

Big Sky

March 26 - April 8, 2021
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FAC: One year on the virtual stage

Housing rush leaves locals behind

Arming women with self-defense

Exploring our plastic crisis

Music Spotlight: Brian Stumpf



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ON THE COVER:

To celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Friday Afternoon Club, Jamie McLean joined viewers from all over the country on Friday, March 19. EBS created a collage of the different performers FAC has hosted in the last year. GRAPHIC BY MARY ELIZABETH BROWN

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One year on the virtual stage

Shortly after Big Sky Resort shut down in March 2020, Jamie McLean took to the virtual stage, providing an opportunity for those stuck in quarantine to connect through live music. This month, the Friday Afternoon Club celebrates a year of bringing live music to starved audiences and artists during a time of social isolation.

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Housing rush leaves locals behind

Jim and Andrea Hawthorne have worked and lived in the Gallatin Valley community for 26 years and raised five kids here. As they approach retirement, they're finding it's unlikely they will be able to afford to stay—an issue many locals can relate to as the valley grows.

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Arming women with self-defense

In response to an increasingly tense political environment and shocking statistics concerning intimate partner violence, one gym is offering self-protection skills to women where they not only learn how to respond to bad situations but also how to analyze and sense danger before it escalates.

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Exploring our plastic crisis

The Gallatin Valley Earth Days' "2040" event series presents a free online screening of the documentary, "The Story of Plastic," which takes a deep dive into the history of plastic production. GVED also has a full docket of events planned leading up to a community Earth Day Festival.

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Music Spotlight: Brian Stumpf

Brian Stumpf arrived in Big Sky in 2005 and now the talented musician has carved out a niche in the local live music scene. Alongside performing, Stumpf is embracing his new role booking acts for Tips Up, Big Sky's newest dedicated music venue.

Opening Shot



As a part of the federal allocation of COVID-19 vaccines for K-12 educators, the Big Sky School District hosted a clinic in the Ophir gymnasium on March 19 for teachers and school staff. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

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25 TOWN CENTER AVENUE | 145 TOWN CENTER AVENUE | 66 MOUNTAIN LOOP ROAD | 181 CLUBHOUSE FORK



Spring is around the corner bringing with it celebrations like Easter and Holi. What’s a celebration or tradition your family has in springtime?



Eileen Pritchard
Big Sky, MT

“My mom gardens so we’d always start seeds around Easter time but in like, eggshells. Because you can plant them right into the ground when they start growing. And Easter baskets, we’d always get the really big chocolate bunnies.”



Kara Haygart
Big Sky, MT

“As a kid we definitely always did an Easter egg hunt in my mom’s garden with family and friends. I personally haven’t celebrated Easter in a long time, but I’m looking forward to outdoor rock climbing. Maybe I’ll do that for Easter this year.”



Andy Haynes
Big Sky, MT

Pond Skim at Big Sky Resort. Spring skiing is fun and [Pond Skim] is an entertaining day of spring skiing. It’s cool to see that the ski culture is still quasi-alive. People are having fun and smiling in the sunshine.



Marian Brogan, Gary Segel
South Jersey

He’s Jewish and I’m Catholic. Growing up and raising our kids, we had Easter dinner and Easter baskets and dyed Easter eggs. And this time of year you get to ride bikes and put on jogging shoes again.

We had Passover dinner with family. I never really enjoyed the matza. As a Jew, I like Easter. I’d rather have jellybeans and candy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

First ever international flights to Montana. Could it happen?

Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport continues to grow by the week it seems, with airlines continuing to announce new service and new routes to and from the Gallatin Valley it’s safe to say there is a huge desire for travel into the region. Could we ever see an international flight to BZN?

How soon? We all know BZN is one of the main airports that attracts tourists wanting to visit the one-of-a-kind Yellowstone National Park. Yellowstone attracts tourists from all over the globe. Tourists from Asian countries seem to be the most interested in seeing what Yellowstone is all about. So why isn’t there a direct flight from say Tokyo, Beijing or Soul already? There’s no doubt it would be profitable, especially during peak summertime travel with a seasonal service to and from one of those major hubs. During wintertime and when travel to Yellowstone is at its lowest point in the year the international gate could be used for vacationers wanting to escape the cold should an airline seek interest to say Cancun or Cozumel, both popular winter time destinations.

Obviously if Montana ever was to see an international flight BZN would first have some infrastructure hurdles they need to jump. First being a runway expansion so that it could accommodate larger/heavier aircraft like ones that would be used for the long haul across the pacific. Secondly it would need to have a gate and extended ramp for such aircraft, with that gate it would need to have a customs portion of the building to separate the domestic part of the terminal from the International part of the terminal and customs agents to staff it.

It may seem like small town Montana isn’t capable of having international flights but I say it is possible.

Anthony Silvis
Former Bozeman resident
Indianapolis, Indiana

Big Sky to vote on transportation district expansion

To the Editor:

On Tuesday, May 4, Big Sky residents will be asked to vote on whether to expand the boundaries of the Big Sky Transportation to match the Big Sky Resort Area District.

The Transportation District was formed in 1991. Many of the current neighborhoods, clubs and resorts did not exist at the time. For example, parts of the Town Center are not within the transportation district.

While BSTD legally operates services outside of the district’s boundary lines, it makes sense as Big Sky grows to have the transportation district match the boundaries of the Big Sky Resort Area District. Expanding the boundaries of the transportation district will better reflect its current service area, work provided by the Skyline transportation system.

The expansion of the district does not necessarily mean that the service will be expanding to all of these areas, it’s more of a “housekeeping process” for Big Sky so that all the districts are in alignment.

The Big Sky Resort Area District is the largest source of local funds for the Big Sky Transportation District, so it makes sense that these two districts have the same boundaries. The largest overall funding source for the transportation district is through federal money via the Montana Department of Transportation.

Voting “yes,” will not have any financial impact on the Big Sky community, as the transportation district does not levy any property or other taxes. A “yes” vote on the May 4 ballot will only be in favor of aligning the boundary of BSTD to BSRAD.

We urge you to help the transportation district better reflect the growth in the Big Sky community by voting “yes” and expanding its boundaries.

David Kack
Big Sky Transportation District



BETTER TOGETHER

A monthly District bulletin

BIG SKY RELIEF

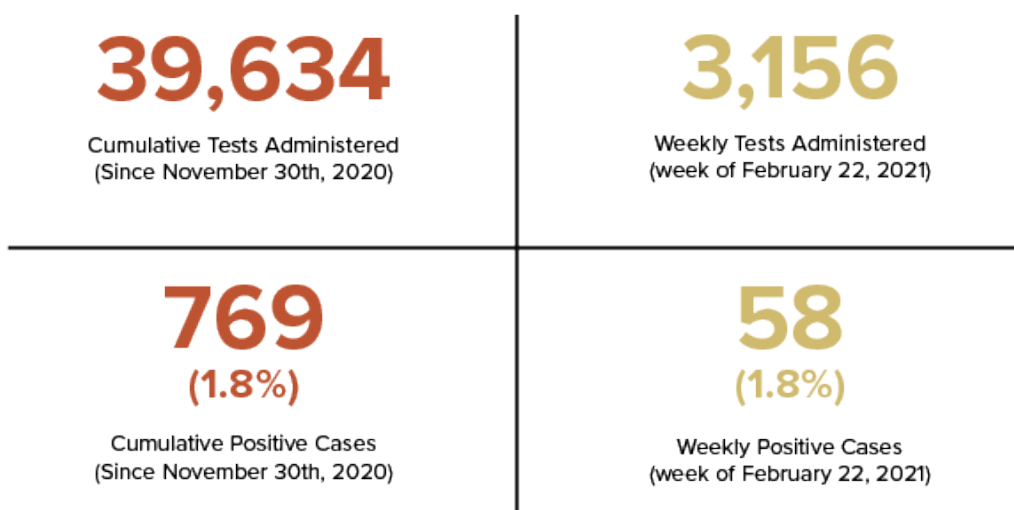
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Community Testing Dashboard



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- Gallatin-City County Health Department (Bozeman)
- Madison Valley Medical Center (Big Sky)

Visit: BigSkyRelief.org/vaccinations for up-to-date vaccine clinic information

Did you know...

Big Sky Resort Area District is a founding partner of Big Sky Relief.

District Events

FY22 Funding Applications Available
ResortTax.org/funding



Board Meeting*
@ 9:00am
Via Zoom



FY22 Funding Application Deadline
ResortTax.org/funding



Board Meeting*
@ 9:00am
Via Zoom



Memorial Day
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Application Review Meeting #1*
@ 5:30 pm



Application Review Meeting #2*
@ 5:30 pm



*All meetings are open to the public and held via Zoom. Public comments are welcome and highly encouraged.

Visit ResortTax.org to join.

Now Accepting Funding Applications

The District is accepting applications for the FY22 (July 2021-June 2022) funding cycle beginning March 1, 2021. As required by law, an applicant must be a legal entity formed under the laws of the State of Montana. The applicant must be located within the Resort Area District. The applicant must be a governmental unit, corporation, or limited partnership with the capability of being legally bound by an agreement. Applications must be completed using the online application portal and submitted by Thursday, April 15, 2021, to be considered for funding.

For more info visit:
ResortTax.org/funding



Gallatin County Election Department nationally recognized for 2020 election efforts

GALLATIN MEDIA CENTER

BOZEMAN – The Gallatin County Election Department recently received national recognition from the Election Assistance Commission for its mobile satellite program that was used during the 2020 general election.

The EAC is a federal agency that was created by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to serve as a clearinghouse for election administration information. In fulfilling this mission, the EAC gives annual Clearinghouse Awards known as “Clearies” to election offices across the country to highlight and celebrate exceptional efforts in public service. The Gallatin County Election Department received an honorable mention for outstanding innovations in elections for small jurisdictions. While not a Clearinghouse Award, this is the first time an election office in Montana has received recognition by the EAC.

“It’s an honor,” said Casey Hayes, Gallatin County election manager. “It’s great to be recognized for some of the hard work and extra effort that went in to making the 2020 election cycle as successful as it could be. Everybody who works in the department had an active role in making this pilot program successful and we are hopeful that we can do this again in 2022.”

Working with local partners across the county, the election department established a mobile satellite office in Belgrade, Three Forks, Manhattan, West Yellowstone, Big Sky and the campus of Montana State University in the weeks leading up to Election Day. Over 2,000 voters were able to register, vote in-person, and deposit their voted ballot at the satellite office before Nov. 3. The election department built on these experiences in order to provide a satellite voting office at the fairgrounds on Election Day, which significantly reduced wait times and lines.

Gianforte warned for trapping, killing wolf

EBS STAFF

Gov. Greg Gianforte was issued a written warning by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for illegally trapping and killing a wolf on Feb. 15. The trapping took place on private land about 10 miles north of Yellowstone National Park. The landowner, Robert E. Smith, was a contributor to Gianforte’s 2017 congressional campaign and director of the Sinclair Broadcasting Group.

Although he had a trapping license, Gianforte had not completed his trapping certification course. Montana FWP says that a written warning is standard in such cases.

“After learning that he had not completed the wolf-trapping certification, Governor Gianforte immediately rectified the mistake and enrolled in the wolf-trapping education course,” said Gianforte spokesperson, Brooke Stroyke in an email to Montana Free Press. “The governor had all other proper licenses.”

Wildlife advocacy groups spoke out against the governor’s actions, condemning him for “trophy hunting,” and disturbing a key species that ensures Yellowstone is a biologically diverse ecosystem. Simultaneously, there are two measures that would expand wolf trapping in Montana expected to reach Gianforte’s desk any day now.

Bozeman Health forms new partnership with Life Flight

EBS STAFF

Sometimes, no matter how careful we are, there’s a need to get to the hospital, fast. In order to meet that need and expand ambulatory services in the Gallatin Valley and surrounding communities, last week Bozeman Health announced a new partnership with Life Flight.

Life Flight is a nonprofit that provides helicopters and fix-wing planes for emergency transport and has been serving Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana for over 40 years. Bozeman Health says it will most often use the services to transport patients from hospital to hospital—such as from Deaconess in Bozeman to Big Sky Medical Center, and vice versa—in order to free up ground ambulances.

“As the region grows, we just need more resources at all levels,” said Dr. Kathryn Bertany, the president of Deaconess Hospital and Big Sky Medical Center, at a press conference in the Life Flight Network hangar at the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport. “We are super excited about our new partnership with Life Flight.”

Gallatin County expands vaccine eligibility, emphasizes at-risk groups

GALLATIN CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

BOZEMAN – On Tuesday, Mar. 23, after meeting with community stakeholders and healthcare professionals, Gallatin City-County Health Department confirmed that it would follow the state’s expanded eligibility criteria starting on April 1. That means people age 16 and older will be eligible to receive vaccines. The Health Department emphasized, however, that it will continue to provide expanded access to people in higher-risk groups, including those 60 and older, people with certain underlying health conditions, and people of color and American Indians.

In order to provide access to people in those higher-risk groups, the Health Department will likely hold some clinics that are open only to people over 60 years old and those in higher-risk populations. Demand for the vaccine from those groups continues to outpace supplies of vaccine available in Gallatin County.

“We’re determined to make vaccines available to those who have been eligible for some time and waiting,” said Matt Kelley, health officer in Gallatin County. “At the same time, we also will be working to expand access to younger people as outlined in the state’s expanded eligibility criteria.”

