

ExploreTM

Life and land from the heart of the Yellowstone Region

FREE

Big Sky

December 3 - 16, 2021
Volume 12 // Issue #25

LIVE IN NORTH AMERICA 2022

FOO FIGHTERS



FOO FIGHTERS:
Coming to Big Sky
August 2022

*Big Sky Resort hosts
historic opening day*

*Hebgen Dam malfunction
leaves fish stranded*

**Helena skier claims
spot on U.S. Ski Team**

Big Sky Christmas Stroll Guide



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ON THE COVER:

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame band Foo Fighters announced on Nov. 30 that Big Sky will be a stop on their LIVE IN NORTH AMERICA 2022 tour. The show, scheduled for Aug. 10, 2022, will kick off Outlaw Partners Peak to Sky music series. Tickets went on sale Dec. 3 at 10 a.m. on peaktosky.com. PHOTO CREDIT: Foo Fighters

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Foo Fighters: Coming to Big Sky August 2022

Powerhouse rock band Foo Fighters, 2021 inductees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, will take the stage at the Big Sky Events Arena in Big Sky Town Center on Aug. 10, 2022 as part of their LIVE IN NORTH AMERICA 2022 tour. In one of the most intimate settings on the tour, the show will kick off the 2022 Peak to Sky concert series, produced by EBS publisher Outlaw Partners.

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Hebgen Dam malfunction leaves fish stranded

Volunteers and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff gathered on Dec. 1 to rescue fish on the upper Madison River after the Hebgen Dam malfunctioned and caused a significant drop in flows. In the middle of the brown trout spawning season, the low flows posed a particular threat to fish and their offspring.

29

Big Sky Christmas Stroll Guide

The Big Sky Christmas Stroll is back to kick off the holiday season, featuring beloved event traditions and exciting new additions. Start your stroll experience through the Big Sky Meadow Village the evening of Friday, Dec. 10 and travel to the Big Sky Town Center Saturday, Dec. 11 using a lit-up community trail network. This year's stroll will include sleigh rides, photos with Santa, in-store raffles, fireworks, ice skating and more.

8

Big Sky Resort hosts historic opening day

Between unveiling the fastest six-person lift on the continent and opening 106 acres of terrain, Big Sky had an eventful and historic opening day on Nov. 25. Keeping with its tradition of opening on Thanksgiving Day, gratefulness abounded as skiers enjoyed their first runs of the reason.

17

Helena skier claims spot on U.S. Ski Team

At the age of 18, Helena skier Konnor Ralph secured himself a spot on the U.S. Freeski Rookie Slopestyle team for the 2022 season. Ralph grew up skiing Helena's Great Divide before attending high school at the Wy'East Mountain Academy in Mount Hood, Oregon. EBS interviewed the young athlete to learn about his journey from childhood on the slopes to the U.S. team.

Opening Shot



Construction on the new BASE community center is progressing, and the Big Sky Community Organization has announced a March 2022 opening. Tours of the facility are available every Friday at 3:30 p.m. offering a sneak peek at the many amenities including a climbing wall and bouldering area, a mental health services office and a multi-use studio room. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

EDITORIAL POLICIES

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

For the December 17, 2021 issue:
December 8, 2021

CORRECTIONS

Please report errors to media@outlaw.partners.

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Ski-in/Ski-out

SPANISH PEAKS MOUNTAIN CLUB

Mountain Homes at Montage Big Sky
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SPANISH PEAKS MOUNTAIN CLUB

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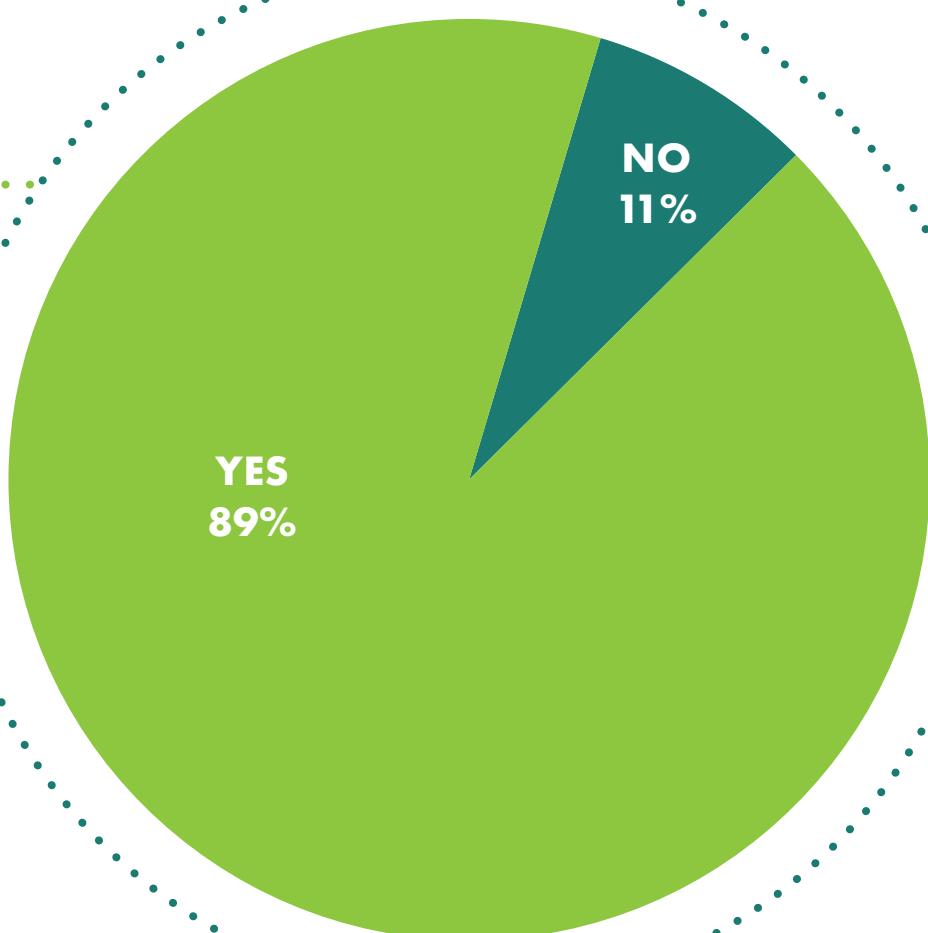
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25 TOWN CENTER AVENUE | 145 TOWN CENTER AVENUE | 66 MOUNTAIN LOOP ROAD | 181 CLUBHOUSE FORK

**406
FORUM**

EBS is reporting on childcare access in Big Sky. On Nov. 19, EBS published a survey on social media to gather community feedback. The results are below.

Do you think
access to childcare
in Big Sky is
an issue?



If you're interested in sharing your insight or experience on this topic, please contact Gabrielle Gasser at gabrielle@theoutlawpartners.com.

GET INVOLVED IN THE FUTURE OF WATER IN BIG SKY

Learn about recent water successes in our community and provide input into our future priorities

Headwaters Alliance Symposium
Wilson Hotel
December 9th, 5 - 7pm

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HOTEL
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BETTER TOGETHER

A biweekly District bulletin

BIG SKY RELIEF

Free Community-Wide COVID-19 Testing Returns for Winter 21/22

Big Sky Relief Partners announce the return of community-wide testing for Big Sky residents and local workforce. The effort, in combination with ongoing vaccine incentives, is designed to keep the community healthy and resilient as businesses gear up for the winter season. The free, self-administered tests are available now.

Tests are available to those not currently experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. A limited number will be available weekly on a first-come-first-served basis. Tests may be picked up 24/7 from the foyer of the Big Sky Visitor Center (Big Sky Chamber | Visit Big Sky offices) located at 88 Ousel Falls Road Unit A1.

- Who:** Residents & Employees of Big Sky
- What:** FREE Community Surveillance Testing
- When:** Starting Nov 22nd 2021
- Where:** Big Sky Visitor Center Foyer - 88 Ousel Falls Road
- How:**
 - Pick-up tests 24/7
 - Self-Administered
 - Results within 15 minutes
 - Encourage your friends and family to participate



Unlike last winter, tests do not need to be returned for processing to receive results. Because of this, test results will not be collected, compiled, or shared via the testing dashboard. The rapid antigen tests are self-administered and provide results within 15 minutes. All individuals, regardless of vaccination status, are encouraged to test regularly. Individuals who receive a positive result are asked to follow local and CDC guidelines. If you are symptomatic, please contact Big Sky Medical Center or your health care provider.

Visit BigSkyRelief.org/testing/ for more information or scan QR code.



District Events

Annual Business Registration Due December 31st, 2021

All Businesses, collectors and non collectors, operating in Big Sky are legally required to register with the District annually in December. Register @ ResortTax.org



BSRAD Board Meeting January 5th, 2022 @ 9:00 am



FY23 Application Training Session January 31st, 2022



FY23 Application LOI Available & Training Session February 1st, 2022



BSRAD Board Meeting February 9th, 2022 @ 9:00 am



FY23 LOI Deadline February 15th, 2022



All Meetings are open to the public and are held in person @ the Resort Tax Office (11 Lone Peak Dr. #204) and via Zoom.

Public Comment is highly encouraged and can be shared by:

- Emailing Info@ResortTax.org prior to meetings.
- Attending Board meetings and making public comment in person or through Zoom.
- *Comments on the Facebook WILL NOT be accepted as public comment.*

Visit ResortTax.org for more information.

Administered by the Big Sky Resort Area District, Resort Tax is a 4% tax on luxury goods & services.

OUR VISION: "Big Sky is BETTER TOGETHER as a result of wise investments, an engaged community, and the pursuit of excellence."



NEWS IN BRIEF

Knife incident in Big Sky leads to hospitalization, arrest

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – A local resident on Nov. 30 appeared in Gallatin County Justice Court to a charge stemming from a Nov. 28 altercation involving a knife that left one person hospitalized with severe injuries, according to legal documents obtained by EBS.

At his court appearance, a judge set Joseph Fairchild's bond at \$250,000. He will next appear in Gallatin County District Court.

Fairchild, 20, was charged with attempted deliberate homicide after he caused the victim injuries to "vital areas which nearly resulted in his death," according to an affidavit filed by the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office.

The victim was taken to Big Sky Medical Center then flown to Deaconess Hospital in Bozeman where he underwent surgery on Sunday, Nov. 28.

"Never be afraid to call the sheriff's office prior to these events escalating," said Gallatin County Sheriff Dan Springer. "We're happy to come out there and determine if it's something that we should be intervening in or not."

Montana's unemployment rate down to 3.1 percent

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HELENA – A record number of Montana residents are working and the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate reached a 14-year low in October, the governor's office said Nov. 19.

Total employment in Montana grew by nearly 2,400 jobs last month to 525,220, while the labor force expanded by nearly 1,200 workers to just over 542,000.

Montana's unemployment rate was 3.1 percent in October, compared to the national rate of 4.6 percent.

"We'll continue enacting policies that create more Montana jobs, increase opportunities, and bring the American dream into greater reach for more Montanans," Gov. Greg Gianforte said in a statement.

Montana's unemployment rate has fallen by 0.9 percentage points so far this year to the lowest rate since April 2007, when Montana had 3 percent unemployment.

The lowest unemployment recorded in Montana, since data collection started in 1976, was 2.8 percent in February 2007.

The number of Montana residents receiving unemployment benefits fell below 17,000 in October, about 4,200 fewer than the 21,220 receiving unemployment benefits in January, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Groups finalize first elk occupancy agreement in Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

EBS STAFF

PARADISE VALLEY — The Greater Yellowstone Coalition and The Property and Environment Research Center have partnered together to execute the first elk occupancy agreement in the northern Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

An elk occupancy agreement is a voluntary agreement between wildlife interests and landowners to improve elk tolerance and conserve elk habitat.

Paradise Valley is a key location for essential winter range for a variety of wildlife, including elk, according to a Nov. 29 press release from the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. The Paradise Valley ranch will keep livestock out of the 500-acre elk winter range area

Christmas tree permits available for Custer-Gallatin National Forest

EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – Christmas tree permits for Custer-Gallatin National Forest are available online for free through recreation.gov. A small transaction fee is associated with the online platform. The online option is strongly recommended, as a convenience for the public and to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Call ahead to your local district for any in-person requests.

"Every tree that is cut, with friends and family connects to a story and memory, we hope these memories continue or families start a new tradition, connecting with their local forests," said Mariah Leuschen-Lonergan, acting Custer Gallatin National Forest public affairs officer.

This tradition benefits general forest health by removing smaller trees from the forest, promoting growth in larger trees and creating increased open spaces for wildlife foraging according to a Nov. 18 CGNF press release.

For further information, please visit recreation.gov, call (877) 444-6777 or contact your local district office.

