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Big Sky

Dec. 22 - Jan. 7, 2016
Volume 6 // Issue #26

Big Sky traffic at a boiling point

WMPAC winter lineup

EBS top stories of 2015

*Osinato Project:
Big Sky music students on the national stage*



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EBS Top Stories of 2015

Explore

Big Sky

 **What is this publication?**

Explore Big Sky is the local paper for Big Sky, Montana, and a news and lifestyle journal for the Greater Yellowstone Region.

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Montana Newspaper Awards

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NEWS IN BRIEF

BY EBS STAFF



Company applies for copper mine operating permit near Smith River

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HELENA (AP) – A mining company applied on Dec. 16 for an operating permit for an underground copper mine that conservationists and sportsmen groups fear could harm the popular Smith River and its trout fishery.

Tintina Resources Inc.’s Black Butte Copper Project would be located on private land that contains one of the highest-grade copper deposits in the world with more than 11 million tons, according to a statement by the company.

The mine site is a mile from Sheep Creek, which feeds into the Smith River. The river is one of Montana’s most popular fly-fishing destinations, with demand so high the state conducts a lottery each year to regulate the number of people making multiday float trips.

The Smith River is too valuable to the state to risk with the development of a mine that feeds into its headwaters, Benjamin Bulis of the American Fly Fishing Trade Association said in a statement. “Is it worth developing any resource that has the potential of destroying a treasure?” he said.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality officials will conduct an initial review to make sure Tintina’s application is complete and complies with state law, DEQ public policy director Kristi Ponozzo said. Any deficiencies in the application would have to be addressed before the state issues a draft permit to the company.

Construction of the mine would take two to three years, the company officials said.

Christmas dinner in a box Food bank addresses holiday hunger

The Big Sky Community Food Bank, in partnership with the Big Sky Chapel, is helping to make the holidays happier for community residents. The inaugural “Christmas Dinner in Box” is an extension of the food bank’s “Thanksgiving in a Bag,” now in its third year.

The free Christmas meal is meant to serve individuals that are not part of the Rotary Club of Big Sky’s “Giving Tree” program, according to food bank advisory council member Diane Bartzick. The Rotary’s annual holiday campaign assists Big Sky families with children, including meal donations.

Bartzick said the food bank is prepared to serve up to 50 families on Wednesday, Dec. 23, and donations by Kym and George Rapier and the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation made the program possible. Bartzick believes there is a growing need for the food bank’s services in Big Sky.

“I think we’re seeing more people that need the assistance between paychecks,” she said. “The community has grown with the construction market picking up again.”

This year’s “Turkey for a Ticket” on Dec. 11 went a long way to help address that need. The annual food drive – where participants donated 20 cans of food or a frozen turkey in exchange for a Big Sky Resort lift ticket – generated more than 6,000 pounds of canned food and over 800 pounds of turkey for Big Sky’s food bank.

Located in the Big Horn shopping center on Highway 191, the food bank is open Tuesdays from 3-7 p.m., and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Commissioner: Conservative group broke campaign laws

HELENA (AP) – A conservative nonprofit group broke Montana campaign laws in 2012 when it failed to disclose spending on campaign advertisements, the commissioner of political practices said.

Issue-focused ads would not have required reporting, Commissioner Jonathan Motl said. But the Montana Growth Network paid for ads that advocated for and against candidates while passing them off as issue-focused.

Motl forwarded his findings Dec. 18 to prosecutors, who can choose whether to pursue a case against the Montana Growth Network. If they don’t, Motl will likely negotiate a settlement with the organization.

The Montana Growth Network, which was run by former state Sen. Jason Priest, R-Red Lodge, was registered as a tax-exempt issue-advocacy group not required to report its spending or donors. But it was a significant player in the 2012 elections, Motl said in his findings.

The group raised \$878,000 from 13 donors during the election cycle, and made \$49,000 in express advocacy independent expenditures, spending that requires disclosure to the state. The Montana Growth Network also paid \$476,000 to vendors, including to a conservative group that Motl previously said provided unreported campaign services to candidates, and \$174,000 to lawyers and consultants, including Priest.

One of the races it was involved in was the Supreme Court election between Laurie McKinnon, Ed Sheehy and Elizabeth Best. McKinnon was elected in November 2012.

The group spent money on flyers supporting McKinnon and opposing Sheehy and Best. A radio ad called for listeners to sign a petition on Montana Growth Network’s website to “tell activists like Ed Sheehy that you want a fair and impartial Supreme Court that will apply our laws. Because our judges need to leave their activist agendas at the door.”

Motl wrote the ads were advocacy because Sheehy was their focus, and it was not a public policy issue as the Montana Growth Network claimed.

Congratulations!

Emily and Pat Wolfe on the arrival of your daughter
Elouise Winter!



Emily was the first managing editor of Outlaw publications and we wish her family the best of luck and many powder days together.

Free Christmas tree recycling offered in region

BIG SKY COMMUNITY CORP.

Republic Services waste management services is offering Christmas tree recycling around the region from Dec. 28 through Jan. 8. Containers will be located throughout Gallatin County including the rodeo grounds in Three Forks, Cashman Nursery in Bozeman, Lewis and Clark Park in Belgrade and the Big Sky Community Park in Big Sky.

Trees will be ground into mulch or compost and to ensure environmental safety and continuation of this service, Republic Services requests that you remove any non-organic material – such as wire, string, or metal – from the tree.

Garbage will not be collected at these sites and Republic Services urges users not to dump household waste with their trees.



OUTLAW
PARTNERS

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Pioneering transparency in energy drinks

Outlaw films Hiball Energy trip to India

After flying 16,335 miles across the globe and driving 400 miles, Outlaw Partners' Video Director Brian Niles got a firsthand look at what it takes to source and process organic caffeine.

This December, Niles traveled with Hiball Energy to Bangalore, India to film a short documentary on Hiball's premium ingredient: organic caffeine.

Hiball's founder Todd Berardi and Dan Craytor, director of sales, initiated the seven-day trip to see and experience the ingredients at their source.

"The Hiball trip to India is something I will cherish the rest of my life," Berardi said. "To be able to go to this magical forest setting, meet the farmers and pick, sort and pulp the organic green coffee beans that we use to extract organic caffeine ... was surreal."

The caffeine used in all Hiball energy drinks is derived from fair trade, organic arabica coffee beans found in the countryside northwest of Bangalore. The adventure took the team to the Thippanahalli coffee estate in Chikmangalur, where they observed and documented the process of preparing organic arabica coffee beans. The trip and documentation also marked a

significant step in providing transparency in Hiball's energy drink ingredients. Hiball pioneered "good energy" when it launched back in the mid-2000s – using only naturally occurring, organic, healthy ingredients of the highest quality.

"We traveled halfway around the world through 11 time zones in order to usher in a new era of transparency in the energy drink category," Craytor said. "Many people are afraid of energy drinks, and rightly so, since many mainstream brands over the years have created mystery around what may or may not be in their products. Likely because they are relying on cheap, lab-synthesized artificial ingredients."

Craytor says that by going to the organic coffee farms – the source of its primary active ingredient, organic caffeine – allows consumers to connect the dots themselves. "It was an incredible experience to immerse ourselves in the organic farming community and witness the process," he said.

For Outlaw, the trip was equally inspiring – from visiting the beautiful Indian countryside to meeting hard working, wonderful and hospitable people.

"The best part for me was being able to capture this incredible process on film, and witnessing the impact the trip had on the Hiball crew," Niles said. "Todd and Dan have always been so passionate about the Hiball brand, and this experience only solidified that passion and commitment. Outlaw is proud to help support their efforts."

For Berardi, the trip further validated Hiball's mission of making the healthiest and most sustainable energy drinks on the planet.

"We are excited to bring this transparency to light as our organic and fair trade ingredients for energy are what makes Hiball unique, premium and efficacious – versus mainstream energy drinks that are artificial, synthetic and full of ingredients that don't reside in nature," said Berardi.

As the best-selling and fastest-growing natural energy drink in the U.S., Craytor says that Hiball has a responsibility to consumers above and beyond the typical energy drink brand.

"It's time people had an energy drink they can feel good about," he said. "Things are about to change!"



Outlaw Partners Video Director Brian Niles poses with a worker at the Thippanahalli Coffee Estate. PHOTO BY TODD BERARDI



Hiball Director of Sales Dan Craytor and owner Todd Berardi pose with a local Thippanahalli coffee estate employee. PHOTOS BY BRIAN NILES



These shade grown organic arabica coffee plants are only fertilized by the fallen leaves and debris from the overhanging forest canopy.



A Thippanahalli coffee estate employee after her first taste of the Hiball Organic Black Cherry energy drink.

Boiling point

Big Sky traffic ‘a concern for community’

BY TYLER ALLEN AND AMANDA EGGERT
EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – J.C. Knaub, a Big Sky resident since 1973, has feared for his life multiple times in recent years, just moments from his house.

“I almost got killed on my motorcycle coming back from Sturgis in August,” Knaub said, describing how a vehicle missed him by inches as he turned left into his driveway off Lone Mountain Trail. “People are driving way too fast and they’re not paying attention.”

Knaub says it was the third time in two years he’s nearly been done-in by other drivers while turning into his driveway. The other two were trying to pass him in the westbound lane while he had his blinker on.

Annual average daily traffic on Lone Mountain Trail – also known as Montana Highway 64 – increased 21 percent between 2010 and 2014 (the most recent data available), according to the Montana Department of Transportation. Fueled by a recovering development and tourism economy, Big Sky is facing a growing problem.

Big Sky’s landscape, and the roads lacing through it, have changed significantly since the late 1960s when Chet Huntley first envisioned a resort tucked between the Gallatin and Madison ranges.

“In 1972, when I got here, the road to the mountain was a logging road still and the spur road was still gravel,” said Big Sky resident Mike Scholz, referencing MT 64’s former name, “Big Sky Spur Road.”

Traffic is a major talking point in the community, Scholz said on Dec. 16. “In the last week I have been in three or four discussions about it.”

Scholz is also one of five Big Sky Resort Area District tax board members responsible for appropriating nearly \$4 million collected annually from a 3 percent resort tax on luxury goods. During Scholz’s first four-year term the board didn’t see any proposals to address the traffic issue, but it wouldn’t surprise him, he says, to see resort tax applications by anxious parties in the future. “It’s a concern for the community,” Scholz said. “If there’s a group of people that have a proposal for a project that’s a public health and safety issue, we would certainly look at it.”

During the twice-daily rush hours, cadres of contractor, cement and gravel trucks create strings of headlights on Ousel Falls Road and Highway 191.

A time-lapse video taken by EBS on Oct. 12 found that in one hour, between 8:40 and 9:40 a.m., 184 vehicles passed through Town Center on their way up Ousel Falls Road.

The Montana Department of Transportation collected traffic data and issued a report this spring suggesting that a traffic signal is warranted at the intersection of MT 64 and Ousel Falls Road, but it’s low on the agency’s priority list, according to MDT Butte District Administrator Jeffrey Ebert.

“MDT’s current backlog of needs would preclude funding for a signal at this

“This is a real issue for this community to deal with. We’re lucky we haven’t had more tragedies.”

time,” Ebert wrote in an email to EBS. “MDT would be willing to work with future developers and the local government on developing a funding solution.”

In an unincorporated town without a local government, solutions to Big Sky’s traffic problems – much like affordable housing, strained public transportation, and infrastructure development – rely upon the efforts of community members, developers and other stakeholders.

Kitty Clemens, executive director of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber recognizes the traffic issue and plans to host neighborhood meetings in early 2016 to address the topic. She said the idea is to capture public sentiment, and identify priorities to present to the chamber board.

“I think everyone would agree that [Big Sky’s] congested,” Clemens said, suggesting the conversation should be held at the state level as well. Clemens says smooth-functioning transportation is key to supporting a robust economy.

Despite the lack of a traffic signal, roundabout or other traffic mitigation measures, the busy intersection of MT 64 and Ousel Falls Road hasn’t recently been the site of a disastrous vehicle collision, though Big Sky Fire Department Chief William Farhat says there have been a number of minor accidents there and at the intersection of MT 64 and Little Coyote Road, near the Big Sky Meadow Village.

“Fortunately, no one’s gotten hurt,” Farhat said. “But it’s only a matter of time before someone does, if we don’t manage this traffic better.”

Traffic on Ousel Falls Road through Town Center is also dangerous given the number of vehicles and pedestrians, Farhat says, but as long as the 25-mph speed limit is enforced the road is as safe as it can be.

“All the big projects going on in the Yellowstone Club and Spanish Peaks [Mountain Club] are only going to add to this traffic flow,” Farhat said, noting that the 100-room hotel planned for Spanish Peaks will be the biggest private structure in the state. Coupled with the hundreds of homes being built at these private clubs, his department is bracing for the future.

“We’re busy now, but we’re entering a phase that will be unprecedented,” Farhat said.



A three-vehicle collision on MT 64 in August resulted in no fatalities but totaled two passenger vehicles and left this electrical truck overturned in the westbound ditch. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

continued on pg. 7



Traffic at the intersection of MT 64 and Ousel Falls Road has been steadily increasing, driven by Big Sky's booming development. PHOTO BY WES OVERVOLD

South of Town Center, the speed limit on Ousel Falls Road increases to 35 mph on a windy, rural artery that wouldn't appear to be designed for high-volume traffic, according to Farhat. "It would be beneficial if the road was widened," he said. "And shoulders should be added so you have the ability to pull off and not be in the traffic ... It's an extremely busy road."

The danger of MT 64 heading east from Ousel Falls Road to Highway 191 hasn't been as benign, with one corner having a particularly tragic history.

On Aug. 17, a fatal collision occurred about one mile west of the intersection with Highway 191, on a long, sweeping corner hugging the West Fork of the Gallatin River. A 23-year-old Colorado woman was killed after her Jeep Cherokee drifted over the centerline into the path of a dump truck towing a trailer.

"That was one of the worst accidents I've responded to, and I've been at this for 25 years," Farhat said. "This is a real issue for this community to deal with. We're lucky we haven't had more tragedies."

There were two other close calls on that corner this year.

A propane truck overturned last January when the driver swerved to avoid a bighorn sheep in the road. No propane was spilled in the accident, but the driver was transported to Bozeman Deaconess Hospital for minor injuries.

In November, a three-vehicle collision left a pickup truck and passenger vehicle totaled, and an electrical truck overturned in the westbound ditch.

"Most of the crashes that happened [on MT 64] in the summer were dump trucks that rolled over," said Gallatin County Sheriff's Sgt. Brandon Kelly. "[They] are going too fast for road conditions or

the size of the vehicle they're driving. "I could see where [MDT] would eventually widen the roadway a little bit to allow people to get around dump trucks and [vehicles] hauling a lot of equipment, at least to the Meadow [Village]," Kelly said.

In addition to the MT 64 and Ousel Falls Road junction, just one other intersection – at Little Coyote Road in the Meadow Village – has dedicated turning lanes between Town Center and 191. That leaves the busy entrances to Roxy's Market, Big Sky Medical Center, the post office, and new ACE Hardware store without protected turn lanes on a 50-mph road.

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The growth of Big Sky is not only reflected in the number of construction vehicles snaking from Bozeman up Highway 191 to MT 64 and Ousel Falls Road. A recent housing study commissioned by the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce found that 83 percent of the resort community's workforce commutes from elsewhere in Gallatin County. Some of those workers drive while others utilize a heavily strained public transportation system.

The Skyline bus service – called the Link Express between Bozeman and Big Sky – expanded this winter with additional routes, but is still leaving people behind, according to Big Sky Transportation District Coordinator David Kack.

"We're doing nine round trips a day, could add another one now, and another one by next year," Kack said, adding that last year Skyline was occasionally leaving two or three people behind due to full buses, and this year it's closer to 30 people some days. "We're kind of a victim of our own success."

The full buses are adding more vehicles to Big Sky's roads, as stranded commuters are forced to drive to work instead.

Steve Griffith, the transportation commissioner for Montana Transportation District Two, which includes Big Sky, says if a traffic signal is

warranted at a given intersection – like MT 64 and Ousel Falls Road – and the traffic is largely driven by development, MDT asks the developers to contribute funding for the signal. Often that money includes tapping Rural Improvement Districts, funded by self-imposed taxes on property owners in the district for road construction and maintenance. RIDs are the responsibility of the county, which approves roadway improvement projects in Big Sky.

RID 395 is one such district that has already funded projects at the intersection of MT 64 and Ousel Falls Road, by financing the turn lanes, as well as paving projects.

"There are a lot of extra taxes on people in Big Sky already," said Clemens, of the Big Sky chamber. "I think there are 17 RIDs taxing people in Big Sky ... [Ask] any colleague that you have living in Big Sky to look at their property taxes - there's probably a road tax and they're paying a RID depending on what road they live on."

Big Sky sent nearly \$540,000 in property taxes to the Gallatin County "Road Fund" in 2014, but that money isn't spent in the community because there are no county roads here.

Highway 191 is a federal route maintained by the state, MT 64 is a state highway, and the balance of the roads are private – dedicated to the public – but maintained by homeowners associations and RIDs.

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Highway 191: A longtime problem

Traffic isn't merely a concern on MT 64. Much of Big Sky's traffic originates from Gallatin Canyon, where 34 white crosses line a 22-mile stretch of Highway 191.

"We've had quite a few fatalities on this road over the years and a lot of those are associated with head-on crashes," said Montana Highway Patrol trooper Brad Moore. "I've got ties to some of these crosses on the road."