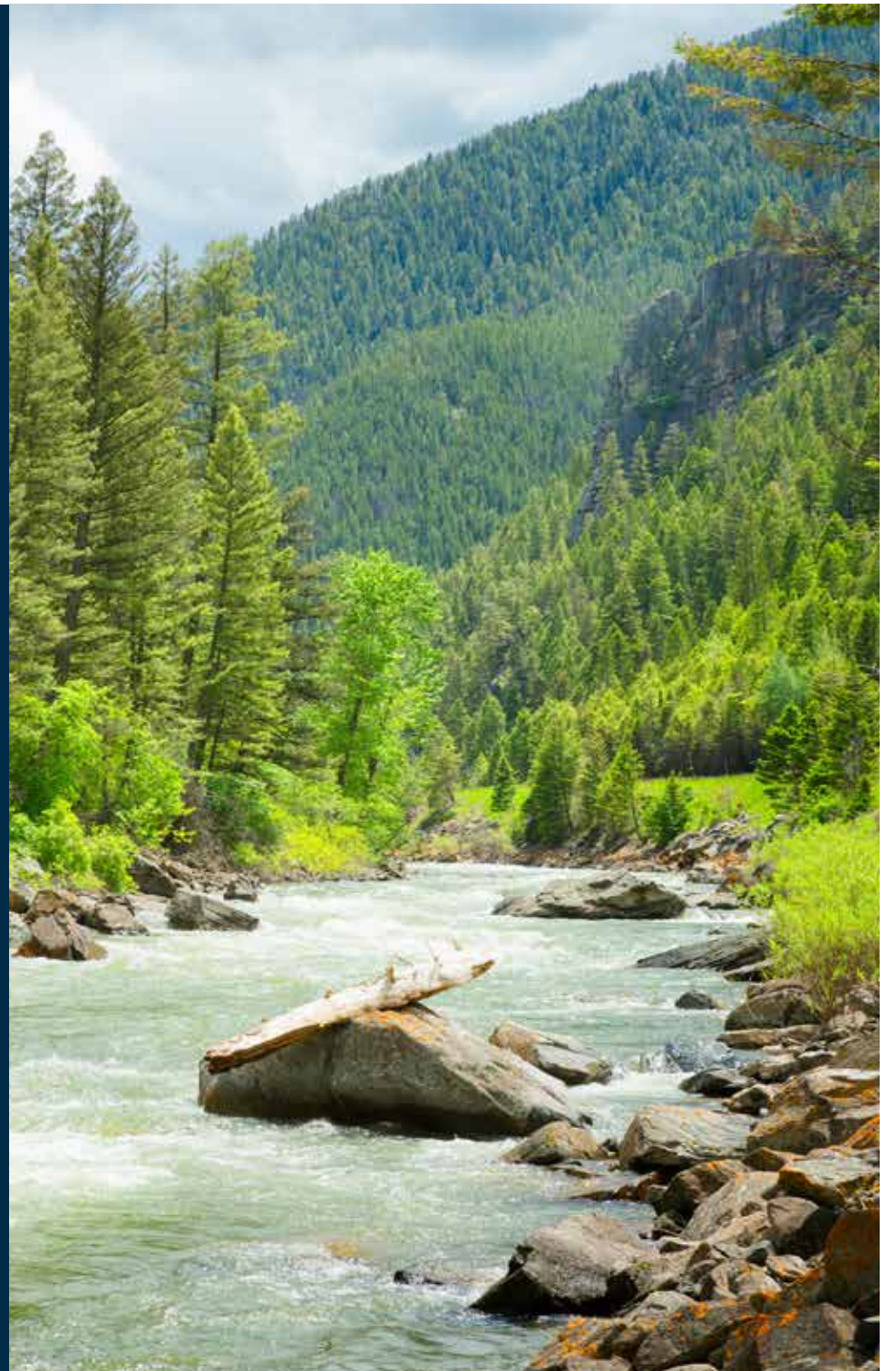
The Gallatin City-County Health Department Call Center is open six days a week, Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to answer questions about COVID-19. Reach the Call Center by phone at 406-548-0123 or email at callcenter@readygallatin.com.

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Last summer, Big Sky PBR was cancelled due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic. This summer marks the tenth anniversary of the event and plans are underway for a full week of family-friendly events culminating with PBR. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

Summer 2021 events in Big Sky

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – One tumultuous year after the pandemic struck southwest Montana, summertime is around the corner, and many hope the warm weather will bring with it some classic Big Sky events.

Currently, vaccines are being distributed and the outlook for events this summer is hopeful. Last summer, after widespread closures and state mandates, Montana was just starting to tentatively reopen at the beginning of May. Many of the classic events that make a summer in Big Sky so fun were canceled in 2020.

Now in 2021, plans are being made in conjunction with county health officials that will ideally allow for COVID-safe events this summer. Currently, the Gallatin City-County Health Department has limitations on gatherings, but health officials say these could change in response to the quickly evolving pandemic situation.

On March 16, Gov. Greg Gianforte announced that vaccines will be made available to all Montanans starting April 1, a move which could potentially help accelerate the return of larger in-person events.

“We just as much as everyone want to see a return to some normalcy and we hope that we can,” said Lori Christenson, the health department’s environmental health director. “It’s reasonable to expect that we’ll likely not

see shoulder to shoulder concerts but [we are] moving in that direction where we can see people enjoying music outdoors.”

One such event will be Music in the Mountains, the free summer concert series put on by the Arts Council of Big Sky. For over a decade this event has gathered the Big Sky community on Thursday evenings for family fun in the Town Center Park, now called Len Hill park.

Currently, construction on the new BASE community center has closed the park but Kate Ketschek, chair of Big Sky Community Organization, said it will be open in time for this summer.

The plan for Music in the Mountains this summer is still in the works and the Arts Council will adapt as the situation develops according to Brian Hurlbut, executive director of the Arts Council. He pointed out that it would currently be difficult to hold a compliant event in the park since it’s a completely open space with no assigned seating or way to restrict access.

“We are planning on moving forward with having some type of concerts this summer and trying to work within those guidelines, whatever they may be,” Hurlbut said. “As an organization, we really don’t want to go through another summer without live music so we’re pretty determined to come up with some creative solutions, and make sure the community can gather in whatever way we can figure it out.”

In addition to live outdoor music, the Arts Council has a few other items on the docket.

Hurlbut confirmed that Shakespeare in the Park will perform on July 19 and the Arts Council is still moving forward with their classical music festival, rebranded as Bravo Big Sky, on Aug. 13 and 14. Finally, the Mountain Film Festival is still scheduled for the weekend of Sept. 11, but could be another drive-in event depending on county regulations at that time.

Another outdoor music event that will likely return to Big Sky this summer in an altered form is the Moonlight Music Festival, which was canceled in 2020 due to concerns over the pandemic.

“We decided not to do a full-fledged festival this summer, [but] we may explore some smaller possible events out there in lieu of the festival for this year,” said Bayard Dominick, VP of planning and development at Lone Mountain Land Company. “We haven’t decided on anything definitive yet.”

Now is the time many organizations typically plan summer events and book artists, but the evolving regulations and uncertainty around events spaces is making it difficult to make conclusive calls. Some are calling for a permanent events center in town.



Every Wednesday evening during the summer, the Big Sky Farmers Market draws crowds to the many tents to shop their various offerings. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

While no concrete plans are in place for a permanent events center in Big Sky, the need has been recognized, according to Dominick.

“We certainly talk often about having a more permanent bigger event venue but there’s nothing specific yet in the works,” he said. “There are lots of possibilities in the full build out of Town Center someday.”

Outdoor concert planners are still facing many question marks, but indoor/virtual music has been thriving and will ramp up this summer.

Every Friday for the past year, Explore Big Sky and its publishing company Outlaw Partners have held the Friday Afternoon Club, a hybrid virtual-live concert series featuring local, regional and national artists. FAC organizers are planning to run the music series as a live concert each Friday throughout the summer.

“We’re looking forward to another summer of FAC on Fridays at 5 p.m.,” said Ennion Williams, VP of events at Outlaw Partners. “As soon as the weather warms up we’re going to start having them outside.”

Tips Up restaurant in Town Center has been offering weekly live music which has drawn crowds that line up out the door. Owner Casey Durham said the plan is to keep offering live music all summer and to bump it up to four nights a week from Wednesday through Saturday.

“It’s been great and everybody’s had a blast,” Durham said. “Thanks to the community for understanding our COVID protocols ... and limited capacity, because I know we have had some lines out the door, which is hard not letting people in but we’re trying to do the right thing.”

Durham’s hope is that the live music at Tips Up will “feed off that energy from Farmers Market and the same thing with Music in the Mountains, and just continue that energy into Tips Up into a little nightlife.”

Big Sky residents can also count on the Farmers Market held every Wednesday evening from June through August. Last summer, the market was deemed essential and continued to occur throughout the pandemic. This summer, the market will continue to prevail and offer a much-needed opportunity for the Big Sky community to gather and socialize outside.

Big Sky’s Biggest Week is also set to go off on schedule the week of July 16-24. The week is set to feature the Big Sky Art Auction, Mutton Bustin’ for kids, a golf tournament, live music and of course, the Big Sky PBR.

This year, tickets for the PBR event went on sale the morning of March 1 and sold out in part due to the fact that ticket holders from the canceled 2020 event had the option to roll them over to this summer.

“We’re excited to bring live events back to Big Sky this summer,” said Megan Paulson, chief operating officer of Outlaw Partners, the event’s producer and publisher of EBS. “It’s been incredible to see the pent-up demand for events already. Big Sky PBR tickets are sold out, and we’ve expanded the festivities to include a full week’s worth of activities from bingo night to family day, a street dance and more to give the community an opportunity to participate throughout the week.”

Summer 2021 will mark the 10-year anniversary of the Big Sky PBR event, an exciting milestone coming at a time when people are craving in-person events.



The Rut is a three day mountain running event held at Big Sky Resort with separate courses on Lone Peak allowing racers to choose their difficulty level. The Rut 50k is the most difficult option featuring 10,500 feet of vertical gain on extremely steep and technical terrain. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

“Outlaw has made a huge investment in COVID protocol and mitigation planning for all our events including Big Sky PBR,” Paulson said. “We have hired an epidemiologist on staff to ensure we’re on top of the latest medical data, federal, state and local governance, and are using this data to support all plans for events this summer.”

Another key player in the Big Sky events scene this summer will be the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center.

After the performing arts were hit hard by the pandemic, WMPAC pulled off an unprecedented winter season through a combination of in-person seating and live streaming performances. According to John Zirkle, executive director of WMPAC, the nonprofit has served more people this year than any other year that it has been operating.

Moving forward, Zirkle said he will continue using some of the innovative presentation formats that the WMPAC has implemented.

“We tried a lot of different things and that’s how we always approach this, and we just have to make sure we listen to our audiences,” he said. “We’re in the room and sometimes moments don’t land like we want and then other times they land beautifully.”

One thing that did land for WMPAC was outdoor programming that Zirkle intends to ramp up. This summer, he has scheduled a Grammy winning choir and is offering outdoor performances in the woods. Audience members will be able to hike out into the experience.

This summer will also see the Artists in Residence program from July 4 through Aug. 1, while other traditions, the High School Musical and Big Sky Broadway, will return in full force this May and August, respectively.

Big Sky Resort will also offer a full docket of events this summer including Lone Peaks Revenge, a Montana Enduro Series mountain bike race; an archery challenge; the Shredfest Clinic which offers mountain biking instruction to women; American Junior Golf Tournament; and of course, The Rut.

“We’re optimistic about hosting events this summer and will continue to work with our state and local partners to ensure that our summer operating plans are both safe and responsible,” said Troy Nedved, general manager of the resort. “As we all know, the COVID situation is fluid and we’re prepared to make adjustments as necessary.”

Christenson, with the county health department, expressed hope that this summer will feature plenty of COVID-safe events for people to enjoy.

“We’re trying to work collaboratively with organizers and vendors to hold events in the safest possible way, knowing that people are wanting to get back to a sense of normalcy, but knowing that we still have individuals to continue to vaccinate,” she said. “We’re still going to need to socially distance and wear masks.”

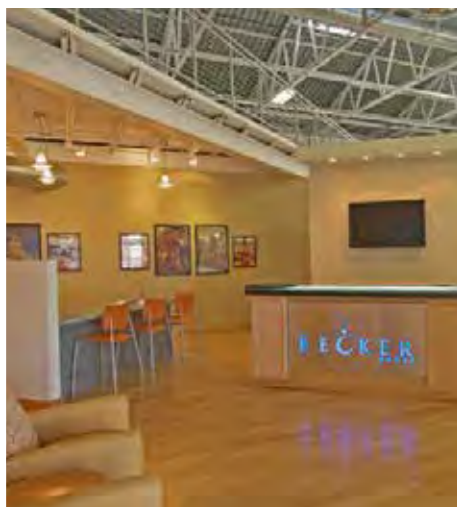
Christenson said the health department has successfully worked in many instances to make sure that events are safe and that they can happen.



The Big Sky community flocks to the stage in Town Center park Thursday nights for Music in the Mountains. This year, the event will likely look different due to county Health Department regulations. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO



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Housing rush leaves some locals behind

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – Andrea Hawthorne was walking her dogs down Cottonwood Canyon Road on the south end of Gallatin Valley when a man pulled his car beside her. He rolled down his window and asked if there was property for sale in the area. They were visiting from Oklahoma, he said, and they intended to move here.

“Just the way he said it,” Hawthorne said of the exchange, “So definitive.” She went back up the road to her own home, one of two employee housing cabins on the property of Yellowstone Alliance Adventures, a Christian youth camp, where she and her husband Jim have lived since they moved here in 1995. Since then, the Hawthornes have raised five kids in this canyon—Jessica, Ellie, Robert, Brianna and Keegan.

“Encroachment has been a real issue,” Jim said. “When we came 25 years ago, there was quite a bit of open space with several neighbor residents. Now, we’ve just had a neighbor sell a two-acre piece of land with a 900 square foot home for \$600,000. So when we think of the nonprofit reality, it’s just ...”

“... the future is uncertain,” Andrea finished the thought.

Much of the Hawthornes’ personal and professional lives are riddled with ironies. They don’t own any portion of the nonprofit they’ve devoted their lives to and although they’ve been provided housing and help with their children’s education, homeownership has always been out of reach, even as they approach retirement.

The Hawthornes met in Wheaton, Illinois and spent the first years of their marriage in Wisconsin. Faith runs deep in their family tree and they wanted their professional endeavors to follow the same path. Andrea’s father, a pastor in White Sulphur Springs at the time, encouraged Jim, who had earned a master’s degree in educational ministries, to interview for an



Yellowstone Alliance Adventures serves surrounding communities such as Townsend, Helena and Billings, but about 60 percent of camp-goers are from the Gallatin Valley. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

executive director position with a nondescript camp south of Bozeman owned by the Christian Missionary Alliance Church.

YAA sits on 80-acres of land and was established in 1961. Its decrepitude made them almost turn down the job, but the board knew it had potential and the Hawthornes were inspired.

Today, YAA offers day and weeklong camps for kids from first grade through high school, including a college councilor program. Andrea calls her husband a “visionary,” and through his eyes they’ve built the campus up to the full-service establishment it is today.

Their programs draw neighboring communities such as Townsend, Helena, Great Falls and Billings, but the Hawthornes estimate 60 percent of their kids are from Gallatin Valley. Some families have been coming for generations—some parents rely on it for daycare. Regardless of reason, everyone who arrives finds in it a sense of community and treasured memories.

“A lot of what I call blood, sweat and tears has gone into this place and into this valley,” Andrea said. “All the people, hundreds ... of people that go through here, we get to serve and give a good week. Our goal is to give kids the greatest week of their life.”

Bozeman is no stranger to the glossy pages of destination and real estate magazines. The pandemic, however, has caused what many call “resortification” to reach a new velocity.

In 2020, according to the Gallatin Association of Realtors, inventory for single-family homes was down 67 percent, average price was up 25 percent and 99 percent of sales received the listing price or more. These are trends the realtors association expect to continue as more people seek the lifestyle and landscape Montana offers.

Jim and Andrea have spoken to a realtor about the realities of buying a home nearby. They learned that anecdotally there are often more than 40 people lined up behind a single offer. One house is on the market every seven days and it’s usually gone in under three. Andrea said they’ve all but lost the energy to peruse.

“That was a rude awakening, to realize that where we’ve invested 26 years of our lives is not likely to be the place that we’ll be able to retire,” Jim said.



