard; I see it, a yellow leaf Among so many. Nothing distinguishes it, Nothing striking, striped, stripped, Strident, nothing More than its yellow On this day, Which is enough, which makes me Think of it later in the day, Remember it in conversation With a friend, Though I do not mention it— A yellow leaf on a shamel ash On a clear day In an Arizona winter, A January like so many.

American Life in Poetry provides newspapers and online publications with a free weekly column featuring contemporary American poems. The sole mission of this project is to promote poetry: American Life in Poetry seeks to create a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. There are no costs for reprinting the columns; we do require that you register your publication here and that the text of the column be reproduced without alteration.



"We've seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it.
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.
And this effort very nearly succeeded.
But while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated.
In this truth, in this faith we trust.
For while we have our eyes on the future, history has its eyes on us."

- Amanda Gorman excerpt from "The Hill We Climb"

# **CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

#### **ACROSS**

1 Adulterate
5 Melville's
captain
9 Lady's title
12 Tibeto-Burmese
people
13 Indian music
14 Equal
opportunity
employer (abbr.)
15 Heb. patriarch's
title
16 Indian red
powder
17 Lip
18 Freedom,
briefly
20 One
22 Art (Lat.)
25 Cotillion
attendee
27 Body of water
28 Fr. month
29 Fish sauce

31 Anagram

(abbr.)

12

15

34

38

34 Doctrine (suf.) 35 Eng. poet 37 Compass direction 38 Corded fabric 40 Water (Sp.) 41 Cereal spike 42 Exclamation 44 Last Queen of Spain 45 Revolutions per minute (abbr.) 46 Irony 49 Tender loving care (abbr.) 51 Turkish caliph 52 River into the North Sea 54 7th incarnation of Vishnu 58 Atomic Energy Commission (abbr.)

59 Tablespoon

60 Above (Ger.)

61 MGM lion

(abbr.)

62 Food

13

16

S C A T T O D O ASN POOL RHODESIA ADMI IGLOOFEMAIL CANNONTAB A B A A G C Y RUDE LIEFLAR R H E S A L L E T E L S I E S T A A T C A L A M I T Y D A M P C I I I I C A L A R M N I D E EUER TRE 63 Norse tale delight

#### **DOWN**

- 1 Swed. county 2 S.A. tuber 3 Exclamations of
- 8 Balinese spear dance 9 Web-footed bird 10 Stir up

Habakkuk

Irish assembly

Strauss operá

(abbr.) Spartan king

- 10 Stir up
  11 Dotted with
- figures
  19 Scientific name
  (suf.)
- (suf.)
  21 Nat'l
  Endowment for the Arts (abbr.)
  22 Arabian
- chieftain 23 Demolish: Brit. 24 Nice
- 26 Pale yellow 30 Female noble 32 Immediately
- 33 Start of an Ídea 36 S. Afr. language 39 Greek letter 43 Mountain spur
- 46 Hall (Ger.)
  47 Helm position
  48 It. island
  50 Shank
  53 Bacon, lettuce,
- and tomato
  (abbr.)
  55 Arab. garment
  56 Alcott heroine

42 43 44 45 39 G
46 47 48 49 50 47 H
51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 S
58 59 60 53 S
53 B
61 62 63 55 A
60 2020 Satori Publishing A137

# BIG SKY BEATS



# **Country Rap**

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

There's a new genre on the block, and it is slowly but surely gaining popularity. Country rap, otherwise known as country hip-hop, is exactly what it sounds like: a combination

of country and rap music. With origins in the 1980s, the genre has experienced a recent resurgence with multiple chart-topping hits.

One recent entry into the genre, "Old Town Road" by Lil Nas X, was released in 2018 with a remix featuring Billy Ray Cyrus in 2019. The song won various awards and topped charts worldwide.



In 2020, "Be Like That" by Kane Brown, primarily a country artist, featuring Swae Lee and Khalid, became yet another example of the novel country rap classification.

The trend seems to be bringing country themes and styles into the mainstream and it has thrust artists like Kane Brown onto center stage after moderately successful country releases.

# BACK4[1]

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"



Flying into the Northern Chugach Range near the Knik River, pilot Shannon Bowman (R) and Di Whitney survey "training runs" in the heli windshield. PHOTO BY SASHA MOTIVALA

## The Silver Element

# How Silverton Mountain Guides are mining a new approach to heli-skiing Alaska's wild backcountry

#### BY BRIGID MANDER

The group of eight 30-something professionals from Denver, Colorado, was a mess. Physically, they looked beat. Mentally, they were nearly incapacitated. They had been reduced to a starry-eyed, floating state. For the time being, the crew seemed held together by an adrenaline high and some version of disbelief.

"We skied 21 runs today," one from the giddy group informed us. Smartphones came from all directions, with shots of skiers on Alaskan spines, lost in powder, dropping steeply and hitting airs like ski movie stars. Although the trip had ended with some extra heli-time costs, this team would have given a year of their lives for the experience. In all likelihood, attaining such euphoria probably adds one.

The man who's made a name for himself by regularly reducing people to this state was nowhere to be found. Aaron Brill, who together with his wife Jen, started Silverton Mountain ski area in Colorado and followed it up with this offbeat but tightly run heliski operation in Alaska, is a quiet, determined snowboard athlete, guide, entrepreneur, and helicopter pilot. Aaron, a man preoccupied with making ski dreams reality, generally skips the schmoozing of cocktail hour. When you're blazing a trail that runs counter to accepted wisdom and the beaten path, partying is low on the list.

Across much of the ski industry, recent years have seen the propagation of a lemming-like approach to success: find big-money clientele, adjust the business model to coddle and attract them, schmooze and entice them to spend as much money as possible—even if it pushes the actual sport of skiing itself to the periphery. This trend is resulting in cookie-cutter ski resorts, over-the-top real estate, and amenities like five-course lunch options that take up more of the day than actual time on the slopes. These, not skiing, are the moneymakers. Deviating from the formula would be a financial nosedive.

But 15 years ago, a brash move by Aaron and Jen Brill, then a pair of broke, upstart, but intensely passionate snowboarders, famously challenged the accepted order. As it turns out, in a happy by-product of chasing their dream, they proved you can still make money from just simply offering skiing and riding.

Now respected as two of the hardest working people in the industry, against all odds, the Brills have engineered and executed a specific dream: to create an area where they themselves—high-level, big-mountain snowboarders—would want to shred.