Montana Highway Patrol Trooper Brad Moore stops a speeding driver on MT 64 bound for the Yellowstone Club on Dec. 2. PHOTO BY AMANDA EGGERT

In the past, a driver who drifted into the oncoming lane had more cushion for error, according to Moore. But that cushion has been eroded by a steady stream of traffic.

“I’ve worked this canyon since late 2002, so I’ve seen it when [traffic] went up and when it came down a little bit,” Moore said, referring to the traffic fueled by the area’s building boom preceding the Great Recession. “People I talk to now say it’s right back to where it was, if not busier.”

Big Sky resident Koy Hoover has been commuting to his job at Stifel, Nicolaus and Company in Bozeman since 2005. Hoover says during the recession he would see approximately 10 vehicles daily heading up to Big Sky, but now “it’s just a chain of headlights.” He leaves home around 6 a.m. to be out of the canyon by 6:30, hoping to avoid the string of vehicles coming the other way.

“I’d say once a month someone’s over that center line ... I have to pull over onto the shoulder to get out of the way,” Hoover said. “Some days I’ll come home and there’s three wrecks on the way.”

In 2014, an average of 4,754 vehicles – 310 of them large trucks with three-plus axles – drove the canyon on a given day. That’s still 12 percent shy of the 10-year high in 2007, but the annual average daily traffic has been steadily increasing since 2012.

In the past 10 years, MDT has completed nearly \$30 million in roadway improvements on 191, installing guardrails, turn lanes and centerline rumble strips. MDT also widened parts of 191 and installed a traffic signal at the intersection of 191 and MT 64.

The only Gallatin Canyon improvement project on the books for the near future is guardrail replacement on a 7-mile stretch of road in the heart of the canyon that’s scheduled for 2018.

Montana State Highway Patrol Capt. Mark Wilfore said MHP is looking at ways to reduce crashes in the canyon. The agency is considering a move to step up trooper presence, but the corridor’s narrow, winding geography makes enforcement difficult and dangerous.

It’s not just the speeding drivers that create unsafe conditions in the canyon. Those traveling well below the speed limit present a danger to other drivers, too. “In the canyon, one thing people don’t remember is it’s also illegal to go [too] slow,” Sgt. Kelly said.

Moore said he is not inclined to make stops for that violation. He reasons it could be less safe for a semi driver to jam on his brakes to make a slow vehicle turnout, and it won’t take long before another string of vehicles collects behind him or her.

“I’d rather [a semi operator] drive a little bit slower and be safe than him driving 60 miles per hour so he doesn’t have traffic backed up behind him,” Moore said.

Shane Day, who drives Gallatin Canyon for Hi-Ball Trucking up to six times a week, said he only uses three of the pullouts in the canyon, because the rest don’t have a sufficient line of sight behind them to re-enter the highway safely.

“[The traffic] is aggressive in the canyon,” Day says. “I’ve had people pass me in places you couldn’t even imagine, going through some of those corners. Even if you’re doing the speed limit in the canyon, they still want to get around you.”

There appears to be a correlation between large trucks driving Gallatin Canyon and the number of accidents occurring there. In 2008, there were 63 crashes and an average of 238 trucks driving the canyon daily. The following year, there were 34 crashes and a daily average of 88 trucks traveling through the canyon.

Although the overall traffic also dropped during that period – by 11 percent – the reduction was much more pronounced in large truck traffic since MDT rerouted most of it from 2008 to 2010 in order to accommodate construction in the canyon.

According to Montana Code 61-8-311, if four or more vehicles are trailing a slow-moving driver on a two-lane highway where passing is unsafe, the driver is required to pull over at the nearest safe turnout and let the other vehicles by.

“We do stop a lot of drivers for that,” Kelly said.

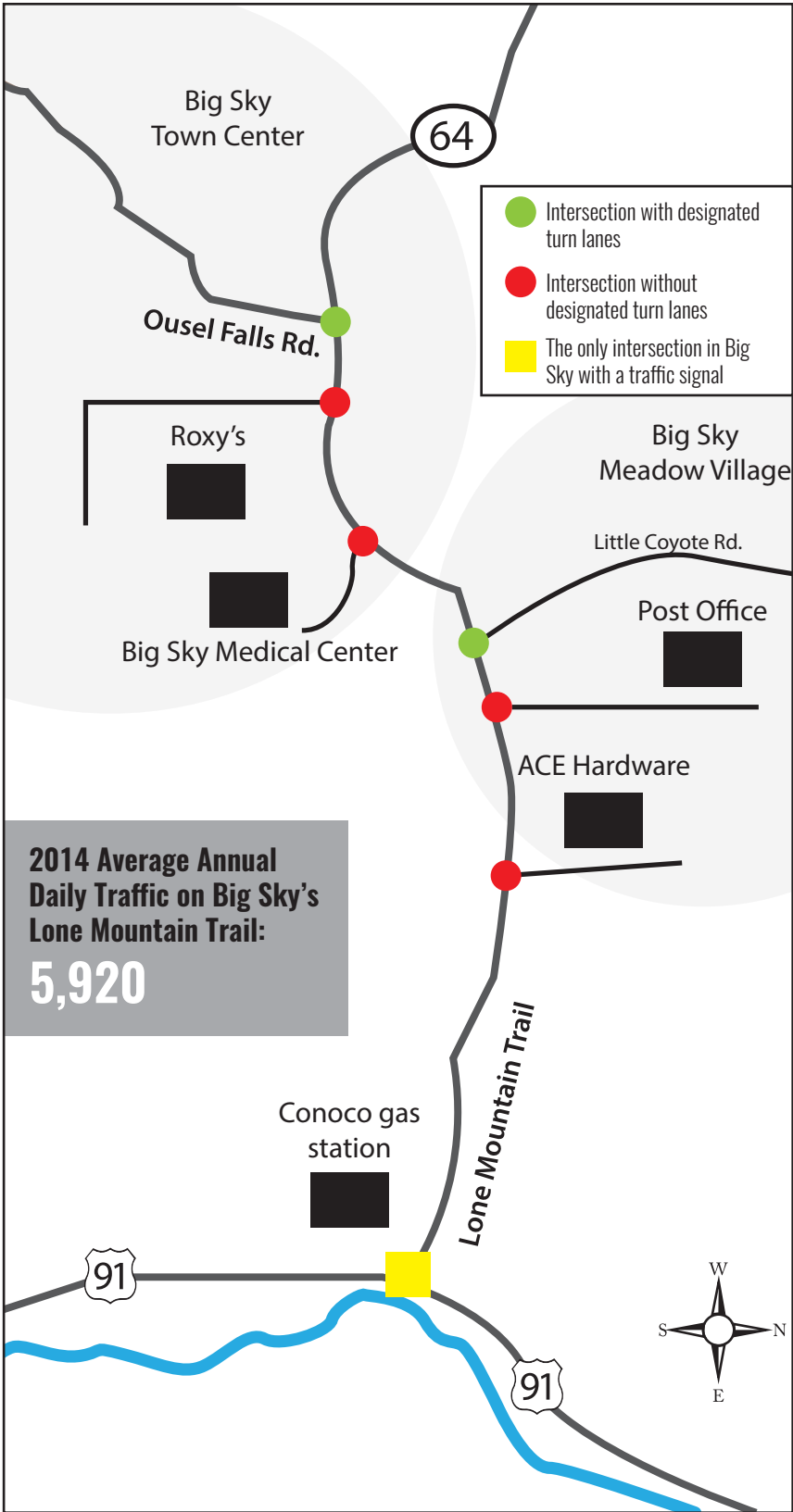
However, Highway 191 receives federal dollars and must allow large trucks. “If you want to accept federal funds on federal roads, you have to allow essentially every kind of traffic use ... you can’t discriminate against trucks,” Griffith said.

Wilfore recognizes that adding a full shoulder, more guardrails and more turn lanes would reduce accidents through the canyon. Such projects are complicated by the canyon’s tight geography.

“Highway 191 is one of [District Two’s] highest priorities on the national highway system. But it is also one of the most environmentally sensitive areas that we have to work with because we’ve got the river on one side and the mountain on the other in a lot of areas,” Griffith said. “I don’t see funding as the limiter on that, it’s finding an engineering solution that works.”

Whether 191 sees future safety improvements or not, the traffic issues in Big Sky itself are presently on the shoulders of the community. Without a municipal government, solutions to this problem will be determined by community members taking the initiative to identify funding sources, organize stakeholders and petition the Gallatin County Commission for solutions.

In the meantime, safety on Big Sky roads will be determined by the drivers.





Traffic on Montana Highway 64 and Highway 191 has been increasing since 2012. What is the most frightening thing you've encountered driving to, or in, Big Sky?



ed dramatically Paul Swenson, Big Sky, Mont.
Lone Peak High School Teacher

"[On Dec. 19], I saw three wrecks on the way down to Bozeman, between the Conoco and House Rock, in an hour span. One car went clear across the other lane and off into the field."



Adam Priquette, Manbattan, Mont.
Driver, Karst Stage

"[Just after a light snowfall, Highway 191] had been wet and the truck in front of me, a Toyota 4Runner, rolled into a rock wall about a mile south of the House Rock turnoff. I think she got to a spot where the road was shaded and slick, and she didn't realize it, and lost control of the vehicle ... That's just one of numerous [accidents] - I've seen so many."



Lucas Westblade, Big Sky, Mont.
Youth Minister, Young Life

"[On Dec. 19] I saw one just north of Karst. I think a truck overcorrected going around that corner. Thankfully no one was hurt ... I think early in the winter people forget how to drive and you have lots of tourists who maybe haven't driven in the winter."

Letter Bighorn Pass Trail bridge should be replaced

In fall 2014 the National Park Service tore down the pedestrian bridge crossing the Gallatin River at the beginning of the Bighorn Pass Trail in Yellowstone National Park. The Park Service gave no reason for removing the bridge without a replacement.

The effect of this action makes this well-used trail inaccessible to 99 percent of the users, since in order to get to the trail, you now have to cross the river. River crossings in the best of conditions are dangerous and are impossible during spring runoff.

The Bighorn Pass Trail is spectacular as it wanders along the headwaters of the Gallatin River with fabulous wildlife viewing, and is used by all levels of hikers and skiers. Tearing down this bridge has the same effect as putting up "No Trespassing" signs in Yellowstone National Park.

Public pressure is the only way that the Park Service will replace this much-used bridge, allowing access to the area once again.

Please contact the Park Service to support the bridge being replaced:

Chris Glenn
Trails Supervisor
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190
(307) 344-2319

Pat Collins
Big Sky, Mont.

Opinion Big Sky: Let's not ruin it

THE EDITORS

During a Dec. 14 business luncheon in Bozeman, Sam Byrne, co-founder of CrossHarbor Capital Partners - principle owner of the exclusive Yellowstone Club - spoke about the explosive growth the Big Sky area is seeing. Then he referenced the future.

"We expect to continue to add approximately 90 [Yellowstone Club] members per year over the course of the next three years," Byrne told the Bozeman Daily Chronicle. He went on to add that CrossHarbor has identified 11 Big Sky hotel sites to build on in the next 15-20 years. This is in addition to large-scale projects Lone Mountain Land Company - the development arm of CrossHarbor - currently has under way at Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, Moonlight Basin, the Big Sky Resort base area and Town Center.

Toward the end of the luncheon, Byrne showed a different side of his personality after praising the local Big Sky community and the massive development opportunity that exists in this small, unincorporated town. "The two things that keep me up at night," Byrne said. "... one, that we don't ruin it ... the second one is construction."

Growth is natural. In middling communities, in major cities, and in ski towns, businesses and developers succeed by identifying a need in

a particular area, and meeting that demand. But being deliberate with how development transpires, and deciding what we, as a community, are willing to risk, is key to the future.

Big Sky is approximately 40 percent built out. Affordable housing is a massive problem. The water and sewer district is reaching capacity. Traffic in the Big Sky area is reaching a boiling point (see page 6).

And what's at stake? The water quality in the Gallatin River and its tributaries; the trails we hike; the wildlife we see; all the reasons we live here.

Development isn't the problem, necessarily. The term "responsible development" is thrown around, but it must be taken seriously. Are we planning the future of the Big Sky area in the best manner we can? Are we too greedy? Can we share the last best place with newcomers, as well as the nature and wildlife that define Big Sky?

Perhaps we can have our cake and eat it too. But we must be steadfast in our collective mindset. We don't want to ruin it.

Explore Big Sky encourages readers to engage in the discussion of Big Sky's future and we can be reached at media@outlawpartners.com or (406) 995-2055.



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Quick action saves life



Charles Johnson and Brian Keanum receive certificates of appreciation on Dec. 16 from Big Sky Fire Department Chief William Farhat. On Oct. 6, Johnson and Keanum – who are members of Spanish Peaks Mountain Club security – responded to a cardiac arrest at the Spanish Peaks Lodge construction site. They performed CPR and used an automatic external defibrillator to keep the patient alive, which allowed BSFD to provide advanced life-support care resulting in the patient's survival. PHOTO BY ALECIA FISCHER

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THE RAM'S HORN



BY DUSTIN SHIPMAN
BSSD SUPERINTENDENT

"The Ram's Horn" is a regular column by Big Sky School District Superintendent Dustin Shipman, offering news and insight from the district.

Greetings and happy holidays from the Big Sky School District superintendent's office. We are approaching a major milestone in the school year, the holiday break. This signifies that the school year is nearly half over and upon reflection, we have accomplished some great things.

The board has adopted a significant strategic plan, which includes the implementation of the International Baccalaureate program of education for Big Sky students.

The IB program is a continuum of approaches to teaching and learning from kindergarten through grade 12. The key component of the IB philosophy is the process of inquiry, meaning students take the content and skills they're learning and apply them in new and unique ways to solve problems.

Consequently, the inquiry-based classroom looks much different than the traditional classroom, since the students lead their own learning while the teacher supports content and skill approaches to solve authentic problems.

The current implementation guidelines for the district are working toward implementing the IB Diploma program, a two-year course of study for 11th and 12th graders. Our current ninth graders will be the first class to start the diploma program, when they become juniors in fall 2017.

Our ambitious timeline for implementing the school-wide program, including grades k-10, is fall 2018. This will result in significant training for staff in the process of inquiry.

While inquiry is the foundation of the IB program, it's also a best practice for how students learn and how teachers teach. We anticipate that trainings will have immediate impact on how our teachers approach each classroom situation starting this year.

The IB program is a highly respected educational program in use all over the world, with the fastest growing segment in American public schools. Colorado leads the U.S. in public school IB programs, and in Montana the IB is present in Flathead and Missoula public schools.

The long-term implementation (2-3 years) is due in large part to our commitment to making sure all appropriate supports are in place for student and staff success. Principal Ide and I will be hosting listening and informational sessions throughout the course of the year to focus on IB and the implementation of the strategic plan.

Stay tuned and have a great holiday!