Sean Hawksford took to the streets in search of a seller that would sell their home to a local. The competition for home ownership is one many are losing the energy to fight as the Gallatin Valley experiences an influx of wealthy out-of-staters. PHOTO BY ELI KRETZMANN



Jim and Andrea Hawthorne have operated Yellowstone Alliance Adventures, a youth camp in South Cottonwood Canyon, for nearly 26 years. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

The business, too, has been at odds with the valley's growth. Jim says while many families moving in from cities find their pricing to be on the low end, a fee hike would price working class families out entirely. There's room on the calendar for program expansion, but there isn't for physical growth—with landowners on three sides and the National Forest boundary on the fourth, YAA is boxed in.

Jim calls it a "two-edged sword." He says while those moving to Montana have the idea that the Treasure State is a place of value, growth is restricting what nonprofits such as YAA can provide for both newcomers in the valley, and the neighboring rural communities that have been here for generations.

"We have to serve both communities," he said. "We could probably elevate both the quality of our programs and the things we offer and charge \$2,000 a week, and the new clients that are coming into Bozeman would pay it without batting an eye. But then that would shut the door ... we can't price-fix for one group of people versus another. It's really difficult to figure out that balance."

Gallatin Valley's skyrocketing growth and the crescendoing housing crisis have touched more than one in their family. Sean Hawksford, who's married to their eldest, Jessica, was the man many downtown-goers have seen recently with the homemade sandwich board asking for housing. "Sell to a local," his Sharpied sign challenged passersby. Exhausted by the same competitive market his in-laws experienced, which he refers to as a "continuous panic attack," the local business owner and soon-to-be father took to the streets.

"Bozeman ... was a small town really recently and people still have that idea in their mind that you can serve the community and afford to live here," Hawksford said. "This is the way things should be and it's a shame that they're not. But sentiment doesn't make decisions for people in the same way that the market makes decisions for people and truly what we're seeing is the market having the final say."

Despite some backlash, Hawksford says most people he's crossed paths with during his sandwich-board odyssey were kind and understanding. Indeed, many of them are in the same boat.

"There's a difference between moving to a place because it's an attractive place to live and moving to a place because it's literally where you belong and all of the things that make you, you," Hawksford said. "It's an understandable desire to want to live in an attractive place, but it's not a good enough reason to move somewhere cool to displace someone who belongs there."

One of the leads Sean and Jessica received through the house-hunting campaign was from a man selling a home on the west side of town. His son had passed away in an accident on Homestake Pass last November and the son's wife and three girls were moving out. Hawksford's impression was that the father, in lieu of mitigating the chaos of realty, wanted to sell his son's home to a young family.

"I think it worked out for both of us," Hawksford said. "I like to think that we kind of helped him. I know what happened was more than just a cold-hard transaction, which is virtually what every other house offer we went into felt like, and I think the really gratifying thing is we have a really unique story to tell."

"Just because our problem is solved doesn't mean we feel a lot better," Hawksford added. "But it shows that we're powerful to each other and we kind of need each other."

Back at YAA camp, the Hawthornes believe that in life, everyone is searching for something in their soul, a search that COVID-19 has deepened as people reevaluate what matters to them.

They're drawn to the beauty and healthy lifestyle they experience on a drive through Yellowstone National Park or down Cottonwood Canyon Road, but they also picture the life their family would have, backdropped by the Bridger Mountains and open spaces that many have called home for decades.

"I think some people will find it to be what they hoped," Andrea said.

Outside, the snowcapped peaks of the Bridgers are visible from her dining room window. "I think other people will find it to not fill the hole that they're still looking for."

OUTLAW™

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners



Photo Courtesy of Jamie McLean

FAC celebrates one year of music, connection

BY BELLA BUTER

BIG SKY – Just days after Big Sky Resort suspended operations due to COVID-19 in March of 2020 and the grim silence of a ski town boarded up too early was settling in, the sound of a fiery guitar transmitted through computer screens across the country, a melodic message of hope and connection.

From his own home in New York, musician Jamie McLean, a Big Sky favorite, played a live virtual show for an audience bound to their own homes by quarantine measures.

For an hour, McLean played many of the same numbers he'd performed on stages around Big Sky for more than five years, lifting a glass of tequila every so often to toast what would become the loyal fanbase of Outlaw Partners' virtual music platform, Friday Afternoon Club, or FAC.

"It was just a really cool way to kind of get together virtually and still kind of have a little bit of a party even though we couldn't do that in person," McLean said in a recent interview with EBS as he prepped for his first anniversary appearance on March 19.

He added that during a time of isolation, the fans chiming in, familiar names popping up on the screen and the virtual cheers made him feel connected.

Since McLean's performance, FAC has hosted 44 shows, filmed and broadcast using a GoPro Hero 9 camera to bring a virtual spirited cocktail hour of music and stage banter to a national audience that's been deprived of such festivity throughout the pandemic.

A week after McLean's performance, Bozeman's Luke Flansburg made an appearance, encouraging the audience to sing along. Viewers tuning in commented that they were singing the harmonies and dancing in their kitchens.

"Such a refreshing moment where you don't stress on the COVID-19. Thanks," one listener, Stacy Fancher, wrote.

What began as a way to bring music to people stuck at home, though, organically evolved into something more.

"As it progressed it was still for the people but also helping out musicians who did [not] or could not have a place to play their music," said Outlaw Partners V.P. of Events Ennion Williams.

A report from the Rand Corporation shared that the unemployment rate among performing artists was above 27 percent in May 2020 compared to just over 1 percent months earlier in January.

While Outlaw Partners provided and facilitated the platform, FAC artists have been able to pocket well-deserved cash by way of sponsors including Lone

Mountain Land Co., Haas Builders, Jereco Studios, Blue Buddha, ACRE and Snake River Brewing.

At the third FAC, Lena Marie Schiffer of Bozeman's Laney Lou and the Bird Dogs, and Ryan Acker from Minneapolis' The Last Revel streamed a show from their Bozeman backyard. Schiffer said it had been more than a month since their last gig, a time frame she says is on average packed with about 10 shows.

"I think that musicians don't need an excuse to play music," Schiffer said in reflection of the past year. "But when you're given the opportunity to play for people it takes on a new meaning."

Over the span of a year, FAC has hosted musicians of many genres. Local DJ duo DJ Lenay and Jenn & Juice brought energy to a warm summer evening behind turntables. A small crowd mixed with children and adults spread across the lawn in front of the Blue Buddha patio, dancing to the electronic beats.

While many Friday afternoon sets have encouraged dancing, others have set the tone for a soft sway; a deep breath after a week of online work and pandemic stress. As part of the Big Sky Ideas Festival, Grammy-nominated singer and songwriter Jim Salestrom welcomed his son James up to the FAC stage for a duet performance.

During his set, two small boys watched with admiration as Salestrom turned to them to introduce his next song, "Puff the Magic Dragon," a whimsical tune he said he's been playing since he was 7.

Off-stage, a fan told Salestrom how neat it was to see him play with his son.

"It's not perfect, but it's fun," Salestrom responded. "There's a lot of love."

While the last year has been chock-full of adversity, FAC has been a true silver lining, innovation born of affliction. From living rooms across the nation to stages around Big Sky, artists and fans meet to close out their weeks in community, connection and good music.

"When I think back a year ago as everyone faced uncertainty, Outlaw knew what we had to do—bring people together and be a centering point for the community," said Outlaw Partners Chief Operating Officer Megan Paulson. "What better way than live music? It's awesome to celebrate a year of FAC and the amazing artists who were able to connect and share their talents through our platform."

To bookend a year of FAC, on March 19 Jamie McLean played his second show on the platform. He lifted a glass—this time of white wine—to the screen for a toast looking ahead to a summer of more music, "big and bold," he said. "Big Sky style."



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FRIDAY, JULY 16

3-5pm - Big Sky Art Auction Preview / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

6pm - Big Sky Community Rodeo / Big Sky Events Arena

9pm - Street Dance / Town Center Plaza

SATURDAY, JULY 17

4-7pm - Big Sky Art Auction / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

SUNDAY, JULY 18

TBA - Mutton Bustin Pre-Ride Competition / Big Sky Events Arena

6pm - Big Sky Bingo Night / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

11am-5pm - Big Sky PBR / Western Sports Foundation Golf Tournament

5pm - Farmers Market

6pm - Golf Tourney Reception

7pm - Big Sky PBR Kickoff / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

8pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

THURSDAY, JULY 22

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open / Town Center Plaza

2pm - PBR Meet & Greet / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

4pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

7pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Night 1 Bull Riding / Big Sky Events Arena

TBA - Music in the Mountains Concert

FRIDAY, JULY 23

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open / Town Center Plaza

2pm - PBR Meet & Greet / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

4pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

7pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Night 2 Bull Riding / Big Sky Events Arena

Following Bull Riding - Jason Boland & The Stragglers

SATURDAY, JULY 24

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open / Town Center Plaza

2pm - PBR Meet & Greet / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

4pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

7pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Championship Night 3 Bull Riding / Big Sky Events Arena

Following Bull Riding - Robert Earl Keen

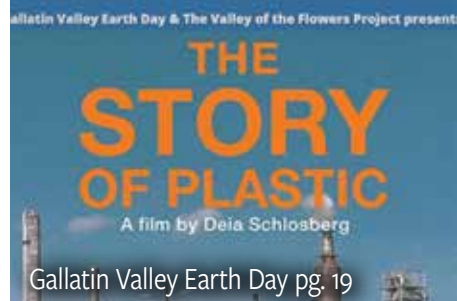
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SECTION 2: HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS, AND SPORTS



In our defense

Bozeman combat arts gym offers self-protection skills to women

BY ASHLEY MCENROE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BOZEMAN – This past year, the world became a more dangerous place, and not just because of COVID-19. Pandemic shutdowns led to domestic terror on a heightened scale for women and children forced to lock down with an abusive relative or roommate. Meanwhile, the streets turned lethal, from the West Coast to the U.S. Capitol and most recently in Atlanta. Women were brutalized at political rallies, white supremacist marches and protests.

Yet, it wasn't the news cycle that led me to seek out self-defense training. At age 56 and feeling every old sports injury reborn as arthritis, I sought a new way to be strong and confident. Part of that self-assurance was knowing what to do if my family or I were threatened with physical harm.

Like millions of other American women and girls, I have had close calls with violent predators. I consider myself lucky because I escaped. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 5 million women experience intimate, partner-related physical assaults and rapes annually in our country. One out of every four American women have experienced severe physical violence committed by a current or former husband, boyfriend or date, according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Women are much more likely than male victims to be injured during these crimes. The Montana Department of Justice reports that from 2000 to 2018, 200 Montanans died at the hands of an intimate partner.

The situation has not been ignored by lawmakers. The Violence Against Women Act—a 1994 law providing federal resources to prevent and combat domestic violence and sexual assault while supporting victims—is now moving through the U.S. Congress for renewal. Montana legislators are considering House Bill 449, which would give courts more power to require electronic/GPS monitoring as a condition of pre-trial release for defendants charged with felony partner or family member assaults and stalking.

However, legislation rarely deters the darkest impulses of humankind.

After an Internet search and a few emails, I found John Betancourt, founder of Fortress Combat Arts in Bozeman. I took him up on an offer for a free women's strike fit class, a mix of kickboxing and assault defense maneuvers. My classmates, a mix of students and professionals ranging from late teens on up, were all aglow with sincerity. From the start, they made me feel welcome.

A former advanced shipboard firefighter, boarding team member and rescue swimmer in the U.S. Coast Guard, Betancourt has 30 years of experience and black belts in an array of combat-related disciplines. He began teaching his first classes in Bozeman in 2009 and in 2013 opened his own gym. His inspiration to create female-focused defense training came later.

Over the past election cycle, Betancourt's outrage grew watching online videos of women being accosted at political events and sometimes pepper sprayed, chased and cornered while objects were thrown at them.

"The people holding the camera phones recording the whole thing weren't coming to their aid. The media wasn't coming to their aid," he said. "That's when I realized we had to get serious about building a skill set for women to get themselves out of a bad situation."

Like the name suggests, Fortress provides a safe space to venture into unsafe territory. In addition to boxing, striking and jiu-jitsu training, Fortress offers weapons courses.



EBS contributor Ashley McEnroe, left, in sparring practice with Montana State University freshman Mackenzie Stone. PHOTO BY JOHN LEWTON



Fortress Combat Arts students (left to right) Ashley McEnroe, Mackenzie Stone and Andrea Wymore warming up on the heavy bags. PHOTO BY JOHN LEWTON

Everything is designed to bypass the mentally paralyzing adrenaline dump one experiences in a threatening situation and replace it with a set of practical, realistic options.

While anyone can learn a little rote, formulaic fight choreography in some dojos or on YouTube, Betancourt said it is worthless in real life.

"You can learn a bunch of cool moves, but unless it fits the situation that you get stuck in, it means nothing," Betancourt says.

More important is sensing danger before it escalates by learning what assault cues look like, he teaches. And trusting yourself is paramount. A male attacker can overcome a female victim just by raising his voice.

"Guys will use their power to shut women down emotionally, to break their spirits," Betancourt says. "This is about finding that place where you can say, 'Okay, I know what this game looks like now, I know what this guy's trying to do.'"

Meanwhile, women tend to overanalyze even imminently menacing confrontations. "Once you understand that this is a bad situation, there's no time for all that other thinking and processing," Betancourt says. "The next confirmation you will get is pain."

Betancourt maintains that the current popularity of concealed carry for personal protection is not a substitute for the spectrum of training he offers.

"If we really believe that the gun is a tool of last resort, then if you have no other skill set, if you can't fight your way out of a situation that doesn't dictate actually killing somebody, then the firearm is the tool of only resort. We can't be that type of person who relies on a gun to get us out of any situation," he says.

Professional fighter and boxing coach Cody Clark, who joined Fortress after moving to the Bozeman area this year, has trained men, women and kids to compete and now lends his experience to Betancourt's program. Combat sports are not about physical violence, he insists, but reliance on a fundamental mindset—defense foremost and positive thinking.

"You've got to believe that you can handle this and you're capable of it," he advises.

Montana State University freshman Mackenzie Stone discovered Fortress while seeking to continue her jiu-jitsu training.

"From what I saw, it just looked like a good community here at Fortress. And it is," she said. "It takes a lot for people to step out of their comfort zone to come to self-defense classes. They have this fear that they're going to be hurt, but once you keep going and commit to it, that fear just totally goes away," Stone explained.

Andrea Wymore, 32, started at Fortress last October, and like Stone and I, she found a positive environment that drew her into the full array of combat classes. As a frequent international and backcountry solo traveler, Wymore feels more equipped to confront danger because of Betancourt's emphasis on proper methods and disciplined technique.

"If I'm going to learn something, I want to learn it right. And you learn technique here," Wymore adds.

To find the Fortress class schedule, visit fortresscombat.com. or call 406-599-6766 with inquiries.

Fortress is affiliated with Adopt-A-Cop, which sponsors first responder participation in fitness and training programs, and with Mission 22, a nonprofit dedicated to getting veterans out of isolation and into healthy pursuits.

To find the Fortress class schedule, visit fortresscombat.com. or call 406-599-6766 with inquiries.