A search for the perfect spot eventually led them to Silverton, Colorado, on a mountain that was part of an old mining claim. It was big and steep, with lots of features and exposed terrain. Perfect. They wanted skiers to come to Silverton after everywhere else failed to cut it, when skiing was on the verge of taking over (or already had) the purpose of your life, and you'd become a junkie searching for a rich, deep-white experience.

Undaunted by reams of government red tape and an industry's worth of onlooking naysayers, the Brills secured the permits to open their ski area and implement a novel, bare-bones formula. They erected a used double chairlift purchased from Mammoth Mountain in California for \$50,000 (the down-on-its-luck-town of Silverton chipped in a small amount of funding). Aaron blasted rock, poured concrete, and became an assistant surveyor to save money. They put up a 1,200-square-foot pole tent as a base lodge, added some couches and a keg, and opened for business.

Skiing and snowboarding purists, turned off by the commercialism of other resorts, flocked to this promising new place only to find it exceeded expectations. Initially maligned as a simplistic deviation, Silverton's concept quickly earned the founding duo legendary status in the ski industry. They've been called the saviors of skiing's soul, an antidote to vapid, luxury, mass-market ski experiences, and some of the few remaining believers that skiing alone—the kind of skiing that not everyone can or even wants to do—is enough to attract business.

At Silverton Mountain today, the amenities still include just one lift, hike-accessed terrain, a helicopter that sells rides for \$179 a run, and zero groomers. The terrain requires guided skiing for most of the season, and if you're not good enough to ski serious, big-mountain terrain, well, they don't want your money. If you need luxurious frills to make it through a ski trip, pick a different destination. There's somewhere else, almost anywhere else, better suited for you.

"It's definitely something [that gets] more to the roots of skiing and snowboarding," says Fabio Grasso, a guide at Silverton for the last 13 years, of the operation and the Brills' management style. "It's for clients who want to focus on the skiing."

The positive response to Silverton in Colorado inspired the Brills to step it up one more notch. In 2009 they took the concept to Alaska, called it Silverton Mountain Guides, and proceeded to turn the heli-ski formula on its head. Operating on their own terms, Jen and Aaron created another industry black-sheep niche for themselves: they won't take just anyone with the money heli-skiing with them. Would-be clients are pre-screened for a certain level of skill and they'll turn you away until you meet it, but they're not suffering for business. On the contrary, their Northern Chugach season, which starts at \$7,880 per week, sells out within hours. SMG is booked solid until 2018, with a waitlist, while many other operations struggle to fill seats.

In order to give more guests opportunities to get on their program, they decided to expand beginning in winter 2015-16. Fittingly, it wasn't the usual approach to add another helicopter. The Brills added a new season: early winter in Seward, Alaska. Due to traditional helicopter leasing costs, no other heli operation flies those months in Alaska, but all Aaron saw was cold powder, plenty of light for a full day, and the added bonus of shredding big faces and spines in pink alpenglow and long winter twilights.

After Seward, there's no rest for the weary. The SMG guides and the chopper head back to Colorado for heli-ski drops at Silverton Mountain until mid-March, and then back to Alaska for the traditional heli season. "They still really like to get after it [on the mountain]," Grosso says. "They haven't slowed down much, even as we see them take on more and more on the business side."

Aaron's snowboard track leads down a knife-edge ridge, cutting through deep, fresh powder that immediately sloughs down the drop-off to the left. We follow, lining up between Aaron and our second guide, "88," referred to as such because, the more senior guides gleefully informed us, he showed up to Silverton, Colorado, looking for a job in a 1988 Oldsmobile.

We're all alone, high in the Northern Chugach. I'm not sure how many runs we've even done today so far, so fast and efficient they are. And we haven't stopped for lunch. No one even suggests it. (I scarfed down some snacks in the A-Star between this run and last, a more exciting version of the chairlift lunch.) Not one person is interested in wasting time sitting around and eating, when we could be skiing faces like the one dropping out of sight below. The tails of my skis hang over the precipice behind us, my tips poke into thin air over the line we are about to drop into. It's steep; I can't see anything but the first few feet.

Aaron gives some directions on where to turn once we drop in, where to watch for sloughing snow, and where to start straight-lining in order to air over the bergshrund at the bottom. Basically, make about three or four big fast turns and then point it. He disappears into the void, leaving a cloud of white smoke, and reappears shortly far below on the sunny glacier.

"Go for it," says 88, cracking a grin. I drop in, railing a high-speed turn into one of the steepest, deepest, and fastest runs I've ever skied. Gliding into the sun where Aaron is, 21 runs like this is clearly more than enough to turn one's brain to mush. Enough to empty a bank account. And then come back for more.

Heli-skiing is expensive. It's expensive for the client, and it's expensive for the operator. Profit margins, when they exist, are thin. Competition is cutthroat. Myriad variables that can affect business are unpredictable: bad weather, bad snow, and poor snowpack stability are the major issues.

When Silverton expanded to Alaska, they wanted to cut out some of these factors and bring their brand of soul skiing with them. Based on the reactions to Silverton Mountain in Colorado, Aaron was certain there was enough business out there from skiers and riders who could hang skills-wise, and who would be able and willing to pay the cost of heli-skiing.

So the AK operation maintains a bar to entry that has nothing to do with bank accounts. Before they'll touch your money, SMG first wants to know you can hang, because mellow glacier runs or long lunch breaks would suck the life out of Aaron, Jen and their guides, and the operation would cease to exist.

A vetting of ski or snowboard skills by the crew during a few ski days in Silverton, Colorado, is preferred for new Alaska clients, and if they pass muster, they can join an Alaska trip if and when there is space. There's a little flexibility: if you can't make it to Colorado but desperately want to get on board, a phone interview grilling by Aaron or his guides will assess whether you'll cut it. If the client doesn't fit the bill, a polite redirection to a more traditional operation is offered, at least until the hopeful client hones their skills to a higher level. For SMG, there are a few reasons for this.

"It's just better with better skiers," Aaron says. "It's safer for everyone, and less stressful for me and the guides. And the guests are happy when everyone skis at a higher level." This steadfast insistence on a certain level of skier has practical business applications, and it keeps the owners and the guides not only interested, but passionate. "What people underestimate about Aaron is how much he wants to [ride]. He's still in it for the money, but he doesn't compromise on the terrain," Jen says.