Winold Reiss (1866-1953) "Spider Version II, circa 1937," 28^{3/4} x 20^{3/4}, Pastel



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bigskylibrary.org

Announcements

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hours.
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Monday 10a.m.-6p.m.
(Toddlers Storytime 10:30 a.m.)
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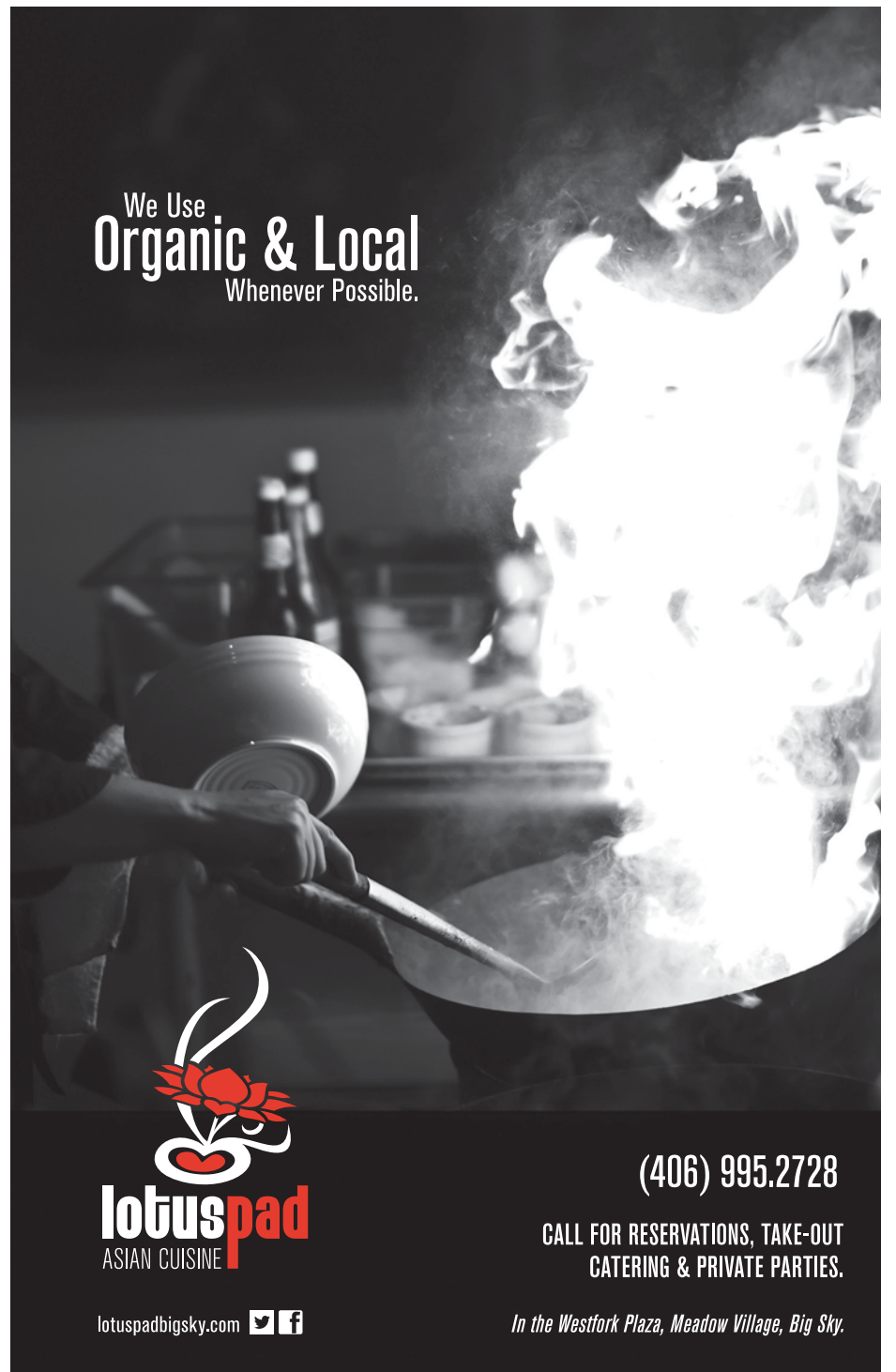
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\$625,000 | MLS 209628



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- Dramatic mountain views

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MEADOW VILLAGE - LOTS 23 & 24

- 2 side-by-side .25 acre lots with million dollar views
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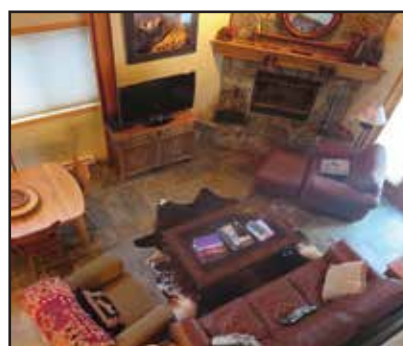
\$900,000 | MLS 156618



FRANK ROAD - BELGRADE

- 60 acre tract at the end of Frank Road
- Can be subdivided
- Great Bridger Mountain Views
- Level tract for easy building

\$1,400,000 | MLS 201531



BIG HORN 66

- 3BR/3B 1,595 sf chalet w/ one car garage
- Beautifully upgraded & close to Poma Lift
- Granite countertops and tile
- Close to mountain shops & restaurants

FURNISHED \$525,000 | MLS 207791



LAKE FRONT MANOR - LOT 6

- 1.04 acres in a 7 lot subdivision
- Overlooks Hebgen Lake
- Well in place & approved septic
- Private community dock

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LOST TRAILS RETREAT, LOT 8

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20± acre property between the Meadow and Mountain Villages at Big Sky! Lot has been partially cleared for evergreen management and to create view corridors. Community water system with fire flow.



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\$654,000 | #200659 | Call Stacy or Eric

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\$649,900 | #203211 | Call Stacy or Eric

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297 PARK CONDO

\$525,000 | #207174 | Call Stacy or Eric

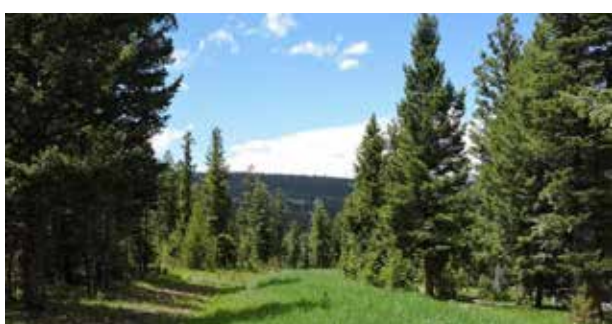
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\$240,000 | #202467 | Call Don

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Yellowstone open for winter season

NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

Yellowstone National Park opened to the public for motorized over-snow travel as scheduled on Dec. 15.

Visitors are now able to travel the park's interior roads on commercially guided snowmobiles and snowcoaches from the north, west and south entrances. Visitors with proper permits can also participate in the Non-commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program. Travel through the park's east entrance over Sylvan Pass was, as of EBS press time on Dec. 20, scheduled to begin Dec. 22.

The road from Yellowstone's north entrance at Gardiner, Mont., through Mammoth Hot Springs and on to Cooke City, Mont., outside the park's northeast entrance is open to wheeled vehicle travel all year.

The Geyser Grill, the Bear Den Gift Shop, and the Old Faithful Visitor Education Center opened for the season Dec. 15, while the Old Faithful Snow Lodge and Cabins, and the Obsidian Dining Room opened Dec. 20.

The Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, dining room, and gift shop will

opened doors for the season on Dec.18. The Yellowstone General Store, medical clinic, campground, post office and the Albright Visitor Center at Mammoth Hot Springs are open all year, as are the 24-hour gasoline pumps at Mammoth Hot Springs and Tower Junction.

Communities surrounding Yellowstone are open year round, and local businesses offer a wide range of winter recreation opportunities.

Park staff members will continue to monitor road conditions and weather forecasts that can have an impact on roadways and guided over-snow travel operations.

Weather during the winter season is unpredictable in Yellowstone, and road closures or delays can occur with little or no warning. Visitors should come prepared, carry personal emergency survival equipment in their vehicles, and dress appropriately for outside activities in extremely cold weather.

Visit nps.gov/yell for extensive information and assistance for planning a visit to Yellowstone this winter.



Electric Peak at sunset. NPS PHOTO

AUDIT PUBLICATION STATEMENT

An audit of the affairs of Big Sky Fire Department has been conducted by Holmes & Turner (a professional corporation). The audit covered the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015.

Section 2-7-521, MCA, requires the publication concerning the audit report include a statement that the audit report is on file in its entirety and open to public inspection. This report is available to the public at 650 Rainbow Trout Run, Big Sky, MT 59716 or at www.bigskyfire.org (under the Home Page "Big Sky Fire Department Annual Department and Audit Reports"). Big Sky Fire Department will send a copy of the audit report to any interested person upon request.

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The team at AHL has also created the Architect's Wife, Bozeman's destination for furniture, lighting, and decor. The Architect's Wife services AHL clients, customers in the Gallatin Valley and beyond, and other interior designers and industry professionals looking to snag the perfect piece on the spot.

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Big Sky Medical Center Family Medicine Clinic at Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center, is centered on keeping our community healthy—one person, one family at a time. Big Sky Family Medicine Clinic focuses on maintaining health. From nutrition

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most qualified to provide them. And Big Sky Medical Center Family Medicine Clinic is supported by the entire Bozeman Health integrated system. Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center—at the center of community health.



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Section 2:
SPORTS, HEALTH, DINING,
AND ENVIRONMENT



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Pulse-check and reflect for succesful 2016
p. 23



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Kids' ski injuries p. 30



Environment:
Opponents of coal call on feds p. 31

Big Horn boys fall to Wildcats in close home game

BY AMANDA EGGERT
EBS STAFF WRITER

BIG SKY – The Big Horns’ inexperience worked against them in their Dec. 19 loss to Harrison/Willow Creek, a team with six seniors to Lone Peak High School’s one.

Early in the game, the Wildcats changed their game plan to better defend junior guard Eddie Starz, LPHS’s most effective scorer. Starz did manage to score 18 points, but half of those were earned by the end of the first quarter.

In the second quarter, the Wildcats focused their defense on cooling his scoring streak, and they succeeded. All four of Starz’ points in the second and third quarters were free throws.

LPHS led 24-19 at the half, but couldn’t hold onto their lead down the stretch. “The beginning of the second half is sort of where the momentum turned,” said Big Horns head coach Al Malinowski.

The Big Horns’ 29 turnovers and weakness on the boards – both offensive and defensive – sealed their fate. The Wildcats led 34-33 at the end of the third quarter, and handed the Big Horns a 49-44 defeat.

The teams’ shooting percentages were well matched, with LPHS making 27 percent of their shots and Harrison/Willow Creek shooting 28 percent, but turnovers really hurt the Big Horns, Malinowski said. Even shooting 72 percent from the free-throw line wasn’t enough to propel LPHS to victory.

“It hurts now, I’m sure [the team] is feeling it,” Malinowski said. “Hopefully we’ll take the path of learning from it, making fewer mistakes next time, and being on the other side of it.”

Frankie Starz, an eighth-grader who only recently moved up to the Big Horns’ varsity squad, played all four quarters. Junior Hugo Boman is still out with an injury, but Malinowski hopes he’ll be back in the lineup after the holiday break.

On Dec. 18, the Big Horns lost 76-44 in Ennis.



Freshman Kolya Bough, the Big Horns’ starting point guard, looks for an open shooter. The Big Horns had a strong first half, but lost momentum in the second half, leading to a 49-44 loss. PHOTO BY TYLER ALLEN.

Lady Big Horns battle for another win

BY AMANDA EGGERT
EBS STAFF WRITER

BIG SKY - The Lady Big Horns beat Harrison/Willow Creek Dec. 19 with a string of key 3-pointers and free throws, outperforming the Wildcats with a strong perimeter game.



LPHS junior Luisa Locker penetrates the Wildcats’ defense for two points. Locker scored 17 points in the Lady Big Horns’ 43-37 win against Harriison/Willow Creek. PHOTO BY AMANDA EGGERT

Junior Dasha Bough put up the Lady Big Horns’ first points of the night with a pair of back-to-back 3-pointers, establishing a pace that carried LPHS to a 43-37 win.

Junior point guard Luisa Locker picked up the torch Bough lit, scoring a game-high 17 points. She also hustled her way to four steals.

Lady Big Horns head coach Nubia Allen said that although Locker and Bough had particularly strong showings, the win was a team effort. “Everyone was doing what they were supposed to be doing,” Allen said, adding that junior Bianca Godoy turned key offensive boards into baskets and sophomore Kuka Holder had a couple of big steals.

By the end of the first half, the Lady Big Horns were up 22–9, but they struggled to take care of the ball in the third quarter, turning the ball over nine times. The Wildcats seized the opportunity to narrow the deficit, but weren’t able to finish the job.

“That’s way too many turnovers for a quarter,” Allen said. “There were a lot of sloppy passes.”


By the start of the fourth quarter, the score was 26-24 in LPHS’s favor.

The Wildcats came close to tying up the score in the fourth quarter, and although they played a solid game in the paint, they never quite overcame the Lady Big Horns’ strong defense. Nor did they adequately defend LPHS’s perimeter aces.

Allen attributes a strong fourth quarter to “being patient and playing our game rather than their game,” and a run of free throws in the final minutes of the game.

On Dec. 18, the Ennis Mustangs handed the Lady Big Horns their first loss of the season, 47-39.

Moose: *Alces alces shirasi*



Did you Know?

The largest in the deer family, a moose can live up to 20 years.

The loss of spruce forage from the 1988 fire in Yellowstone National Park, combined with the harsh winter of 1988 – 1989, took a large toll on the number of moose in the park. In the 1970s, there were about 1,000 moose in Yellowstone, but that number has dropped to **less than 200 animals today due to hunting outside the park, burning of habitat, and predators.**

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SPORTS

BASKETBALL



LPHS Schedule

Dec. 12	Home	Hybrid Tip-Off Jamboree Lone Peak vs. Absarokee	G: W / 50-40 B: L / 23-62
Dec. 18	Away	@ Ennis**	G: L / 39-47 B: L / 44-76
Dec. 19	Home	Harrison / Willow Creek**	G : W / 43-37 B: L / 44-49
Jan. 2	Home	Shields Valley**	G 7:00 B 5:30 JVG 4:00
Jan. 8	Away	Gardiner**	G 7:00 B 5:30 JVG 4:00
Jan. 9	Home	Twin Bridges**	G 7:00 B 5:30 JVG 4:00
Jan. 15	Away	@ West Yellowstone**	G 7:00 B 5:30 JVG 4:00
Jan. 16	Away	@ Lima**	G 2:30 B 4:00
Jan. 22	Away	@ Harrison / Willow Creek**	G 7:00 B 5:30
Jan. 23	Home	Sheridan**	G 4:00 B 5:30
Jan. 28	Away	@ Shields Valley**	G 7:00 B 5:30 JVG 4:00
Jan. 29	Home	Gardiner**	G 7:00 B 5:30 JVG 4:00
Feb. 4	Away	@ Manhattan Christian**	G 7:00 B 5:30 JVG 4:00
Feb. 6	Home	White Sulphur Springs**	G 7:00 B 5:30 JVG 4:00
Feb. 12	Home	West Yellowstone**	G 7:00 B 5:30 JVG 4:00
Feb. 13	Home	Lime** / Senior Parent Day	G 2:30 B 4:00

** District 11/12C basketball games

G: Girls Varsity
B: Boys Varsity
JVG: Junior Varsity Girls
JVB: Junior Varsity Boys



Dec 4	@Sheridan**	B5:30/G7:00	Jan 15	@W. Yellowstone**	JVG4:00/B5:30/G7:00	Feb 12	W. Yellowstone**	JVG4:00/G5:30/B7:00
Dec 5	@Roberts	B4:30/G6:00	Jan 16	@Lima**	B2:30/G4:00	Feb 13	Lima** Senior Parent Day	G2:30/B4:00
Dec 12	@Harrison vs. Absorokee	G4:30/B6:00	Jan 22	@Harrison**	G5:30/B7:00	Feb 17-20	@MC – District 11/12C Tourney	
Dec 18	@Ennis**	JVG2:30/B4:00/G5:30	Jan 23	Sheridan**	G2:30/B4:00	Feb 25-27	@Hamilton – Western C Divisional	
Dec 19	Harrison**	B5:30/G7:00	Jan 28	@Shields Valley**	JVG4:00/G5:30/B7:00	March 5-7	@Great Falls - State C Boys' Championship	
Jan 2	Shields Valley**	JVG4:00/B5:30/G7:00	Jan 29	Gardiner**	G5:30/B7:00	Mar 12-14	@Great Falls - State C Girls' Championship	
Jan 8	@Gardiner**	B5:30/G7:00	Feb 4	@Manhattan Christian**	G5:30/B7:00			
Jan 9	Twin Bridges**	JVG4:00/B5:30/G7:00	Feb 6	WSS**	JVG4:00/G5:30/B7:00			
This schedule is subject to change								





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Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays







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EYE ON THE BALL

An MVP case for Cam Newton



BY BRANDON NILES
EBS SPORTS COLUMNIST

Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton deserves to win the NFL's annual Most Valuable Player award.

As of this writing, the Panthers hold the league's best record at 14-0, and Newton has already set a career high for passing touchdowns. At age 26, he's showing the kind of efficiency and leadership that fans have been expecting since he was selected first overall in the 2011 NFL draft.

He's not alone. Other players are deserving of consideration. Fellow quarterbacks Carson Palmer of the Arizona Cardinals and Tom Brady of the New England Patriots seem to be leading candidates, and rightfully so.

Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson and New York Giants receiver Odell Beckham Jr. could also be considered, as well as defensive studs like Carolina cornerback Josh Norman and defensive end J.J. Watt of the Houston Texans. However, a quarterback has won the award in seven of the last eight seasons, making it likely that one of the three field generals will walk away with the prize.

The success of Brady and Palmer is easy to quantify. The two rank first and second, respectively, in

both passing yards and touchdowns, and both had only two losses through the first 13 games of the season. The justification for Newton's candidacy is a little more difficult. He ranks in the middle of the pack in passing yardage this season, and his completion percentage is under 60 percent, a typical barometer for efficiency.

However, a simple look at statistics doesn't tell the whole story. Palmer plays in a pass-heavy offense and has three fantastic receivers to throw to, including perennial Pro Bowler Larry Fitzgerald. He also has an excellent offensive line, giving him more time in the passing pocket.

Brady had a good supporting cast to start the season, but deserves a tremendous amount of credit for how well he's performed despite injuries along his offensive line, and to four of his best offensive weapons. Despite his teammates' afflictions, Brady has managed to put up incredible numbers, and lead the Patriots to one of the best records in the NFL.

Newton on the other hand, never had much of a supporting cast to begin with. His offensive line has been a work-in-progress all year, and his best receiver, Ted Ginn Jr., likely wouldn't crack the starting lineup on most NFL rosters.

Newton also plays in a run-based offense. Only the Seattle Seahawks have run the ball more than the Panthers this season, and Carolina ranks in

the bottom third of the league in pass attempts. Meanwhile, New England and Arizona both rank in the top three in passing attempts this year. Newton benefits from an elite tight end in Greg Olsen, but Brady has had an even better one in Rob Gronkowski for most of the season.

Most notably, Newton adds a lot with his legs. He leads all quarterbacks in rushing yards this season, and is tied for sixth among all NFL players in rushing touchdowns with seven. His running ability makes him a nightmare for opposing defenses, and is one of the reasons he has led the Panthers to their third straight division title this year.

If any of these three players win the award, it will be well deserved. However, Newton has done the most with the least this season, and has the Panthers being talked about as a legitimate Super Bowl contender for the first time in over a decade.

While many players have been valuable to their teams, Newton has been the most valuable, and he should win this year's honor for his remarkable season.

Brandon Niles is a longtime fan of football and scotch, and has been writing about sports for the past decade. He is a fantasy football scout for 4for4 Fantasy Football and is co-host of the 2 Guys Podcast.