GVLT celebrates Big Sky conservation easement

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Gallatin Valley Land Trust has completed its 120th conservation easement with longtime locals Harry and Peggy Ring on their Beaver Creek property in Big Sky.

GVLT conservation easements are a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and GVLT that permanently limits use of the land in order to protect its conservation values from future development.

According to a Nov. 19 GVLT press release, the land in the easement serves as habitat for native plants, fish and wildlife.

"By limiting future residential or commercial development of this parcel through the establishment of a conservation easement, this landscape will be protected on behalf of the greater community, thus promoting the perpetuation of the scenic rural feel of Gallatin County," the press release said.

The 200 acres will contribute to the total 51,148 acres GVLT has placed in conservation easements.

Groups finalize first elk occupancy agreement in Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

with approximately 1.25 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing and benefit both livestock and elk by helping to decrease brucellosis transmission.

The two groups partnered with a 500-acre Paradise Valley ranch that will keep livestock out of the elk winter range area with approximately 1.25 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing and benefit both livestock and elk by helping to decrease brucellosis transmission.

"This agreement offers a model of how private resources raised by wildlife interests can be partnered with the landowners who provide valuable wildlife habitat," said PERC's CEO, Brian Yablonski. "By addressing the costs associated with providing elk habitat, we can help keep these large private landscapes intact and provide valuable winter range for the elk—accomplishing both is our goal."

Hebgen Dam malfunction causes dramatic drop in river flows, strands fish

NorthWestern Energy works to repair dam and restore flows

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

HEBGEN LAKE – Volunteers and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff gathered on the morning of Dec. 1 to rescue fish on the upper Madison River after a malfunction in the Hebgen Dam caused a significant drop in flows.

A gate component on Nov. 30 failed on the dam's outlet structure, according to a Dec. 1 press release from dam operator NorthWestern Energy, which decreased the opening for the outtake of water at the bottom of the gate. The gate malfunction interferes with NorthWestern Energy's ability to control river flows which led to the river dropping to a third of normal.

NorthWestern Energy said at a Dec. 1 press conference that the failure occurred between 2 and 3 a.m. on Nov. 30 based on United States Geological Survey data that showed a sharp drop in flows at that time. Equipment at the site did not notify NorthWestern Energy of an issue at that time, and Clotfelter said NorthWestern Energy became fully aware of the problem mid-morning Nov. 30.

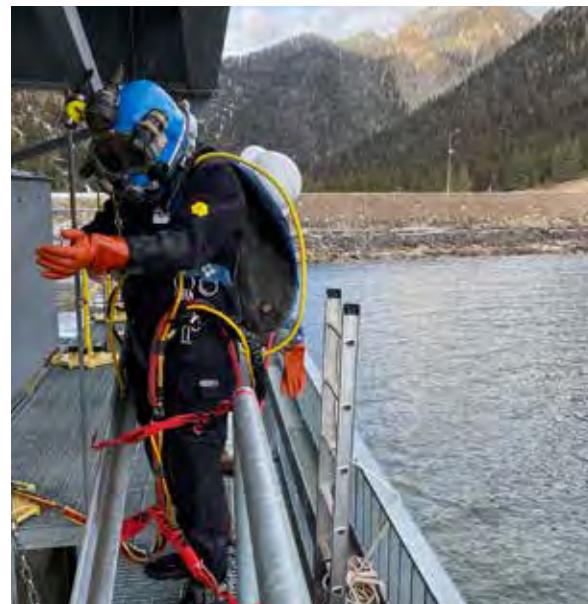
"The indicating equipment worked as it's designed to do," Clotfelter said. "It's just that the failure occurred in a matter that the indicating equipment would not pick up."

According to a Nov. 30 press release from FWP the impacts to the fishery are still unclear. Morgan Jacobsen, information and education program manager with FWP, said that the impact will take a while to become fully known.

"It is significant for sure," he said. "There is still water in the channel but it is a significant drop."

FWP issued a full fishing closure on Nov. 30 for the upper Madison River from Ennis Lake to Hebgen Dam. As of EBS press time, the closure was still in place.

FWP staff and volunteers moved stranded fish along the upper Madison River into the main channel on Dec. 1. Jacobsen said that the biggest concern was spawning trout. The Madison River brown trout are currently spawning, meaning their fertilized eggs are being deposited into spawning beds in the river



Travis Wilson, a diver from Associated Underwater Services, preps to go into the river to look at the component that failed on Hebgen Dam. PHOTO COURTESY OF NORTHWESTERN ENERGY

called redds. As low flows lead to dried up channels, redds are left exposed.

"At this point, the biggest potential impact to those redds is going to be low temperatures at night," Jacobsen said.

Kelly Gallup, owner of Gallup's Slide Inn located on the upper Madison River, witnessed the impacts of the low flows firsthand. When he walked out to the river the morning of Dec. 1, Gallup estimated he saw 200 people on the river trying to save the stranded trout.

"It's quite heart wrenching to walk out there and see all of that," Gallup said. "It's just dry. It's just frightening."

NorthWestern Energy spent Nov. 30 troubleshooting the failure, according to Clotfelter, and a new gate component was fabricated overnight in Anaconda. On the morning of Dec. 1, contract divers were on site at Hebgen Dam and were able to support the gate from above to prevent it from closing any further.

As of the Dec. 1 press conference, the replacement gate was en route to the dam and Clotfelter was hopeful that the repair could be completed quickly.

"If current efforts are successful, flow could be restored back this evening," he said.

If the new part does not fix the issue, Clotfelter said NorthWestern Energy has the option to transfer flow to a different gate as an alternative solution.

As of EBS press time, river flows were holding steady at approximately 250 cubic feet per second according to USGS data.

Moving forward, Clotfelter said NorthWestern Energy will focus on studying the failure as well as impacts to the Madison River and the fish.

"On the failure itself, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will be very involved in working with us to help identify the why and the how of the failure and to identify those corrective actions that we can implement to prevent reoccurrence," he said. "And then on the resource side, certainly there will be efforts to understand the impact, and to see what could be done to help offset that going forward."



Volunteers work to save stranded fish and move them to the main channel of the Madison River. PHOTO BY JONATHAN STONE

A new dawn

As Big Sky Resort unveils new lift on Opening Day, gratefulness abounds

BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

PHOTOS BY JONATHAN STONE / BIG SKY RESORT

BIG SKY – At 9:07 a.m. on Thanksgiving morning, the first riders on what is now the fastest six-person chairlift in North America unloaded at the top terminal on Jay Walk at Big Sky Resort. They were all smiles on this first day of the 2021-2022 ski season.

And why not be grateful? The resort's new Swift Current 6 chairlift dumped them at mid-Lone Mountain in exactly seven minutes, nearly half the time of the old Swift Current quad chair, which ran for 25 years.

It was a momentous occasion for Opening Day this year. After announcing a massive upgrade in snowmaking ability at the resort, which allowed Big Sky to open three aerial lifts, servicing 106 acres of skiable terrain on opening day, resort officials cut the ribbon on the historic ski lift and General Manager Troy Nedved welcomed skiers and snowboarders waiting in the snaking base-area lift line for the chair to load.

"Today is extremely momentous," Nedved told the crowd. "Opening on Thanksgiving Day is a tradition here at Big Sky Resort; lots of familiar faces so thanks for being here and sharing it with us."

Riders didn't wait long once they began loading, the base area cleared in a matter of minutes. With a maximum speed of 6 meters per second, or 1,200 feet per minute, Swift Current 6 joins the fastest lifts in the country and marks a revolution for the ski lift industry as a whole.

"The ride itself is a Cadillac," said Julie Towle, the Dirtbag Queen of 2003 who, along with her kids Grady and Poppy, were among the first six to experience the

new Swift Current 6 lift. "It's gorgeous," added Towle, a Big Sky resident of 22 years and the 2003 Dirtbag Queen. "It was warm it was fast and the way you get off is top notch."

Joining the Towles on the lift's first chair were Nedved along with 2021 Dirtbag King Ted McClanahan, better known as "Ted Shred," and Queen Michelle Clark-Conley.

The unload area is made to pour skiers—at a jaw-dropping rate of 3,000 per hour—directly onto Jay Walk, the cat track at the top of the lift, to keep skier traffic flowing and disperse them across the resort's nearly 6,000 skiable acres. The bottom lift terminal design was also strategic. Constructed approximately 40 feet further up the hill, it affords additional breathing room in the base area.

Overlooking the new Swifty 6 base terminal starting at 8 a.m., DJs Take a Chance and Jenn N'Juice set the rhythm for the day and Bozeman's MAP Brewing Co. unveiled its new Swifty Session Pale Ale, pouring complimentary tasters until the kegs were kicked.

The celebratory mood was infectious and the gratefulness flowed across the resort.

Curt Sundein moved to Big Sky and began his career as a lift operator in 1986. Now a ski guide and instructor at the resort after four seasons at the Yellowstone Club, Sundein was all smiles.

"Opening Day is my favorite day of the year, it's Thanksgiving," Sundein said. "Gratefulness is everything to me. My life is so good."

There is much to be grateful for on this Thanksgiving Day. Especially in Big Sky, Montana.





Federal program buys daily lunch for all Big Sky School District students

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – All hot lunches at Big Sky School District will be free thanks to a federal program expansion.

In response to the fiscal effects of COVID-19, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program was extended through June 2022. The program usually only provides free lunches to students in low-income areas during summer months. The expanded program took effect at BSSD Dec. 1.

"It's going to benefit a lot of people who could stand to save some extra money right now," said Lindsie Hurlbut, food service director at BSSD.

School board trustees voted unanimously on Nov. 9 to adopt the federal lunch program after listening to a presentation by Hurlbut.

Big Sky usually isn't eligible for the summer program because the community doesn't have a high enough number of children eligible for free and reduced-rate meals according to Hurlbut, but now that the extension has been offered to all schools, she said it will hugely benefit BSSD families.

Lunch usually costs \$3.70 per day for grades K-5 and \$3.90 for grades 6-12. Instead of parents paying, the USDA will reimburse those monies to the school. Hurlbut, a mother of two kids in the district, said this will save her about \$1,500 from now until the end of the school year.

On average, Hurlbut says she and her five part-time staff serve about 70 percent of the district's students



Hurlbut works on preparing a Thanksgiving themed school lunch. PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHLEY DODD



Left to Right: Ashley Dodd, Ali Pizza, Jamie Buntain and Lindsie Hurlbut gather in the kitchen during meal prep. PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHLEY DODD

each day—275 kids per lunchtime. She anticipates that number will go up when the new program kicks in.

"We are grateful for the herculean efforts of Lindsie Hurlbut and her school nutrition team for consistently serving healthy meals to our children throughout the evolving times of the pandemic," wrote school board trustee Kara Edgar in an email to EBS.

Hurlbut's staff echoed Edgar's sentiments.

"All of us that work here with Lindsie we're so impressed with what she's been able to do with this program," said Kitchen Assistant Ashley Dodd.

Hurlbut expressed her excitement about being able to offer this free lunch program to the Big Sky community and commended her staff for their support.

"The only way that I can make this happen is because I have an amazing staff and without that I wouldn't be able to implement this program," she said.

Hurlbut's latest effort to adopt the federal program is one of the many ways she has worked to improve the district's food services in her four years with the school.

She also writes a grant through the Moonlight Community Foundation, a big supporter of the lunch program, that helps her purchase Montana grown produce in an effort to produce high-quality lunches.

"Our ultimate goal for the lunch program is to get more kids eating the school lunch and make sure that we're offering really healthy whole foods," Hurlbut said.

winter
INSIDE-OUT

Go all out. Come on in.

Whether you're one to brave the elements or would prefer to relax by a warm fire, West Yellowstone is home to the winter of your dreams.

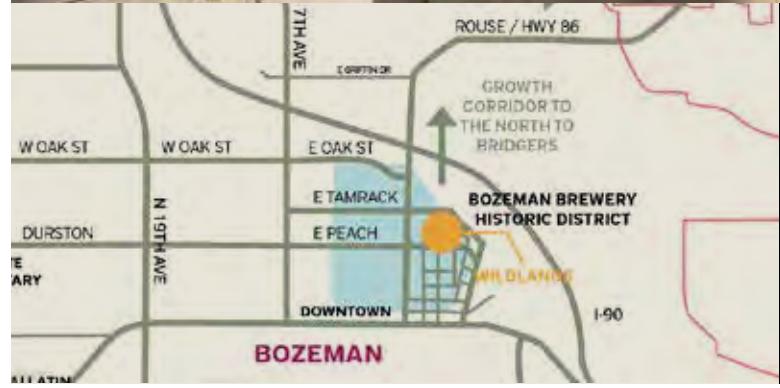
West Yellowstone is home to hundreds of miles of trails inside and outside Yellowstone National Park, and Yellowstone Vacations provides tours and rentals of one of the world's best snowmobiling destinations. Plus, we offer convenient snowcoach tours of the park, where you can experience highlights such as Old Faithful. Our comfortable snowcoaches give you an unrivaled view of the Yellowstone region.