Jackson, Wyoming-based cinematographer and producer Sasha Motivala is a veteran with various heli-ops, both filming and as a client, and he's a convert to Silverton's program. "While it might not be film lines, it's the closest I've come, and we didn't even



Guides Aaron Brill and Skylar Holgate scope terrain in Seward, Alaska, December 2015. Photo courtesy of Silverton Mountain Guides



ABOVE: Guide Fabio Grasso leading his group of clients to the top of their run in Seward at the end of December 2015. PHOTO COURTESY OF SILVERTON MOUNTAIN GUIDES

have to coax the guides into it," Motivala says. "That was just the norm. You do have to have [the money] to heli-ski, but also have to have spent the real time in mountains to ski with Aaron and his guides, who are damned if they are going to spend their precious time skiing 35-degree powder or anything that resembles a warm-up run."

Motivala's feelings echo the whole base of Silverton's clientele: good skiers willing to pay for heli-runs, but only if they get bang for their buck.

Today, SMG presides over the largest tenure among Alaskan heli-ski operators, at about 15 million acres. From a utilitarian point of view, this only makes sense when you understand that Silverton also has no set base lodge. "The whole goal is mobility," Aaron says. If the skiing isn't prime in the current location, SMG can pull up stakes and move the whole show to another Alaskan location with better snow or weather. "That can be a bit of a gamble ... but when it works—and it usually works 9.5 times out of 10—the guests realize we are really committed to providing the best possible ski experience for them and come back year after year."

To make such mobility possible, Aaron and Jen have arrangements with a multitude of lodges around the state, and if need be, the operation can take to RVs in something out of a ski movie: friends, guides, skis, cans of beer, and a helicopter in tow.

SMG sends two guides for every group, as opposed to the usual one-guide industry standard. That means one less paying client in the heli, but it's another piece of the Brills' carefully crafted puzzle. With two guides, groups can shred much more challenging and interesting terrain. It's a safer, smoother experience, not to mention more fun for the guests—and the guides. "Their safety talk and protocol are amazing, and really professional. They don't care what you think you know—you have to listen to them," says Bjarne Salen, a filmmaker and ski mountaineer who spent time in the Chugach with Aaron and SMG last spring. "And they were really smart with the business. There's so many good skiers that work a lot and have the money for this. I'd send any friend to Aaron."

For his part, Aaron believes it's exactly this approach that his clients appreciate. "I think it's a big reason people notice the [professionalism at SMG], and why I feel comfortable allowing our guests into hyper-challenging terrain," he said. "Two experienced guides per group can focus primarily on the care and safety of the guests within the run, which creates an attention to detail like no other operation can provide."

Even the helicopter is different. SMG uses a powerful AStar B3e on a long-term lease, meaning they keep it year round. They fly early season in Seward, midwinter in Colorado, spring back in AK, and use it for reconnaissance and other work the rest of the year.

The simple ski bum dream Silverton offers belies the immense effort that went into the making of both the Colorado and Alaska operations. "You just wish you had had that idea," Motivala says. "Everyone wants their own lift or helicopter, but few of us would have the ambition or the drive to actually make it happen."

It defies belief, based on claims by the rest of the ski industry, that this duo could make money without real estate deals, luxury amenities, or baller, big-money investors. "It's really just a matter of where you place your revenue stream," Aaron says. "For example, in college I wanted a hot tub. To save money, I lived in a house with no furniture [and] slept on a camping mat, but I had a hot tub outside."

With laser-like focus and unwillingness to stray from their own ski dreams, the Brills created an oasis for others from the merciless, uniform commercialism of the rest of the ski industry, and are making it work in the process. It's the act of making some money without losing your own soul, according to Jen. "You can't get rich off it," she says. "It depends what making money means to you."

But by doling out bits of their own dream, of lives rich with profound experiences, the Brills are blazing a trail in the industry. For those lucky enough to get on board, that path leads fall line down the deep and steep.

Brigid Mander is a skier and writer based in Jackson, Wyoming, who has graduated from ski bum to Responsible Professional Journalist, but still knows how to live on 92 cents a day. For this story, Mander's ski bum research helped her understand how the Brills live and share remarkable ski dreams.

A version of this story was first published in the Winter 2017 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.



WONDERFUL INSIDE.







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# **SECTION 4:**

WORD FROM THE RESORT: A look into Big Sky Resort







# A turning ski is a stable ski

BY DAN EGAN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

There has been a big push in the last 10 years towards wider skis. "Fat skis" or "Powder skis" have changed the perspective on what skis look like, because some have lost camber, some are flat with no camber, some have reverse camber, some have camber under the foot and tips and tails that turned up or so called "early rise." All of this has allowed skiers of all abilities to explore more of the mountain basically because the ski floats and glides on and through the snow easier.

However, wide skis of more than 88mm under your foot have significantly more surface area and have resulted in skis that don't track well in a straight line. Rather, they wobble in deep and cut up snow, chatter and vibrate on hard pack and groomed snow. If you have ever felt your ski wobble

under your foot while traversing, or on the cat track, you know what I mean.

This has resulted in many skiers feeling like they are doing something wrong, but they are not—it's an equipment issue, not a performance issue, as I like to remind skiers. Here's the dilemma: the increased surface area of the ski due to the width causes the ski to scoot forward. This puts the feet of the skier in front of their hips and puts skiers out of balance. The result is a lack of control and it is exhausting on the legs.

Let's talk about the length of the arc of a turn. The most stable part of skiing is the turn. If you want more stability with your wide skis, lengthen the arc and shorten the length of the transition between turns. After I make this statement in my camps and clinics, most skiers instantly think that a longer turn will mean going faster and result in acceleration that they don't want.

In general, when skiers turn to slow down, they make short turns and a long transition.

The issue with this method is that they are spending more time standing on an unstable ski and spending a short period of time in a stable turning ski. To gain stability, lengthen the arc of your turn and shorten the transition between your turn. So, if you have purchased "fat" skis to float over the

the arc of your turn and shorten the transition between your turn. So, if you have purchased "fat" skis to float over the snow and then make a short turn you are not gaining all of the stability the ski is designed to provide.

There will be a slight increase in speed however you will be more stable, be in balance and the result will be more confidence. A stable ski will be easier to control and the speed will become less of an issue.

Start on a slope you are comfortable on, ski down the fall line, tip the ski on edge and let it find its designed arcing radius down the mountain. Be patient. Don't twist your feet, let the ski turn on its own. Keep your hands just below shoulder height and push them forward to keep your shoulders over

your feet, as the skis come out of the turn roll your feet quickly over to the new edge and let the skis arc down the fall line in the new turn. Please note that I am talking about fall line skiing, not cross hill skiing. By keeping the ski in a long arcing turn in the fall line you should be making a series of "S" turns that are long and short transitions so the skis go from edge to edge. This will shorten the length of time the ski is flat and unstable.