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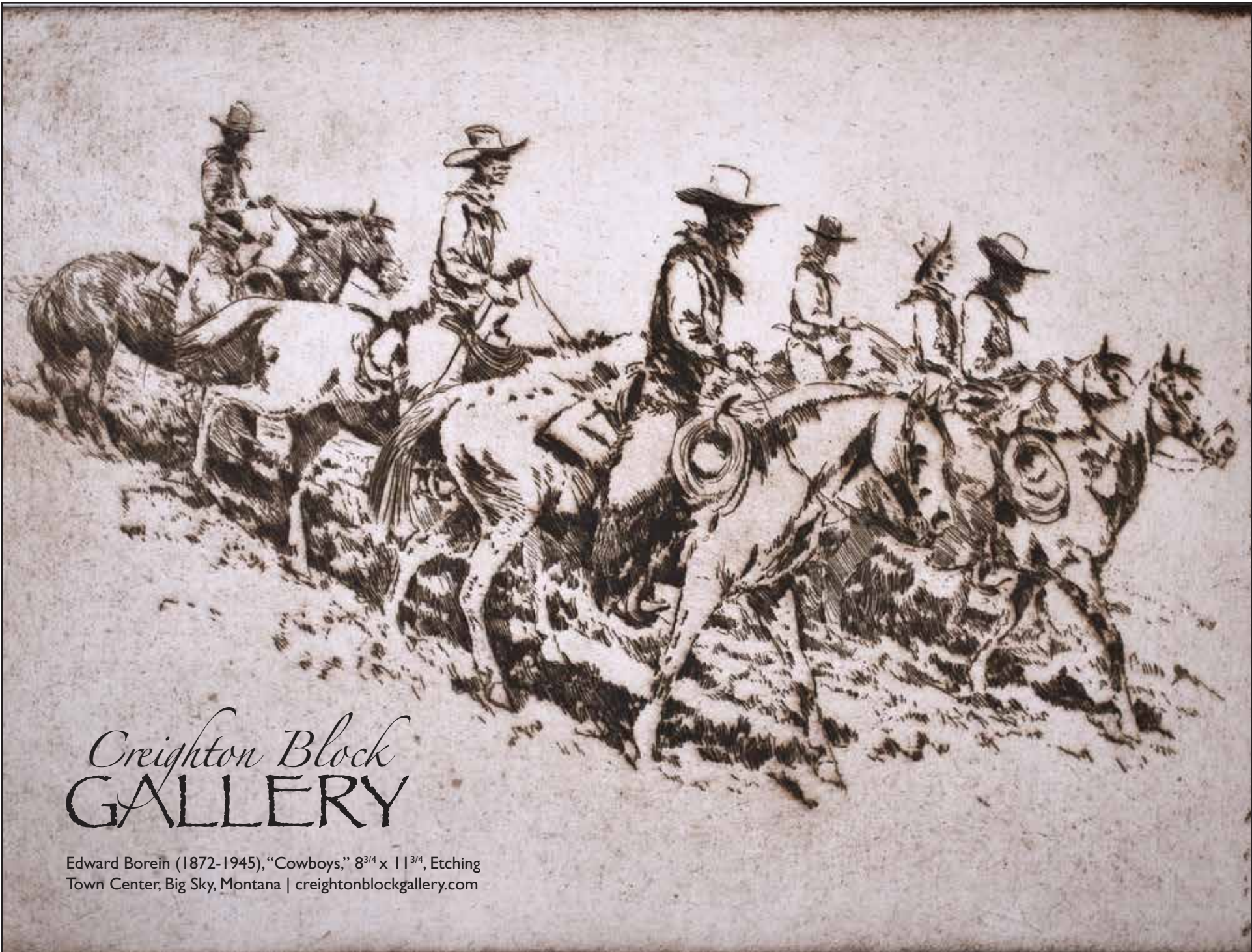
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Pulse-check and reflect for successful 2016



BY JOHANNE BOUCHARD
EBS BUSINESS COLUMNIST

While we love to disconnect and chill out over the holidays by relaxing and enjoying quality time with our families, it pays to be reflective. Whether you’re a business owner, leader, entrepreneur, employee, investor, or board director, I invite you to sit back and look at how this past year has unfolded for you in business and in your career.

When we take a true pulse and reflect, we gain clarity about what worked, what was disappointing, and how we could have been more effective and possibly more patient and tolerant. We also confront the truth about where we missed the mark.

In having a clear picture, we can define what should change and how we intend to create the outcome we’re capable of producing and hope to realize.

Set a block of time aside to sit in your favorite chair, review the past year, and take notes. There’s nothing like writing down your thoughts to give you ownership of a situation and to reveal accountability steps to bring about necessary changes as you begin a new year.

As an employee, did you like your job? If not, how much of it depended on your attitude or by being in the wrong place with the wrong people? Make notes for the new year about what you can do to improve your experience, versus what someone else in the workplace could do on your behalf.

If you have taken critical feedback personally, commit to receive it objectively in 2016. If you’d like to advance in your company, commit to the behaviors that will help you do this, like punctuality, proactive communication regarding deadlines and status, setting and managing expectations, and being a team player.

As a business owner, did you take the time to establish a culture with your employees, and do you feel they are representing the image you wish to convey? Did you competitively serve your customers? Ask yourself honestly where you could have done better to foster customer loyalty and lead a motivated team of workers who felt invested in your business, then write a list of steps you can take in the new year to go further.

As a board director, did your contribution have an impact, and did you leverage your skills, experience and talents? Do you feel that you belong at the board table going into 2016? Evaluate your

experience in this role and how well you performed, but also consider whether you felt that the time you invested was well spent. Be honest with yourself about whether you want to continue, and if you do, create some clear goals for how you can best contribute going forward.

As a leader, did you empower your team, making appropriate changes when necessary? Did you take the time to poll and to listen to your team members? Did you micromanage or did you effectively delegate? Trusting and humbly listening to your team is critical, and comes from managing yourself and choosing the right team members. Look ahead to determine where you need to improve personally or in personnel going forward.

Life is short. We don’t have to feel suffocated by work or in our daily life. We all have gifts, innate talents and skills, and we must take the time to express ourselves to be fulfilled and contribute with our full potential.

Have clear intentions about how 2016 can be a great year for you in business and in all aspects of your life. Envision the possibilities, and take ownership of going after what you know you should do.

I wish you a successful and prosperous 2016!



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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.

A restaurant's chess game



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

After reading an article from a chef in which he likened a restaurant's business and staff to a game of chess, it got me thinking: Who would the chess pieces be? Since not all restaurant owners are in the game day to day, for simplicity sake, I'll omit them from this article.

King – Executive chef: Despite the piece's name, the king is not gender specific on the restaurant board. Much like the king sitting in the back and center of the chessboard where everything is in his vision, the chef is at the center of all kitchen activity. At times, the other pieces move around the king. Diligent in their roles, other pieces follow the grand plan. Take down the king, and it's a devastating blow.

Queen – Restaurant manager: Much like the king, gender has no reference to the queen in this case. The queen is ostensibly able to move anywhere with ease and can be there in a moment's notice. The restaurant manager covers more ground in a given evening than perhaps any other player. Always putting out fires and hustling to the aid of their team, they are invaluable. The game is not over if the queen is taken, but the other pieces may very well feel it is.

Bishop – Sous chef: The sous chef, like the bishop, possesses a move similar to the king, but not all of them. Bishops can move great distances, but are limited in their overall mobility. The skill set of the sous chef should be about 85 percent of the chef's – they've not yet reached the platform of king. Many will reach this pinnacle, eventually, while many others will not.

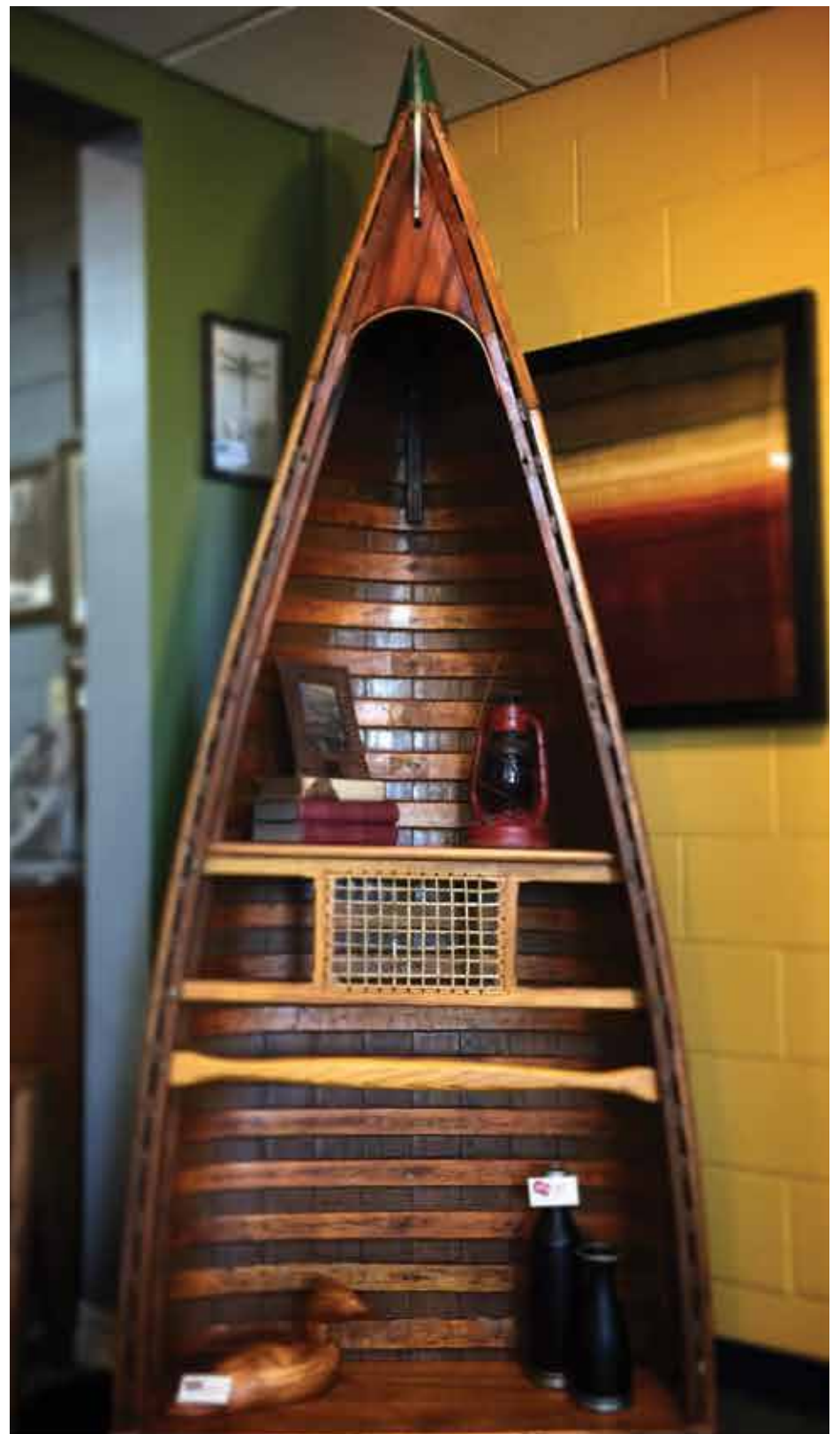
Castle – Cooks, bartenders, and servers: Moving side-to-side or forward and backward, castles have great value on the board. Cooks are able to move to other stations when necessary, filling critical gaps. If the situation requires, servers and bartenders have the ability to take over another's section or station with little adjustment. These men and women are the valuable lieutenants of the operation.

Knight – Sommelier: The knight has a quirky, yet oddly useful ability to move in a somewhat unorthodox pattern. You sometimes need advanced geometry skills to see all of their potential angles. The sommelier has a unique skill set: immensely knowledgeable about all things wine, yet can be a dapper Maître d', or skilled, charismatic waiter at the flick of a wrist.

Pawns – Dishwashers and bussers: The pawn is out front, and can at face value appear expendable or even in the way, at times. I can assure you they are neither. They may appear to have little strength on the surface, but like pawns, a busser or dishwasher can get upgraded, or be promoted, as the case may be, to a waiter or a cook at any time. More importantly, they provide a basic but absolutely fundamental role in the overall board, or restaurant. Do not underestimate their influence, usefulness, or potential.

So now, this formidable board of restaurant pieces needs an opposing team. Bon appétit!

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



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From Jackie *with love*

Your 2016 Circle of Life



BY JACKIE RAINFORD CORCORAN
EBS HEALTH COLUMNIST

The New Year is an exciting time. It brings a sense of closure and completion, and offers the hopefulness and optimism that accompanies new beginnings.

If you're looking to make changes this year, it's helpful to first bring awareness to areas that are currently out of balance and then devise a plan to course-correct. Below is an effective and simple tool called

the Circle of Life that can assist on your 2016 journey. It was created by the health coaching school I attended, New York City's Institute for Integrative Nutrition.

One of IIN's key philosophies is that while it's important to eat whole and healing foods, nutrition is only a part of holistic health. IIN refer to the other parts as "primary foods," which include joy, spirituality, creativity, finances, career, education, physical activity, home cooking, home environment, relationships and social life.

If any of these "primary foods" don't resonate with you or you want to make them more specific, simply relabel them on your circle before filling it out.

This exercise is intended to first give you a snapshot of which "primary foods" you are skimping on, and second provoke thoughtful ideas for bringing more abundance to these areas.

After taking 3-5 minutes to complete your 2016 Circle of Life, here are some follow-up questions you can ask yourself:

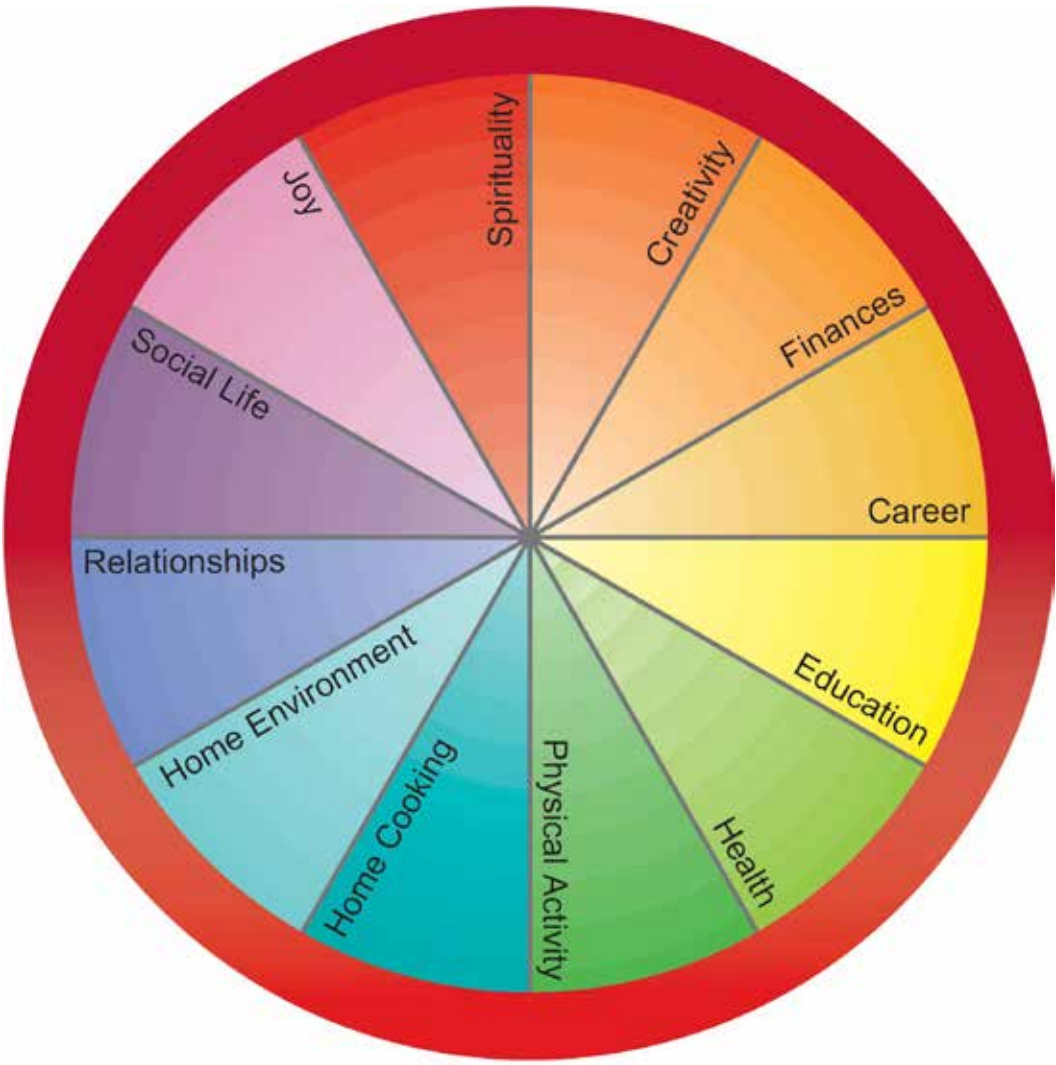
- Are there any surprises for you?
- How do you feel about life as you look at your Circle of Life?
- Which of these elements would you most like to improve?
- How could you make space for these changes?
- What help from others might you need?
- What would make it a better circle?
- What would a balanced circle look like to you?