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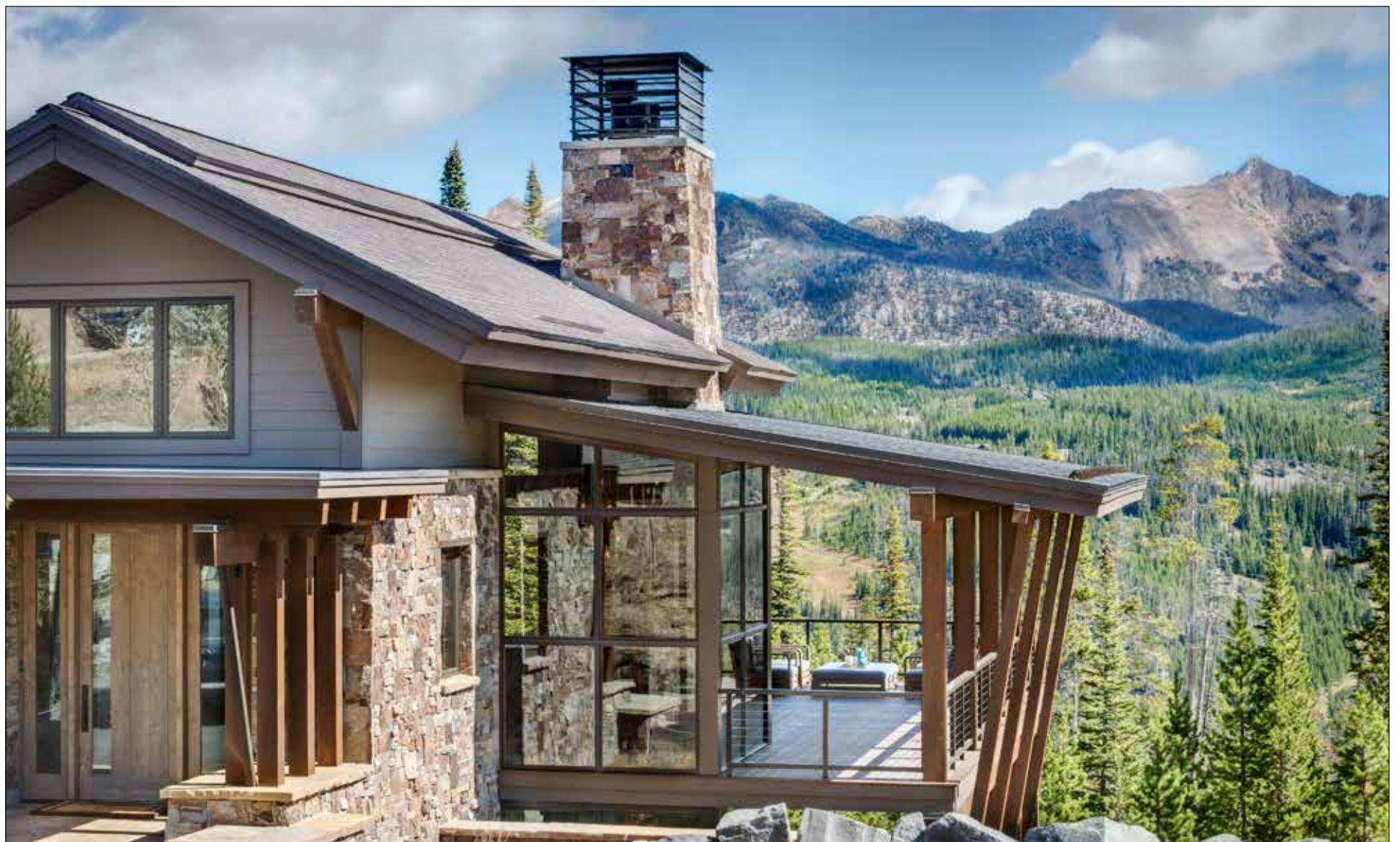
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Friday, Dec. 3 @ 10am MST

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PEAK TO SKY

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News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Rock legends Foo Fighters to play in Big Sky

Headline concert set for Aug. 10, 2022 as part of Outlaw Partners' Peak to Sky event

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees Foo Fighters are set to take the stage at the Big Sky Events Arena in Big Sky Town Center on Aug. 10, 2022 as part of their LIVE IN NORTH AMERICA 2022 tour. The band will open with a headline show for the 2022 Peak to Sky concert series, co-executive produced by Outlaw Partners and Laura Glass / Cocolittle Media. Ticket sales for Foo Fighters begin Friday, Dec. 3 at 10 a.m. MST online only at peaktosky.com.

The Big Sky Events Arena is an intimate, 5,000-capacity venue in Big Sky, Montana and home to Outlaw Partners' 8X award-winning Big Sky PBR among other events. With 11,166-foot Lone Mountain as the backdrop, this Foo Fighters show will offer one of the most unique and iconic live music experiences on the tour which spans major U.S. cities.

"Dreams will come true for music fans in August," said Outlaw Partners Founder & Chairman, Eric Ladd. "History will be made with Foo Fighters in Big Sky – imagine one of the finest rock bands playing an intimate Montana setting; not much more can be said other than get ready to be part of the most amazing concert of 2022."

Foo Fighters are a staple of American rock. Since their conception in 1994, Dave Grohl and bandmates Nate Mendel (bass guitar), Pat Smear (guitar), Taylor Hawkins (drums), Chris Shiflett (lead guitar) and Rami Jaffee (keyboards) have spanned the spectrum of classic alternative to adrenaline-pumping hard rock that sells out arenas across the globe.

Over their decades-long career, Foo Fighters have won 12 Grammy Awards, including Best Rock Album four times, and were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame earlier this year. Their 10th and latest album, "Medicine at Midnight," is out now.

The inaugural Peak to Sky event in 2019 was curated by Pearl Jam's Mike McCready and came to life offering two days of world class music to an assembly of fans among rodeo-style bleachers surrounding a dirt arena in the

spacious mountains of Big Sky. Peak to Sky was an idea that McCready and Ladd hatched on the chairlifts at Big Sky while skiing a few winters ago. The goal was to bring amazing music to Big Sky and curate some of the most memorable concerts.

"Peak to Sky is back in 2022 and I'm stoked Foo Fighters will headline Aug. 10th," says McCready.

Tickets for the Foo Fighters show in Big Sky went on sale Dec. 3, at 10 a.m. MST, and will be available for purchase online only at peaktosky.com. Ticket options will include VIP, seated GA and floor GA, starting at \$120.

Follow Peak to Sky on Facebook, Instagram and online at peaktosky.com for more information, ticket links and artists.

About Peak to Sky

Peak to Sky is Big Sky, Montana's leading summer music event, originally curated by Mike McCready from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted band Pearl Jam. The two-day event debuted in 2019 with Brandi Carlile, Mike McCready, Taylor Hawkins, Duff McKagan, Chad Smith and Josh Klinghoffer.

About Outlaw Partners

Outlaw Partners is Co-Executive Producer and Promoter of the Peak to Sky event, and a thriving marketing, media and events company in Big Sky, Montana. Outlaw-owned events include the eight-time PBR Event of the Year award-winning Big Sky PBR and publishers of the regionally acclaimed Mountain Outlaw magazine and Explore Big Sky newspaper. Outlaw Partners was founded in 2009 and is Southwest Montana's leading publisher, marketing, and events organization.

About Cocolittle Media

Based in Seattle, WA, Laura Glass / Cocolittle Media is Co-Executive Producer of the Peak to Sky event. Cocolittle produces and curates live music and comedy events around the globe. Founded in 2010, Cocolittle continues to create and redefine first-time experiences for artists and audiences alike.



Foo Fighters will rock the Big Sky Events Arena this summer during their American tour. PHOTO CREDIT: Foo Fighters

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News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Introducing the 2022 TEDxBigSky speaker lineup

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – In the popular Rocky movies, Sylvester Stallone's character, Rocky Balboa, says, "Life's not about how hard of a hit you can give ... it's about how many you can take, and still keep moving forward."

Benjamin and Azrya Bequer

Benjamin and Azrya Bequer aren't afraid to ask you hard questions. The husband-wife force of nature is devoted to helping humanity achieve its full spectrum of aliveness, a process they call "Beqoming" that is outlined in their new book "BEQOMING: Everything You Didn't Know You Wanted" and will soon be joined by a podcast and a six-month online course.

Beqoming is meeting yourself fully and unapologetically, shaking off physical and psychological barriers in order to become the person you are destined to be. Although the path to get there appears different for each person, the potential that awaits, the Bequers believe, is enormous. In their TEDx talk, Azrya and Benjamin will speak of their own journey of Beqoming, as well as their use of plant medicine, particularly Ayahuasca.

"Our theme is everything you didn't know you wanted," said Benjamin. "That is different for everyone, but our proposition to the audience and why we're sharing our story, is when we relinquish our personal preferences, that's the master key to unlocking [potential]."

Resilience, they say, fits into that theme perfectly as resilience is no longer resisting what is, no matter how challenging that might be.

"It's having trust when it's difficult to," Benjamin adds.

Learn more at beqoming.me.

Moving forward in the face of adversity, the act of resilience, is the theme of this year's TEDxBigSky speaker event. Each of our seven esteemed speakers will tell their stories of resilience during the Jan. 29 and 30 event at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center. Ahead of the event,

Explore Big Sky spoke with four of this year's speakers to hear their own stories of resilience.



Julie McGue

In the U.S. nearly six to eight million people are adopted. It's an experience that has affected a large portion of the population, including Julie McGue. After undergoing her own journey of self discovery, McGue is devoted to helping those adopted find their identities. The author of "Twice a Daughter: A Search for Identity, Family, and Belonging," is no stranger to the process of finding herself. After facing a medical issue in her 40s, the identical twin and adoptee realized there was a major flaw in the closed adoption system. While it protects identities, it also shields adoptees from important, and sometimes life-saving information about their past.

In her TEDxBigSky talk, titled "When it comes to the adoption process, conversations matter,"



McGue will discuss her five-year journey searching for her biological parents, the roadblocks she encountered, the lingering stigma surrounding adoption and the importance of having a strong sense of identity.

"In my era there was a stigma of illegitimacy, so it was very important for an adopted child to look like the family they were being adopted into," McGue said. "That shame has become a part of their personality."

To McGue, resilience is the journey she and her sister took to discover their own identities. "It took perseverance," she says. "Figuring out the next angle to attack."

Learn more at juliemcgueauthor.com.

Timothy Tate

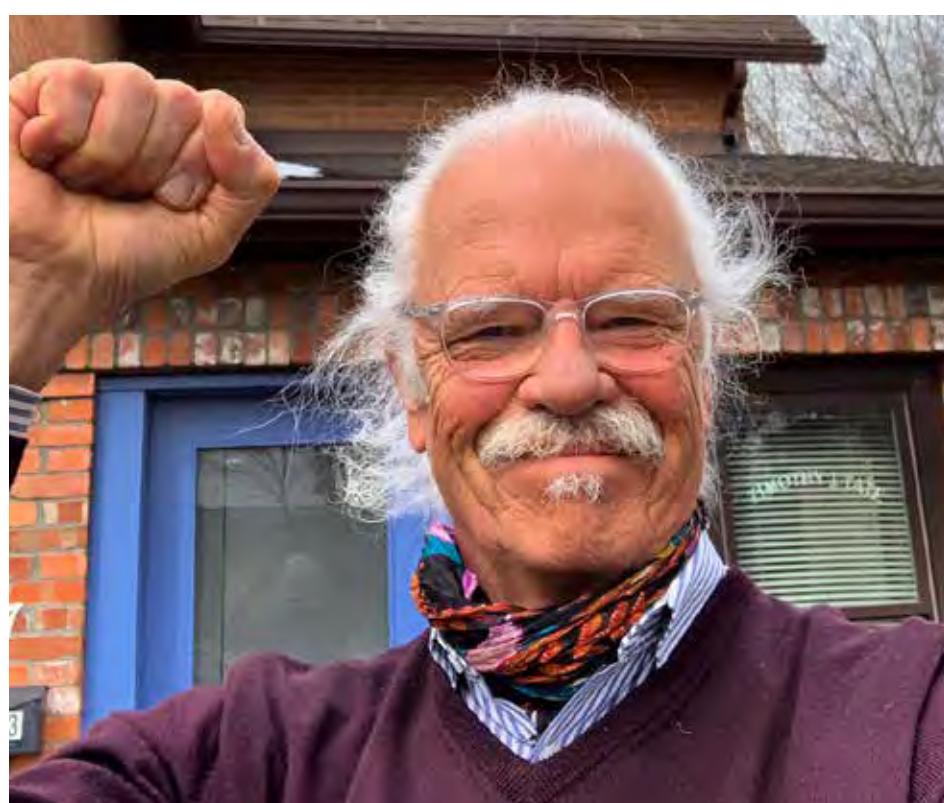
While nature and nurture are important factors in a person's psychological growth, Timothy Tate, who has been a professional psychotherapist for over three decades, believes in a third force, which he calls the "unique genius." It's a theory outlined by James Hillman in his book "The Soul's Code" and one Tate has integrated into his psychotherapy work.