Life 101

Coping with a hungry soul



BY LINDA ARNOLD
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

You know the feeling: those pangs that sear through your soul. You're hungry ... again. It's not the physical kind, though, it's emotional.

Everything on the outside seems to be in order—your career, your family, your friends. Yet, you could be emotionally starving.

What are you hungry for?

Telling the truth, to yourself, about what you deeply long for is at the very core of satisfying this soul hunger. You're more likely, though, to ignore this call. Until a crisis hits. Some outside force—illness, accident, death of someone close to you, job layoff, etcetera—forces you into action.

The appetizer: granting yourself permission

Why do we need this external “permission” to make the life changes we need? You may have heard the expression “playing the C card.”

When someone gets a cancer diagnosis, those around them immediately accommodate changes. I've even heard some say they're going to “play the C card.” There's nothing wrong with this, but it shouldn't take a life-threatening wakeup call to action.

The main course

You may have played the game so long and kept all those plates spinning in the air that it's foreign to approach life any other way. And yet you still feel that hunger.

If you've tried “numbing out” with overeating, overworking, drinking, television binge watching, drugs, gambling or shopping, you've probably found that these are only temporary fixes and the cravings return.

In her book “Hungry,” renowned psychologist Dr. Robin Smith talks about being at the end of her rope. “Even though I looked alive and vital, the hourglass measuring the aliveness of my soul was swiftly draining to the bottom,” Smith writes. “I was losing my battle to be myself.”

Emotional anorexia

Do any of these symptoms sound familiar?

- You feel empty inside despite outward appearances that you “have it all.”
- It's hard to take off your public mask.
- You value others' opinions more than your own.
- You crave the approval of others.
- You're not even sure what defines you anymore.

A type of identity theft has taken place, Smith explains, one of your own identity. If you're a people pleaser, you can end up being resentful of everything you do for others. If you have a more aggressive personality, you may have pushed others away in an attempt to “get them before they get you.”

The self-discovery channel

Think of relaunching yourself as a new television network that's creating new shows:

- “Stepping Out of My Comfort Zone”
- “Speaking Up”
- “Setting Healthy Boundaries”
- “Putting My Own Oxygen Mask on First”
- “Stop Faking It”
- “Dining on My Own Loaf, Not Others' Crumbs”

Staying tuned in

You've taught those around you how to treat you so there could be some pushback. Try a neutral phrase to deflect outer demands: “That just won't work for me right now.” Not only are you retraining yourself, you're retraining others.

Maybe you're just not ready to take action or you've decided to accept certain conditions because of the tradeoffs involved. That's OK. Nobody has the right to tell you what to think or dream. You—and only you—can know what you feel at your core and if, or when, you'll want to do anything differently.

Author Anais Nin sums it up nicely: “And the day came when the risk to stay tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.”

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 and visit lindaarnold.org or amazon.com for information on her books.

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Awareness Wednesday The Basics of Spring Cleansing with Callie Stolz
Wednesday, April 14th 6:30-7:30pm

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Gallatin Valley Earth Day presents ‘The Story of Plastic’

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – As consumers, we all try and do our part and recycle our disposable plastic containers by #1 and #2 in the green bins, but then what—what actually happens to plastic after we recycle it?

The film “The Story of Plastic” takes a deep dive into the history of plastic production and documents the journey plastic goes through before it reenters the ecosystem and becomes a pollutant. The film is directed by Montana State University alumna Deia Schlosberg and it is available to stream free March 21 through the 28 courtesy of Gallatin Valley Earth Day.

GVED has partnered with the film’s creators and supporters to arrange this free virtual screening as well as a Q&A with Schlosberg on March 25.

These virtual events are just two of many planned in March and April as part of GVED’s event series “Gallatin Valley 2040” inspired by 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.

GVED 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 computer programming, she became active in volunteering for climate change advocacy and recognized the need for an Earth Day celebration in Bozeman.

After having to cancel 2020’s events due to concerns over COVID-19, the Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival will return this year on April 17 with the theme of transforming and healing our earth together.

“We really want to inspire people to envision a very bright future,” Ready said.

The virtual screening of “The Story of Plastic” is one of several events planned by the organization in the lead up to Earth Day. The film presents a cohesive timeline of the current plastic pollution crisis and how the narrative around this issue has been hijacked by the oil and gas industry.

The film is presented by The Story of Stuff Project, a nonprofit dedicated to changing the way we make, use, and throw away stuff. During the hour-and-a-half film, viewers will learn about the discovery of plastic by the oil and gas industry all the way to the present-day crisis.

According to the film, while there are recycling programs in place to manage plastic waste, they are expensive, and most plastic is only recycled once before ending up in a landfill. Furthermore, the film explains that most plastic is downcycled and only two percent is effectively recycled meaning what is made with it is just as useful as the original product.

The systemic issue of plastic is revealed in the film as it explores different solutions that have been implemented including shipping plastic waste to other countries like Vietnam. It is pointed out that most media coverage focuses on the issue when plastic is already pollution showing it in the ocean or piled in landfills. While clean ups are necessary, the film says they are not a solution and suggests a redirection of resources to changing our production and use of plastics.

Some solutions offered include extended producer responsibility, which would transfer responsibility of waste back to the manufacturer, zero waste programs and research into bioplastic as a better option.

The March 25 virtual event will offer viewers to chance to talk with Schlosberg, learn more about the issues in the film and about what is going on in the Gallatin Valley.

As part of the Earth Day efforts this year, GVED partners have gone out and asked all grocery stores in the Gallatin Valley to give away reusable cloth grocery bags to help reduce the number of plastic bags being used. According to Ready, Smith’s and Walmart are already on board and they are waiting to hear back from other stores in the valley.

“We want to show that there is positive stuff going on our community,” Ready said of the efforts.

In addition to a Q&A with the director, GVED organized another virtual presentation on March 30 to teach the community about local recycling efforts. Alexis Alloway of Republic Recycling will be presenting on where locally recycled items go and what really happens to the recycling.

The Earth Day Festival this year will take place on the Bozeman Public Library lawn and feature live music, food trucks, exhibitors and wildlife groups. Ready said that they will be taking appropriate COVID-19 precautions at the event by requiring masks and directing the flow of traffic one way through all the different stations.

“It’s very exciting but also very intense right now,” Ready said. “People were so excited about the event last year, and we had 50 organizations involved and everyone’s chomping at the bit to do something this year.”

Luckily, the celebration won’t stop on Earth Day.

GVED has a full docket of events planned from March through the end of April. In addition to those discussed above, there will be a screening of “2040,” a presentation on wind energy from MSU professor Robb Larson, a talk on the effects of climate change on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem by Dr. Cathy Whitlock, and Earth Day in the park among many other great events.

Ready discussed the importance of this event series in the time of a global pandemic.

“I think everyone’s realized with COVID [that] taking care of our earth is so important for both our mental and physical health,” she said. “It’s very important for people’s mental health to have wilderness and wildlife to go out and hunt or take pictures out there but wilderness and public lands are essential.”

Ready is excited to share all of these events with the residents of Gallatin Valley and urges the importance of this awareness, now more than ever.

“Everyone, regardless of what team red or blue team they’re on, I think everyone cares about clean air and clean water,” she said. “By switching over to a new energy economy, it will mean healthier air, healthier water and enough water.”

Visit gallatinvalleyearthday.org to access the film and for the full schedule of events.

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THE STORY OF PLASTIC

A film by Deia Schlosberg

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For the link visit: www.gallatinvalleyearthday.org

Greater Yellowstone United Way (GGUW) serves as the fiscal sponsor for Gallatin Valley Earth Day (GVED). All donations made to GGUW on behalf of GVED will be safely for GVED events and programs.

The Story of Plastic details the history of plastic, including its discovery right up until the present-day pollution crisis. POSTER COURTESY OF GALLATIN VALLEY EARTH DAY

THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

EDITOR'S NOTE: This week, EBS environmental columnist Todd Wilkinson interviews fishing guide and conservationist Tom Sadler, a frequent visitor to the Greater Yellowstone region, about the movement among anglers to practice more gentle catch-and-release fishing.

TODD WILKINSON: *Our region is one of the fly-fishing meccas in the world. In many Greater Yellowstone residences and in many homes of people who visit Greater Yellowstone, there are photographs of people posed with the game animals they've taken during the hunt or on fishing trips. It's a ritual in angling that extends to almost any species of fish. What's this tradition all about?*

TOM SADLER: It's pretty simple. If you catch a fish, you want to be able to prove it. You've heard the old saw, "all fishermen are liars," so with that kind of reputation, fishermen feel compelled to document the event. Where the problem for the fish comes in is when fish are tossed up on to the bank, the angler digs around for the camera, poses with the fish, then chucks the fish back into the water. That sure is not good for the fish.

T.W.: *In angling parlance, some refer to it as the "hero shot."*

T.S.: The so-called hero shot is holding up the fish out of the water, out in front of your grinning mug. It "proves" you caught the fish. It's an age-old practice and back in the day when folks keep all the fish they caught, it really wasn't doing any more harm to the fish. It was dead or headed that way. As anglers and practices evolved, and catch and release became more prevalent, fish handling practices were revisited and those where the fish was out of the water for a long time were questioned.

T.W.: *You have mentioned that there are actually forums where this phenomenon is discussed along with chats about barbless hooks or using flies with no hooks at all. Who created the websites and why do they exist?*

T.S.: In the last few years, catch and release has evolved. My friends Andy and Sasha Danylchuk have been leading an effort called Keep Fish Wet. "Science shows that even small changes in how an angler catches, handles, and releases a fish can have positive outcomes once that fish swims away," they've written. "Not only does using best practices increase survival rates of fish, but it also helps fish return to their normal behavior as quickly as possible after release. Using best practices for catch and release is a quick and effective way to put conservation into practice." I encourage our readers to learn about it on their website, keepfishwet.org.

T.W.: *Another topic involves humans showing empathy for the fish that when it's taken out of the water for a picture the angler then holds his breath. Please explain.*

T.S.: If you take a fish out of water, you're forcing it to hold its breath. So, fair's fair. If you want a "hero shot" or some such with the fish out of water then when you take the fish out of water, take a breath and hold it. When you need a breath, then the fish does too.

The other thing is water drops as it does on local rivers like the Gallatin. If there are not

Making our trout 'hero poses' gentler on fish

drops of water coming off the fish, then it has been out of the water too long. There is a new catch phrase going around that makes sense, "make the fish the hero."

T.W.: *For the record so that readers understand, I fish; have my whole life; it's part of the imprint of nature made early and I cherish the memories. Often ignored is the fact that with catch-and-release fishing, we're using fish as objects for our personal entertainment and pleasure. I realize that to fish is to rationalize. Do you wrestle with this too?*

T.S.: You're digging deep with that question. Yes, in the last few years I've wrestled with it. On one level there's no explanation that will make sense to all people. And I can live with that. The reason I fish is for what it does for me. It is, as you said, part of the imprint nature made on me at the start of my life. I respect the fish, the habitat and the opportunity. For me, it goes way beyond entertainment and pleasure although those both are benefits.

T.W.: *When you are guiding, say, a stressed-out corporate executive who's tiered to constantly competing, how do you help them shift away from thinking about fishing only as an endeavor of how many fish they hook?*

T.S.: That may be the hardest puzzle in guiding for me. I like to move the conversation toward the experience rather than the numbers. I'm pretty up front about it with all my clients at the start of a trip. Often enough they start seeing the bigger picture.

T.W.: *Let's end with this: How do you personally push yourself to appreciate the intrinsic value of nature or of wildlife, which is different from viewing it as primarily an amenity that exists to be monetized—and what can we learn from that?*

T.S.: I think I'm lucky that way. I know that the places I fish are for the most part beautiful places, so I don't have to push myself. I'm usually pretty good about situational awareness and having a sense of what is around me, so I take advantage of that and spend time appreciating my surroundings and enjoying the comfort and solace of those surroundings.

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



A day's outing catching fish in Yellowstone, circa 1923. PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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Water Wisdom

Storm warning

BY DAVID TUCKER
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

As you drive around Big Sky these days, it's impossible not to notice an influx of pavement and other hard surfaces. Everywhere you look, parking lots, driveways, roofs, sidewalks and roads pervade, and these surfaces add up to one thing: the need for coordinated stormwater management.

What, you ask, is stormwater? And how can it be managed? The word itself—stormwater—conjures up images of hurricane-driven sideways rain and tsunami-level tidal events. Those scenarios don't seem manageable or even likely in these parts, so what exactly are we talking about?

In the upper Gallatin watershed, we're talking about spring snowmelt and runoff from powerful summer storms. Around this time of year, when temperatures hit the mid-40s and the snowpack starts rapidly melting, floods of running water can be seen all over town, rushing along trails and roads on their way to who knows where.

"Where" is actually the Gallatin River, and by the time this water resource has reached the Gallatin or other nearby creeks and streams, it has picked up any number of harmful pollutants along the way. Those pollutants are flushed into the Gallatin, harming aquatic life and tainting water quality.

If the smooth, hard surfaces didn't exist, the water would naturally drain into the ground recharging our aquifers and slowly making its way to the river over the course of months or even years. With these hard surfaces, however, water rushes quickly away, leaving our groundwater reserves depleted and our surface waters like the Gallatin peaking earlier and running lower later in the year.



Stormwater runoff from developed properties in Gallatin Canyon carries excess sediment and harmful pollutants to the main stem of the Gallatin River. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

While this all sounds catastrophic, there is hope: stormwater management! Developing towns and cities across the world have found ways to mimic natural snowmelt and stormwater runoff patterns, tactics that lead to better groundwater recharge and cleaner surface-water discharge.

In Big Sky and throughout the upper Gallatin watershed, stormwater management regulations do exist, but they focus primarily on the construction phase of new development. The Gallatin River Task Force is working on a framework that would consider pre- and post-construction phases more comprehensively, taking a holistic approach as the area continues to see rapid growth.

"Through GIS mapping and analysis, we're identifying opportunities and locations to capture runoff and facilitate groundwater recharge throughout the West Fork watershed," said Emily O'Connor, conservation project manager for the Task Force. "These are the areas we can prioritize for better stormwater infrastructure."

At a recent Big Sky Planning and Zoning Committee meeting, board members including committee chair Steve Johnson highlighted stormwater management as a priority.

"With the rapid proliferation of hard-surface parking areas in Big Sky, mitigation of stormwater runoff is becoming a concern," Johnson said. "We are considering alternatives with the Gallatin County Planning Department, including permeable parking surfaces and vertical parking structures."

Through education and the development of a communitywide management framework, rapid improvement is possible in a relatively short amount of time. If we continue with business as usual, we'll see more and faster stormwater runoff, and along with it, more and worse surface-water pollution.

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

An Idaho congressman aims to dump dams



BY ROCKY BARKER

Rep. Mike Simpson is a conservative Republican from Idaho whose concept of wildness in the 1990s was going into the rough at a golf course.

He fought higher taxes and remains a strong advocate for gun and states rights. But he changed as he waged a 13-year campaign to protect the Boulder-White Cloud Mountains in central Idaho. He began hiking the area, finding it a place of God. "The streams, the lakes, the forests are His cathedral, and you don't desecrate a cathedral, you preserve it," he said in 2014.