When we ski, we want to be efficient and intentional with both our motion and our route down the mountain. Learning to stabilize these wider skis will result in not only more confidence but also allow you to have a longer day and help you master more of the mountain.

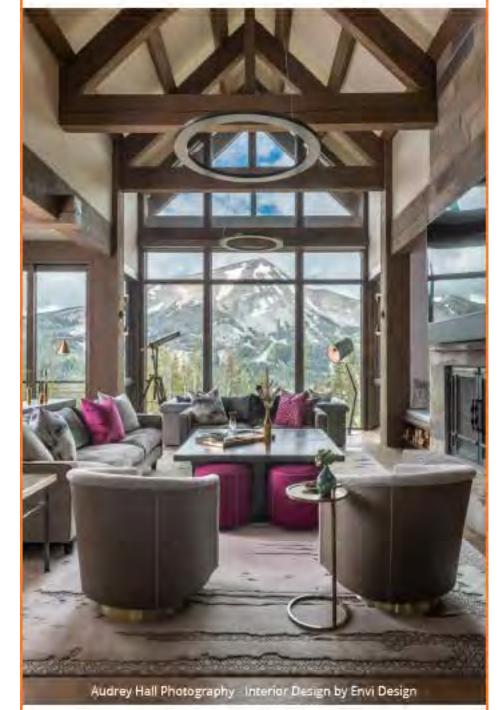
You'll be amazed at how effortless it is to keep the skis turning under you in long stable turns and when you add the slowing method of decelerating over a series of turns, allowing the skis to arc between your slowing turns you will be gaining a level of mastery that will be extremely rewarding.



PHOTO BY IAN ANDERSON, WARREN MILLER ENTERTAINMENT "FUTURE RETRO"

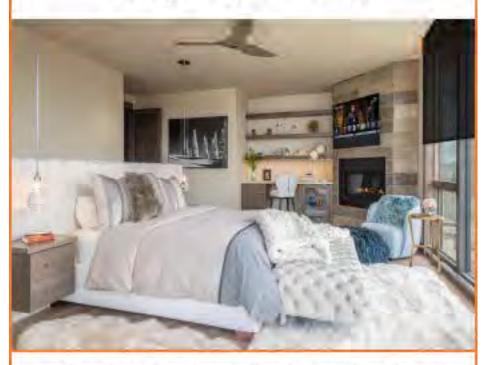






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# Racing Season is in full Swing

BY LUKE KIRCHMAYR

BIG SKY – The Big Sky Ski Education Foundation Alpine team has had a very busy two weeks training and competing in races in both Big Sky, MT and in Jackson, WY. All in all, BSSEF athletes competed in 14 races in 11 days.

From Jan. 19 – 24, the International Ski Federation (FIS) athletes traveled to Jackson to compete in two slaloms and two giant slaloms. Conditions in Jackson were harsh with low visibility and an icy surface.

"The surface was very icy and was challenging to find grip, even with sharp skis." Said Caleb Unger, a BSSEF athlete.

Despite the challenging conditions, the athletes were able to excel and score very well in all events.



BSSEF athlete, Geno DiTullio, poses at the start of the slalom in Big Sky. PHOTO BY JESSIE LEPEL

While the FIS athletes were in Jackson, the U8-U16 athletes competed at home in the Big Sky Youth Ski League Tech Series from Jan. 14 - 17 with two giant slalom events and one slalom. Although the competition was very tough, the athletes placed extremely well in all categories.

"The first race of the year is always hard to pull off, especially this year due to COVID," said Tomás Rivas, head coach of BSSEF YSL. "It was a tough test and a preview into how this strange season is going to play out. All in all, everything went quite smoothly, and fun was had by all. Big thanks to all the volunteers. The kids gave all what they had to give, that's what makes me happy. Now it is time to keep training."

With the tech series coming to a close, the entire team is focusing their efforts on speed events, such as the super-G, as the team will be hosting their annual speed camp from Jan. 27 – 31. The camp will be hosting teams from all over the region and will finish with three super-G races.

#### RACE RESULTS: Big Sky YSL Tech Series & Jackson, WY FIS Series

#### Jan. 14, 2021 Race 1

#### **U14 Women's, Giant Slalom**

- 1. Davis, Sophia 1:16.70
- 5. Olsson, Piper 1:22.81
- 12. Emmert, Grace 1:30.18
- 13. Skogen, 1:33.95
- 14. Fassbinder, Emerson 1:35.14
- 16. Cook, Alice 1:35.27
- 22. Hardan, Cate 1:38.50
- 23. Magrans, Megan 1:40.83

#### U12 Woman's, Giant Slalom

- 1. Taylor, Anna 1:24.88
- 4. Langlas, Ileana 1:30.89 5.. Morton, Camryn 1:33.45
- 8. Wolfe, Olive 2010 1:37.09
- 11. Schreiner, Paige 1:40.32
- 12. Olsson, Violet 1:40.37
- 13. Priest, Alexa 1:40.45
- 14. Givens, Brooklyn 1:41.45
- 18. Bryant, Daniella 1:42.58
- 23. Rupprecht, Hannah 1:43.96

#### U10 Woman's, Giant Slalom

4. Langlas, Evelyn 1:44.27 51

#### **U8 Woman, Giant Slalom**

1. Taylor, Brett 2:10:34

#### Jan. 14, Race 2

#### U14 Women's, Giant Slalom

- 3. Davis, Sophia 1:15.54
- 6. Olsson, Piper 1:20.21 9. Cook, Alice 1:22.01
- 18. Skogen, Cecelia 1:28.16
- 28. Hardan, Cate 1:33.98 30. Magrans, Megan 1:34.64
- 33. Fassbinder, Emerson 1:35.54

- **U12 Women's Giant Slalom**
- 1. Taylor, Anna 1:22.21 3. Langlas, Ileana 1:27.90
- 4. Morton, Camryn 1:29.15
- 5. McRae, Maeve 1:30.23
- 6. Wenger, Peyton 1:30.86
- 7. Givens, Brooklyn 1:31.52
- 8. Schreiner, Paige 1:32.32 12. Olsson, Violet 1:34.65
- 14. Wolfe, Olive 1:35.69
- 17. Priest, Alexa 1:38.98
- 24. Rupprecht, Hannah 1:41.74
- 26. Bryant, Daniella 1:42.69