Assess your circle as the year progresses to stay on course. Enjoy the process. Live this year to the fullest – we truly never know when it will be our last. Why not intentionally make it the best one yet? Happy New Year!

Jackie Rainford Corcoran is an IIN Certified Holistic Health Coach, public speaker and health activist. Contact her at rainfordcorcoran@gmail.com.

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

Discover which primary foods you are missing, and how to infuse joy and satisfaction into your life.



Example

What does YOUR life look like?

1. Place a dot on the line in each category to indicate your level of satisfaction within each area. Place a dot at the center of the circle to indicate dissatisfaction, or on the periphery to indicate satisfaction. Most people fall somewhere in between (see example)
2. Connect the dots to see your Circle of Life.
3. Identify imbalances. Determine where to spend more time and energy to create balance.



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HEALTH

Kids' ski injuries



BY DR. JEFF DANIELS
EBS MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Over the 21 years I've treated medical problems of the residents, workers, and visitors in Big Sky, injuries to kids seem to hit me the hardest. Although some of them present hysterically, most are subdued, favoring the injury, and holding on tight to a parent without making a sound.

We all see kids zooming down the mountain, once they get over their initial fear of skiing or snowboarding, and wonder how they do it. But sometimes accidents happen, and the speeds they reach, the bumps – or jumps – they hit, and occasional harsh conditions all contribute to injuries similar to what we see in adults.

Very young children can sustain fairly bad leg injuries, most common being spiral fractures of the tibia, or shin. Luckily, these heal well in a cast and rarely need surgery. If kids sprain a knee ligament, 95 percent of the time it will involve the medial collateral ligament, or MCL.

It's unusual for a youngster to tear the anterior cruciate ligament, or ACL. Until recently, it had been several years since we've seen a case like that. On Dec. 8, an 8-year-old boy hyperextended his right knee after going too fast, hitting a bump, and flying through the air.

His parents didn't think he was injured when they asked ski patrol to give him a courtesy ride to the base, but they soon realized he had a problem, and came into the Medical Clinic at the end of the day.

I took one look at his knee and knew this was not a minor injury. The knee was swollen, about 50 percent bigger than the uninjured side. We could feel both the fluid filling up the knee joint and the abnormal movement of the bones with gentle manipulation. The boy remained calm, while his parents were anxious to know what was happening.

An 8-year-old's ACL may be injured in several ways. Like an adult's, it can tear apart completely, or sometimes partially tear, but the most common way is for a piece of bone holding the ACL to break off the tibia, with the ACL attached. I've rarely seen this happen in adults.

The fragment of bone, called an avulsion, coming from the top of tibia, can float freely inside the knee joint, or still be hanging onto the bulk of the tibia by a thread. This type of injury in an adult is frequently treated surgically, within days of the accident. The same holds true for children who experience this avulsion injury.

We put the 8-year-old boy in a long splint that completely wrapped his leg like a cast, taught him how to walk with crutches, and explained everything to his parents. I also was able to get them the latest review article of this type of injury, so they would more easily understand what an orthopedist at home would be explaining to them in a few days. I hope this is the only one we see all ski season!

Here's hoping that you all have a great, safe holiday season.

Dr. Jeff Daniels has been practicing medicine in Big Sky since 1994, when he and his family moved here from New York City. A unique program he implements has attracted more than 700 medical students and young doctors to train with the Medical Clinic of Big Sky.

Opponents of coal railroad call on feds to deny permit

BY MATTHEW BROWN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BILLINGS (AP) – A group of conservationists and ranchers asked federal transportation officials on Dec. 11 to deny a permit for a long-delayed \$400 million railroad that would serve a proposed coal mine near the Montana-Wyoming border.

The Tongue River Railroad was first proposed more than three decades ago and would open up southeastern Montana's huge coal fields to new mining.

But after its sponsors last month sought to suspend the railroad's permit application – citing a weak coal market and delays in the proposed Otter Creek mine near Ashland – opponents want the Surface Transportation Board to kill the project.

"They've been buying time for 30 years and it's time to say enough is enough," said Clint McRae, whose Rocker Six Cattle Co. near Colstrip sits in the proposed path of the 42-mile line. "We've got fence projects on hold, livestock watering pipeline projects that have been on hold because we don't know where it's going."

Attorneys for Rocker Six and the Northern Plains Resource Council asked the transportation board to deny the railroad's most recent application, submitted in 2012.



PHOTO BY NOSTRIFIKATOR / CC BY 2.0

It's the fourth application to be submitted for the railroad. Three prior applications involving different routes for the line were approved over the decades, only to have the plans abandoned or changed.

The railroad is jointly owned by Arch Coal, BNSF Railway and TRRC Financing. On Nov. 25, the railroad asked the Surface Transportation Board to suspend its permit application indefinitely, pointing to delays in the approval of Otter Creek.

Railroad spokesman Matt Jones with BNSF said it had not yet had a chance to review Friday's request to deny its application. But Jones said

there was "strong justification" to grant the suspension given the "extended permitting process for the Otter Creek Mine."

Beginning in 2009, St. Louis-based Arch paid \$160 million to the state of Montana and Houston-based Great Northern Properties for leases at Otter Creek. Those gave it rights to an estimated 1.4 billion tons of coal and company executives once hoped to begin mining at the site by this year.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality in March said it needed more information from the coal company to process its mining application.

Arch has said it expects to resubmit the application this month, but the company's growing financial troubles loom large over the project.

Arch posted a \$2 billion loss in the third quarter of 2015 and has said that bankruptcy is possible. On Thursday, the company was notified by the New York Stock Exchange that it could be removed from the exchange because Arch's market value has shrunk considerably as its share price has plummeted, from \$19.30 a share in December 2014 to just 90-cents a share on Friday.

A company spokeswoman did not immediately return messages seeking comment.



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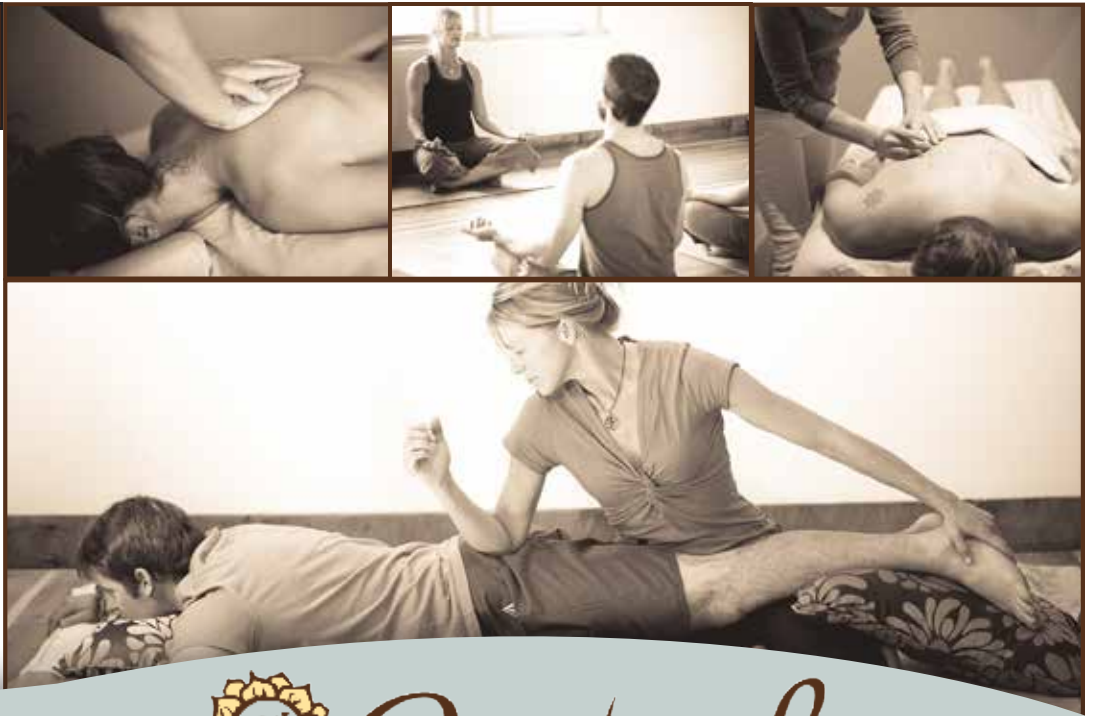
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SUNDAY

5:45-7:00pm
Weekend Wind Down
All Levels Yoga

MONDAY

9:00-10:15am
All Levels Yoga
6:00-7:15pm
All Levels Yoga

TUESDAY

7:00-8:00am
All Levels Yoga
8:15-9:15am
Pilates
9:30-10:45am
All Levels Yoga
5:30-6:30pm
Barre
6:45-7:45pm
All Levels Adult Ballet

WEDNESDAY

7:30-8:30am
All Levels Yoga
9:00-10:15am
All Levels Yoga
Noon-1:00
All Levels Yoga
4:30-5:30pm
Apres Ski Yoga

THURSDAY

7:00-8:00am
Zumba
8:15-9:15am
Barre
9:30-10:45am
All Levels Yoga
5:30-6:30pm
Pi-Yo

FRIDAY

8:30-9:30am
Level II Yoga
10:00-11:30am
All Levels Yoga
(No classes on
Christmas Day)

SATURDAY

9:00-10:15am
Vinyasa Flow
All Levels Yoga

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Section 3:

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT
OUTDOORS

The Ostinato Project

Big Sky music students collaborate with world-renown composers

BY AMANDA EGGERT
EBS STAFF WRITER

BIG SKY – In his role as a music educator, John Zirkle has found students are often deterred from playing and composing music because they’ve bought into the idea that they have to be flawless musicians before they can participate in its creation.

Zirkle believes that music can be taught and learned, just like any other subject or discipline. “It’s a craft that is kind of given to all of us,” he says.

The goal of Ostinato Project, an experimental music program developed this fall, is to empower students to create and enjoy music without the inhibitive barriers that can derail the creative process.

As participants of the pilot program, 29 Big Sky middle and high school music students are collaborating with composers and professional musicians to create a music production, which will be released - ideally to global reception - to generate funding for the school’s music program.

A 10-track album is almost complete and a spring concert is in the works just three months into the project.

Ostinato is an Italian word that means a continually repeated musical phrase or rhythm. Russell Spurlock, one of the project’s founders, says this simple music concept helped him demonstrate to students how easy it is to create music on their own.

“What [Ostinato Project] ultimately does is it empowers young kids who aren’t necessarily skillful musicians ... to feel like they have control over something beautiful,” Zirkle said.

The idea was developed at a four-day HATCH conference held in Big Sky in September. HATCH is an invite-only conference where creative types from around the world gather to network and “catalyze creativity to hatch a better world,” according to the organization’s website.

Ostinato Project founders include HATCH director Yarrow Kraner; Philip Sheppard, a cellist, composer and producer who has worked with Grammy-nominated musicians like The Weeknd and Queens of the Stone Age; Spurlock, a television and film composer; and Zirkle, the artistic director of Warren Miller Performing Arts Center and Big Sky School District’s music teacher.

Sheppard recently played for the opening of the global climate change summit with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in attendance. And one of the tracks Spurlock developed with Big Sky’s music students is slated to appear in a reality television show in 2016.



Ophir Middle School music students discuss track titles for the album they're creating for Ostinato Project, a pilot program that launched in Big Sky this fall. PHOTO BY AMANDA EGGERT

“To have that type of exposure to those artists here in Big Sky is phenomenal,” said Ania Bulis, whose sixth-grade daughter is participating in the program.

In the first stage of the project, Zirkle gave his music students a time-restricted prompt, telling his students to, “turn the tones from the last four digits of your phone number into a melody,” for instance. They went to work creating a simple a music idea and voted on the most compelling melody. Zirkle then shared the melody online with Sheppard and Spurlock, who are based in London and Los Angeles, respectively.

In the next stage of the project, Sheppard and Spurlock built upon the melody, shaping the arrangement and adding layers. They sent a sound file back to Zirkle, who led his students in a critique of the track as they continued the collaboration – reshaping and refining it.

They repeated this process with nine more tracks and they’re on pace to release a full album on iTunes and Google Play in early 2016.

“We get to be the pilot project because we’re in a small school system with open-minded administration, and a bunch of kids and parents who are willing to do it,” Zirkle said, adding that generating money for BSSD’s music program is not the primary motivation behind Ostinato, but he’s impressed with the project’s success.

Zirkle said the Ostinato Project could have a powerful impact on other music programs around the U.S., particularly those that are isolated, underserved or in jeopardy of being cut.

“We’re working toward developing other relationships with schools in L.A.,” Kraner said of the program’s expansion, adding that the Ostinato model could work well with other creative applications like writing and film.

“The idea that there’s a self-funding mechanism for a creativity education platform is something that I’m extremely intrigued by,” he said. “I’m

confident that once this platform is built out we’re going to be able to utilize it for other models.”

The engagement and ownership behind the project is evident – students’ parents have noticed how energized their children are by the project’s unconventional approach to music education.

“They’re not just experiencing music, they’re creating it,” Bulis said. “At home I see [my daughter Olivia] sitting on the floor listening to these various chords, trying to figure out what comes next in the creation of music.”

The composers have benefited from the collaboration, too.

“This is the first project I’ve ever worked on where the momentum just immediately built on its own very, very quickly,” Spurlock said.

The support of Soundtrap – an online collaborative music software company based in Sweden and an official partner of Ostinato Project – will help its founders build the platform to a global scale. This October, the premise, and promise, of Ostinato Project was presented to 1,000 educators at the EdTech Global Summit featuring Google for Education.

On Dec. 8, Zirkle received approval from the provost of Montana State University to start the “Last Chair Program.” In addition to other projects with BSSD and WMPAC, the funding made available by the Last Chair Program – nearly \$85,000 – will enable BSSD’s music department to bring the Ostinato Project to life in a concert with MSU students, as well as professional musicians. The concert is slated for this spring.

Zirkle says the Ostinato Project has generated a deep shift in his understanding of music education.

“It’s more than learning about notes,” he said. “Music education is expressing ideas in musical ways.”

‘Nothing Serious’ happens in Big Sky



Scenes from the Big Sky Community Theater's Dec. 18 production of Rich Orloff's rollicking, multi-act play "Nothing Serious" at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center. PHOTOS BY TYLER ALLEN

LPHS stages successful first non-musical performance

“It’s A Wonderful Life,” Lone Peak High School Thespan Society’s first ever non-musical, premiered in the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center on Dec. 11 with two well-attended performances as well as an art exhibition, milk and cookies reception, and raffle.

Staged as a live radio play, the show featured 15 LPHS students on stage and several more backstage – nearly a third of the high school was involved. The LPHS Thespan Society plans to make the performance an annual event and fundraiser as it provides additional theatrical opportunities for students while raising funds for the annual spring musical.

Liam Germain and Dasha Bough, LPHS students and lead actors in the show, created a one-of-a kind design for a snowboard, donated by Gallatin Alpine Sports and Rau Design. A raffle for the board, lift tickets and gas coupled with an auction for another snowboard garnered nearly \$1,400 which, in addition to ticket sales, will go a long way toward staging the spring musical.



PHOTO BY TORI PINTAR

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WMPAC announces winter lineup

Diverse third season includes acrobatic ballet, repertory-crossing string quartet, and opera

BY BARBARA ROWLEY
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – Local audiences have learned to be both surprised and pleased by the variety, quality and unique attributes of the acts comprising the winter season lineups at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center. But mostly, they’ve come to trust that whatever WMPAC presents is guaranteed to be, at minimum, memorable.

“We don’t spend a lot of time looking or choosing between acts,” says long-time local Maggie Trimiew, who’s attended a number of performances at WMPAC. “There’s never a question that we are going. We always know it is going to be really good.”

WMPAC Artistic Director John Zirkle says that while he intentionally looks for new and different acts for each season’s lineup, he finds certain commonalities in the performances.

“We always feature something that highlights movement, a spoken word artist or two, cutting edge musicians in specialized fields, and something theatrical,” he said.

This year’s season opener, for instance, echoes last year’s sold-out presentation of “Loon.” Chicago’s Manual Cinema will bring their unique combination of puppetry and shadow art to present “Lula del Ray,” a live theatrical performance that integrates, film, shadows and puppetry to tell a story Chicago Theater Beat describes as “charming and fresh.”

Manual Cinema will appear on Jan. 30; an exhibit featuring their puppets and a live, interactive shadow photo booth exhibition in the theater art gallery will occur on Dec. 30.

Two spoken-word events will be season highlights for anyone interested in poetry or fiction. “Selected Shorts,” the popular Public Radio International radio program, will feature well-known actors reading familiar works of fiction.

Seven-time Emmy nominee and former “Malcolm in the Middle” star Jane Kaczmarek headlines the cast for this Jan. 9 performance. Two-term U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins, a popular guest on “The Colbert Report” and “Prairie Home Companion” as well as TED Talks, will appear on March 5. The New York Times’ best-selling author, Collins has won-over millions of fans with his clever and humorous approach to the form.

Instrumental groups are always a part of the WMPAC season, and this year’s lineup is no exception. Kronos Quartet, one of the world’s most popular string groups, is known for its genre-crossing repertory. The group is as likely to play Jimmy Hendrix and accompany a Paul McCartney-led performance of “Yesterday” as to play an entire classical repertoire. The best selling group with, 2.5 million recordings sold, appears on Feb. 12.