The next year Congress unanimously passed his bill to protect three areas of the White Clouds totaling 256,000 acres, enough to put him among the likes of wilderness icons Sen. Frank Church and former Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus. But he wasn't through.

In 2018, Simpson walked into the meadows of a stream in Idaho's Sawtooth National Recreation Area. In the water he saw a three-foot female salmon that had survived an 870-mile trip to the Pacific Ocean and back.

He came back to the meadow in 2019, where he watched a female salmon dig a redd, or nest, out of the gravel for her eggs. Her tail was beaten down to the flesh as hook-jawed red males darted in and out, competing to spread their milt to impregnate the eggs. It's the way it's been done for thousands of generations.

"These are the most incredible creatures I think that God has created," Simpson said. "We shouldn't mess with it." Yet we have, and \$17 billion in fixes later, salmon are still going extinct because of dams that block them from spawning.

Simpson recounted the story at a 2019 conference in Boise. Listening were farmers who ship their grain on barges from Lewiston, Idaho; Nez Perce tribal leaders; and power producers who depend on the four Snake River dams that block salmon. But how to move the ball?

Biologists for 20 years or more have said removing the four dams – half of the eight between Idaho and the Pacific – was key.

Simpson began the tedious process of meetings – 300 of them – with everyone involved in the salmon-dam conundrum. He asked: Could the four dams be destroyed, pulling salmon back from extinction? Could people depending on the dams be made whole?

Simpson answered "yes" to both questions this February by unveiling his \$33.5 billion bill: Power produced by the downed dams would be replaced, the electric grid throughout the Northwest upgraded, alternatives found for farmers shipping grain, and billions of dollars would go toward economic development.

Simpson made sure there was something for everyone in the four states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. There were billions for improving water quality, and a shift in control over the dollars that pay for salmon conservation, from a federal agency to a panel convened by the states and Indian tribes. The bill would create the Lower Snake River National Recreation Area, replacing reservoirs with the rapids of a free-flowing 100-mile stretch of river.

The price for salmon advocates would be a 35-year moratorium on litigation and a license extension of 35 years for other dams in the region. This is a high price, as conservation advances for salmon since the '90s have come about mostly through lawsuits.

But the price is worth the risk. I watched the Elwha River's dams come down in Western Washington in 2011, and saw how quickly the steelhead returned to their former abundance, along with salmon and even birds and other species.

Senate Majority leader Chuck Schumer has said he plans to carry President Biden's "Build Back Better" infrastructure bill through the budget reconciliation process, to avoid a filibuster and require only Democratic votes to pass. Simpson wants his proposal to move with that bill.

For now it's in the hands of the region's Democratic Senators: Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley of Oregon, Jon Tester of Montana, and especially Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray of Washington. One veto could kill the bill.

But Simpson has convinced a powerful group he's serious, and President Biden, if he's serious about environmental justice, should get on board, too.

Shannon Wheeler, chairman of the Nez Perce Tribe Executive Council, told me the absence of salmon for the last 65 years has left a void in the landscape and in the lives of the Nez Perce. Now, he said, "There is potential for a lot of healing with this legislation."

Rocky Barker is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. He is a longtime reporter for the Idaho Statesman.

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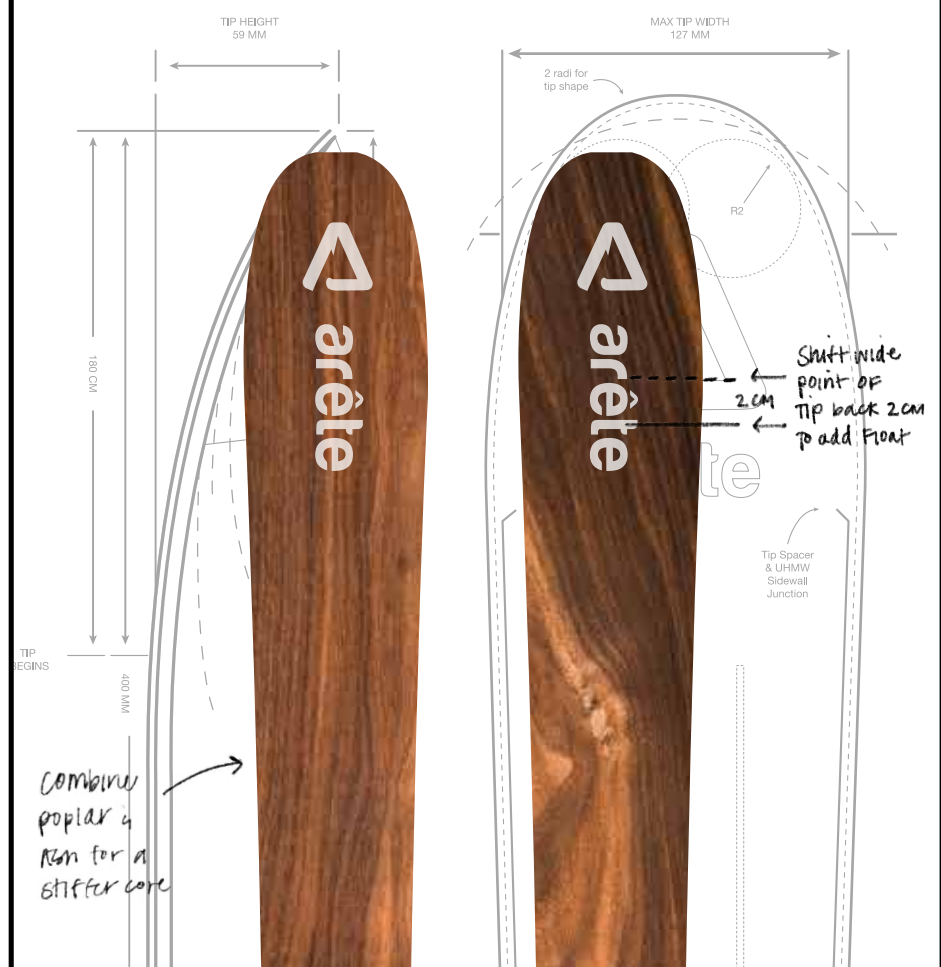
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Jen Bennett demonstrating how to embrace the fall line and not rely too much on edging late in turns to decelerate on steep terrain. PHOTO COURTESY OF DAN EGAN

Ski Tips: Lower the edge angle in the steeps

BY DAN EGAN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

This column was originally published in EBS in March of 2019.

Most skiers think that they can slow down by edging more on the steeps, but the opposite is true. A high edge angle at the end of a turn will scoot the ski forward and often cause the skier to become off-balance. Combine this with some tension or stress to the downhill leg and the situation can worsen because the skier is moving away from the fall line instead of embracing it.

Although it is true that edging will provide grip, it will also cause the skis to travel across the fall line rather than down it, thus creating a false sense of security because when traversing across a steep slope you are often out of position for the next turn.

Simple fact: edging in the last third of the turn causes acceleration because when you pressure on the ski edge in that part of the turn, you will accelerate across the slope. When this happens, the skier typically does not have enough pressure on the uphill ski, and this causes even more instability. The result will be hesitation to make the next turn especially if the terrain is intimidating.

Here is an example. A skier enters onto a steep slope, and their hips are behind their feet. Then they initiate the turn, their skis accelerate down the fall line and the skier immediately puts the skis hard on their edges thinking it will slow them down only to accelerate across the fall line. They repeat this a few times and low and behold their thighs are burning and their confidence is shaken.

So what is the fix? It's simple: edge less on the steeps. The goal is to get the skis to drift down the fall line rather than traverse across it. To

accomplish this, add some pressure to the uphill ski at the end of the turn so that the feet are closer together. This will release the edge of the downhill ski and the result will be controlled deceleration in the fall line.

Drifting down the fall line will also lengthen the turn, which will increase stability. Plus while standing on both skis, the skier will feel more comfortable moving into the next turn. Balance will improve as will confidence.

Here are a few things to remember next time you head out onto the steeps. Start on a steep, groomed slope. Stand tall with your shoulders over your feet and your feet under your hips. Then lower the edge angle of the skis to create more surface area on the snow and slide down the hill. Now with some momentum allow the skis to drift down the fall line instead of traversing across it and make a turn.

Do this for three or four turns then add some edge to grip and stop. Repeat. Once comfortable head off to some steep, smooth slopes and practice. The goal is a series of smooth, medium-length turns at a consistent speed with little-to-no acceleration between turns.

I tell skiers of all abilities that deceleration happens best over a series of turns. Think of it as slow, slower, slowest stop. When you slow down over a series of turns you are more apt to stay in balance and better manage your control in varied terrain.

The result will be more confidence as you explore more steep terrain on the mountain.

*Extreme Skiing Pioneer, Dan Egan coaches and teaches at Big Sky Resort during the winter. His steep camps run Feb. 25-27, March 4-6 and March 11-13. His newest book, *Thirty Years in a White Haze* was released in February. Visit www.White-Haze.com for autographed copies.*

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Do I get to ski now or what? Thinking strategically about travel in avalanche country

BY DAVE ZINN

AVALANCHE FORECASTER AT THE GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST AVALANCHE CENTER

I learned the basics of avalanche safety in several awareness level courses when I began dabbling in backcountry skiing. I understood that I needed to carry avalanche rescue equipment, travel with a partner, avoid a few notorious slopes and not get caught in an avalanche. When I added stability tests to the toolbox, I dug in the snow, looked at test results, scratched my head and asked the inevitable question, “Do I ski this slope now or not?” I desired a clear “go” or “no go” answer from a hole dug in the side of the mountain. This, unfortunately, is something no snowpit can provide, and this way of thinking dangerously fails to consider the big picture. A better way to think about stability and terrain choice is to develop a strategic mindset combining the avalanche forecast, weather, recent avalanche activity, weak-layers of concern, red-flags and test results with **unstable indicators trumping stable indicators**. Consider the following mindsets for backcountry travel:

- 1. Assessment:** Watch for signs of instability and dig and test to develop knowledge about the snowpack structure while limiting exposure to avalanche terrain.
- 2. Status Quo:** A good strategy when current backcountry travel parameters are working well and no change is needed. Be careful not to unintentionally expand terrain choices. When persistent weak layers exist, this may result in long-term entrenchment and little change over extended periods.
- 3. Stepping Back:** New snow, wind or information necessitates more conservative terrain selection.
- 4. Stepping Out:** A prolonged period of inactivity, lack of loading and/or lack of persistent weak layers suggest that more challenging terrain may be safe after further assessment.



The Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center crew digging and testing a snow pit. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST AVALANCHE CENTER

Based on your strategic mindset for the day, put available terrain into three categories: Green Light, Yellow Light and Red Light. Green Light terrain is good to go based on the general knowledge about prevailing avalanche conditions and can be utilized after minimal assessment. Yellow Light terrain *should be okay* based on the current conditions but requires more extensive field observations and tests to give you one more chance to turn around. Red Light terrain equates to no-go zones. Do not turn *Red Light Terrain* into *Yellow Light Terrain* while in the backcountry thus ignoring the strategy you carefully crafted before staring at that super sick powder run.

These categories may include specific slopes or general types or terrain. For example on one day, Red Light terrain could be steep runs on Beehive Peak or slopes above 35 degrees in alpine terrain exposed to wind-loading.

On another day with higher danger, we could say that any slope under 25 degrees with no overhead hazard is Green Light terrain.

While a stability test can't give you a “go” or “no-go” answer, developing a strategic mindset based on the big picture outlined above will set you on the path to making informed backcountry decisions. As far as interpreting your stability tests, an unstable stability test result means no-go. A stable result only means you haven't found a reason to turn around yet. Using an instability test to prove stability is a dangerous habit.

Further Reading:

Atkins, Roger, 2014: Yin, Yang, and You, Proceeding, International Snow Science Workshop, Banff, 2014.

Dave Zinn has been with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center since 2019 and has ten years of ski patrol experience at Bridger Bowl and the Yellowstone Club.



Dave Zinn has been with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center since 2019 and has a decade of ski patrol experience under his belt. PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE ZINN



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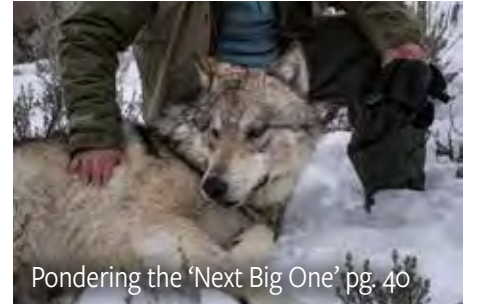
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BUSINESS, A & E, FINANCE,
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Brian Stumpf pg. 34

Pondering the 'Next Big One' pg. 40



Making it in Big Sky: Steele Pressed Juice and Java

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – Steele Pressed Juice and Java has been fueling Big Sky with healthy blends for over two years now and, as of the fall of 2020, the business also provides soul-warming soups in the winter as The Soup Shack.

Before moving to Big Sky, owner Jen Steele attended culinary school in Florida and worked on an organic juice farm in Hawaii where she learned about food medicine and the tremendous impact food has on physical and mental health. She also worked making sandwiches, smoothies and juices at a market, where she developed her interest in juices specifically.

When Steele arrived in Big Sky, she noticed an empty niche that she could fill with her passion.

“When I moved here, I saw a healthy, active community with zero healthy food and beverage options,” she said. “I was coming from Hawaii where fresh juice and smoothies are available everywhere, so I decided to go for it and open up the juice bar.”

Since opening Steele Pressed Juice, Steele has evolved from a farmer’s market stand to a bar in Compass Café to a stand-alone kiosk in the new park in front of the Wilson Hotel. She now serves juices, smoothies, coffee, and soups.

Explore Big Sky: *What is the most challenging part about owning and operating a small business in Big Sky?*

Jen Steele: “...I’m going to have to say that the most challenging part of owning and operating a small business has been finding a solid balance between work and play. The cost of living makes it difficult to hire employees at a pay rate that a start-up business can afford, meaning I’ve got to be there pretty much all day every day.”

EBS: *What is your favorite memory as a resident/business owner in Big Sky?*

JS: “So many favorite memories! But basically, the camaraderie and intimacy of a small town. You go somewhere alone; the mountain, the park, the store, and you end up on an adventure with friends and they’re the closest friends you’ll ever have. As a business owner, having local and seasonal customers [coming] to see me at the kiosk and congratulate me on the success and growth has been really cool.”

EBS: *What is the mission of Steele Pressed Juice and Java?*

JS: “My mission is to continue to contribute to happy, healthy lifestyles in Big Sky through food and beverage while also maintaining a small environmental footprint. I just want to create a fun environment for like-minded people to hang out and talk story.”