While Tate believes that family, environment and trauma all play a role in our development there is more depth to discovery.

"Beyond, behind and underneath all of that is a force of soul, a force of character or your unique genius, that goes back to a theory that Plato put on the table first, saying that each of us are given a unique genius—a 'daimon'—just before we're incarnate," Tate explains.

Tate's goal is to help people realize their unique genius through three core modes: dream, imagination and creativity. In his TEDxBigSky talk, he will draw from examples from his life to illustrate this concept. By discovering our unique genius, he says, we are liberated because we return to something that's always been there and accept our full selves.

Resilience, he says, is the persistent call to be, to say, to accomplish what is true to someone's nature, without performing or trying to impress others.



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Nick and Mike Fiorito

On his way to his corporate job in New York City, Nick Fiorito would pass the same homeless man each morning. It was his urge to improve the man's situation, coupled with his unhappiness in his own work life, that led him and his brother, Mike Fiorito, to quit their jobs in 2016 and start the nonprofit Blankets of Hope.

"Something in my bones just told me 'we have to do this right now,'" Nick said. "If I was outside and I was cold and someone came up to me and offered me a blanket, I would appreciate it."

What started as a casual day their friends and families took to walk around New York and hand out blankets to those in need, grew—with the help of a viral video of their efforts and the help of a California tech investor—into the launch of a new nonprofit and a new career for the Fioritos. Today, 100 percent of all donations go toward the efforts of Blankets of Hope.

Since then, Blankets of Hope has partnered with 500 schools across 46 states to provide 60,000 blankets to those in need. A large part of Blankets of Hope is their Kindness Workshops, through which they educate children about the importance of compassion.

"These kids are going to be our future leaders, running the communities and country that we live in," said Nick, who says the emphasis of their program is really to instill that mentality of service in children at a young age. "That really is one of the most important things we can teach the future generation."

Nick and Mike will join TEDxBigSky this year to talk about Blankets of Hope and the journey of resilience it took them to launch its success. Their talk, titled "The Cheat Code to Fulfillment," will focus on self-fulfillment and the better world that results when people are doing what they truly love for a living. To them, resilience means moving forward with a positive attitude, despite all obstacles.

For more information, visit blanketsofhope.com.



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SECTION 2:

SPORTS, ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS, MONTANA AND HEALTH



Helena skier joins US Freeski Rookie Slopestyle Team

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

HELENA – Konnor Ralph has been skiing since he was 2 years old and competing since he was 10. Now 18, The Helena-native secured himself a spot on the U.S. Freeski Rookie Slopestyle team for the 2022 season.

Ralph grew up skiing at Great Divide Ski Area and at age 12 he attended a United States of America Snowboard and Freeski Association event at Schweitzer Mountain Resort in Idaho that cemented his desire to keep competing.

“Ever since then, I kind of just was hooked and started doing it [and] getting better,” Ralph said.

To advance his freeski skiing career, Ralph attended Wy’East Mountain Academy in Mount Hood, Oregon for four years of high school. After a successful season of skiing with multiple podium finishes, Ralph secured a spot on the U.S. team in the spring of 2021.

U.S. Freeski Rookie coach Ryan Wyble met Ralph three years ago at a competition. This will be Wyble’s third season as the head coach of the rookie team, which currently consists of eight athletes.

According to Wyble, Ralph attracted the attention of the U.S. team coaches with his competition results, training and his hard work.

“He’s definitely got super high motivation levels,” Wyble said. “He’s always hungry to be working on a new skill or a new trick or whatever it is.”

Freeski is a type of alpine skiing involving tricks, jumps and terrain park features like rails, boxes and pipes. There are currently three Olympic freeski events: Ski Cross, Halfpipe and Slopestyle. A big part of freeski, Wyble says, is performing different tricks and being able to spin in all directions.

“He’s quite proficient with all those different skills and [a] variety of tricks, which is awesome,” Wyble said of Ralph.

EBS talked with Ralph to learn more about his journey from a childhood on the slopes to the U.S. team.

Some answers below have been edited for brevity.

Explore Big Sky: How did you get into skiing?

Konnor Ralph: My mom skied when she was pregnant. I was 2 when I started. I kind of just went with my parents on weekends and that was that. You know, you just do it when you can. My parents were super into it at the time so I would always tag along.

EBS: How did skiing at Great Divide shape you as a skier?

K.R.: I think that I probably wouldn’t have gotten into park skiing if it wasn’t for Great Divide. Just because, when you ski there every weekend, you kind of start to not get tired of it but you’re ready to try new things on the mountain. So, every time I would go up with my parents, I would ski the mountain and then me and my brother would be like, “well, let’s go to the park, why not?” I kind of got hooked right away. And I was like, “this is so fun, this is what I want to do forever.”

EBS: Where is your favorite place to ski?

K.R.: I like spring time in Mount Hood or Great Divide. But I think that’s biased because I grew up skiing there.

EBS: What was your first competition?

K.R.: [It was] a Smoking Aces Tour. ... It was kind of just like a local event and it was at Big Sky, Schweitzer



Helena-based Konnor Ralph earned a spot on the U.S. Freeski Rookie Slopestyle Team in the spring of 2021. PHOTO BY CHRIS NEWETT



Ralph performs a switch left cork 540 Japan Grab. PHOTO BY CHRIS NEWETT

and Whitefish. The first year, I don’t think I podiumed once and then the second year, I was like, “I’m winning it, I have to,” and then that’s what happened. Which is great.

EBS: Tell me about what you have done to improve and ultimately earn a spot on the U.S. Freeski Rookie Slopestyle Team?

K.R.: I think a lot of it was just like, knowing in the back of my mind that this is what I want and having that self-motivation to get better and keep progressing to be the best I could be and can be. I went to a ski academy for high school, and all four of those years definitely made me as good as I am now.

EBS: When did you realize that you wanted to ski professionally?

K.R.: It was actually after I lost a rail jam. I think I got fourth place or something at a rail jam. ... I got fourth there, and I was so bummed I was like “I do not want that to happen again.” And then I almost used it as motivation to never have that happen again. And I was just like, “I don’t want to not win” and I’m pretty competitive. So definitely that but just skiing at Great Divide you have all these people that are rooting for you. And once you get to a certain level, ... I’d say like the [North American Cup] level which is below World Cups, [supporters are] like, “come on we know you can do this” and you have this little huge community behind you. And they’re all so invested in your success. It’s crazy.

EBS: What does a day of training look like for you?

K.R.: A day for me would be waking up and getting my ski gear on and then making breakfast, and then driving to the hill and skiing pretty much from 9 to 4. And then sometimes we’ll have a workout after that. Yeah, kind of just preparing and working on tricks that you know you want to do in competition and just getting in the right mindset for that competition.

EBS: What’s your favorite trick?

K.R.: I really like the Cork 9 blunt. It’s like a backflip 540 and you reach to the tail of your ski in the back and you grab with your right hand on your right ski across your skis.

EBS: How does it feel to have a spot on the U.S. Freeski Rookie Team?

K.R.: I think my sophomore year I started to realize that I really was aiming to get on the team. And, I mean it felt so accomplishing because you work for a few years at something and it finally happens. It just feels like you finally got over that step and you’re starting to make serious leverage. It feels amazing.

EBS: Do you have a favorite part of being on the team?

K.R.: So far, I haven’t ever competed with them, as of now, but I’ve had a few camps that I went to. I think mainly it’s just being able to ski with the main slopestyle and big air skiers that are progressing the sport right now and the best I guess. Being able to ski beside them and kind of have them motivate me in a way and be like, well, I want to be as good as them like, I want to do that and do it better. That’s a big part of it. And then just the training facilities that they have, they’re amazing.

EBS: How does it feel to have your support system behind you?

K.R.: It just makes me want it more. They make me want to prove not only to myself that I can do it, but to all those people that I’m gonna do it. It’s just nice to have that support it keeps you in it.

EBS: What are your future goals?

K.R.: My next goals, I would say just competing in World Cups and skiing to my best ability. I have my first one Dec. 12 at Copper. I think just making finals at those and skiing to my best ability.

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What makes Big Sky a must-visit resort

And why Dave Stergar can't seem to leave

BY EMILY STIFLER WOLFE

EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Dave Stergar was nearing the front of the Tram line when a friend leaned over the fence and cupped his hands to whisper.

"Patrol is about to open the North Summit Snowfield," he said.

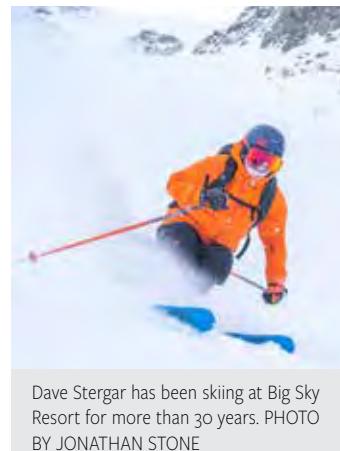
Stergar's blue eyes lit with excitement. If the whisper was true, it would be the first day the Snowfield opened to the public that year. And while the morning snow report posted 1-2 inches, Stergar had already skied two fluffy laps in the Headwaters, so he knew there was more in the alpine and the wind had favored the northerly aspects.

Not 15 minutes later, I trailed Stergar as he knocked on the summit shack and signed out with patrol. We hustled over to click into our skis, slid through the gate, and traversed to the lip of the Snowfield. The third public party to ski the Snowfield all season, we found at least a foot of new snow—light enough you skied right through it, but supportive and soft.

Known to friends as "Stergy," Stergar, 54, grew up in Anaconda, Montana, and has skied at Big Sky Resort for more than 30 years. As a boy, he strapped leather lace-up boots to wooden skis to ski tiny Wraith Hill, a ski hill with a rope tow that's no longer operating near his home town. Later, when Discovery Ski Area opened in the winter of 1974-75, he got a pass there, too, and with his family, visited other areas around the state including Big Sky. Eventually, Stergar got a job as a night bellman at the Huntley Lodge. That season, 1992-93, he skied 100-plus days.

"That really hooked me on Big Sky," said Stergar, who spent the next 27 years teaching seventh grade science in Helena—and almost every weekend in Big Sky. He worked as an ambassador for the resort for over a decade, bought a condo here in 2010, and once skied 26 Tram laps in a single day. He got married at age 40 and taught his wife to ski here.

A sort-of unofficial mayor figure, Stergar seems to know everyone on the mountain—and if he hasn't met you yet, he'll make sure he does by the time you're through the Tram line. But if you chase him around the mountain, he'll probably outski or out-hike you without even trying.



Dave Stergar has been skiing at Big Sky Resort for more than 30 years. PHOTO BY JONATHAN STONE

Stergar has skied Jackson, Snowbird, Sun Valley, Vail, Whistler, Chamonix, and Val d'Isère. He's heli skied in Alaska three times. But Big Sky is home.

"Big Sky is the most European-type skiing I've seen outside of Europe," he said. "If you like the big wide open above tree line skiing, this is it. Our Tram accesses a massive amount of terrain."

And then there's the weather, which does crazy things on Lone Mountain. Sometimes, if you're in the right place at the right time, they're crazy good.

One such day, two inches of fresh snow blanketed the Mountain Village picnic tables when Stergar walked through the base area in the morning. After he rode the Tram and dropped in, he found the wind had blown snow from the northwest side of the mountain onto the South Face, and it was literally chest deep in Marx.

"Picture the face shot up and over the shoulders," Stergar recalls after our run down the Snowfield—which, while not chest deep, held the kind of aerated, boot-top alpine delicacy I've skied only on Lone Mountain.

Stergar loves skiing 3,000 vert in one shot, ripping five-minute laps in the Bowl, and slicing into fresh corduroy on Andesite. He loves when the wind buffs his tracks pool-table smooth between runs, and when the sky is so clear you can see the Tetons from the summit. He loves riding the new heated bubble chairs, pounding 3:45 p.m. leg-burner Snake Pit moguls, and gazing at the peak over après beers from the Vista Bar deck at the Exchange in anticipation of being in the right spot in the alpine at the right time again tomorrow.

Stergy just loves Lone Mountain. "It's pretty hard to leave this place."