The same genre-hopping, experimental style will be more than a little present when So Percussion takes the stage. These percussionist masters will pay homage to world-famous composer John Cage with their presentation of “Third Construction,” but you can also expect some out-of-the-drum behavior and performances from this famous group. Watch (and hear!) them on Jan. 16.

The movement artists this year range from the well-known and loved James Sewell Ballet on March 19, to Diavolo, a thrilling acrobatic-meets-martial-arts-meets-ballet directed by Jacques Heim, a former choreographer for Cirque du Soleil. Both groups move from a classical tradition into highly athletic, entertaining and often gasp-inducing performances.

James Sewell makes new works each summer in Big Sky, and the troupe’s performances almost always sell out. Diavolo will present their enigmatic show, “Volo,” which explores how humans interact with inanimate, architectural elements in fantastical ways on Jan. 23.

This season also includes two close-to-the-heart performances especially selected by Zirkle, who brought one of the most impressive pianists in the world, Antony Baryshevskyi, to great local acclaim in the debut season.

“The Czech choir Jitro is a group that absolutely changed my life,” Zirkle said. “I studied with their conductor in Czech Republic in 2008, and I was able to witness firsthand how a world-class children’s choir is created. It’s an out-of-this-world experience because the clarity of their tone is absolutely gorgeous and awe-inspiring.” The Jitro (pronounced Yee-Tro) choir will perform March 26.

The other performance is also a labor of love, an opera written by Zirkle’s college professor, acclaimed composer Ofer Ben-Amots. “As for the Dybbuk, well ... this is how WMPAC does Opera, and we’ve never done something like this before,” Zirkle said. “The thought of skiing all day and then coming down to WMPAC to enjoy an opera is such an amazing concept; once the idea took hold, there was no going back.” The Dybbuk will be presented on Feb. 27.

The community also produced three shows this season: LPHS students performed “It’s A Wonderful Life, the Live Radio Play,” on Dec. 11; Big Sky Community Theater’s production of Rich Orloff’s “Nothing Serious,” on Dec. 18; and the high school musical, “The Drowsy Chaperone,” will play May 26 and 27.

The WMPAC season also includes four art gallery openings, which are curated and opened to coordinate and enhance the experience of the mainstage performances they accompany.

Visit warrenmillerpac.org for tickets and more information.

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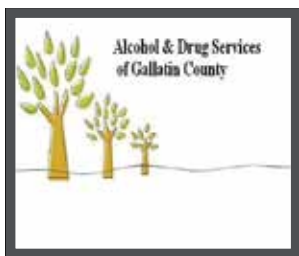
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EVENTS CALENDAR

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FRIDAY, DEC. 22 – THURSDAY, JAN. 7

***If your event falls between Jan. 8 and Jan. 21, please submit it by Dec. 31.**

Big Sky
TUESDAY, DEC. 22
Kenny Diamond
Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Mike Haring
Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Milton Menasco Duo
Chet's Bar & Grill, 4:30 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-5 p.m.

Kids Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 5-6 p.m.

Adult Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 23
Mike Haring
Carabiner Lounge, 8:30 a.m.

Milton Menasco Duo
Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Kevin Fabozzi
Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Joe Knapp
Chet's Bar & Grill, 4:30 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-11 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 24
Load Bearing Walls
Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Mike Haring
Carabiner, 4 p.m.

Christmas Eve Dinner
Huntley Dining Room,
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Torchlight Parade
Big Sky Resort, 8 p.m.

All Saints' Lessons & Carols
Christmas Eve Service
Big Sky Chapel, 8 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-4:30 p.m.

Kids Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink,
5:30 – 7 p.m.

Adult Drop In Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

FRIDAY, DEC. 25
Kent Johnson
Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Lauren Jackson
Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

All Saints' Christmas Day service
of Holy Communion
Big Sky Chapel, 9:30 a.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-11 p.m.

SATURDAY, DEC. 26
Blue Grass Trio
Choppers, 9:30 p.m.

Subaru Preferred Parking Day
Big Sky Resort, all day

Diamond
Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Mike Haring
Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Lone Mountain Trio
Chet's Bar & Grill, 4:30 p.m.

Jeni Fleming Trio
Carabiner Lounge, 8:30 p.m.

Lone Mountain Trio
Chet's Bar & Grill, 9 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-11 p.m.

SUNDAY, DEC. 27
Subaru Preferred Parking Day
Big Sky Resort, all day

Football Sunday
Lone Peak Cinema, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-6 p.m.

Adult Drop in Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

MONDAY, DEC. 28
Subaru Preferred Parking Day
Big Sky Resort, all day

Lauren Jackson & Jeff Bellino
Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Chuck Denison
Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-4:40 p.m.

Kids Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30-7 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

TUESDAY, DEC. 29
Kenny Diamond
Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Mike Haring
Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Milton Menasco Duo
Chet's Bar & Grill, 4:30 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-5 p.m.

Kids Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 5-6 p.m.

Adult Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30
Manual Cinema
WMPAC, 7:30 p.m.

Milton Menasco
Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Kevin Fabozzi
Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Lauren & Jeff
Chet's Bar & Grill, 4:30 p.m.

Mike Haring
Carabiner Lounge, 8:30 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-11 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 31
Waylon and Kelsey with DJ Tiny
Choppers, 9:30 p.m.

Mike Haring
Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

New Year's Eve Buffet
Huntley Dining Room,
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Kids New Year's Eve Party
Missouri Ballroom, 6-9 p.m.

New Year's Eve Dinner
Everett's 8800, 7:30 p.m.

New Year's Eve Party
Montana Jack,
9:30 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-4:30 p.m.

Kids Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink,
5:30 – 7 p.m.

Adult Drop In Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN. 1
Kelsey & Waylon
Ousel & Spur Pizza Co, 9 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-11 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 2
Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-11 p.m.

SUNDAY, JAN. 3
Football Sunday
Lone Peak Cinema,
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-6 p.m.

Adult Drop in Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

MONDAY, JAN. 4
Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink,
12-4:40 p.m.

Kids Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30-7 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

TUESDAY, JAN. 5
Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-5 p.m.

Kids Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 5-6 p.m.

Adult Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 6
Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-11 p.m.

THURSDAY, JAN. 7
Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink,
12-4:30 p.m.

Kids Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 – 7 p.m.

Adult Drop In Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7-11 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN. 8
Gallatin Grass Project
Ousel & Spur Pizza Co, 9 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 12-11 p.m.

Bozeman
TUESDAY, DEC. 22
Irving Berlin's White Christmas
Ellen Theatre, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 23
Music & Mussels: Acony Belles
Bridger Brewing, 5:30 p.m.

Aerial Fabric & Trapeze Class
Aerial Arts of Bozeman, 5:30 –
6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Silent Meditation
Bozeman Dharma Center,
7-8:30 p.m.

Bingo
American Legion, 7-9 p.m.

Open Mic
Haufbrau, 10:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 24
Karaoke
Eagles Lodge, 8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DEC. 26
Papa Chaci
Zebra Lounge, 9 p.m.

Bert & Charlie's Gift of the Magi
Verge Theater, 2-3 p.m.

SUNDAY, DEC. 27
Open Mic
Haufbrau, 10:30 p.m.

MONDAY, DEC. 28
Improv on the Verge
Verge Theater, 7-8 p.m.

Open Mic
Haufbrau, 10:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, DEC. 29
DIY Ski Tuning Clinic
Play It Again Sports,
6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30
Torchlight Parade and Fireworks
Bridger Bowl, 3 p.m.

Hockey Night
Rocking R Bar, 6 p.m.

Music & Mussels: Jesse Atkins
Bridger Brewing, 5:30 p.m.

Open Mic
Haufbrau, 10:30 p.m.

Bozeman Film Society: 'Room'
Ellen Theatre, 7:30 p.m.

Down North + Paige and the
People's Band
Filling Station, 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 31
MOTH & HEV-E NYE Masquerade
Zebra Lounge, 9 p.m.

NYE Dance
Bozeman Senior Center, 7 p.m.

Karaoke
Eagles Lodge, 8:30 p.m.

Bozeman Swing Masquerade Ball
The MAC, 8:30 p.m.

Laney Lou & the Bird Dogs
Eagles Lodge, 9 p.m.

Alter Ego
American Legion, 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 2
Ticket Sauce / Milton Menasco
& the Big Fiasco
The Filling Station, 9 p.m.

Hyalite Tour
Hyalite Canyon, 10 a.m.

SUNDAY, JAN. 3
Montana Manouche
Sola Café, 12-2 p.m.

Open Mic
Haufbrau, 10:30 p.m.

MONDAY, JAN. 4
Pints with Purpose
Bridger Brewing, 5 p.m.

Open Mic
Haufbrau, 10:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 6

Open Mic
Haufbrau, 10:30 p.m.

Movie Night: Human
Bozeman Public Library,
7-9 p.m.

THURSDAY, JAN. 7

Tiger Talk
The Baxter, 7-9 p.m.

Karaoke
Eagles Lodge, 8:30 p.m

FRIDAY, JAN. 8

2016 Open House
Bozeman Dharma Center, 7 p.m.

Free Friday Night
Children's Museum, 5-8 p.m.

Artist Shelia Hrasky
Bozeman Public Library,
6-7:30 p.m.

Livingston & Paradise Valley

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 23

Songwriter's Night
Murray Bar, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, DEC. 25

Community Christmas Dinner
Park County Fairgrounds,
12-2 p.m.

MONDAY, DEC. 28

Tom Kirwin
Neptune's Brewery, 5:30 p.m.

John Dendy
Murray Bar, 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, DEC. 29

Band of Drifters
Murray Bar, 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 31

Roaring 20's NYE party
Livingston Bar & Grille, 6 p.m.

Dan Dubuque
Katabatic Brewing, 5:30 p.m.

The Fossils
Murray Bar, 9 p.m.

NYE party
Park County Farigrounds, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN. 1

New Year's Day Kegs & Eggs
Neptune's Brewery, 11 a.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 2

Leif Christian
Katabatic Brewing, 5:30 p.m.

MONDAY, JAN. 4

Bluegrass Jam
Katabatic Brewing, 5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, JAN. 5

Beer for a Cause: Last Free River
Katabatic Brewing, 4-8 p.m.

West Yellowstone

FRIDAY, DEC. 25

Prime Rib Christmas Dinner
The Branch, 5-9 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 31

NYE Bash
The Branch, 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 2

Free Ski & Try Biathlon Day
Rendezvous Ski Trails, 11 a.m.

RECURRING EVENTS

Christmas for the Critters
Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center, Dec. 1-31

Afternoon Talk with a Park Ranger
Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center, 2 p.m. every
Saturday and Sunday

Snowshoe walk with a Park Ranger
West Yellowstone Visitor Center, 10 a.m. every
Saturday and Sunday

Historic Walking Tour
Historic District, self-guided, daily

Big Sky
Saturday, January 2

6th Annual Pavelich Invitational
Town Center Ice Rink, 6 p.m.

Big Sky
December 28 - January 8

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16 Pond Skim

COMPLETE INFO at bigskyresort.com/events

Ski Tips: Feet together back in style



BY DAN EGAN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

What is old is new again, and skiing with your legs together is back in style. Wide or “fat” skis have brought us many benefits and they’ve made more of the mountain accessible to more skiers. When it comes to skiing powder, cut-up snow and steepes, fat skis are magical.

However it’s important to keep in mind that as ski technology changes so must our ski technique.

Wide skis are not skied like the “shaped skis” of the mid-90s. When shaped skis came onto the scene our skiing stance changed, widening our feet and requiring 60 percent of pressure on the downhill ski and 40 percent pressure on the uphill ski. All over North America instructors and coaches were chanting, “Get your feet further apart!”

The second part of the shaped-ski technique revolution was, “Don’t stand up, keep your hips low, and move them forward and through the turn.”

But that was then and this is now – times have changed and so has ski shape. If you’re on skis that are 94 millimeters or wider underfoot, bringing your feet together and standing tall in transition will benefit you by yielding smoother turns, more control and less fatigue.

When your feet are wider apart in a more traditional stance, you’ve probably experienced some leg wobble as you finish your turns, usually with the inside leg. This wobble is a direct result of a wide ski and its surface area overwhelming your body position. Not only is this inefficient, it’s can also drain the energy from your legs.

Wide skis provide a large amount of surface area under your body causing your skis to shoot out in front of your body at the end of the turn. I call this the “inside leg wobble” because the amount of surface area has overwhelmed the uphill leg when your hips are “aft” of your inside foot.

To correct this, simply let your inside ski slide close together to the downhill ski and stand tall during this process. Combining the width of the two skis will create a wide and stable platform, and as you stand tall you will have the leverage to take advantage of the surface area under your body.

You may have also noticed the wobble while you’re coasting on cat tracks and during this traditional time of rest the wobbling makes your legs tired. Again, this is a result of the amount of surface area under your feet.

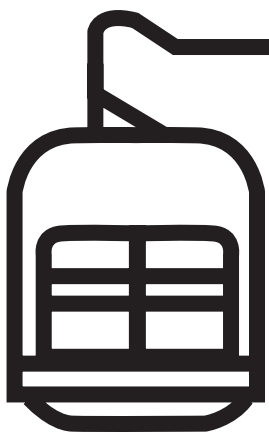
Remember to stand tall and make slight snakelike turns from edge to edge. This will engage the skis, and by creating edge pressure you will have more control and not have to work as hard.

Skiing with your feet closer together and standing tall will reduce fatigue, and increase control. Remember to bring your feet together at the end of the turn for smoother turns. For “old school” skiers like me, this is the best news of all: it’s finally cool again to ski with your feet together.

Extreme skiing pioneer Dan Egan has appeared in 12 Warren Miller Ski films and countless others. Today he teaches clinics and guides trips at locations around the world including Big Sky, where he’ll be teaching March 3-5 and March 10-12. Find more ski tips from Dan Egan at skiclincs.com/education/skitips.



Dan Egan demonstrates how keeping your feet together while skiing is back in style. PHOTOS BY JEN BENNETT/RUMBLE PRODUCTIONS



WORD FROM THE RESORTS

Giving you the news directly from the region's top ski resorts



BY LYNDSLEY OWENS,
BIG SKY RESORT MARKETING DIRECTOR

December's abundant snowfall has provided exceptional ski and riding conditions at Big Sky Resort. 'Tis the ski season at the Biggest Skiing in America - time to hit the slopes.

Holiday week is packed with festivities, including live music every night around Mountain Village. Kids can try a climbing wall or bungee trampoline at the Ballroom Bonanza Dec. 26-30 from 4-7 p.m. The Torchlight Parade, Big Sky's way of lighting the tree,

takes place Christmas Eve at 8 p.m. Interested parties can gather at the Base Area to watch skiers illuminate Ambush ski run.

Big Sky Resort is on the "nice list," so come up and ski with Santa – Saint Nick will be out and about at his favorite ski resort on Christmas Day.

New Year's Eve offers special events including mountain-top dining at Everett's 8800, a party at Montana Jack with Tsunami Funk, the Ballroom Bonanza kid's party, and the New Year's Eve buffet in the Huntley dining room. Ring in the new year with fireworks at Mountain Village.

Visit bigskyresort.com/events or contact the concierge at (406) 995-8006 for more information.



The second half of December has been bountiful at Bridger Bowl Ski Area. As of EBS press time on Dec. 20, Bridger had received nearly 100 inches of snow for the season and the settled base depth was 45 inches. With all chairlifts spinning – including the famed Schlasman's lift – this holiday season is the time to find the steep and deep at Bridger Bowl.

Celebrate the New Year early on Dec. 30 with a torchlight procession and fireworks display. Jim Bridger Lodge will host a spaghetti dinner and music from The Hooligans beginning at 3:30 p.m.

Keep winter cool by riding the free weekend bus to the slopes from Montana State University's Student Union Building and the Gallatin County Fairgrounds. Busses begin running at 8 a.m. and the fairgrounds' stop has a new entrance off of Oak Street, across from the Cannery District. – T.A.

Visit bridgerbowl.com for the latest snow conditions and more information.



BY KATE HULL
GRAND TARGHEE MARKETING COORDINATOR

Grand Targhee Resort is 100 percent open and the snow continues to fall with 112 inches of fresh, dry Teton powder as of Dec. 18.

If you're looking to improve your off piste skiing, sign up for the "Knowledge is Powder" Off Trail Camp for a combination of pristine snow, excellent terrain and top-notch instruction. The program includes three days of coaching, lift tickets, social events and snowcat skiing. The next camp kicks off Jan. 8, and there are four more in January, February and March.

The new year welcomes a celebration of winter sports at Grand Targhee during Learn to Ski & Snowboard Month. Targhee is offering a 1-2-3 Start Me Up to Ski Free package all January long to mark the occasion. Skiers and snowboarders who complete the three-lesson course will receive a 2015-2016 season pass to Grand Targhee.

Visit grandtarghee.com or call (307) 353-2300 ext. 135 for more information.



BY PAUL ROBERTSON
LONE MOUNTAIN RANCH GENERAL MANAGER

The staff at Lone Mountain Ranch couldn't be happier Ol' Man Winter brought a big batch of snow for the holiday season. In addition to recent snowfall, LMR is celebrating its centennial anniversary. In 1915, a gentleman named Clarence Lytle homesteaded the ground LMR is on today, and

he was the first of a long list of characters who have helped build traditions at the ranch.