Jen Steele, owner of Steele Pressed Juice and Java, started her business at the Big Sky Farmer’s Market a year ago and has since expanded to a kiosk next to the new Wilson Hotel. PHOTO COURTESY OF JEN STEELE

EBS: *What conclusions do you make about the beverage industry in Big Sky and what do you do to accommodate this?*

JS: “There’s actually plenty of places to get good coffee in Big Sky. My goal is to set myself apart by providing a coffee that reflects the healthier lifestyle that I’m promoting through juices and smoothies. To do that I am using organic coffee grown on small family farms in small batches. Additionally, I am using Kalispell Creamery milks to keep it local and the lowest sugar and ingredient nut milks available.”

EBS: *What is most unique about running a business in Big Sky?*

JS: “I think the coolest thing about running a business in Big Sky has been the support I’ve received. From fellow business owners offering advice, to community members helping spread the word, and friends offering to help out any way they can.”

EBS: *Do you remember your first customer? Who was it/ what’s the story?*

JS: “My first customer was Shawna Winter. Before I started [as a vendor] at the farmer’s market, she ordered a 32-ounce jar of green juice and a 32-ounce jar of honey lavender lemonade. I remember getting ridiculously excited because she posted about it on Facebook and I was just like ‘This is really happening!’”

EBS: *Where do you see your business in 10 years?*

JS: “Honestly, I have a hard time looking that far into the future. I’m more of a go with the flow kind of mind set. Ultimately, I would like to figure out a way to work less, play more, and do the family thing. In the near future I plan to go mobile with a Juice Box on wheels, so keep an eye out for more on that!”

EBS: *You’ve experienced a lot of change in the short time you’ve been in business. How do you stay flexible and adapt?*

JS: “I like the challenge of change, so it has been pretty fun to be constantly growing and adapting.”

EBS: *What’s the best piece of business advice you’ve received?*

JS: “Save your receipts.”

EBS: *What is your favorite juice that you’ve come up with?*

JS: “My favorite smoothie is the orange creamsicle which is banana, mango, carrot, vanilla, coconut milk, and orange juice. For a summer juice I’m pretty into the Upper Morningstar: It’s cucumber, lemon, ginger, and cayenne. It’s great on a hot day.”

A version of this story originally ran in the August 2, 2019 edition of Explore Big Sky.

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From grapes to the Gallatin

Natalie's Estate Winery helps protect the Gallatin River

SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENT

BY PATRICK STRAUB

Wines are defined by years: a good one, a great one and an excellent one. And Boyd and Cassandra Teegarden, founders and owners of Oregon's Natalie's Estate Winery, have experienced some excellent years.

In 1999, the couple purchased 15 acres outside of Newberg, Oregon, with the goal of creating an artisan winery to produce world-class wines. Naming the vineyard Natalie's Estate after their daughter, Boyd and Cassandra put their skills into nurturing vines, growing grapes and making some of Oregon's signature wines. For the couple, 1999 was a great year.

Six years later, the Teegardens had the chance at another great year. In early 2005, they visited Big Sky for a summer vacation. While they fished the Gallatin River, the couple knew this place would eventually prove very special. Shortly after their initial visit they purchased a home in Big Sky and their roots grew, quick and solid.

"We have our business and live in Oregon," says Boyd, "but our hearts are in Big Sky and Montana."

Like their wines, the Teegarden's commitment to the Big Sky community is full-bodied. Their Big Sky Collection—a pinot noir and a pinot gris—mirror the Teegarden's connection to Big Sky. The wines are made in Oregon but are only available throughout Montana and, like Boyd and Cassandra's rootedness in the Treasure State, the bottles do much more.

"These two wines allow us to give back to the community and resources we love," Boyd says. "The Gallatin River is loved so much by so many that by donating wine to organizations like the Gallatin River Task Force, Natalie's Estate can support efforts to preserve the river for future generations."

Indeed, the company donates more than 10 cases a year of their Big Sky Collection of wines to GRTF as a way to aid the organization's mission, which is to preserve and protect the Gallatin River watershed.

Not only do the Teegardens support GRTF through fundraising, but you can also find mud on their boots by assisting the nonprofit's staff and their executive director, Kristin Gardner, with restoration and water sampling efforts.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NATALIE'S ESTATE WINERY



Natalie's Estate Winery, located in Newberg, Oregon, is currently open by appointment only. PHOTO COURTESY OF NATALIE'S ESTATE WINERY

This commitment to preservation and sustainability flows through all of Natalie's Estate's wines. With the challenges that accelerated growth is bringing Big Sky, the Oregon wine country is seeing similar patterns.

"As the wine region thrives and expands, sustainable viniculture practices are essential to preserving the health and beauty of the place we call home," Boyd says.

"Sustainability really means having a lot of biodiversity paired with socially equitable responsibility and business viability," he adds. "We do that at Natalie's Estate. It isn't always easy and requires some hard work, but like protecting the Gallatin River for many excellent years to come, it is very much attainable."

For specific food pairings with their Big Sky Collection, the Teegardens suggest the following from the Rainbow Ranch Lodge menu in Big Sky:

2020 Big Sky Collection Pinot Gris paired with sesame-glazed Chilean sea bass

2018 Big Sky Collection Pinot Noir paired with slow-cooked Colorado rack of lamb

To learn more about Natalie's Estate's Big Sky Collection, including other food pairings and how to purchase, visit nataliesestatewinery.com or visit any of these fine retailers:

Big Sky:

*Hungry Moose (Town Center and Mountain)
Roxy's Market
The Cave
The Rock's Tasting Room
Country Market*

Bozeman:

*Community Food Co-op #1
Montana Spirits and Wine
Chalet Market*

Visit gallatinrivertaskforce.org to support the mission of the Gallatin River Task Force.

"Kristin and the staff at the Task Force continue to do a remarkable job protecting the heartbeat of Big Sky, which is the Gallatin River," Boyd says. "Our Big Sky Collection of wines is a small way we can help others give back to a place so special to so many. By purchasing the wines others help us to continue supporting the Gallatin River and the people who care about it."

WMPAC closes its season with string quartets

WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

BIG SKY – After being forced to close its doors early last year due to the growing COVID-19 pandemic, the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center wasn't sure what the 2021 season would hold. Questions about artists' willingness to travel and perform lingered, as well as audiences' willingness to take in a show in public. But the center didn't see closing its doors for the winter as an option. Instead, the team put together a slate of shows that combined in-person and virtual performances, and rolled out a new high-tech streaming platform, wmpac.live, which delivers high-caliber livestreams to viewers who prefer to watch from home.

"This year presented challenges like we've never seen before, but we're immensely proud of what we've accomplished and presented this season," said John Zirkle, executive director of WMPAC. "We embraced the creativity of needing to rebuild from the ground up, and the quality of performances we saw from the artists blew us away."

WMPAC brings its unprecedented 2021 Winter Season to a close with a performance by two exceptional string quartets, Cascade and Kronos. The Cascade Quartet is Montana's foremost string group. They have toured nationally, and had the privilege of playing alongside Yo-Yo Ma when he performed with the Great Falls Symphony. The Cascade Quartet will travel to Big Sky to perform in-person on the WMPAC stage.

"We love having national groups join us, but it's a special feeling to give the spotlight to local Montana artists who are exceptionally talented," Zirkle said.

Cascade's in-person performance will be paired with and amplified by high-quality films of Kronos Quartet performing pieces from their extensive repertoire. Kronos will not appear on the stage in-person, but have been working closely with Cascade to craft this dual performance for the WMPAC audience. Of late, Kronos has prioritized selecting music by contemporary and underrepresented composers, using their substantial name recognition to bring awareness to new trends and voices within the classical music world. The group will perform pieces by Tanya Tagaq, Aftab Darvishi and Hawa Diabate, among others.

Up to 50 patrons are able to attend each of the live performances at WMPAC, which will take place at 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. on both Friday, March 26 and Saturday, March 27. Audience members will wear masks for the duration of the show, and groups will be seated with social distancing measures in place. For those who feel more comfortable taking in the show from home, the 5:30 p.m. performance on March 27 can be streamed live at wmpac.live, the center's new virtual streaming platform.

Tickets and more information are available at warrenmillerpac.org.



WMPAC brings its 2021 Winter Season to a close with a performance by two exceptional string quartets, Cascade and Kronos. The Cascade Quartet is Montana's foremost string group. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, March 26 – Thursday, April 8

If your event falls between April 9 and April 22, please submit it by March 31 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

Friday, March 26

Friday Afternoon Club

EBS Facebook Live, 5 p.m.

Kronos and Cascade Quartets

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 5:30 p.m. & 8 p.m.

Saturday, March 27

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

Carve Out Hunger Food Drive

Bridger Bowl, 9 a.m.

Kronos and Cascade Quartets

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 5:30 p.m. & 8 p.m.

Sunday, March 28

Support Friends of MSU Library:

Bobcats Eat for the Bears at Noodles and Company

Noodles and Company, Bozeman, 4 p.m.

Twisted Trivia

Bar IX, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Monday, March 29

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

Live Poker

Cat's Paw, Bozeman, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, March 30

Open STEAMLab

Montana Science Center, Bozeman, 3 p.m.

Service Industry Night

Blend – Wine Bar & Gallery, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 31

New Member Meet Up

Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, 10 a.m.

Super Smash Bros Game Night

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

Thursday, April 1

Live Poker

Cat's Paw, Bozeman, 1 p.m.

Bucket Night

Bar IX, Bozeman, 8 p.m.

Friday, April 2

Public Skate

Haynes Pavilion, Bozeman, 1:30 p.m.

Friday Afternoon Club

EBS Facebook Live, 5 p.m.

Saturday, April 3

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

Bozeman Night Live

Willson Auditorium, Bozeman, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 4

Afternoon Tea

Starlite, Bozeman, 1 p.m. & 3 p.m.

Closing Day

Bridger Bowl, 8 a.m.

Monday, April 5

Preschool Science Series

Montana Science Center, Bozeman, 10 a.m.

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, April 6

Open STEAMLab

Montana Science Center, Bozeman, 3 p.m.

Live Music: Rich Mayo

Kountry Korner Kafé, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, April 7

Kindergarten Readiness

Gallatin Valley YMCA, 10:00 a.m.

Live Music: Matt Miller

Bozeman Taproom, 7 p.m.

Thursday, April 8

Kites, Bees and Tiny Seeds

Gallatin Valley YMCA, 7:30 a.m.

Food Explorers PIR Camp

Museum of the Rockies, 9:30 a.m.

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Painting through a ‘feeling of place’

Artist spotlight: Jim Dick

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – Bozeman painter Jim Dick combines two forces into his work: a love for the outdoors and a strong work ethic. The self-taught, 45-year veteran of the arts was born and raised on a family farm on the Fort Peck Reservation and began experimenting with paints in his 20s after realizing that he wasn't fond of the nine to five office life.

“My early attempts at painting with oils was, in my opinion, very amateurish,” Dick said. “I discovered I had a lot to learn about composition, color, values, perspective, brush-work and other technical tools. I am still learning about refining these elements.”

These days, Dick's work is anything but amateurish. He spends his time evolving his craft and learning from his favorite teacher: the Montana landscape. The outdoorsman begins every piece with an on-location, plein air field study with oils. He says these studies “give me the feeling of the place and the season” before he later completes a final composition in the studio.

He primarily paints landscapes, including the Spanish Peaks, Gallatin, Madison, Tobacco Roots and Bridger mountain ranges, as well as eastern



Artist Jim Dick's "Daybreak on Lone Peak" 36x48. PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM DICK

Montana prairie studies, or, Native American tipi paintings. An avid trail runner, he often brings his sketching supplies on his ventures, pausing to capture a scene on the mountain peaks before heading back down.

“Every moment in time is unique as the light, colors, atmosphere, etc., relate to each other in that place to make it special,” Dick said.

Although he has participated in the Big Sky Art Auction for a couple of years, he asserts that he has been painting the Big Sky area for over 40 years—most of his painting career—and he calls it “a favorite place of mine—I

am looking forward to getting outdoors in our beautiful Big Sky country more this year.”

Dick enjoys participating in local art events because it allows him to share his appreciation of the landscape and places that Montana offers with others. Through art, he says, “I think there is mutual benefit to both the community and the artist.”

Jim Dick will be featured at this year's Big Sky Art Auction from July 16 through 18. Visit bigskyartauction.com for more information.

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Longtime musician looks to revitalize Big Sky music scene

Musician spotlight: Brian Stumpf

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – Brian Stumpf will tell you transparently that he always hated school. That is, until one day his middle school teacher brought them to a music appreciation class and he heard the opening notes to the Grateful Dead’s “Dark Star.” The inspiration he felt that day stuck with him. After rescuing his father’s old bass guitar from the basement and a few years of guitar lessons, he applied for a vocational music program in Rutland, Vermont, called “Music Technology: Jazz and Contemporary.”

“There I spent my last two years of high school learning music theory, recording, how to play the six-string, and the benefits of Visine after study hall periods,” Stumpf said. “Diving deep into the compositions of Miles, Jobim, and The Duke with my new starry/blurred eyed friends was a great thrill, and for those two years, I loved school.”

Stumpf is no stranger to the ski bum resort town lifestyle. His parents had met in the 70s after moving from South Jersey to Vermont, and although they encouraged Stumpf and his three siblings to seek possibly a more structured life, Stumpf landed himself in Big Sky in December of 2005 at the age of 21.

“The ultimate goal was to score a respectable job and find a professional role in the ski world. So much for that,” Stumpf says.

As he became familiar with the open mic and entertainment scene in Big Sky, from By Word of Mouth to Scissorbills and Montana Backcountry Adventures Yurt Dinner gigs, Stumpf found that he could make performing a full-time job.

“The good folks of those establishments, along with the fine and patient individuals at The Riverhouse [BBQ and Events] and Ousel & Spur Pizza Co., among others, were



Brian Stumpf has been performing in Big Sky since his arrival in 2005. Today he books shows for Big Sky’s newest dedicated music venue, Tips Up. PHOTO BY KENE SPERRY

kind enough to keep offering me opportunities despite my amateur prowess at the start, and for that I will be forever grateful,” Stumpf said. “They gave me the gift of experience and the opportunity to grow, a luxury not every player is able to receive.”

Stumpf practiced in what used to be empty retail spaces, where they could “get loud” and honed his craft alongside his band mates from The Riot Act, The Driftwood Grinders, Gallatin Grass Project, The Cropdusters, Eldrick, The Champagne Thursdays, Fringe Bikini, and eventually Dammit Lauren & The Well—who is set to release a new album in fall 2021. He says traveling around the region with his bands is one of his most cherished memories.

Today, while many small music venues across the country are closing down, Big Sky just opened a new one—Tips Up in Big Sky Town Center. Stumpf, with his years of experience, was asked to help with booking shows, a role he was eager to fill.

“Reaching out to the different players around the area over the past few months to offer work has been a great pleasure for me,” Stumpf said. “... The new Tips Up stage has an opportunity to offer a new commitment to live music in our town, and I’m excited to be involved in growing it.”

Stumpf is excited to be revitalizing the world of live music in Big Sky and hopes that soon, Tips Up will be able to better utilize their space to offer bigger and more frequent events.

“Before you know it, people invading your personal space on a sticky beer-soaked floor will have never felt so good,” Stumpf said. Tips Up is open for lunch and dinner seven days a week with a crafted menu and full bar, and anticipates live music five nights a week.