This article originally appeared on Big Sky Resort's blog: [The Way I Ski It](#) on Nov. 10, 2021. For more stories, visit [blog.bigskyresort.com](#).

Emily Stifler Wolfe is a writer and business consultant based in Bozeman, Montana. Find her at [emilystiflerwolfe.com](#).



BASE

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SKI TIPS

BY DAN EGAN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

The "Road Trip" is part of the DNA of the winter experience. Skiers and riders love both new and familiar resorts, and these days if you ask the question, "Why go?" the answer is, "Because we can," especially with the multi resort ski passes that are available worldwide.

The key to a smooth road trip starts with packing, whether it's for a flight to your dream resort or loading the family into the car to the local hill, you want the right gear, clothing, accessories, personal items, electronics and a few things that remind you of home.

Let me tell you up front, I tend to overpack, and often I'm the guy parked in front of the departure terminal with bags opened, gear in the car and on the curb pulling it all together. As a kid, I lived by the quote, "Never pack more than you carry on your back," then I got a car, then I got a van, then a house, well you get the idea. We love our possessions.

Simply said, luggage with wheels, changed my life and think about what you really need, a good base layer, dry socks, gloves or mittens, ski outfit, and gear.

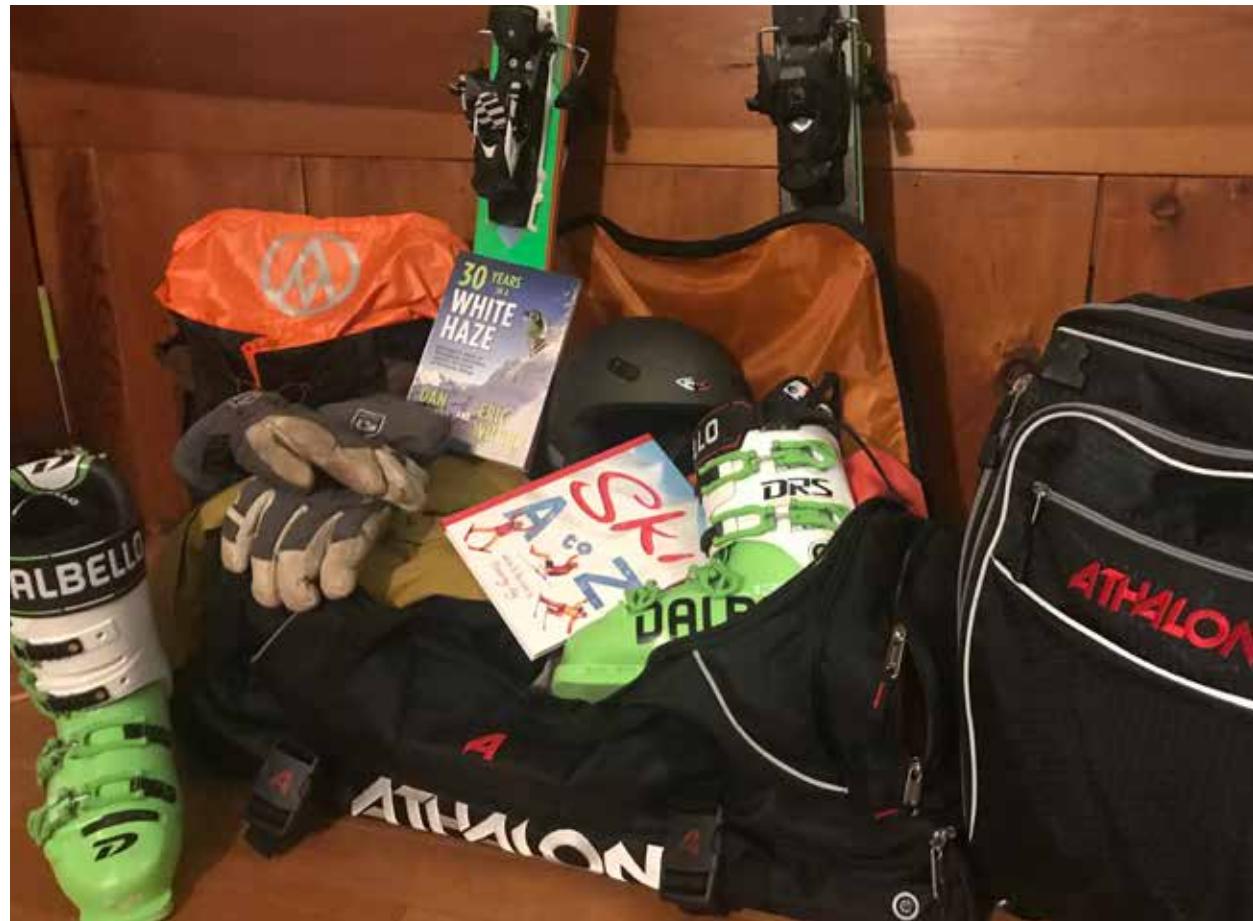
For me it starts at home, being a visual person I lay out the gear on the floor. Equipment, clothing, ski outfits, workout clothing, and stuff spread out in front of me. It's a bit of a chaotic approach but it works.

Not everything that is on the floor will make the cut for the trip but it's all items I typically want to bring. And that includes hats, goggles, sunglasses, headphones, ski tuning kit, the magazines I haven't read yet, a book and a few gadgets such as, GoPro, boot heaters, phone charger(s) and associated cables.

Then I check my list from my last trip and the first item on the list is, "Things I didn't use on my last trip." I scan over the floor and remove those items, a sweater, two of the three magazines I thought I would read, extra hoodie, water bottle, that sort of thing.

The next step for me is grabbing the luggage and bags. I recently upgraded my travel bags which has made traveling easier. The upgrade included a soft carry-on bag designed for airplane overhead bins, a duffle bag with top and bottom compartments with side boot compartments and wheels, and a ski bag that can hold two pairs of wide skis and some gear (yes it has wheels).

This is a multipart equation for me. I pack checked and bulky items first: skis, boots and helmet, etc. Skis in ski bag, boots and helmet in the appropriate



Dan's pre-packing pile. PHOTO BY DAN EGAN

Packing for the next road trip



Dan and John Egan packing at the Berlin Wall. PHOTO BY DAVID ROMAN

compartments of your duffle. My goggle and lens are in my helmet. Then I pack those compartments full of socks, underclothing, t-shirts and other items that can be stuffed in and around them. Next I pack my street cloths, pants, shirts, sweaters, and lastly extra warm clothing such as a puffy jacket vest.

I hold out my ski outfits for the ski bag. Skis go in the bag first, then shovel, probe, beacon, then I go with ski jacket, pants around them with my pole and gloves.

My carry-on packing goes like this: camera gear, two-way radios, travel gloves, down vest, hat and books and magazines. In my backpack I put in my computer, coat and personal items.

Gone are the days of carrying either ski boots and helmets onto a plane. In my opinion that is so "1980s." Relax, trust the system and cut down the weight and bulkiness of your carry-on for ease of boarding the plane. Every time I see people slinging boots and helmets outside of or within luggage into overhead bins on planes, I cringe for both the owner of the gear and the people around them.

In all my years traveling to resorts around the world, rarely if ever have my checked-in bags and skis not made it. Plus, we live in a service-based economy where the customer rules and reviews matter. Give the airlines a chance to provide their services and solutions.

Most of the items I've lost traveling are the ones I've forgotten and left behind on the plane or in a hotel. Years ago, on a trip to the Alps, I did leave my entire backpack with my street clothes in the door of my friend's house. It was just one bag of many, and it got overlooked. In the end it made for a fun trip collecting new items in Europe during the trip and as always made for a great story when the film came out.

These days I really do try and travel light; less is more as they say, and the adventure is all in the people and the places, not what jacket, hat or sweater were in my luggage. Look for me in the mountains this winter as I am hitting the road and traveling light this winter with trips to Zermatt, Engelberg, Laax, Val d'Isère, around New England and of course Big Sky, Montana.

Extreme Skiing Pioneer, Dan Egan coaches and teaches at Big Sky Resort during the winter. His 2022 steeps camps at Big Sky Resort run Feb. 24-26, March 10-12 and March 17-19. His newest book, "Thirty Years in a White Haze" was released in March 2021 and is available at www.White-Haze.com.

THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Remember the line from Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now," in which the elusive character Colonel Kurtz, played by Marlon Brando, repeats a passage from Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" about the shadow of humanity? "The horror," Kurtz utters as he's about to be assassinated, "the horror ..."

In Wyoming, there's another kind of horror playing out involving the Kabuki theater that

is now the Republican Party. A few days ago, leaders of the Wyoming GOP declared that the state's lone member of Congress, Liz Cheney, will no longer be considered a member of the Republican Party.

She's been cast out because she believes that former President Donald Trump and his allies need to be thoroughly investigated for events that resulted in the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. That a member of the Cheney clan could ever be jettisoned from the overwhelmingly dominant ruling party in that state is head-spinning.

Many consider Ms. Cheney's bid to win re-election next year, and not be primaried out by a challenger who identifies as a loyalist to Trump, to be a litmus test on national sanity. Not long ago, I had a chat with Tom Sadler, a longtime hook-and-bullet Republican and fishing guide who served on the staff of former U.S. Sen. Warren Rudman on Capitol Hill and has fiercely identified as a Theodore Roosevelt Republican.

Readers here may find the conversation intriguing, for the step taken to oust Cheney from her own party appears to also hold resonance among Republicans in Montana and Idaho. Sadler, who has helped protect large tracts of public land in the West, said he thinks Cheney and her political situation are shining a spotlight on a big problem for not only the Republican party but for our country.

Todd Wilkinson: As a lifelong card-carrying Republican, your head must be spinning.

Tom Sadler: Spinning for sure and party vertigo as well, and some profoundly serious head-shaking.

T.W.: In many ways, the Cheney family, now with two generations having achieved prominent roles in national politics, has rarefied stature across Wyoming. So, let me cut to the chase and ask you: What do you think of Congresswoman Cheney making a "last stand" within her party. And in a case of strange bedfellows, she's become a darling of the Democrats.

T.S.: I'm not sure I would go so far as to say she is the darling of the Democrats, but she is greatly appreciated by former Republicans like me when she stands up to the insurrectionists. This doesn't appear to be a political ploy for her. She is not backing away from this fight and is now the Vice Chair of the U.S. House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol.

I think she sees this as an existential threat to our form of government. That may seem alarmist but if the actions by the insurrectionists and their enablers don't scare the heck out of you then you aren't paying attention.

T.W.: If politicians from both parties committed themselves to telling the truth, to provide leadership by insisting on facts, we'd probably be able to solve a lot more serious problems facing the country.

T.S.: That's right. Cheney and Republican Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, who recently announced he will not seek re-election, are stellar examples when it comes to January 6, but that attitude needs to apply to everything. Our elected officials need to be able to separate politics from policy and put country before party.

T.W.: What's the end game for not only the Trump loyalists but for people like Congresswoman Cheney?

T.S.: I've begun to wonder what the politics of the future looks like. Both parties are being held hostage to their more radical wings and a growing lack

What Liz Cheney's GOP problem means for politics in Northern Rockies

of space exists for folks who want responsible solutions to the growing issues facing not only the ecosystem and the country, but the planet.

T.W.: Do GOP moderates from the West — people like former Montana Gov. Marc Racicot, former U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson and former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman — have a play in trying to bring the party back to center?

T.S.: I truly hope so.

T.W.: You started this chat suggesting that her fate holds symbolism for where the country is. So, what are the consequences of her losing to radical ideologues in her own party?

T.S.: Here's the thing. When I was on the Hill you could "go along to get along." It worked because there was a basic trust that that approach went both ways and people were operating in good faith. That's not happening any longer. Comity is no longer respected and people who operate from that position are getting taken advantage of.

T.W.: It's going to be a bruising year of negative campaign ads and hurt feelings. Telling will be who the big money backs from both inside the state and outside.

T.S.: This race is going to continue to get a lot of national attention and watch what happens on Fox News. Dick Cheney got star-fawning treatment on Fox and so did Liz from people like Hannity. This will show what kind of friend the guy really is. If it goes down to a one-on-one race, it will get very interesting and likely help answer your referendum-on-Trump question.

T.W.: I don't make predictions but I'd like you to. Do you really think Liz Cheney will prevail in Wyoming's Republican Primary next year and get re-elected?

T.S.: Yes, I have faith that the good people of Wyoming will use their heads, recognize her value as a defender of the constitution and return her to Washington.

Todd Wilkinson is the founder of Bozeman-based Mountain Journal and a correspondent for National Geographic. He authored the book "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek," featuring photography by famed wildlife photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen, about Grizzly Bear 399.