Mark the occasion with one of LMR's most popular offerings, the sleigh ride dinner. Groups of 10 to 12 gather at the Outdoor Shop in the evening and hop on a sleigh pulled by draft horses. The teamsters take diners to the North Fork Cabin, where they'll enjoy a family style dinner lit by oil lanterns and prepared in a 100-year-old wood-fired stove. Two cowboy musicians provide the evening's entertainment.

LMR has 85 kilometers of award-winning Nordic trails suitable for brand new skiers and seasoned experts. The trail system is groomed an average of every 48 hours and rises and falls over 2,200 feet of vertical drop for skiers looking for a challenge.

Back at the Saloon, enjoy a cocktail while listening to live music – offered several nights a week – and sample Executive Chef Nick Steen's farm-to-table fare.

Visit lonemountainranch.com or call the LMR Outdoor Shop at (406) 995-4734 for more information.



Skiers enjoy December's bountiful snowfall at Lone Mountain Ranch. PHOTO BY WES OVERVOLD



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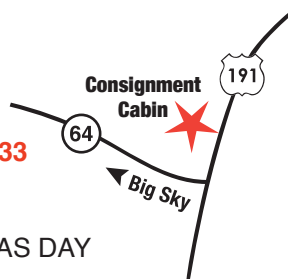
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Fly fishing's 2015 rewind 'Tis the season for reflection



BY PATRICK STRAUB
EBS FISHING COLUMNIST

It's go time. For many of us, the clock is ticking and our lives are full of shopping lists, school recitals, and holiday performances. But amidst the scraps of wrapping paper near the

carpet stain where the drunk uncle spilled eggnog, find time to take a breather and reflect on the past 12 months.

My reflection typically occurs a-stream where my thoughts are often interrupted by a trout eating my fly. I'm lucky in that regard, but my getting out is the result of shirking other responsibilities for a few hours.

If you've got time to put your feet up, or have someone read to you in between shopping stops, here is 2015's year in fly fishing in and around Big Sky.

Best March Ever. A local fishing guide is notorious for overzealous fishing reports. "Best. Day. Ever!" are the texts I often get at day's end. But if the guide was talking about any day in March 2015, he would be correct. An extremely mild weather pattern brought warm, dry, and calm skies to southwest Montana. Skiers quickly became anglers, and folks were grabbing 4-weight rods instead of powder boards. Fortunately for the ski biz, early April saw a few big storms and ski season finished as strong as it started.

Fire season: Heat wave? Not this time. Timeline: June 29, 2015. Air temps reached 95 degrees at Bozeman-Yellowstone International Airport. Gallatin and Yellowstone River streamflows were dropping faster than ever recorded and late-summer fishing and streamflows appeared to be apocalyptic. Then a miracle happened – cool and wet weather predominated for nearly a month. July weather was similar to what I remember as a kid: temps in the high 70s and low 80s, and afternoon thunderstorms with plenty of rain. It even snowed on Lone Mountain on July 28.

Madison River is first pick. When towing a drift boat coming down Lone Mountain Trail and hitting the junction of Highway 191, the choice can be tough: Turn left and head to the Yellowstone or turn right toward the Upper Madison. This year, the Upper gave it up big time: Salmon flies in June; PMDs in late June and early July; and then caddis, tricos, and hoppers dominated late. Many anglers fell in love all over again with this gem of a river.

Big fish on the Gallatin. I feel like we said this last year, but it was true then, and was in 2015 as well – this year included reports of more, and larger fish, being caught out of the Gallatin River in the canyon north of Big Sky and coming out of Yellowstone National Park. Perhaps due the mild spring and more food in the river? Perhaps due to our cooler and wetter summer? Theories abound and rivers cycle, so let's be thankful for another year of big fish.

Big Sky Fly Fishing Festival and Hooked on the Gallatin Banquet. 2015 marked the third annual Big Sky Fly Fishing Festival. The Gallatin River Task Force created this event in 2013, and thousands of dollars



Pat Straub fishes the Gallatin River with his daughter Adela, near their home in Gallatin Gateway. PHOTO BY THOMAS LEE

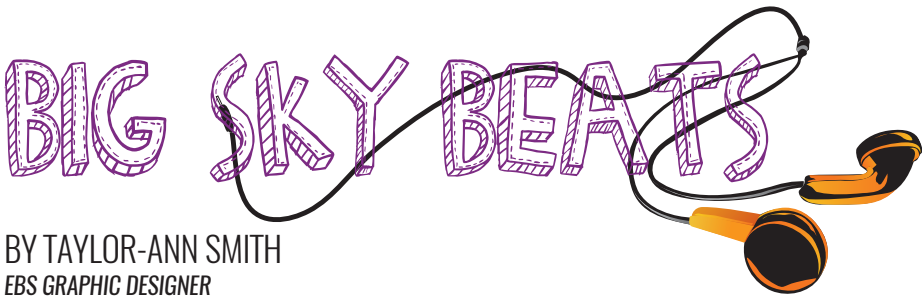
were raised to preserve and protect the water quality we see here on the Gallatin. We appreciate all who donated money and time to make this growing event a success.

Flip-flops in October. They'll be a run of flip-flop sales come summer because 2015 was the longest season on record. At the cringe of many streamer anglers, summer-like weather lingered deep into fall. Even if the thrill of a trophy brown had to wait until November, as the snow piles-up, flip-flop tans are distant memory.

2015 is nearly in the books. As you enjoy family and friends the next few weeks, toast or pause to appreciate some pretty good angling fortune of the past year. All things considered, this year was as good as it gets.

2016, you've got some big waders to fill ...

Pat Straub is the author of six books, including "The Frugal Fly Fisher," "Montana On The Fly," and "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Fly Fishing." He and his wife own Gallatin River Guides in Big Sky and Pat operates the Montana Fishing Guide School and the Montana Women's Fly Fishing School.



BY TAYLOR-ANN SMITH
EBS GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Find out what tunes we’re bumping! In Big Sky Beats, Explore Big Sky staff offers suggested tracks for your next playlist. Whether you need to freshen up your music library, want to expand your collection, or just need some tunes for the next road trip, we’ve got you covered.

It’s time for too many sugar cookies, floors covered in wrapping paper, and gathering the family around the table for a hearty feast. Christmas is a time of merriment as snow brightens peaks and shining lights adorn neighborhoods.

One of my favorite Christmas traditions is building gingerbread houses. My cousins and I get together at my family’s home and construct elaborate houses from my grandmother’s homemade gingerbread and frosting.

Bowls of candy fill the table as we decorate the sugar houses and hopelessly restrain ourselves from eating the treats instead. Although I’m a designer and focused on landscaping details, my brother always makes the biggest and best house due to his love of architecture. Once we’ve made our houses, we proudly display them on the mantel, and brag about whose is best – until next year.

The playlist below features my favorite Christmas songs that I hope will bring musical joy to your holiday gatherings:

- 1. “Sleigh Ride,” Ella Fitzgerald
- 2. “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen/We Three Kings,” Barenaked Ladies
- 3. “Snow Angels,” Sugar & The Hi Lows
- 4. “Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas,” Sam Smith
- 5. “Let It Snow! Let It Snow!,” Frank Sinatra
- 6. “Winter Wonderland,” Emeli Sande
- 7. “Jingle Bells,” Diana Krall, Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra
- 8. “The Christmas Song,” Denis Solee
- 9. “Happy Holiday,” Peggy Lee
- 10. “Winter Wonderland,” Andra Day

Visit explorebigsky.com/beats for a sampling of the playlist.

American Life in Poetry: Column 560

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE

The only times I feel truly homicidal are when I see somebody abusing a pet, and I was glad to find this poem so I could get that off my chest. But don’t ever even think about taking a kick at my old dog, Howard. Wesley McNair lives in Maine and is that state’s poet laureate. This is from his book “Lovers of the Lost.” His most recent book is “The Lost Child: Ozark Poems.”

The Puppy
By Wesley McNair

From down the road, starting up
and stopping once more, the sound
of a puppy on a chain who has not yet
discovered he will spend his life there.
Foolish dog, to forget where he is
and wander until he feels the collar
close fast around his throat, then cry
all over again about the little space
in which he finds himself. Soon,
when there is no grass left in it
and he understands it is all he has,
he will snarl and bark whenever
he senses a threat to it.
Who would believe this small
sorrow could lead to such fury
no one would ever come near him?

American Life in Poetry does not accept unsolicited submissions, and is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poery magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2010 by Wesley McNair, “The Puppy,” from “Lovers of the Lost: New & Selected Poems,” (David R. Godine, 2010). Poem reprinted by permission of Wesley McNair and the publisher. Introduction copyright © 2015 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction’s author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Noun-forming (suf.)

5 Cry

8 Languish

12 "Arabian Nights" dervish

13 Harem room

14 Swami

15 Anta

17 Adjective-forming (suf.)

18 Cheer

19 Afr. gazelle

21 Agent (abbr.)

22 Irish church

23 Misplaced

25 Card-reader's card

28 Lead telluride

31 Heb. measure

32 Federal Aviation Admin. (abbr.)

33 Letters sound

34 Two-footed

36 Ionian island

37 Track

38 Ten decibels

39 Fetish

41 State (Ger.)

43 Storage place

46 Onionlike plant

48 Cuban dance

50 Jewelry setting

51 Poetic contraction

52 City in Judah

53 Eng. statesman

54 Electric reluctance unit

55 Love of Abie

DOWN

1 Small goby

2 Norse mythical hero

3 Victory site of Nelson

4 To be announced (abbr.)

5 Yuccalike plant

6 Polish border

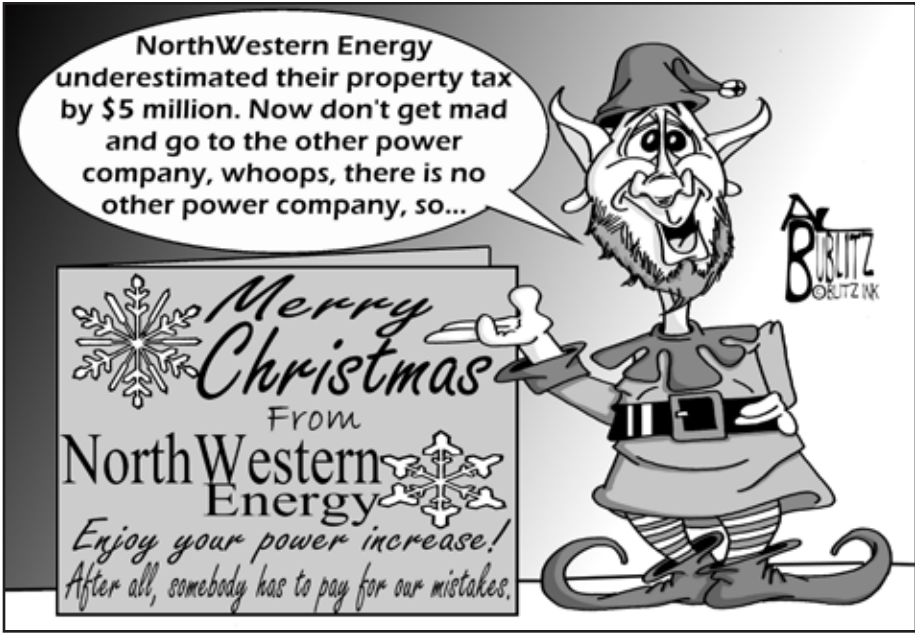
ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

U	N	C	A	S		H	B	O		L	I	E
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L	I	M	A	N		D	E	A		A	I	N
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A59



BACK40

For Explore Big Sky, the Back 40 is a resource: a place where we can delve into subjects and ask experts to share their knowledge. Topics include regional history, profiles of local artists and musicians, snow and avalanche education, how-to pieces for traditional or outdoor skills, and science.

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

The facet factory

An introduction to snow metamorphism

BY ERIC KNOFF
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

A bitter cold snap hit southwest Montana early this winter, turning much of the existing snowpack to facets and directly influencing snow stability in the region. Now, the snowpack is unstable in our area. Here’s why.

From the time snow crystals fall from the sky to the time they blow away or melt in spring, the shape and structure of each crystal never stops changing. This is known as snow metamorphism.

Snow metamorphism determines if individual snow crystals are rounding, a process that makes them stronger, or faceting, when they become more angular-shaped and weaker.

These shapes affect how the crystals interact with each other, a relationship that ultimately dictates what kind of layer is formed, and whether it’s strong or weak. Overall, the interaction between these individual layers determines snowpack stability.

Three main variables drive change within the snowpack:

- temperature
- temperature gradient
- pore-space size

Of these, temperature gradient is the most influential in determining crystal formation in an alpine snowpack.

Temperature gradient – or TG – is the difference in temperature over a distance. If the temperature within the snowpack differs more than 1 degree Celsius per 10 cm of snow depth, a strong TG is present. These conditions cause individual grains to become angular and faceted; in turn, these faceted crystals can form weak layers that may persist within the snowpack for long periods of time.

When a weak layer forms at or near the snow surface it is not a problem; however, once it is buried and stressed by the weight of new snow, it can produce unstable conditions.

When faceted layers fail, they collapse like a row of dominos, reducing friction. If the slope is steep enough when a weak layer collapses, an avalanche will likely take place. Signs of instability such as cracking, collapsing and recent avalanche activity are bull’s eye data that buried weak layers are present in the snowpack.

Becoming an active observer of snow metamorphism can help backcountry travelers make more educated decisions in avalanche terrain. Knowing the processes by which the snow crystals change is advantageous, because it allows you to anticipate snowpack changes and puts you ahead of the game.

Eric Knoff is an avalanche forecaster for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center. Check out the GNFAC’s daily advisory page for current weather and snowpack information at mtavalanche.com.

This story was originally published in a Febuary 2014 issue of EBS.



Surface hoar, pictured here, is a weak layer that forms on cold, clear nights and is essentially frozen dew. Once buried, this layer can fracture far and wide, creating avalanches capable of propagating into low-angle terrain. PHOTO BY EMILY WOLFE

Weak layers

Three distinct weak layers form under strong temperature gradients and often produce dangerous avalanche conditions in the Northern Rockies:

Depth hoar

Depth hoar forms when a shallow snowpack is exposed to an extended period of cold and clear weather. Large cup-shaped facets form and may reach 4-10 mm in size. These grains are cohesionless and have a hard time bonding due to their angled structure and large size. Once depth hoar forms, it can be preserved in the snowpack by subsequent storms and create instability for weeks or even months.

Near-surface facets

When the snowpack becomes deeper, only the top 15-20 centimeters of the snow surface are affected by air temperature fluctuations. When the surface is subjected to fluctuating daytime and nighttime heating and cooling cycles (which occur between storm cycles and are called diurnal fluctuations), the snow on and near the surface begins to facet, creating near-surface facets. The longer the snow surface is exposed to these temperature fluctuations, the weaker that snow becomes.

Near-surface facets are smaller in size than depth hoar (1-2 mm), but they are quite pesky and can persist in the snowpack for long periods of time. They are responsible for nearly 60 percent of all avalanche accidents in southwest Montana.

Surface hoar

An equally dangerous weak layer is surface hoar. Essentially frozen dew, surface hoar forms on cold clear nights and, unlike other types of facets, it’s created through the growth of new crystals, not the metamorphism of existing snow crystals. Surface hoar is fragile and is easily knocked down by wind or sun – it may remain standing in some areas and disappear in others.

Once buried, sporadic distribution can make this layer very unpredictable. Buried layers of surface hoar are renowned for fracturing far and wide and can create avalanches capable of propagating into low-angle terrain.

Explore

Big Sky



Top Stories of 2015



Big Sky Medical Center opens Culmination of 15 planning years ‘historic’

BIG SKY – More than 200 Big Sky residents and visitors crowded the atrium in the Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center on Dec. 9, 2015, for what Bozeman Health interim dyad CEO and president as well as its CFO Gordon Davidson called a “historic event.”

Visitors took guided tours through the 51,625-square-foot facility that includes a six-room emergency department; four-bed inpatient unit; primary care clinic; pharmacy; laboratory services; medevac landing pad; and imaging center with a new cutting-edge MRI scanner.

BSMC began accepting patients on Dec. 12.

The welcoming and ribbon-cutting ceremonies culminated a dream that took root during the center’s groundbreaking in May 2014, but one that was planted much earlier, according to Big Sky Resort President and General Manager Taylor Middleton, also the chair of BSMC’s board of managers.

“Sure, two years from moving dirt until this building opened [is] a spectacular timeframe,” Middleton told the crowd in the atrium, “but the board of directors for Bozeman Health has been working on this project for over 15 years.”

After years of planning, Bozeman Health – called Bozeman Deaconess at the time – opened a pharmacy in 2004 in Big Sky Meadow Village then in

2005 bought the land along Lone Mountain Trail where the medical center exists now.

Beginning in 2013, Big Sky community leaders held open forums to discuss options for a hospital in the area, inviting Bozeman Deaconess representatives as well as those from Billings Clinic to participate. A BSMC groundbreaking ceremony was held September 2013.

“This is a big deal,” Middleton said. “Within two years we were building a hospital right here in this place where cows, and for that matter, buffalo used to roam.”

Jason Smith, executive vice president of philanthropy at the nonprofit Bozeman Health Foundation, said that a combined pledge of \$1 million has helped BSMC meet a fundraising challenge set by the Charles and Peggy Stephenson Family



PHOTO BY MIKE CHILCOAT

Foundation to match their \$850,000 gift to provide for a high-quality MRI unit.

The Yellowstone Club, Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, Moonlight Basin and the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club joined forces to meet the challenge. A 1.5 Tesla MRI scanner was installed in Big Sky Medical Center on Oct. 23.