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Enjoying the Ride: Take it to the limit so you can take it easy!



BY SCOTT BROWN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

I find that if I don't have a plan it creates a lot of unnecessary stress! It doesn't matter if were talking about a plan for your business, your family, an upcoming vacation or a hike or bike ride, I prefer to have a plan so that I can attempt to alleviate any additional anxiety. When I don't, it reminds me of the Eagles hit song "Take It Easy;" "Well, I'm running down the road, trying to loosen my load, got a world of trouble on my mind ..." When it comes to saving for retirement, the same applies—you need to have a plan.

One way to reduce your angst about retirement is to strive to max your retirement plan contributions. This reminds me of another great Eagles song, "Take it To The Limit." In order for you to max your retirement savings, it helps to know what the IRS Code section 415 Qualified Retirement Plan Limits are for 2021.

Let's begin with the most common employer sponsored plans 401(k)/403(b) and 457. In 2021 you can contribute \$19,500 to your plan. If you are age 50 or older your catch-up limit allows you to contribute another \$6,500 bringing your grand total to \$26,000. The Simple IRA plan deferral limit is \$13,500 and allows for a \$3,000 catch-up for participants 50+ years of age, which totals \$16,500. The total defined contribution 415 limit on all combined contributions per participant or beneficiary is \$58,000 in 2021.

For both Roth and Traditional IRA's your contribution limit for 2021 is \$6,000. Again, if you are 50 or older you have a catch-up for your IRA contributions and that is \$1,000 for a total of \$7,000 this tax year. Keep in mind, you still have until tax-filing day to make IRA and some other qualified retirement plan contributions for tax year 2020.

If you are a parent or grandparent of children or grandchildren with earned income, don't forget that you could consider helping them make or even maximize their retirement plan contributions assuming you are financially able and so inclined. Obviously, if you own and operate a family business, you could consider contributing part of your family members compensation to retirement plan contributions each year.

Regardless of your station in life, make a plan and begin saving. Remember, as many investors have advised, it is time in the market that builds returns, not timing the market. So start early and save often! Of course, it can't hurt to attempt to take your contributions to the limit so you can take it easy in retirement and enjoy the ride!

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

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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.

Bring on the (to go) box stores



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

To break my own rule and use a cliché: our industry is “dying on the vine.”

And by that I mean the hospitality industry.

One year ago, the world as we knew it essentially stopped. And here we are a year later and there are still some states and counties that still do not have restaurants and bars open for indoor seating.

Not only is this incredibly depressing, but it defies science and logic.

Great Britain and the U.S. have led the world in back-to-back healthy beer renaissances over the last 50 years. Before that, the beer world had dwindled to a handful of massive conglomerate brewers, virtually all of whom lacked depth of character.

And we have a handful of Brits and Yanks to thank for this. They had had enough of sub-par beer, plain and simple.

But we’ve also seen an incredible food renaissance as well. The most amazing, thought out concepts have opened all across America.

From Thomas Keller and Grant Achatz, to Danny Meyer and Steve Eills—all in their unique way, they changed the way we eat and even view food and the overall food experience. And with the millennial generation’s cultural shift from occasionally sitting down and dining in a restaurant, to eating much more casually while simultaneously almost never cooking from scratch at home, fast casual concepts are rapidly on the rise. One of many stats that prove this is since 2017, Americans spend more money annually on restaurants than the grocery store.

But will it turn out to be all for not? It seems we are in the midst of another sea of change because we are rapidly moving in a direction in which only the large, (to go) box stores can survive. Only the fattest of restaurant chains can weather this storm.

We’ve all seen it in our own cities. It seems a restaurant or bar closes “indefinitely” with frightening frequency. Or a hotel cannot keep its doors open and is purchased by an even bigger company, swallowed up and rebranded before we even knew what happened.

Restaurants and bars simply do not have the coffers to hold on. PPP loans were only a prolonging of the inevitable for many. Sure, we have to go food, or delivery, but that is a far, far cry from the social interaction and quality of food that we so cherish. Social interaction and quality of food that is our due, given everything we have endured and accepted.

When pick up or delivery food is your only option as a consumer, you have now decided to compete with the big fish in the big pond. The companies that do this day in and day out are companies that have structure and systems in place, that have teams and boards and divisions larger than your entire independent restaurant has employees. These teams have spent decades figuring out the best and cheapest to go container China has to offer, figuring out the right chemical make-up of food that maintains its integrity through traveling and temperature changes.

Sometimes your best dish on a plate in a warm, friendly restaurant is suddenly sub-par in a wax lined container when you open it in your kitchen one hour after it was prepared.

Take a look around at how many restaurants from state to state are struggling, yet I’ve never seen more consistently long drive through fast food lines in my life.

We simply cannot keep this up and expect our industry to survive, let alone even resemble its former self.

We are a resilient bunch, but can’t do this forever.

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.

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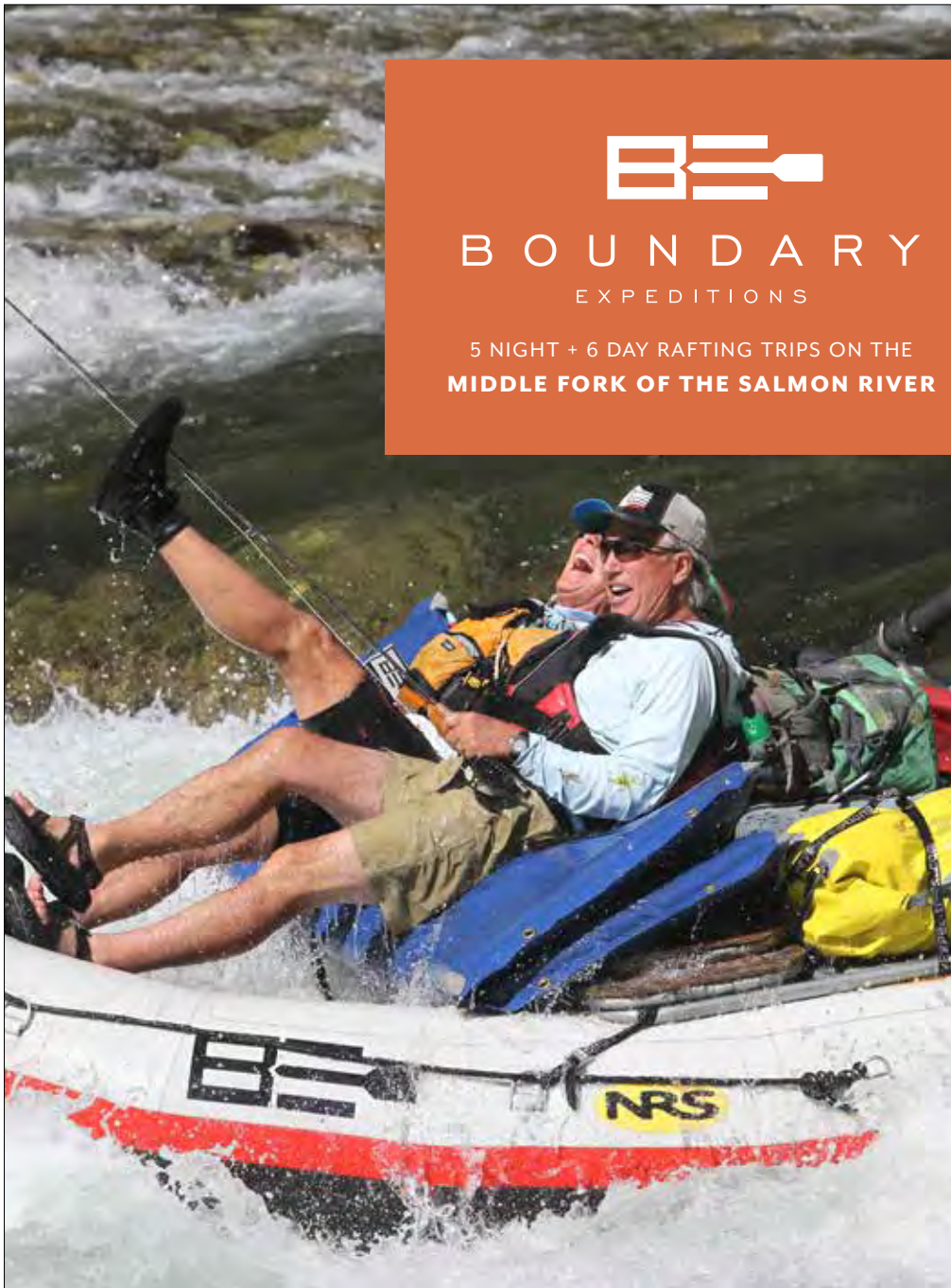
Forbes Best-In-State Wealth Advisors Methodology 2020
The Forbes ranking of Best-In-State Wealth Advisors, developed by SHOOK Research, is based on an algorithm of qualitative criteria, mostly gained through telephone and in-person due diligence interviews, and quantitative data. Those advisors that are considered have a minimum of seven years experience, and the algorithm weights factors like revenue trends, assets under management, compliance records, industry experience and those that encompass best practices in their practices and approach to working with clients. Portfolio performance is not a criterion due to varying client objectives and lack of audited data. Neither Forbes or SHOOK receive a fee in exchange for rankings.

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AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

BY KWAME DAWES

Pat Emile, who served as Assistant Editor to American Life in Poetry for over a decade, was described by past editor, Ted Kooser, as the “Jill-Of-All-Trades for this column”. I was fortunate enough to enjoy her sensitive ear for the rightly tuned poem, and her generosity as a liaison with poets, publishers and our collaborating periodicals, as a necessary component of the training for my tenure. It all makes sense, as Pat Emile is, herself, a poet of fine taste, lovely insight and, as evidenced in this poem (from column 580), “They Dance Through Granelli’s”, a poet with a remarkable eye for sensual detail. Thank you, Pat, for all you have done for American Life in Poetry, and for your gift of delightful verse. Her poem is a fit way to start this exciting re-launch of ALiP!

They Dance Through Granelli’s

By Pat Emile

He finds her near the stack
of green plastic baskets waiting to be filled
and circles her waist with his left arm,
entwines her fingers in his, pulls her toward him, Muzak from the ceiling shedding a
flashy Salsa, and as they begin to move, she lets
her head fall back, fine hair swinging
a beat behind as they follow
their own music—a waltz—past the peaches bursting with ripeness in their wicker
baskets,
the prawns curled into each other
behind cold glass, a woman in a turquoise sari,
her dark eyes averted. They twirl twice
before the imported cheeses, fresh mozzarella
in its milky liquid, goat cheese sent down
from some green mountain, then glide past
ranks of breads, seeds spread across brown crusts, bottles of red wine nested together
on their sides. He reaches behind her, slides a bouquet
of cut flowers from a galvanized bucket, tosses
a twenty to the teenaged boy leaning
on the wooden counter, and they whirl
out the door, the blue sky a sudden surprise.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2016 by Pat Hemphill Emile, “They Dance Through Granelli’s.” Poem reprinted by permission of Pat Hemphill Emile. The introduction’s author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004–2006.

Corner Quote

“If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it.”

— President Lyndon B. Johnson, on signing the Wilderness Act of 1964

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Left turn
 - 4 Eucalyptus secretion
 - 8 Wool (Lat.)
 - 12 Gelderland city
 - 13 Eastern bishop’s title
 - 14 Work (Sp.)
 - 15 Stool pigeon
 - 16 Record
 - 17 Growl
 - 18 Enamel (Fr.)
 - 20 Migratory worker
 - 22 Faithful follower of Lear
 - 25 Agog
 - 28 High (Lat.)
 - 31 Assistant
 - 33 Exclamation
 - 34 Bureau of Indian Affairs (abbr.)
 - 35 Fr. month
 - 36 Article
 - 37 Blunder
 - 38 Sideshow performer
 - 39 Gorgons’ parent
 - 40 Four (pref.)
 - 42 Ravine
 - 44 Rhine tributary
 - 46 Gr. colony in Asia Minor
 - 50 Broad-leaved herbaceous plant
 - 52 Tight
 - 55 Aid to Dependent Children (abbr.)
 - 56 Polynesian god
 - 57 Herring barrel
 - 58 Estuary
 - 59 Assistant (abbr.)
 - 60 Filament
 - 61 Cape
- DOWN**
- 1 Roll-call response
 - 2 Original sinner
 - 3 N.Z. locust
 - 4 Bail
 - 5 Mother of Hezekia
 - 6 Able-bodied seaman (abbr.)
 - 7 Silver-iron ore
 - 8 Religious sayings
 - 9 Renounce
 - 10 “Blue Eagle”
 - 11 Berne’s river
 - 19 Presidential nickname
 - 21 Part of a ship
 - 23 Church center
 - 24 Weary
 - 26 Very (Ger.)
 - 27 Current (pref.)
 - 28 Foment
 - 29 Read (Fr.)
 - 30 Hades
 - 32 Wild mango fruit
 - 35 Culture medium
 - 39 Chief executive officer (abbr.)
 - 41 Polishing material
 - 43 Metric measure
 - 45 Depict sharply
 - 47 Sleep (pref.)
 - 48 One’s own (pref.)
 - 49 Academy (abbr.)
 - 50 Federal Aviation Admin. (abbr.)
 - 51 Approves (contr.)
 - 53 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
 - 54 N. Caucasian language

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

B	A	B	E	R	I	E	A	B	A	S
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BIG SKY BEATS

Big Sky Beats: An Ode to Spring

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

The sun is shining, temperatures are rising and spring is just around the corner. To get ready for corn snow and chocolate Easter bunnies, here is a sunshine-filled playlist to get you in the mood for spring.

1. “Here Comes the Sun” by The Beatles
2. “Pocket Full of Sunshine” by Natasha Bedingfield
3. “Sunshine On My Shoulders” by John Denver
4. “I’m Walking on Sunshine” by Katrina and the Waves
5. “Sunshine” by Matt Costa
6. “Sunshine Song” by Jason Mraz
7. “Sunday Morning Sunshine” by Harry Chapin
8. “We’ll Sing in the Sunshine” by Gale Garnett
9. “You Are My Sunshine” by Jimmie Davis
10. “Sunshine State of Mind” by We The Kings



PHOTO BY DAUDI AISSA ON UNSPLASH

BACK40

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

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

Pondering the ‘Next Big One’

Editor's note: When COVID-19 erupted, the media flocked to Bozeman, Montana's David Quammen who had predicted it in a book. In this interview with Todd Wilkinson, he discusses the multitude of ways human and economic health are cued by the environment.

BY TODD WILKINSON

For a science writer who has spent much of his career exploring the innerworkings of the natural world—and understanding the origins of ecological disasters—David Quammen derives no solace from having his warnings proved right. Be it witnessing the loss of species as part of the sixth major extinction episode, which may now be underway, or being deadly accurate in predicting a disease event like the COVID-19 epidemic, Quammen makes no claim to wielding clairvoyant power.