Liz Cheney is Wyoming's sole congress member in the U.S. House of Representatives. PHOTO COURTESY OF US HOUSE OF PHOTOGRAPHY



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A grassroots effort can defy the odds



BY LOUISA WILLCOX
WRITERS ON THE RANGE

This year marks the 25th anniversary of one of the most spectacular conservation victories in recent history: the defeat of a massive gold mine planned for the doorstep of Yellowstone National Park. Called the New World mine, it was proposed by the Canadian corporate giant Noranda, and it had a lot of momentum behind it. Yet the mine would have destroyed world-class trout fisheries and wild places for grizzlies and other wildlife in and around the nation's first park.

Noranda planned to industrialize a rugged corner of the Beartooth Mountains of Montana and Wyoming with its underground mine, mill site and work camp, and 70-mile long, high voltage transmission line. An 80-acre lake of mine waste would have flooded a wetland, all this at the headwaters of three drainages in a landscape prone to avalanches, earthquakes and blizzards.

As Stu Coleman of Yellowstone National Park put it, "If you threw a dart at a map of the United States, you could not hit a worse place to put a mine."

Still, the mine seemed a sure thing. No mine on public land had ever been stopped, thanks to the power of the Mining Law of 1872, passed the same year that Yellowstone Park was designated. It gives hard-rock mining priority over all other activities. Working back then for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, I recall being told that fighting Noranda was futile and perhaps dangerous.

What happened, though, felt like a miracle. A coalition of unlikely allies came together: anglers, hunters, ranchers, snowmobilers, park visitors, conservationists, scientists, artists and local businesses. All agreed that Yellowstone National Park and the nearby wild country were more precious than gold. Together with officials from Yellowstone National Park and the U.S. Department of the Interior, they created such a storm of opposition that former President Bill Clinton finally intervened.

Looking back, what we did seems like textbook organizing, combining legal and media work supported by generous donors. It took a seven-year campaign until Noranda, beaten in court and bruised by negative public opinion, was eager for a way out.

Negotiations were complex, but on Aug. 12, 1996, Clinton announced a deal that stopped the mine, bought out Noranda's interest, retired its claims, and restored lands that had been heavily damaged by mining activity from decades earlier.

I remember feeling amazed when this David and Goliath battle ended. It would still take years for the government to purchase most of the mining claims, and almost two decades to restore the area's toxic streams.

At a celebration this year of the 25th anniversary of Clinton's announcement, veterans of the fight shared reminiscences, marveling again that we won. Some had gone on to lead other successful campaigns, including bringing back wolves to Yellowstone and protecting the Wyoming Range and Montana's Rocky Mountain Front from oil and gas development.

All of these campaigns needed strong coalitions and luck to succeed. What did they have in common?

Locally, they shared a diverse and fired-up grassroots base. Then they were able to develop legal and communications strategies that reached out regionally, even nationally. And, because the battles dragged on, they required stamina, leadership, a high level of coordination—and, crucially, substantial funding.

What helped was that the battles centered on wild places or species whose iconic status generated wide support.

In more than 40 years of conservation advocacy, I have seen numerous campaigns fail. Advocates often misunderstood the complexity of what they faced or the need to adapt as circumstances changed. They lacked the skill and openness to sustain a broad-based coalition, ran out of money or the political climate soured. Sometimes, champions abandoned the fight because the struggle just lasted so long. Success, I'm sorry to say, is hardly the norm.

Yet how wondrous it is when you save a place or restore a species. The New World site is not an industrial nightmare now.

Cutthroat trout swim again in upper Soda Butte Creek. Wildflowers abound in areas where tons of poisonous waste from earlier gold mining is now safely buried. A weasel has created a palace in a collapsed miner's cabin, and grizzlies excavate whitebark pine seeds nearby that were cached by squirrels.

To me, the New World campaign was not just about stopping a mine. It was about a burning love for a special place that inspired us to keep working together to achieve a shared goal.

Louisa Willcox is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She is co-founder of Grizzly Times, which works to protect habitat for grizzlies.

The advertisement features a dynamic photograph of a skier in a yellow jacket and black helmet carving through white snow. To the left of the skier, there are large, semi-transparent letters spelling out 'LIFT TICKETS ON SALE NOW!' These letters are partially obscured by the skier's motion and the background. The background shows a snowy mountain landscape with blue contour lines indicating elevation. At the bottom right, the Grand Targhee logo is displayed, consisting of a stylized 'G' icon followed by the text 'GRAND TARGHEE RESORT'. Below this, the text 'LIFT TICKETS ON SALE NOW!' is written in a large, bold, teal font. At the very bottom, the website 'GRANDTARGHEE.COM' and phone number '307.353.2300' are listed, along with the location 'ALTA, WY'.



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NorthWestern Energy's manager of sustainability working with Montana communities to meet climate action goals

NORTHWESTERN ENERGY

Special advertisement

BUTTE – The tough agriculture economy in the early 1980s brought John Bushnell from his family's northern Illinois farm to Montana's big sky country in search of career opportunities.

"I've always been interested in natural resources, hiking, camping, hunting, fly fishing and Montana, with all its attributes, was perfect," he said.

Today NorthWestern Energy's manager of sustainability uses his three decades of experience in the energy industry to assist Montana communities with their climate objectives.

The role, new to Bushnell and to NorthWestern Energy, is an ideal fit.

"My interest in this position was generated by communities' desire to obtain their clean energy goals and NorthWestern Energy's desire to be responsive to customers," he said.

Previously, he managed NorthWestern Energy's energy supply planning; a data-created roadmap with short-term and long-term forecasts for the energy supplies needed to meet customers' energy demands reliably and affordably.

"I started about two years ago working with Montana communities interested in opportunities that allow customers to choose to go from what is already a portfolio that is currently 70 percent clean energy to 100 percent clean energy," Bushnell said.

NorthWestern Energy already offers customers in Montana E+ Green, a voluntary program that allows customers to buy carbon-free electricity blocks, incrementally, each month. NorthWestern Energy supports the E+ Green program with renewable energy certificates purchased from the Bonneville Environmental Foundation from resources in the northwest. Find more information at northwesternenergy.com/clean-energy/how-you-can-help/e-green.

But what are the opportunities for new resources in Montana, such as additional wind or solar generation, some asked? Bushnell is now exploring those opportunities in partnership with communities.

"Many groups are involved as initial stakeholders," Bushnell said. "At Big Sky, that includes businesses as well as Big Sky Chamber, Big Sky Community Organization, Big Sky Resort, Big Sky Resort Tax and Big Sky Sewer and Water District. Lone Mountain Land Company and Big Sky SNO will be part of future stakeholder processes."

Municipal governments in Bozeman, Missoula and Helena, and Missoula County, are working with a consultant and NorthWestern Energy to develop a voluntary green-power product. The premium product will include investment in a new renewable energy resource in Montana.

"We're also looking at resource options that include a storage component such as a battery," Bushnell said.

Program subscribers will receive credit for the energy produced by the new resource.

"We view Bozeman, Missoula and Helena as the anchor tenants for this potential new product, but ultimately we are looking to design a product that could include all customers who make that choice, right down to the residential level," said Bushnell.

Working with customers on green-energy projects is not a path Bushnell, an economist, envisioned when he started his career. Growing up with three brothers on his family's Midwest farm, he didn't envision a life in big sky country either. Today he appreciates the unexpected.

"I always say you can find the beauty of nature anywhere you live, it's just easier in Montana," he said.



NorthWestern Energy Manager Sustainability John Bushnell says you can find beauty anywhere you live, it is just easier in Montana. PHOTO COURTESY OF NORTHWESTERN ENERGY

'Reframing Rural' podcast launches second season

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

SEATTLE – A Montana-made podcast series that focuses on sharing the stories and perspectives of small-town USA launched its second season, highlighting rural issues and solutions within and beyond Montana's borders.

Podcast founder, host and producer Megan Torgerson launched her nonfiction series "Reframing Rural" in 2020 while working toward her Master of Fine Arts in Arts Leadership at Seattle University. The idea for the project started brewing during the 2016 election when rural America was brushed aside, according to Torgerson.

"I just felt like I wasn't seeing stories that were reflecting the experience that I had growing up in rural Montana," said Torgerson, a Dagmar, Montana native and University of Montana alumna.

In the production of season two, called "Sowing Possibilities," Torgerson sought to push her storytelling boundaries and bridge divides by discussing rural issues and their solutions.

As opposed to the first season where all of her subjects were in Dagmar, Torgerson branches out in the second season of "Reframing Rural" in order to gather a wider perspective on the issues that she is delving into. She said her interview subjects are scattered across the West including a few from Minnesota.

"I'm trying to move beyond geographic boundaries in this season and highlight different issues and solutions that communities and community development organizations could be implementing," she said.

Guests for season two include Sarah Calhoun, founder of Red Ants Pants the first company dedicated to making workwear for women; Miranda Moen, a Fulbright scholar and rural architectural designer; and Randi Tanglen, Humanities Montana executive director.

The goal, according to Torgerson, isn't merely to tell stories, it's to discuss ideas and hopefully allow rural communities to learn from each other and work collaboratively towards solutions to place-based issues.

A few issues that Torgerson said she is invested in through the show are economic and climate resiliency, preservation of green spaces and understanding our history in the American West.

"Reframing Rural" is a true grassroots media initiative, supported by several



Founder, Host and Producer Megan Torgerson started Reframing Rural in 2020 while working toward her Master of Fine Arts in Arts Leadership at Seattle University. PHOTO COURTESY OF MEGAN TORGERSON



The Dagmar, Montana post office and Dagmar Central diner are the only two establishments in town.
PHOTO BY MEGAN TORGERSON

funding sources including a Humanities Montana Regular Grant and fiscal sponsor Montana History Foundation.

Torgerson began with sharing the stories of her northeastern Montana home community to accomplish her goal of cultivating curiosity and conversation across the rural-urban divide. Episodes in season one include a deep look into how Native American history is taught in school and a Mother's Day special that celebrated rural womanhood.

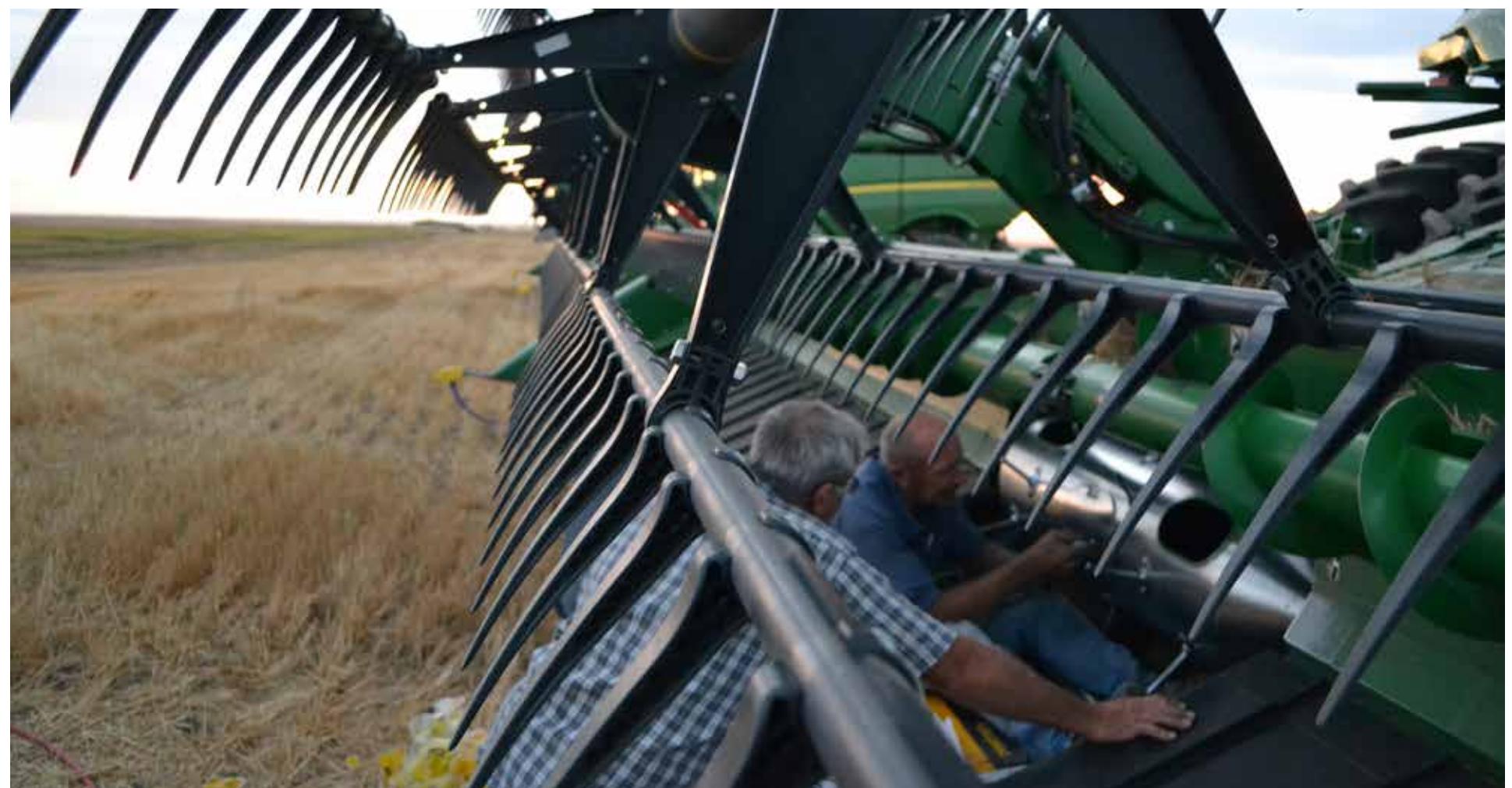
"I also hope as my home community is getting smaller, just to archive some of this history and oral histories especially for future preservation," Torgerson said.