#### **U10 Woman's, Giant Slalom**

- 3. Langlas, Evelyn 1:39.73
- 4. Switzer, Ella 1:39.78
- 10. Switzer, Fia 1:50.63
- 11. Taylor, Reese 1:52.49
- 15. Hamrick, Posey 2:00.34
- 16. Bryant, Valentina 2:09.68

#### **U8 Woman's, Giant Slalom**

- 1. Priest, Savannah 1:49.83
- 2. Taylor, Brett 2:02.39
- 3. Sullivan, Catherine 2:02.77
- 4. Switzer, Scarlett 2:06.31

#### Jan. 15, 2021

#### U16 Women's, Slalom

- 1. Brown, Brooke 1:15.27
- 2. Unger, Chloe 1:21.35

#### U14 Women's, Slalom

- 2. Cook, Alice 1:21.42
- 4. Olsson, Piper 1:23.47
- 5. Emmert, Grace 1:25.42
- 10. Skogen, Cecelia 1:37.92 13. Fassbinder, Emerson 1:43.00
- 22. Magrans, Megan 2:00.22

#### **U12 Woman's, Slalom**

- 1. McRae, Maeve 1:37.01
- 2. Morton, Camryn 1:38.00
- 6. Cook, Adaline 1:44.76
- 8. Olsson, Violet 1:49.31
- 12. Walkup, Lavinya 1:52.72 13. Priest, Alexa 1:52.93
- 15. Roberts, Josephine 1:54.00
- 16. Wenger, Peyton 1:54.86
- 19. Rupprecht, Hannah 1:57.30
- 23. Schreiner, Paige 2:15.88

#### U10 Woman's, Slalom

- 1. Langlas, Evelyn 1:50.35
- 4. Switzer, Ella 1:52.69
- 11. Taylor, Reese 2:01.80
- 12. Switzer, Fia 2:04.83
- 16. Bryant, Valentina 2:32.99

#### **U8 Woman's, Slalom**

- 1. Priest, Savannah 2:09.83
- 2. Switzer, Scarlett 2:47.81

#### Jan. 16, 2021 Race 1

#### U16 Men's, Giant Slalom

1. Pecunies, Cameron 1:16.03

#### U14 Men's, Giant Slalom

- 1. Morton, Carter 1:10.75
- 3. Ditullio, Anthony 1:12.36 6. Pecunies, lan 1:14.48
- 7. Wenger, Ryan 1:14.64
- 8. Klug, Finn 1:15.67
- 9. Bourret, Cooper 1:16.17
- 12. McRae, Finnegan 1:18.01
- 17. Brown, Walter 1:21.14
- 18. Hamrick, Ely 1:21.55
- 22, Ueland, Dane 1:27.88 28. Ardia, Vincent 1:48.18
- U12 Men's, Giant Slalom 2. Ditullio, Dominic 1:17.35
- 5. Harder, Elijah 1:21.85
- 7. Sheil, Cullen 1:23.29 9. Mittelstaedt, Ty 1:26.84
- 14. Rupprecht, Hans 1:29.88
- 16. Frank, Emerson 1:31.45 17. Jennings, Jack 1:31.84
- 19. Barker, Liam 1:35.90 20. Alessi, Luke 1:37.70
- 22. Givens, Brayden 1:42.19
- 23. Sullivan, Connor 1:43.22

#### U10 Men's, Giant Slalom

- 2. Kelsay, Jaxson 1:28.41
- 5. Klug, Gus 1:35.00
- 11, Johnson, Rex 1:36.40 12. Schreiner, Michael 1:37.60
- 15. Hardan, Ethan 1:43.96
- 16. Charles, Micah 1:44.35 17. Alessi, Teddy 1:44.42

#### **U8 Men's, Giant Slalom** 2. McGuire, Graham 2:04.85

Jan. 16, 2021 Race 2

#### U16 Men's, Giant Slalom 1. Pecunis, Cameron 1:24.48

- **U14 Men's, Giant Slalom**
- 3. Morton, Carter 1:19.25
- 5. Pecunies, Ian 1:20.54 6. Wenger, Ryan 1:20.73
- 7. Ditullio, Anthony 1:21.14 9. Klug, Finn 1:22.69
- 13. McRae, Finnegan 1:26.90
- 17. Brown, Walter 1:32.17
- 19. Ueland, Dane 1:36.57

### 24. Ardia, Vincent 1:58.75

- U12 Men's, Giant Slalom
- 2. Ditullio, Dominic 1:23.99
- 4. Harder, Elijah 1:30.28 5. Sheil, Cullen 1:32.12
- 12. Rupprecht, Hans 1:40.98
- 16. Jennings, Jack 1:43.32
- 17. Alessi, Luke 1:47.28 20. Barker, Liam 1:52.44
- 23. Sullivan, Connor 1:55.22 24. Givens, Brayden 1:56.63

- **U10 Men's Giant Slalom** 2. Swain, Weston 1:37.61
- 7. Klug, Gus 1:41.22
- 9. Johnson, Jesse 1:48.65
- 11. Johnson, Rex 1:51.46
- 12. Schreiner, Michael 1:54.97
- 14. Charles, Micah 1:56.87

#### 15. Hardan, Ethan 1:59.77 17. McGuire, Rory 2:12.27

- **U8 Men's Giant Slalom**
- 1. Seed, Wyatt 1:58.67 3. McGuire, Graham 2:13.57

#### Jan. 17, 2021

**U16 Men's Slalom** 1. Pencunies, Cameron 1:21.17

#### U14 Men's, Slalom

- 3. Ditullio, Anthony 1:15.01 3 5. McRae, Finnegan 1:18.05
- 6. Pecunies, Ian 1:19.08
- 13. Bourret, Cooper 1:29.83 14. Brown, Walter 1:32.69
- 15. Ueland, Dane 1:34.15 19. Talla, Russell 1:41.75 23. Ardia, Vincent 1:54.58

#### U12 Men's, Slalom

- 2. Sheil, Cullen 1:29.31
- 4. Mittelstaedt, Ty 1:32.01
- 7. Jennings, Jack 1:38.56 10. Frank, Emerson 1:40.02
- 11. Rupprecht, Hans 1:41.19
- 15. Sullivan, Connor 1:51.09 17. Alessi, Luke 1:53.11

18. Givens, Brayden 1:57.62

#### 19. Barker, Liam 1:57.96

- U10 Men's, Slalom 1. Klug, Gus 1:34.32
- 2. Swain, Weston 1:36.32
- 3. Johnson, Rex 1:43.49 5. Kelsay, Jaxson 1:44.22
- 8. Johnson, Jesse 1:48.76 12. Alessi, Teddy 1:57.39