Nor, for that matter, is he interested in writing Chicken Little “the sky is falling” jeremiads. The simple explanation, relating to what informs his critically acclaimed work, is that he listens to what the best scientists on the planet have to say—many of whom have told him directly—and then translates it so the public can understand.

Growing up in Cincinnati, Quammen, 72, came to Greater Yellowstone as a young man after graduating from Yale and then as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, not with a penchant for science writing but as an aspiring young novelist who paid the rent by working as a Madison River fishing guide and bartender in Ennis. Eventually, *Outside* magazine enlisted him to write a regular column, “Natural Acts,” and both his interest and esteem took off from there. Now writing regularly for *National Geographic*, he's counted among the finest nature writers of our time.

When it comes to ground-truthing, he's been no desk jockey. Conducting field research for his book *The Song of the Dodo*, Quammen visited with residents of the jungle where not long before a number of people had died mysteriously from eating

primates as bush meat. It turns out the animals were infected with Ebola. He's also ventured into bat caves in Uganda where epidemiologists believe the ultra-deadly Marburg virus lives. He did it with spacesuit-like protective gear, the same kind seen in *Contagion*, the Hollywood portrayal of a disease outbreak not altogether different from COVID-19.

The fact that Quammen lives on a quiet street in Bozeman and has made the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem his chosen vantage for pondering the big picture should cause us to perk up and pay attention when he says there's no place to escape global environmental issues.

In fact, he can't think of a more poignant setting in America for considering the intersection between humans and nature. His 2012 book *Spillover: Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic*, vaulted again in 2020 to bestseller lists after the novel coronavirus rapidly spread from a wet market in China where wildlife are sold for consumption. The book astutely predicted it would happen. Like everyone else, Quammen was sheltering in place and engaging in social distancing when *Mountain Outlaw* caught up with him.

Todd Wilkinson: How is COVID-19 any different from what the Black Plague, polio and smallpox brought to the “New World”?

David Quammen: A direct flight from Wuhan to San Francisco takes 10 hours. That's one big difference, for starters. Polio and smallpox are not zoonotic diseases—only human-borne viruses—and therefore they can be defeated. Bubonic plague is caused by a bacterium, therefore treatable with antibiotics. Smallpox in the New World, brought by Europeans, was the greatest infectious-disease disaster that we know about, and the fact that we don't know more about it is a tragedy of lost and suppressed voices.

TW: *If you look at a few of your last books, *Song of the Dodo*, *Monster of God*, *Spillover*, and *The Tangled Tree*, what do they represent in terms of your own interests as an inordinately curious human and science writer?*

QUAMMEN: Interesting question, and thanks for asking it. Those four very disparate books do in fact have at least one thing in common. They reflect my deep and longstanding interest in ecology and evolutionary biology. *Dodo*: ecology and evolution on islands, and what that study has taught us about ecology and evolution, generally. *Monster of God*: ecology and evolution of big predators, especially the ecological relations between them and indigenous populations of humans. *Spillover*: ecology and evolution of scary viruses. *The Tangled Tree*: an evolutionary history of the Tree of Life.

TW: *In *Song of the Dodo*, which is generally about island biogeography and why species on “islands” of various kinds go extinct faster, the topic might appear wonky. Yet it is, in fact, exciting because it really explores how humans interact with and use the environment around them. How did the book grow out of reflecting on your own home region?*

QUAMMEN: You're right that the subject matter of *Dodo*—island biogeography—sounded wonky to many people when I started work on the book in 1988. But I knew that the phrase carried beneath it one: stories of strange animals and plants, natural wonders and prodigies, giant flightless birds, pygmy hippopotamuses, giant earwigs and all manner of weird living critters in faraway places, and two: profound relevance to conserving biological diversity in wild landscapes, especially landscapes that have become fragmented by human development, and populations that have become perilously isolated, surrounded by humanity, and therefore at risk of falling below the numbers level of a viable population. I knew from the beginning that this was about lemurs in Madagascar, giant tortoises in the Galapagos, but also about the survival of the Yellowstone grizzly.

TW: *What do we take for granted about Greater Yellowstone?*

QUAMMEN: One thing we take for granted is what I just mentioned, what researchers Frank and John Craighead told us back in the late 1960s: the grizzlies of Yellowstone, to survive for the long haul, need more than Yellowstone Park; they need the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.



During a collaring operation in Yellowstone National Park, David Quammen inspects the fur of a sedated gray wolf. Radio and GPS tracking collars provide valuable information to the Yellowstone Wolf Project's biologists about pack movements, diet and prey interactions. This photo was taken on assignment for *National Geographic Magazine's* May 2016 issue, written by Quammen, dedicated entirely to Yellowstone National Park. It was the first time in the Magazine's history that a single author had written an entire single topic issue. PHOTO BY RONAN DONOVAN

TW: *There is a strong thread flowing through Song of the Dodo that extends into Spillover and it is the warning that fragmentation of ecosystems and disturbances that accompany human inundation of wildlands are not only costly from a biodiversity perspective, but also dangerous. Could you riff a little on this?*

QUAMMEN: Where do I start? When you come in contact with wild animals, which all carry viruses, you invite those viruses to infect you. Usually they don't but sometimes they do. When you demolish a richly diverse forest ecosystem, as I've said elsewhere, it's like what happens when you bulldoze an old barn: viruses rise like dust from the wreckage. I don't believe in the myth of "Nature's Revenge"; I'm a Darwinian materialist, not a shaman. But I believe that there are ecological consequences to ecological disturbance, and one of those consequences is new viruses getting into humans.

TW: *You've spoken about the toll of smallpox on indigenous people in the Western Hemisphere. When you ponder the impact, what is important to note?*

QUAMMEN: When people move and they move their livestock, diseases move too. Europeans coming to North America was one of the great, tragic movements of conquest. Me and my Norwegian-American ancestors benefited. Smallpox and measles were two of the weapons. We owe.

TW: *Many reporters reaching out to you for interviews about COVID-19 ask you what keeps you up at night. And you gently have said what's more important is that people become educated about why pandemics occur and do what they can, or advocate that governments act in better ways, to prevent and confront them. What are some of the most essential things individuals and governments can do?*

QUAMMEN: What keeps me up at night occasionally ... and it doesn't happen often, is one: deadlines for highly ambitious projects and two: sciatica. Oh, and on the night of July 4: neighborhood fireworks in Bozeman.

What can governments do? Jeez, well they can start with listening to scientific warnings much better than most governments did in the case of COVID-19 and spending the money and political capital necessary to create effective national preparedness against pandemic threats and international coordination of preparedness. What can people do? Inform ourselves better, discover what's meant by critical thinking, vote more intelligently.

TW: *Over the course of your life, have you noticed any social patterns that have set up or deepened?*

QUAMMEN: I don't think there's more fear of nature. I think there's a sad and deepening fear among many people, well justified, about what we're losing. I dread being alive in a world, coming soon, where we scarcely see insects in our yards anymore. Where hummingbirds never appear at the bee balm flowers. Among other people, there's a distance from nature. Among people who work in agriculture, especially our fine, hardworking Montana ranchers and farmers, there's a closeness to nature but a resentment that their interactions with it are to some degree regulated by laws, and those laws are passed by distant strangers, sometimes for very good reasons and sometimes not.

TW: *We are currently focused and dealing almost singularly on COVID-19, and some use war analogies for confronting it, as if this is a one-time event that needs to be vanquished. But you and others have pointed out that it's possible to have several different emerging viruses at once. Has that ever happened and how would you assess the response to this novel coronavirus?*

QUAMMEN: It's certainly possible to have two serious virus spillover problems at once. As the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who have been dealing with an Ebola outbreak in their eastern Kivu area for almost two years, and who now also have to cope with COVID-19. I've been worried about Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries of Central Africa since early February. What happens when their case numbers start to rise? They have some wonderful scientists, for instance Jean-Jacques Muyembe-Tamfun in Congo, and some wonderful medical people. But they don't have the resources to cope with this thing.

TW: *Let's discuss our species. We are not separate from nature, we are a product of it. When you think about the predominate traits of Homo sapiens, our instincts and behavior, what are they and can we ever escape what Richard Dawkins describes as our self-destructive proclivities?*

QUAMMEN: Humans are driven to reproduce, expanding their existence, their influence and their genomes in space and time. Richard is right about that because he is a good Darwinist at his core—whether you accept his Selfish Gene thesis in its most literal form, or less so. Viruses are also driven to reproduce, expanding their existence, their numbers, their presence across space and time. But unlike viruses, humans are smart and can be wise. Most often we're just hungry and smart.

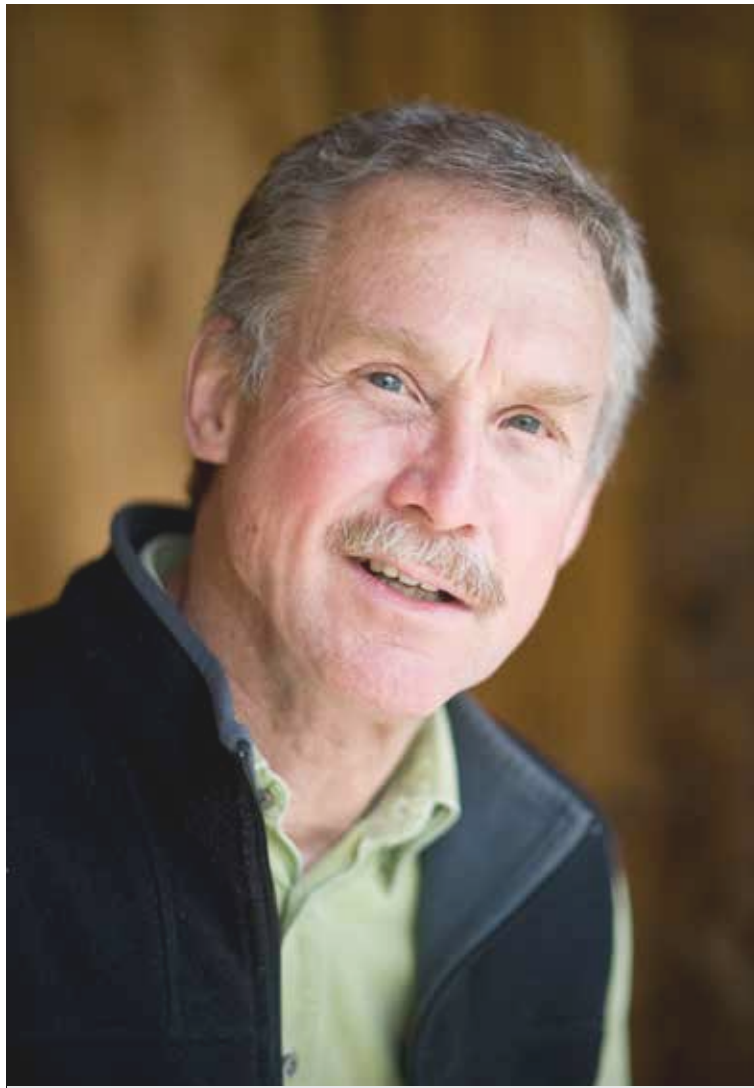


Photo by Lynn Donaldson

TW: *Ecological resilience in an age of climate change: Why does it matter and what do we need to do to help protect it in Greater Yellowstone?*

QUAMMEN: For ecological resilience we need maximal biological diversity. To have that, you need sufficient space—space that consists of good habitat. If your ecosystem contains big fierce animals and you want to continue containing them, you need big space.

TW: *What does the word "Anthropocene" mean to you and do you buy into it? Your pal Ed Wilson has referred to it as a surrenderist mindset in which fragmentation becomes rationalized and justified. And he says we should protect 50 percent of the planet as a preserve.*

QUAMMEN: I love Ed [Wilson] dearly and admire him to the skies. I'm currently functioning as editor of the select Edward O. Wilson works to be published in two volumes by the Library of America. I don't always agree with him on every point, but I don't argue those few points in public. I think it would be great if we could protect 50 percent of the planet for nature but it's difficult to see how to get there, and of course whatever answer there might be must be fully respectful of human rights, especially the (historically much-abused) rights of indigenous people. There's no inherent paradox there because indigenous people traditionally lived at low population densities, and in relative harmony with the rhythms and products of nature.

TW: *When we enter and pummel a rainforest like the Amazon or tropical central Africa, disturbance exposes us to viruses and we in turn can expose wild country to our viruses. What are your concerns related to Greater Yellowstone?*

QUAMMEN: The issue of disturbance and habitat loss and fragmentation with Greater Yellowstone is not about emerging viruses. There are many reasons we need intact, robust, richly diverse ecosystems, and minimizing the chance of humans acquiring new viruses is only one of them. On the other hand, the arriving of Chronic Wasting Disease in Greater Yellowstone brought in by migrating deer is a sad and sobering reminder that infectious disease is an ecological phenomenon, and human actions often help to spread it as they did with the original emergence of CWD into wild cervids, probably from a sheep-holding corral in Colorado decades ago. So far there's no solid evidence that CWD infects humans, but we know it's terrible news for our deer and elk.

TW: *You could write from anywhere but you are a resident of Greater Yellowstone, a person who lives here because of extraordinary access to the great outdoors. The thinking was that after Greater Yellowstone passed through the natural resource extraction era and moved to a tourism economy, that we were bulletproof as long as we didn't mess it up. But coronavirus is shattering that notion. Ironically, it's Greater Yellowstone as a global destination that has increased our vulnerability.*

QUAMMEN: The tourism economy is better for conservation than the traditional resource-extraction economy, but not without problems and contradictions itself. Right now we have neither economy. This virus is a resounding message on the fragility of the global economic system, with its axiom that growth is good and fuels increased wealth and therefore increased human welfare. Population growth, population size and the rate of our consumption are the monkeywrenches in that model.

TW: *Too many people doing too many things overwhelming natural areas?*

QUAMMEN: Human population size, and the growing consumption generated by it is the ultimate driver of all our worst problems and the destruction of so much diversity and beauty.

TW: *COVID-19 is not the super-lethal "Big One" that decimates Homo sapiens. What is the Big One?*

QUAMMEN: In Spillover, I talk about the Next Big One. This is a Big One. There will be more unless we are far better prepared next time. These viruses are knocking on our door. Why? Because there are 7.7 billion of us humans. We have made ourselves the World's Biggest Target (WBT).

TW: *And, finally, what are some favorite creature comforts during social distancing?*

QUAMMEN: As of May, I haven't been in a building other than our house for a month. But dog-walking, always important, is more important than ever. Betsy [Quammen's wife and author of the new book: American Zion: Cliven Bundy, God and Public Lands in the West] and I share a quiet cocktail hour each evening, again with the dogs (no cocktails for them, only butcher bones) and usually Bach or Albinoni. Later at night, for me, it's Guy Clarke, Louis Armstrong or the late and missed John Prine.

A version of this story was first published in the Summer 2020 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.

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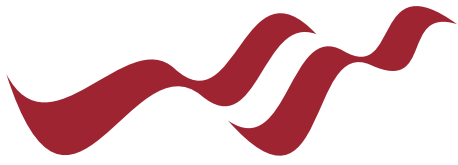


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