When she's not working on her podcast, Torgerson is a grant writer and she does public relations and communications work for her sister's Missoula firm Upward Public Relations. The Seattle-based host can't stay away from her home state for very long. She frequently returns to Missoula for her work and goes back to northeastern Montana every summer to help her dad, Russ Torgerson, with the wheat harvest.

"The fate of rural America matters to everyone, no matter where you live," Torgerson wrote in a season two press release. "Through conversations with thought-provoking rural advocates, I hope to uplift the resiliency of rural communities, stretch listeners' social imagination and call attention to the interconnectedness of rural and urban geographies."

Torgerson says she hopes that people feel represented by her podcast and are able to relate to the experiences shared by guests.

"I just hope that it inspires conversation and action," she said.



Megan's father Russ Torgerson and her uncle, Stu Torgerson work on Russ' John Deere combine during the 2020 wheat harvest. PHOTO BY MEGAN TORGERSON



Health Buzz

DR. KALEY BURNS
EBS HEALTH COLUMNIST

It's that time of year—the holidays—when the healthy routines that we have been refining all year long are put to the test. One of the most efficient ways to boost winter vitality and fill nutritional gaps is through high-quality nutritional supplements.

Winter can be a demanding time for your body. Your health is unique, but the correct nutritional supplements can optimize your health and help you make the most of the season.

Isn't just a multivitamin adequate?

It is generally more effective to get specific when it comes to individual needs. Many generic multivitamins contain inactive ingredients such as fillers and additives that make it difficult for your body to absorb the nutrients. For this reason it is important to work with a healthcare provider to ensure you are utilizing quality supplements.

Taking supplements doesn't necessarily translate to better health.

My main goal when working with patients is for them to get the majority of their nutrients from their food intake. No matter how many supplements are consumed, you cannot compensate for a poor diet. Optimal nutrition is the foundation of your health and supplements are best used only as a tool to boost your wellness.

Dr. B's Top 5 Recommended Nutritional Supplements

Vitamin D

Every cell in your body needs vitamin D to function properly. Vitamin D moderates immune function, assists in bone formation, supports mood regulation and enables a healthy inflammation response. It is commonly recommended to take between 2,000 to 5,000 IU of vitamin D per day. I advise testing vitamin D levels as part of a baseline lab assessment.

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Probiotics

There are 10 times more bacteria in our GI system than cells in our body. The gut is the foundation for many aspects of your health, regardless of whether you are having digestive symptoms or not. While it is important to include probiotic-rich foods in your regimen, many of us benefit from an additional boost. Typically an intake of around 10-25 billion CFU per day is sufficient.

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Methylation is a process that helps keep you healthy by assisting your body's ability to properly detoxify and is essential to hormone balance. B vitamins are the key to keeping this process running smoothly. Chemical, physical and emotional stresses can increase the body's requirements for B vitamins. Look for a B complex containing methylated B-12 and folate.

Collagen

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Dr. Kaley Burns is the founder, owner and Naturopathic Doctor at Big Sky Natural Health. She embraces a natural approach to health and aims to similarly inspire and guide others on their health journey. Dr. Burns has advanced training in application of regenerative and intravenous injection therapy. She also serves as the Vice President and CE Liaison of the Montana Association of Naturopathic Physicians.



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SECTION 3:

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT,
BUSINESS, DINING
AND FUN



Big Sky Events Calendar pg. 31



Buffalo Chicken Dip pg. 35



The edge of the world pg. 38

2021 CHRISTMAS STROLL

BY TUCKER HARRIS

The Big Sky Christmas Stroll is back to kick off the holiday season. Start your stroll experience through the Big Sky Meadow Village the evening of Friday, Dec. 10 and make your rounds through Big Sky Town Center Saturday, Dec. 11. This year's Christmas stroll will focus on giving and supporting friends and family.

"This year is all about community," said Erik Morrison, Town Center's marketing and events manager.

New this year, all of Big Sky's trail systems will be lit up, connecting the Meadow to the Town Center with warming huts offering toasty beverages and holiday treats manned by the Big Sky Community Organization and Big Sky Ski Education Foundation teams. Strollers are encouraged to snowshoe, cross country ski or fat bike on Lone Mountain Ranch and BSCO's vast system of multi-use and dog friendly trails in Big Sky as part of the stroll journey.

Meadow Village Stroll | Dec. 10, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

The first night of the beloved Big Sky event will boast photos with Santa, horse-drawn sleigh rides and an interactive scavenger hunt. Pick up a booklet from any business and follow the clues to other businesses to complete the scavenger hunt and win a prize.

Participating stores will be offering goodies, drinks and raffles. Be sure to stop by the fire pit outside of the Big Sky Owner's association to cap off your night with s'mores and refreshments.

"The Christmas Stroll is a great community event that brings everyone together to kick off the holiday season," said Savannah Cantrell, co-organizer of the Christmas Stroll and store manager of Meadow-based Shelly Bermont Fine Jewelry.

Big Sky Town Center Stroll | Dec. 11, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Continue the stroll on Saturday by visiting Santa's Holiday Lounge at First Security Bank for snacks and beverages and photos with Santa before making your way to Lone Peak Drive to support local businesses and nonprofits. Sleigh rides will be running between the Town Center Loop down to Beehive Basin Brewery all evening. After strolling through town, make your way over to Len Hill Park to experience a lantern labyrinth that leads to the entrance of the new BASE Community Center. BASE will be open for tours with surprise visits from Santa.

Next door, step out on the new ice skating rink for an open skate night with Big Sky Skate and Hockey Association before visiting the local stores on Town Center Avenue for open houses. End your night with a celebratory fireworks display under the big sky, designed and sponsored by Big Sky Community Organization as a thank you to everyone who donated fireworks this summer for the Fourth of July fireworks show.

CHRISTMAS STROLL CHECKLIST

- Take photos with Santa at Big Sky Christian Fellowship or First Security Bank
- Meadow Village Scavenger Hunt
- Make Fire Pit s'mores outside Big Sky Homeowners Association
- Enter a raffle inside a local business
- Enjoy a sleigh ride through the Meadow Village and Town Center

- Complete the Lantern Labyrinth on Len Hill Park
- Take a BASE community center tour
- Show off your moves on the ice at the new ice rink
- Watch the fireworks show from the Town Center Plaza or Fire Pit Park
- Travel down BSCO and Lone Mountain Ranch's illuminated trails



Strollers enjoy a ride down Town Center Avenue on a sleigh ride at the 2018 Big Sky Christmas Stroll. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

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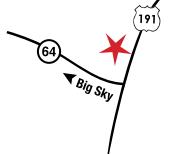
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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, Dec. 3 – Thursday, Dec. 16

If your event falls between Dec. 17 and Dec. 30, please submit it by Dec. 8 by emailing media@outlaw.partners.

Friday, Dec. 3

Resilience: Her Gift, Her Creation
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 4 p.m.

406 Holiday Market

Gallatin Valley Mall, Dec. 3-4

Live Music: Kaylie Marie

Tips Up, 9 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 4

New Moon Women's Circle
Santosha Big Sky, 7:30 p.m.

41st Annual Christmas Stroll

Downtown Bozeman, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 5

Museum of the Rockies Member Appreciation Day
Museum of the Rockies, all day

Monday, Dec. 6

Madrigal Dinner
Bucks T-4, 5 p.m.

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 8

Storyhill presents: 'A Christmas Carol'
The Ellen Theatre, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 9

Headwaters Alliance Symposium
The Wilson Hotel, 5 p.m.

Live Music: Ryan Acker

Tips Up, 9 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 10

Meadow Village Christmas Stroll
Big Sky Meadow Village, 5:30 p.m.

Live Music: Dead Yellers

Tips Up, 9 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 11

Santa Paws
Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter, 10 a.m.

Town Center Christmas Stroll

Big Sky Town Center, 5:30 p.m.

Bozeman Symphony: HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR

Willson Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 12

Live Music: Daily Confused
Bozeman Hot Springs, 7 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 13

Trivia Night
Pinky G's Pizzeria, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 15

Maddie Poppe: Acoustic Christmas Tour
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 9:30 p.m.

Featured Event: Headwaters Alliance Symposium

It's been almost three years since the creation of the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Stewardship Plan. The plan created a vision for Big Sky to be a model mountain community by protecting and improving water resources, sustaining ecological health of the watersheds and supporting a vibrant local economy. The

Gallatin River Task Force will host the Headwaters Alliance Symposium at 5 p.m. at the Wilson Hotel on Thursday, Dec. 9 to review what they have accomplished to date in the plan and to hear input on the future priorities that will steer the future of water in Big Sky.



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Making it in Big Sky: Big Sky Community Food Bank

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Since 2012, the Big Sky Community Food Bank has been lending a helping hand to those in need, but in the unprecedented time in which we currently reside, they have continued to go above and beyond for the Big Sky community.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak there was only one paid employee working—part-time—for the Big Sky Community Food Bank: operations manager and services navigator, Sarah Gaither Bivins. Gaither Bivins recently received reinforcements as operations assistants Laine Hegness and Candice Brownmiller joined the team to ensure the food bank can meet the extra demand.

“All three of us are really dedicated to confidentiality and we all know what it’s like to be in an emergency and have to use the food bank, so there’s no judgment,” Gaither Bivins said. “You might have seen us around Big Sky for years, [you’ve] been our friends and neighbors and we’re going to keep your information confidential and you should feel welcome coming to the food bank.”

A more than six-year veteran with the Big Sky food bank, Gaither Bivins recently spoke with EBS over the phone to discuss her adjusted role as she and her co-workers assist the Big Sky community with its food needs throughout the pandemic.

Explore Big Sky: What adjustments have you made to address COVID-19 guidelines?

Sarah Gaither Bivins: We have now moved to a drive-up model to keep [with] social distancing. So, we have moved to pre-packed boxes and we take it out and give it to you in your car...We also went to being open four days a week, rather than just two. Again to kind of spread people out [and] give them more opportunities to come and so hopefully not everybody’s crowding in at the same day...The three of us who are working take our temperature before we get there, we wear our gloves, we’re sanitizing probably every 20 minutes...My mom just sent us some face masks this week, so we’ll start to use those.

EBS: How has your daily work routine been impacted by COVID-19?

S.G.B.: This used to be a part-time job. I was only working 20 hours a week. I now have a full-time job. I now work 40 hours and have two employees, so that’s kind of

how my life has been impacted...For years I lived in Big Sky and now I live in Bozeman, but I’ve been driving to Big Sky every single day to either deliver food or work at the food bank or whatever.

EBS: Since the pandemic began, how many meals has the food bank been able to provide to members of the community to date?

S.G.B.: I measure things in two different ways. One measurement is how many food boxes we’ve given, and one measurement is actually how many individuals we served. So, in a typical year, we’ll serve about 600 individuals...In a typical off-season I’ll serve about 40 food boxes to families. The week after [March] 13, when it became clear everything was closing, we gave out 86, so it more than doubled. The following week was about 56 food boxes and last week was about 35. So, I think we’re definitely seeing the initial rush of people who were trying to get food just before they left town has subsided.

“I think that we are all doing a really wonderful job of meeting people’s needs. I definitely wouldn’t be able to do it without the support of the community [and] everybody kind of stepping up to help out wherever they can.”

– Sarah Gaither Bivins, Big Sky Community Food Bank operations manager and services navigator



Gaither Bivins and her fellow Big Sky Community Food Bank co-workers practice social distancing, while providing food for Big Sky. PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH GAITHER BIVINS

EBS: What does it mean to you to play such a vital role in the community currently?