13. Schreiner, Michael 2:00.80

#### 14. Hardan, Ethan 2:03.80 U8 Men's, Slalom

#### 1. Seed, Wyatt 2013 2:02.97 5. Givens, Kyler 2:40.58

## Jackson, WY FIS Series

#### Jan. 19, 2021

Men's Slalom, Race 1 44. Kirchmayr, Luke 1:45.40

## 60. Hassman, Kjetil 2:20.24

#### Men's Slalom, Race 2 39. Hassman, Kjetil 1:49.48

- Jan. 20, 2021
- **Men's Giant Slalom** 30. Unger, Caleb 1:45.65 57. Hassman Kjetil 1:53.44

#### 59. Kirchmayr Luke 1:54.23

#### Jan. 21, 2021

- **Men's Giant Slalom** 22. Unger, Caleb 1:39.52
- 42. Hassman, Kjetil 1:45.03 44. Kirchmayr, Luke 1:45.87

#### Jan. 22, 2021

Women's Slalom, Race 1 55. St.Cyr, Franci 1:57.63

#### 64. Davis Hillary 2:11.41 Women's Slalom Race 2

54. St.Cyr, Franci 1:53.91 63. Johnson, Winter 2:10.79

67. Davis, Hillary 2:25.76

### Jan. 23, 2021

#### Women's Giant Slalom 48. St.Cyr, Franci 1:56.66

60. Johnson, Winter 2:05.96 Jan. 24, 2021

#### Women's Giant Slalom

61. Johnson, Winter 2:05.81

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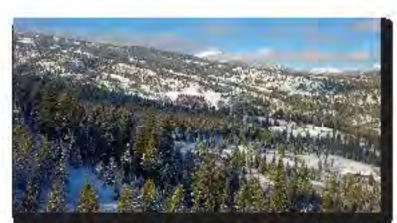
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# **Big Sky Resort Dining Guide**

#### PHOTOS COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

The average downhill skier burns somewhere between 300-500 calories per hour. No matter how hard you shred—whether you're squeezing in as many tram laps as you can, or spending time between green runs carrying your toddler around by the hood—one undisputed fact is that a day on the mountain is always better with a good meal.

Luckily, after some serious renovations to Vista Hall over the summer of 2019, Big Sky Resort has a myriad of options when it comes to food and drink. From sushi to baked goods, a local brew or warm craft cocktail, there's no need to throw those boots into walk mode—most establishments are within reach of the mountain.

#### **COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS**

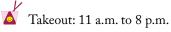
The service industry is no stranger to the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, and Big Sky Resort's dining guide is no exception. Luckily, most options in our dining guide offer reservation seating, takeout and online order options! A few reminders:

- Face coverings are required for those five and older in the base area, and indoors
- Maintain a six-foot distance from those you did not ride to the resort with whenever possible, indoors and out.
- Patrons are strongly urged to pay with a credit card to limit the exchange
- Resort employees are required to wear face coverings at all times and undergo health screenings prior to each shift.
- Stay home if you have any signs of illness!
- Due to adaptations made necessary by the pandemic, some of the hours listed below may change without notice.

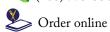
#### **AT THE RESORT**

#### Swifty Takeout and Delivery









Swifty offers quick Asian-inspired bites and soft drinks to go with convenient online ordering. Located in the Yellowstone Conference Center, they also have a fun kids' menu to soothe those post magic-carpet turns.

#### Carabiner





OPEN 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. (406) 995-8078





Online ordering

A fan favorite and landing in the ranks of the Best of Big Sky's Best Après, the Carabiner offers a lounge atmosphere and spectacular views from the Summit Hotel. They boast farm-to-table sustainability from local food sources and a menagerie of local brews on tap.

#### Chet's Bar & Grill







(406) 995-5784



Named after famed Big Sky Resort founder Chet Huntley, Chet's Bar and Grill is a family-friendly tavern with a full liquor shelf for those favorite après ski cocktails. Located in the Huntley Lodge, the grill has a full dinner and dessert menu as well as a kids' menu with a B-Bar Ranch bratwurst you might have to snag off their plate.

#### Montana Jack

Online ordering 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. (406) 995-5786 Online ordering

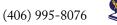




Located on the ground floor in The Exchange building, Montana Jack is hard to miss. With a seemingly endless burger menu and full bar, spacious seating and live music to boot, it'll be hard to leave the resort. If the description "lively taphouse" speaks to you, you won't want to miss Montana Jack on your way home from your final run of the day.

#### **Peaks**

Breakfast: 6:30-10 a.m. Lunch: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dinner: 4-10 p.m.



Online ordering

Reservations



If you're the type who's halfway down the Big Couloir and thinks, "Man, I could bite into a bone-in bison ribeye, medium rare right now," then you may want to aim your line toward Peaks in the Summit Hotel. The resort's chophouse boasts farm-to-table local cuts and sides, was voted Dinner's Choice 2020, and in addition to breakfast, lunch and dinner, also offers a kids' menu, dessert, craft cocktails and a robust wine list.

#### Pizza Works





Online ordering

Located in the resort along the shopping strip, Pizza Works is an easy grab-and-go option. Whether it's summer and you're lounging on the grass watching the zipliners defeat gravity, or on your way back to the hotel in need of a pizza pie for the squad, Pizza Works is an ol'reliable Big Sky staple.

#### Westward Social





Wed.-Sun. 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.



(406) 995-5723



Online ordering

Reservations

Westward Social is one of The Exchange's newest additions. Located downstairs between Montana Jack and the Summit Hotel, the menu provides chef-inspired unique dishes, including crispy fried oysters and a crispy Angus beef short rib, as well as a fresh atmosphere. Alongside cocktails, enjoy live DJs and a round of bar Olympics.

#### **Huntley Dining Room**





6:30-10:30 a.m. (406) 995-5785

Breakfast is the most important meals of the day—at least that's what the Huntley believes. The Huntley Dining Room inside Huntley Lodge offers hearty breakfast options to sustain you on the slopes. The buffet includes eggs, toast and chef-made specials for every palate.

#### Mocha in the Huntley



OPEN 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (406) 995-5542



Cozy up to the Firehole Lounge just inside the Huntley Lodge lobby for a pastry, bagel or warm mocha to fuel your day before heading out to the mountains.