S.G.B.: It’s really been lovely to be so supported. The first phone call I got was from Danny [Bierschwale] at resort tax, just kind of letting me know that there would be support from them and then after that we started getting donations. We started getting help from BSCO with their volunteer management. We’ve been working with WIA to put together this resource guide for Big Sky...I don’t feel like it’s my role that’s so vital. I think that we are all doing a really wonderful job of meeting people’s needs. I definitely wouldn’t be able to do it without the support of the community [and] everybody kind of stepping up to help out wherever they can.

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

S.G.B.: Actually, this is so pertinent for these last few weeks. My mom always used to say ‘you don’t have to like it, you just have to do it’ and she would say that when I was doing chores or whatever, but I think it’s really something that I’ve clung to these last few weeks, like yeah this isn’t fun, but we’re all in the same boat and we just have to do it.

EBS: Anything else?

S.G.B.: I think it’s a misunderstanding that people think they have to qualify to use the food bank and you absolutely don’t. There’s no qualifications, if you feel like you are in a food emergency you should just come down.

This article was originally published in Explore Big Sky in April, 2020.

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BIG SKY BITES

Buffalo Chicken Dip

BY BELLA BUTLER

What better way to get in the holiday spirit than with a little spice? Buffalo spice, that is.

Each year at Outlaw Partners, our team engages in a friendly cooking competition. This year, our esteemed office chefs created dishes that were both baked and included cheese. The final spread was as diverse as it was tasty, but in an understated aluminum pan, Outlaw Marketing Coordinator Sophia Breyfogle's buffalo chicken dip was a clear favorite.

With only a handful of ingredients and steps you can count on a single hand, this recipe is a quick and easy way to please your guests.

"This is my absolute go-to for a game night with friends," Breyfogle said. "And by game night I mean hockey, not NFL. Go Washington Capitals!"

Below is Breyfogle's recipe, adapted from The Forked Spoon.

Ingredients

- 3-4 cups of cooked, shredded chicken (whatever you have works!)
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 1 cup ranch dressing
- 1 cup hot sauce
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ½ cup chopped green onions or chives
- Shredded cheese (1.5 cup cheddar, 1.5 cup mozzarella)



Outlaw Partners Marketing Coordinator Sophia Breyfogle's buffalo chicken dip claimed first place in the company's 2021 cooking competition. With just a few ingredients and easy steps, Breyfogle says this recipe is her favorite go-to for game nights. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

Method

1. Cook the chicken. If the chicken is still raw, cook it how you like; poaching, sautéing and baking are a few options. While your chicken is cooking, preheat your oven to 350 degrees and grease a 9x9 pan.
2. Prepare the creamy buffalo ranch sauce. Heat the cream cheese, ranch dressing, garlic powder and hot sauce in a pot over medium heat.
3. Combine and bake. Add chicken, green onion and 2 cups of the cheese to the sauce and pour into the greased pan. Top with the remaining cheese and bake until the top is bubbling and golden brown. Enjoy with chips or your favorite sauce vehicle.



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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.

Next time you're at a party



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

In my opinion, we've learned some interesting food history and facts, for example, how ketchup originated from Vietnamese fish sauce, or how President Eisenhower is essentially the father of the restaurant diner. And let's not forget how a 12-year-old slave from the French island of Reunion learned how to pollinate the vanilla orchid, thus changing how we use it all over the world.

But there are so many littler hidden treasures from nature, or facts from factories that so many of us take for granted.

Here is just a sampling: Raspberries are in the rose family and it gets better. Not only raspberries, but apples, pears, plums, peaches, apricots, almonds, and a host of other fruits are all related to the rose.

I remember years ago suddenly noticing that the stalks on my grandmother's rose bushes looked a lot like the bark on our apple tree in our backyard. I did some investigative work and sure enough came to the conclusion that they are in the same rosaceae family.

If you are allergic to latex, it's possible you are also allergic to fruits such as figs, melons, kiwi avocado or papaya, as somewhere between 30 percent and 50 percent of people who have an allergy to latex rubber also can have a hypersensitivity to these fresh fruits upon contact. Called latex fruit syndrome, it has to do with what's called cross reactivity and similar structural compounds in these fruits that resemble those in man made latex.

Bananas are berries, while strawberries aren't and in fact, neither are blackberries or raspberries for that matter. They are what's known as an aggregate fruit, which means they are formed from several carpel, or parts, rather than one central piece. In simplest terms, people classified a group of what seemed to be similar fruits together long before scientists could more accurately define what a "berry" was.

By definition, you need three layers to constitute a berry: An outer skin, an inner fleshy part, and more than one seed in the center. Though a "peel" or "rind" do seem to break this mold, bananas and melons are berries, and so is a grape for that matter. To complicate matters more, though classified as berries, grapes seem to have taken on their own laymen's term as simply being called "grapes." Grapes get a bit of a pass since they set themselves apart to some degree by the fact that they grow in clusters.

In Russia, beer used to be classified as a soft drink, as was also the case with anything that was under 10 percent alcohol by volume. They believed this attributed to the heavy consumption of beer by all ages, including drinking beer in the streets, in parks, and almost all other public areas. And studies showed that Russia had per capita alcohol consumption twice the critical level set by the World Health Organization.

Russia had two solutions to this problem. One was to implement a 200 percent tax hike for these alcoholic beverages containing under 10 percent alcohol. The other, was to recategorize beer as alcohol, which in my opinion was a little financially friendlier than the tax hike.

These two changes seemed to be effective, but the most interesting factor to me is when these two things were put into action: Beer wasn't alcohol in Russia until this law passed in 2011!

More fun facts to come in future articles.

Scott Mechura has spent a life in the hospitality industry. He is an executive chef, former certified beer judge and currently the executive chef for Lone Mountain Ranch.

This article was originally published in Explore Big Sky in July 2020.

American Life in Poetry

BY KWAME DAWES

For Kayleb Rae Candrilli, as for many of us, the dramatic change of setting—in their case, the arrival at the coast facing the grand Atlantic—can shift our sense of being in significant ways. For the poet, their affirmation “that lines are always changing” brings a certain comfort. Even more significant is the epiphany that ends the poem: “the tide tells me/ my body can morph/ as many times as it needs.” “Summering in Wildwood, NJ” celebrates the fluidity of our changing human bodies by connecting them with the defiant fluidity of nature.

Summering in Wildwood, NJ

BY KAYLEB RAE CANDRILLI

in a few days, i'll be on a beach
so bright i can see the sun through my fingers,

each thin vein lit
up blue like a heron's leg.

this poem is not so much about a beach
as it is about arriving,

blowing stop signs
until the coast affirms

that lines are always changing,
and the tide tells me

my body can morph
as many times as it needs.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- 1 Ovum
- 4 Mutilate
- 8 Bedouin's cord
- 12 Mulberry of India
- 13 King of the Huns
- 14 Abject
- 15 No middle initial (abbr.)
- 16 Finger cymbals
- 18 Small spring
- 20 Don
- 21 Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation (abbr.)
- 23 Fr.-Ger. region
- 25 Persia today
- 26 Government patronage
- 27 Five-dollar bill
- 30 Silly
- 31 Card
- 32 Amer. Medical Assn. (abbr.)
- 33 Presidential nickname
- 34 Reckless
- 35 Spartan king
- 36 Chest sound
- 37 Five and one-half point type
- 38 Ray
- 40 Large piece
- 41 Uriel
- 44 Dullard
- 47 Hill formed by a glacier
- 48 Large intestine beginnings
- 49 No (Scot.)
- 50 Bring your own bottle (abbr.)
- 51 Correct (pref.)
- 52 Flat fish

DOWN

- 1 Belonging to (suf.)

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

B	B	A	P	A	C		B	A	A	L
A	B	E	T	I	L	A	O	G	G	I
B	I	R	R	C	A	R	R	A	I	S
A	R	N	I	C	A	O	C	E	L	O
		U	N	S		A	A	A		
O	A	K	M	O	S		P	S	A	L
A	D	O		O	H	S		B	I	A
F	A	R	A	D		U	T	T	E	R
	V	A	S		O	A	S			
M	A	D	E	R	O		O	U	L	E
O	N	E	S		B	A	L		A	A
O	B	I	T		O	B	I		T	A
T	A	L	A		E	E		E	P	E



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Corner Quote



“Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair. Not because I have my head in the sand, but because joy is what the earth gives me daily and I must return the gift.”

-Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer

BIG SKY BEATS



Happy Holidays

BY TUCKER HARRIS

Now that we're past the Thanksgiving threshold, I've deemed it perfectly okay to blast Mariah Carey's "All I want for Christmas is You" on repeat. The scrooges out there might not agree, but admit it—you can't help but sing along.

We've found ourselves in December, and the familiar symphony of crackling fires, sleigh bells and holiday cheer begs to be joined by a classic holiday playlist.

As you gather around the kitchen with friends and family, light candles in the window sill and hang stockings on the mantle, we bring you a Big Sky Beats complete with our favorite holiday songs to kick off the season and keep the mood merry and bright. Happy holidays, from EBS.



EBS: Big Sky Beats

1. "Silver Bells" by Bing Crosby and Carol Richards
2. "Have yourself a Merry Little Christmas" by Frank Sinatra
3. "A Holly Jolly Christmas" by Burl Ives
4. "It's the Most Wonderful Time of Year" by Andy Williams
5. "Winter Wonderland" by Tony Bennett
6. "Jingle Bell Rock" by Bobby Helms
7. "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)" by Darlene Love
8. "All I Want for Christmas is You" by Mariah Carey
9. "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" by Brenda Lee
10. "Mistletoe" by Justin Bieber

BACK 40

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”

The edge of the world

Cornice dropping in the Andes

BY DEREK LENNON

A howling wind sends snow crystals flying through the air and into the abyss. All I hear is the wind whipping off the Pacific and beating against the hood of my jacket. I triple-check that my ski anchor is bombproof, giving the buried T-slot another good tug. Then I load it with my full body weight. It should hold, I tell myself.

Standing at nearly 12,000 feet in the Chilean Andes, I can just make out our tiny Toyota pickup truck glistening in the sun 3,000 feet below. There are no clients today, but I’m hard at work. It’s my job to inch out on a mass of overhanging snow and cut a monster chunk of cornice off the side of the mountain, while my partner watches from his safe perch on the ridgeline. We need to open Ski Arpa’s steep and rowdy terrain for our cat-skiing clients.

The sun radiates against the cobalt sky, but the winter wind keeps the air crisp. The chill helps me focus. My fingers check the screwgate on my locking carabiner. Harness double-backed. Prusik cord tight and secure. Gripping my shovel, I take a deep breath and creep toward the cornice edge. My heart pounds under my Gore-Tex shell, my mind in overdrive: How close can I get to the edge before the world drops out?

I reach out with my avalanche shovel and tap the snow. Nothing. I shuffle a few inches forward giving the snow another tap. Nada. I take another step toward the precipice. Now there is no ground underneath my feet—just compacted snow hanging on.

I try to peer over the edge. It’s nearly 1,000 feet to the bench-like moraine far below. I glance around. Aconcagua, the highest mountain outside of the Himalaya, dominates the eastern skyline. Jagged peaks covered in loose, red

rocks and deep snow stretch out forever to the north and south. To the west, the fertile valleys of Chilean wine country stretch to the Pacific. This is my “office” and it makes me smile.

The wind snaps my attention back to the job at hand. I’m still about 10 feet from the cornice edge. My gloved hand snugs up the rope. I extend my shovel and give the cornice a light tap. It’s the sweet spot.

A crack the length of a school bus shoots out in both directions from under my shovel blade and arcs toward the edge of the cornice in a crescent moon shape. A massive chunk of cornice drops from in front of my feet and out of sight. Roughly two tons of snow plummets down the steep south-facing slope triggering a large avalanche that tumbles and sweeps across the alpine cirque known as Cornisas.

Instinctively I hop backwards away from the edge, amazed to be standing on solid snow. I’m safe, but don’t yet grasp this concept as the billowing powder cloud thunders down the mountain. It all happened in slow motion.

Cornisas is open for business. It’s time to ski.

Derek Lennon worked for seven seasons as a ski guide at Ski Arpa, a backcountry snow-cat operation located in the Chilean Andes. He now lives in Big Sky, Montana, where he works as a ski instructor, ski guide, and writer.

Visit mtoutlaw.com/cornice to watch Lennon in action at Ski Arpa. Footage courtesy of Sent Productions.

A version of this story was originally published in the Winter 2016 edition of Mountain Outlaw Magazine.



The author lets ‘er rip at Ski Arpa during Sent Productions’ filming of the short ski movie, Vaya A La Cumbre. PHOTO BY OLLIE NIEUWLAND-ZLOTNICKI



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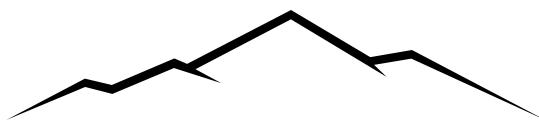


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