#### Hungry Moose Market & Deli



6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. (406) 995-3075



The Hungry Moose Market and Deli has been Big Sky's family-owned grocer since 1994 and can be relied on for all your snack cravings. They serve some of the best to-go breakfast and lunch sandwiches around, have a wide selection of soft drinks and canned brews, warm deli food and much more. Food supply aside, you're bound to be greeted by a friendly employee.

#### Yeti Dogs



11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (253) 797-2017



Hot or cold? Yeti Dogs has both. From gourmet ice cream to fully locked and loaded hot dogs (or tofu dogs) absolutely maxed out on toppings, this Best of Big Sky alumni has every flavor craving on their menu you can imagine.

#### **VISTA HALL**

#### **Deluxe Grill**



8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Deluxe Grill serves scrumptious burgers and curly fries to be enjoyed inside Vista Hall or to go! With daily specials and a double-patty option, the aroma of those freshly-seasoned fries are sure to make you snack before you get to your seat.

#### Illy Café & Bakery



8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Have you done a double-take on a pastry? How about one resting among its cohorts behind a display case, the flaky buttery crust filled with Nutella? Illy's has head-turners like this and more. Located inside Vista Hall, the new bakery offers smoothies, coffees and other warm drinks as well as sandwiches and additional bites.

#### Stone Fired Pizza



11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Stone Fired is one of Vista Hall's new additions that offers fresh, made-daily Sicilianstyle slices and made-to-order whole wood-fired pizzas for the squad. From fungi to pepperoni, the menu offers a variety of different toppings to choose from-enjoy a slice or pie inside Vista Hall, or take it to the lift.

#### Sushi + Bowls



OPEN 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Online ordering

Japan is known for its big mountain skiing. Big Sky is known for its big mountain skiing. The two cultures just seem to mesh. Now, you can stop by for a warm ramen, sushi roll or poke bowl in Vista Hall at Sushi + Bowls for there, or to go.

#### Taqueria



OPEN 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Street tacos, all lined up, piping hot and ready to be enjoyed by you. The Vista Hall Taqueria offers mix and match street tacos with both traditional and fusion-inspired toppings to go for whatever mood you're in.

#### Vista Bar



OPEN 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

You're sitting outside on the second floor of the Exchange on the new Vista Hall deck, gazing up as the sun sets on Lone Mountain, and pointing out all the sweet lines you skied to your friends. Need a refill? The window to the Vista Bar has your back—no going inside necessary. With possibly the best view in the house and bar top and lounge seating, Vista Bar is an après dream.

#### **ON THE MOUNTAIN**

#### Headwaters Grille



OPEN 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (406) 993-6655



A Madison Base Area haunt for all ages, Headwaters Grille offers cozy indoor seating or outdoor seating on those warmer days. Inside there's a full bar, a robust inventory of snacks as well as warm soup, salads and much more!

#### Montana Dinner Yurt

Reservation only



(406) 995-3880

Doesn't a snowcat-accessed meal always taste a little better? This intimate dining experience is one you'll want to save for the fanciest of dates. After a 15-minutes snowcat ride, you'll be welcomed by a torch-lit entry, candle-lit tables and a toasty wood fire inside the yurt. Multi-course dinners include homemade soups, filet mignon, garlic mashed potatoes and scrumptious chocolate cake. Afterward? Sledding and stargazing.

#### Shedhorn Grill

OPEN 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (406) 995-3880



The ski-in, ski-out, on-hill yurt is perfect for a quick bite or brew before hitting the mountain again with full-force. The Shedhorn deck sits at 9,032 feet above sea level and offers 360-degree views of Lone Mountain and other surrounding vistas.

#### **Uncle Dan's Cookies**

The hardest part of coming across Uncle Dan's Cookies is choosing which flavor you want. Is it a peanut butter chocolate chip kind of day? Or do you have a hankering for all of the ingredients in the Big Sky Cookie? Uncle Dan's has on-hill huts in two locations—at the base of the Powder Seeker lift as well as the bottom of the Six Shooter lift—and both serve cookies and paninis as well as warm and cold drinks.

#### MOUNTAIN VILLAGE PROPER

#### The Cabin Bar & Grill

Lunch: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Happy Hour: 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Dinner: 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

406-995-4244

The Cabin is a family-owned locals favorite that offers casual dining with a view ... and a fantastic happy hour. Their menu includes fresh-caught fish, hand-trimmed steaks and nightly specials. Located on the third floor of the Arrowhead Mall in Mountain Village, no matter what you order, it'll always be paired with a breathtaking view of Lone Mountain.

#### Scissorbills Saloon



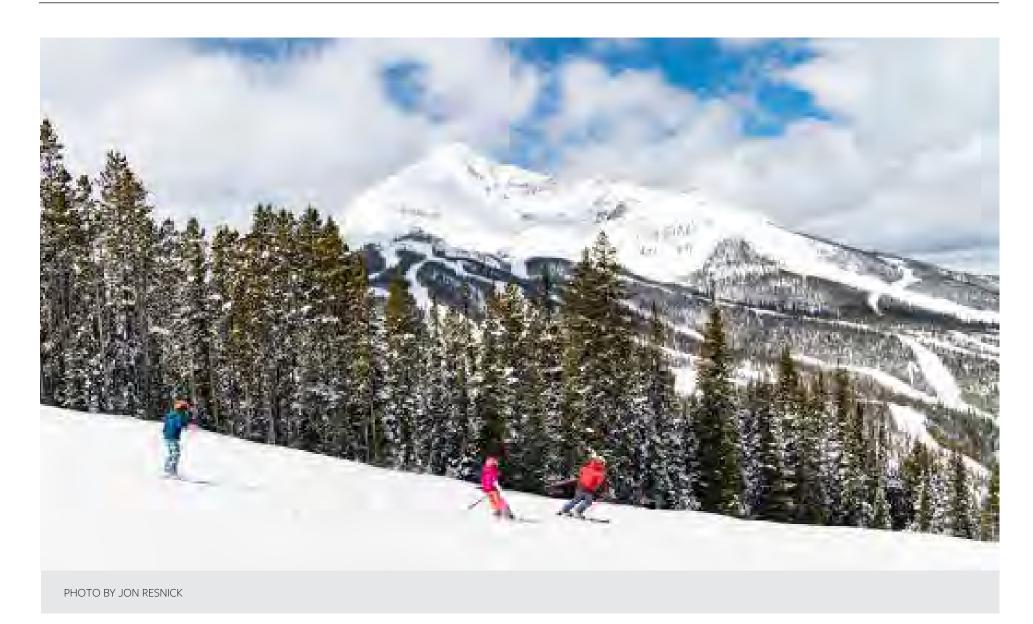


OPEN 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. (406) 995-4933

Ski right into the backdoor of Scissorbills Saloon for a burger and brew after your last run of the day and you won't be disappointed. Locally owned and operated, they're located on the third floor of the Arrowhead Mall and offer an impressive menu of classic bar appetizers and burgers, as well as hot sandwiches, salads and craft cocktails.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEITH KUHNS



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

# Carbon offset program to help skiers reduce footprint

#### BY GABRIELLE GASSER

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

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

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

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

The calculator takes into account details such as method of travel, length of stay, lodging and number of travelers. Guests will then have the option to choose their offset level

which could be 100 percent in order to be totally carbon-neutral or up to 200 percent to go above and beyond.

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

Tradewater destroys some of the most volatile greenhouse gases ever created, chlorofluorocarbon refrigerants, which are 10,900 times more potent than carbon dioxide. The company has destroyed over 1 million pounds of CFCs to date and has prevented the equivalent of 4.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere.

"Managing and destroying refrigerants is an essential strategy for fighting climate change," said Tim Brown, CEO of Tradewater. "This partnership gives Big Sky skiers the opportunity to help collect and destroy some of the most potent greenhouse gases that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere."

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

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

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

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

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



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





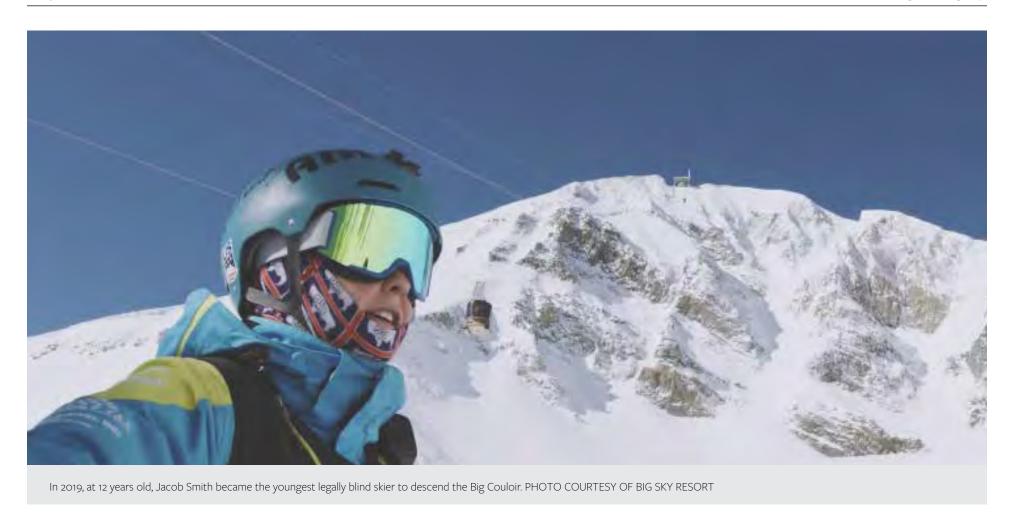
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## Jacob Smith: A lesson in resilience

#### BY DOUG HARE

BIG SKY – For many avid skiers, skiing Big Sky Resort's Big Couloir is a feather in the cap for those looking to challenge themselves on some of the most difficult and breathtaking inbounds terrain in North America. One wrong move, one miscalculation can be catastrophic, sending the skier down a rocky 40-plus degree slope with little hope of self-arrest.

During the final days of the 2019 ski season, 12-year-old Jacob Smith and his father Nathan skied "the Big." While knocking off Big Sky's

most iconic run off the list is an impressive feat at such a young age, there is another detail that deserves mention—Jake Smith is legally blind.

He vividly recalls being 8-years-old and playing Bocce with his three siblings Andrew, Preston and Julia during a camping trip, but he was having a hard time seeing the pallino, the smaller ball that sets the target for the game, if it went 20 yards away.

After visiting numerous doctors, Smith was diagnosed with a meningioma or brain tumor "the size of a grapefruit," he says, that was putting extreme pressure on his optic nerve. Since then, the North Dakota-native has been through nine surgeries and six weeks of radiation as the tumor continued coming back causing him to lose most of his sight permanently.

"After I woke up from the first surgery,
I couldn't even see the walls in the room,"

Smith said. "But my sight has improved since then. I can see shapes but colors are tough for me." His most recent medical report shows no signs of the tumor returning.

Smith, who competes for the Big Sky freeride team, had originally planned to conquer the Big Couloir when he was just 10 years old. "I was supposed to meet my dad at the top of the tram one day but I forgot to charge my phone and we never met up," Smith said about that fateful morning. "I crashed pretty hard later that day on some terrain off of the Challenger lift and fractured my femur into 60 pieces."

Most people faced with visual impairment, and after severely damaging the biggest bone in their body, might try to stay out of harm's way. Smith's physical setbacks had the opposite effect on his mentality giving him a kind of fearlessness that comes with adopting a worst-is-behindme attitude toward life.

"I decided after that injury that worrying wasn't going to be that helpful. I still knew I would ski the Big Couloir one day," Smith said.

Smith's dad Nathan, a farmer from North Dakota, has been taking Jake and his older brothers and eventually his younger sister to ski at Big

Sky Resort since Jake was three years old. Nowadays, the Smith family spends most of the winter in Big Sky and enjoys spending quality time on Lone Mountain.

When asked about how he managed to ski the Big Couloir with limited vision, Smith replies with humility and a touch a wry wit: "Well, the snow conditions were good and my dad was able to give me some directions during the harder spots. The traverse out was actually the most difficult part because I had trouble seeing where the edge was," Smith said.

Persons who lose one of their senses often report that other senses seem amplified in ways that help them cope. Smith reports that he has indeed become more in tune with other manners of engaging the world around him that don't involve eyesight.

"It's hard to explain," he said. "The other day I clapped in the kitchen and asked my mom if she could feel the vibrations. She thought I was crazy but really I could sense the outline

of the room by feeling the reverberations."

What's up next for the blind skier? The young man is hoping for a seeing-eye dog when he turns 16.

Given the grit and resilience he's already demonstrated so early in life, it would be hard to doubt that he'll accomplish anything he sets his mind to. A version of this story was originally published in the May 24, 2019 edition of Explore Big Sky. The video of Jacob Smith making his historic descent of





To watch the video of Smith skiing the Big Couloir, scan the





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