Dr. David Chen, BSMC’s chief medical officer, hired five physicians to work out of Big Sky’s facility, including Maren Dunn, D.O.; Mark Siemer, D.O.; Jeremy Mitchell, D.O.; Kirk Weber, M.D., FACEP. Philip A. Hess, M.D., serves as the center’s medical director.

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TEDD/TIF talks continue despite delays

Effort receives state grant

The effort to bring Targeted Economic Development Districts to the Big Sky area inched forward in March 2015, but remained off the mark from an ambitious timeline set in fall 2014.

The project did, however, receive \$26,250 in state funding that month in the form of Montana Department of Commerce Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund grants.

The original goal was to have two districts in place by the end of 2014, one in Gallatin County portion of Big Sky, one in the Madison County portion. But financing – along with the inherent complications of proposing two TEDDs in Big Sky – slowed progress.

Despite \$25,000 in private funding and a \$45,000 September 2014 reallocation of Big Sky Chamber of Commerce resort tax funds, the Big Sky TEDD Committee in early 2015 was short approximately \$25,000 to pay for the project.

“We’ve had [some] internal timelines,” said Ryan Hamilton, a member of the TEDD committee, and also Big Sky Town Center’s Project Manager. Hamilton said that once the Dec. 31, 2014 timeline passed, “it became clear that we needed to do some more homework.”

A subcommittee of the Big Sky Chamber, the TEDD committee formed last July to explore the option of establishing two TEDDs – Big Sky straddles Gallatin and Madison counties – which could provide support for public infrastructure development.

The TEDD committee was one of seven grants awarded by the state commerce department, which allowed the committee to reach an estimated \$95,000 financing goal.

The Big Sky Trust Fund money would help pay for attorney and consultant fees, mapping, a third-party economic impact study, and writing an infrastructure deficiency report to present to Gallatin and Madison county commissioners, among other project expenditures.

If Big Sky TEDDs are approved, both county commissions would appoint a board of directors to oversee the TEDD, said Hamilton, adding that community members can participate in the public process.

“I don’t think it ever goes to the ballot, but it’s not a new tax either,” he said. “We’ll have to make it a win, win, win for taxpayers, the community, the county and the state.”

Recycling leaves Big Sky

Big Sky’s only recycling center went away Nov. 2.

For more than five years, the recycling bins, which the Gallatin Solid Waste Management District provided and Four Corners Recycling serviced, lived on a 60-foot road right-of-way on Aspen Leaf Drive in Big Sky Town Center. The Simkins family – developers of Town Center – owns the land.

The location is designated for parking and isn’t a place where one expects to see recycling bins, according to Town Center Project Manager Ryan Hamilton, who also noted looming development pressure with residential units planned for the adjacent land.

“We knew upfront it wouldn’t be the final resting place,” Hamilton said. “It’s in a residential zone. It worked for all these years because it’s been around vacant land, but that land will be built on soon.”

Town Center initially set a deadline of October 2014 for the bins to be removed, but extended the date to Oct. 1 of this year with hopes that local interest groups would identify a new site. The deadline was then extended another month while

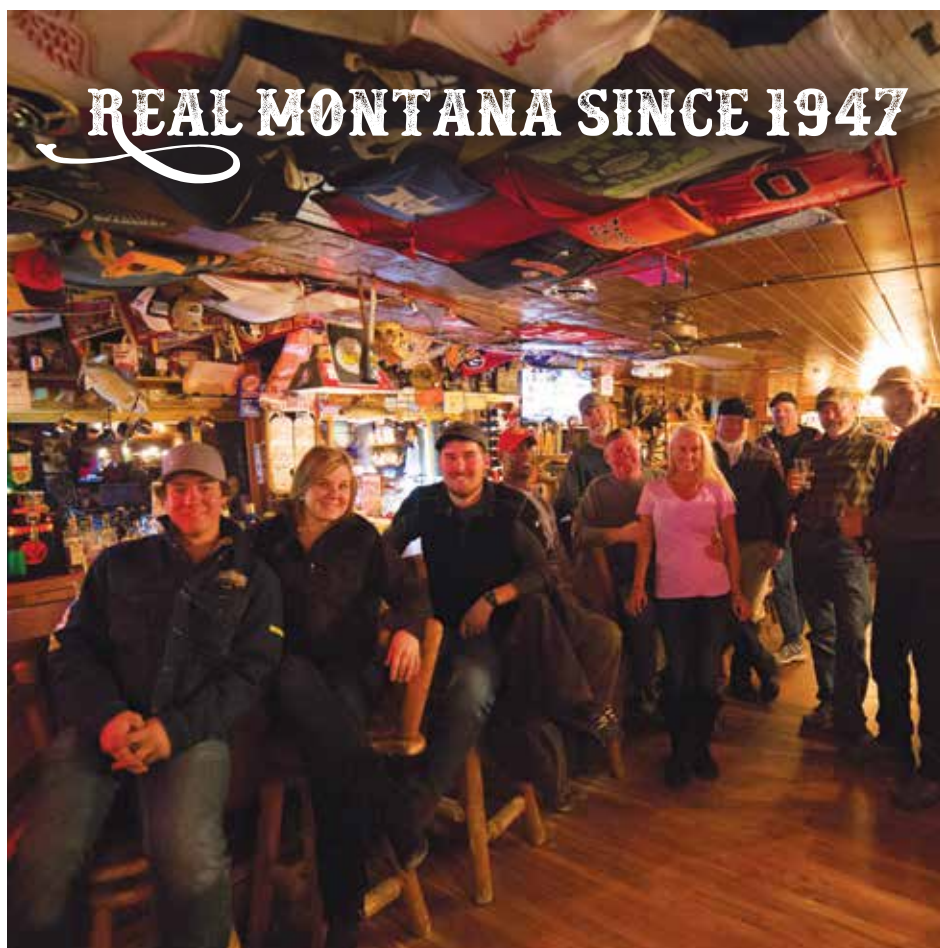
community leaders and nonprofits scrambled to find a solution.

The Big Sky Natural Resource Council, which is a subcommittee of Big Sky Community Corp., works to provide sustainable solutions for natural resource issues in Big Sky. The group is still searching for a landowner to host the site, and working to help facilitate funding that might be needed for site improvement and management.

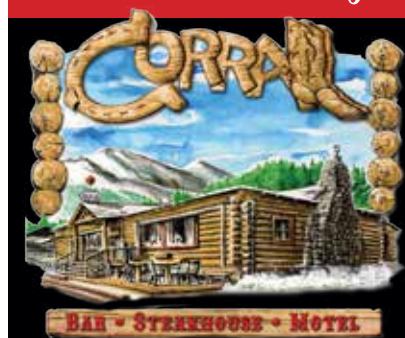
Jim Simon, district manager for the GSWMD, has met regularly with BSNRC and says they’ve been looking for alternatives for nearly two years without luck.

“We haven’t been able to get anyone to commit to hosting a site to move forward with a real development plan,” Simon said. “It’s unfortunate with the growth up there that there’s not a lot of options for us to move the site right now.”

A few options remain on the table, among them the possibility of curbside recycling, as well as a potential 1.4-acre land parcel owned by the Big Sky Water and Sewer District, which could be used as a recycling center site.



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Big Sky’s only recycling center, formerly located in a road right-of-way on Aspen Leaf Drive in Big Sky Town Center, was removed this fall. Until another option is in place, Big Sky residents must either haul their recyclables to Bozeman, or throw them away. PHOTO BY MARIA WYLLIE



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The Big Sky PBR BlueDEF event was selected by the top 35 PBR bull riders in the world as Event of the Year. Pictured left to right are many of those associated with the production: Richard Jones on audio; announcer Brandon Bates; Freestone Productions' Jacey and Andy Watson; The Outlaw Partners' Eric Ladd and Ersin Ozer; entertainer Flint Rasmussen; and bullfighter Frank Newsom. PHOTO BY MATT BRENNEMAN/BULL STOCK MEDIA

Three-peat: Big Sky PBR again wins top event

The entertainers behind the Big Sky Pro Bull Riders event again finished their season under the bright lights of the “Entertainment Capital of the World.”

On Oct. 26, the Big Sky PBR was honored as Event of the Year for the third consecutive year at Las Vegas’ Thomas and Mack Center during the PBR Built Ford Tough World Finals. And this year it was no easy feat.

Big Sky’s event was competing against the J.W. Hart Invitational in Decatur, Texas, that hosted a competition called “Unfinished Business.” Eight former riders from the past three decades came out of retirement to compete for a \$160,000 purse on pay-per-view. But it wasn’t enough to unseat Big Sky’s main summer attraction.

“It’s really something special to beat out this event, it was really tough competition,” said Freestone Productions’ Jacey Watson, who produces the Big Sky PBR with her husband Andy, the Outlaw Partners, and Continental Construction. “It’s a hard thing to pull off every year and the community of Big Sky becomes a big part of that.”

In addition to the J.W. Hart Invitational, Big Sky’s signature summer party was up against approximately 150 other PBR-sanctioned events that include the Touring Pro Division and BlueDEF Velocity Tour stops – the Big Sky PBR was elevated to the BlueDEF series in this year’s inaugural season.

Thirty-five of the world’s best riders, many of whom competed in Big Sky on July 30 and 31, vote for the annual Event of the Year.

Sean Gleason, minted as PBR’s new CEO in June, says this award is an opportunity to honor the high production value of the PBR events outside the Built Ford Tough Series.

“[Event of the Year] is to acknowledge all the independent promoters that put in a lot of hard work into events that we can be proud of,” said Gleason, who attended the Big Sky PBR in 2014.

“I thought it was a phenomenal event – well run [and] well produced,” Gleason said. “And in that setting, it’s absolutely gorgeous. I think the riders see a lot of people in the stands and enjoy the community.”

Housing still problem in Big Sky

Bill thought to assist housing crisis dies in Senate

A group of state, regional and local entities hosted more than 100 community members at a town hall-style meeting in late October 2015 to address what many feel is the preeminent issue in Big Sky: affordable housing.

Held at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, the group consisted of the Montana Department of Commerce, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, Human Resources Development Council, and representatives from two Bozeman-based engineering firms.

Consultants recommended building 18 condos on a 4.14-acre parcel behind the Big Sky Community Park’s tennis courts. A state bill proposed earlier in the year might have helped.

The bill, proposed in the Montana Legislature, which some hoped could be a promising crutch for Big Sky’s growing housing crisis, died in April 2015 on the Senate floor.

House Bill 262, called “Revise resort tax laws,” would have allowed resort districts, resort areas, and resort area districts such as Big Sky, to raise resort taxes by up to 1 percent. Revenue collected from the additional tax increase would need to be earmarked for historical building preservation or workforce housing.

After the Senate Taxation Committee passed the bill on March 25, it moved on to the full Senate, which defeated it in a 25-25 tie. A majority vote is needed for bills to move through to the governor’s desk.

“It all came down to the timing of them stopping the vote,” said Kevin Germain, a member of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce Housing Subcommittee, which aims to find solutions to the area’s housing issues. “At one point it was up 27-23.”

Rep. Kerry White (R-Bozeman) first introduced HB 262 on Jan. 20, as a way to provide additional resort tax revenue that would preserve historical buildings in areas that collect resort tax. He later added “or workforce housing” to the bill, one of a number of amendments HB 262 has seen.

Germain said the bill received resounding support from Sens. Debby Barrett (R-Dillon) and Jedediah Hinkle (R-Bozeman), but that it wasn’t enough.

“They really stood up for Big Sky,” Germain said, adding that at this point supporters are seeking solutions. “We’re looking [for] opportunities to resurrect it and don’t know what they are.”

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Happy winter everyone!

Hope you all have taken some time to wet a line over the past several weeks...if not hopefully we can provide a bit of inspiration for the coming days.

It is not uncommon to get a funny look when I tell people that I fish all throughout the winter! Fishing our local rivers this time of year can be very rewarding, but it is important to be prepared and to dress properly for the occasion.

A good fishing partner, thick socks, fingerless gloves, hand-warmers and lots of layers are just some of the things that can make a cold day on the river into a great day of fishing! If the thought of being cold has been your reason for not heading out, stop by and we'll give you some tips about how to stay warm out there.

As for the fish biting it doesn't get much easier, if you're ok fishing nymphs that is. Fish tend to congregate in slower runs where they have a steady supply of insects to feed on and can spend the majority of their time conserving energy. Often these runs are located near fast and deep runs. Although some of the winter lies are in deep water you can also find fish holding in shallow water that is a foot deep or less as long as it has all of the qualities needed for surviving a long, cold winter.

The bugs are pretty simple as well. Pat's Rubber Legs in medium to small sizes is still a go-to for most along with a variety of midge larvae patterns like the Zebra Midge, as well as worms and eggs. Fish will often be happy to feed on other patterns like Pheasant Tails, Prince Nymphs and more.

My favorite rig this time of year is a Pat's Rubber Legs about 4-6 feet below a strike indicator with a smaller dropper about 12" below the Pat's. Most runs that I fish on the Gallatin this time of year an added split shot is not necessary, but for deeper runs or if you're fishing on upper Madison adding some shot may be necessary to get your flies down.

Hopefully these tips will not only motivate you to wet a line, but also help you to be successful!

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Nepali fundraiser nets \$80,000 for earthquake relief, education

On June 14, one mountain community answered the call of distress from another mountain community, half a world away.

Nearly 250 people from Big Sky and Bozeman packed Lone Mountain Ranch's lodge, saloon, and outdoor patio in support of the Nepali people. Two massive earthquakes on April 25 and May 12 devastated Nepal, killing nearly 9,000 people and injuring twice as many. Approximately 500,000 Nepalis were displaced from their homes, as the quakes destroyed entire villages.

Volunteers greeted attendees on the idyllic Sunday evening as they approached the century-old Big Sky guest ranch. Colorado musician Geoff Union picked traditional and contemporary bluegrass riffs on the outdoor patio, while people perused the silent-auction items indoors or gathered in small conversations in the saloon and on the shaded patio.

Before the night was over, nearly \$80,000 was raised for the stricken country of Nepal.

The money raised was donated to Tsering's Fund, a nonprofit formed in 2007 by Dr. Peter Schmieding, his wife Karen Fellerhoff, and their friend Tsering Dolkar Lama, a Tibetan woman who lives in Nepal's capital Katmandu, and after whom the organization is named. Schmieding practices dentistry in Big Sky and Ennis, and flew to Nepal after the April 25 earthquake.

Tsering's Fund was originally created to fund education for Nepali girls, but quickly shifted its fundraising efforts toward earthquake relief after the disaster.

LMR's General Manager Paul Robertson; Dr. Schmieding; Outlaw Partners CEO Eric Ladd (publisher of this newspaper); Andy Holm from Bozeman's Venture Church; the Rotary Club of Big Sky; and countless others were instrumental in organizing the event.

"To see the community come out in such a generous fashion to support people on the other side of the planet that they'll never meet," Schmieding said, "is a testament to the generosity of the American people."



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Martha has been in real estate in Big Sky, Montana for approximately 20 years and she's been a full time resident since 1988! She's an entrepreneurial spirit and is Founder, Broker and Owner of Montana Living ~ Big Sky Real Estate – the top luxury boutique real estate firm in Big Sky, Montana. Her experience includes brokering the sales, marketing and launch of resort, residential, commercial and ranch sporting properties. Call Martha now and utilize her grass roots knowledge of Big Sky for purchasing or selling your real estate.



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Big Sky's first annual Pairsine

The easy ambiance on the terrace at Big Sky Resort's Peaks Restaurant didn't suggest a battle was underway.

Wielding Shun knives and hot woks, and geared for a fight in chef coats and aprons, 10 southwest Montana culinary artists seared, flipped, rolled and stuffed specialty dishes for the Pairsine Fine Wine and Food Pairing Competition, the event to open the resort's second annual, four-day Vine and Dine Festival.

More than 200 guests on Aug. 13 took in the sunset and the contemporary instrumentals of Montana Skies, while tasting delicacies from some of the region's finest chefs as they paired dishes with wines from around the world. Attendees floated between 30 tables set up on the Peaks terrace, sampling food and wine pairings at their leisure.

The Pairsine, pronounced "pair-zeen," is a signature event of Wine Country Network, a Denver, Colo.-based media and event company dedicated to all things vino, cuisine and travel. WCN has been holding pairsines since the inaugural 2004 event at the Denver International Wine Festival. The name derives from a combination of "pairing" and "cuisine," and the spirit is in competition, according to WCN founder and CEO Christopher J. Davies.

"I tell people it's Iron Chef meets wine," said Davies, sipping from a glass of

Brooks 2014 Rosé. "The hard part – the stress – for the chefs is that they don't get wines until eight days before the event."

At 8 p.m., Davies took the microphone to announce the three winners of the 2015 Pairsine competition. When the smoke cleared, Davies declared the "People's Choice Award" would go to Chef Wilson Wieggl of Big Sky Resort's Summit Hotel.

The judging panel chose the two final winners. Chef Eric Holup of the resort's Huntley Lodge took home the "Best Chef" award for his dishes.

The "Most Creative" award went to Jake Irwin of Rainbow Ranch. First matching an oak cervena venison dish with a Pepper Bridge Winery Merlot, Irwin also paired el mar Mediterraneo trio Spanish pulpo with an Amavi Cellars Semillon.

"I feel great," Irwin said after the Pairsine, adding that this was one of the biggest competitions he's been in. "Being creative is part of being a good chef, and there were a lot of good chefs up there."

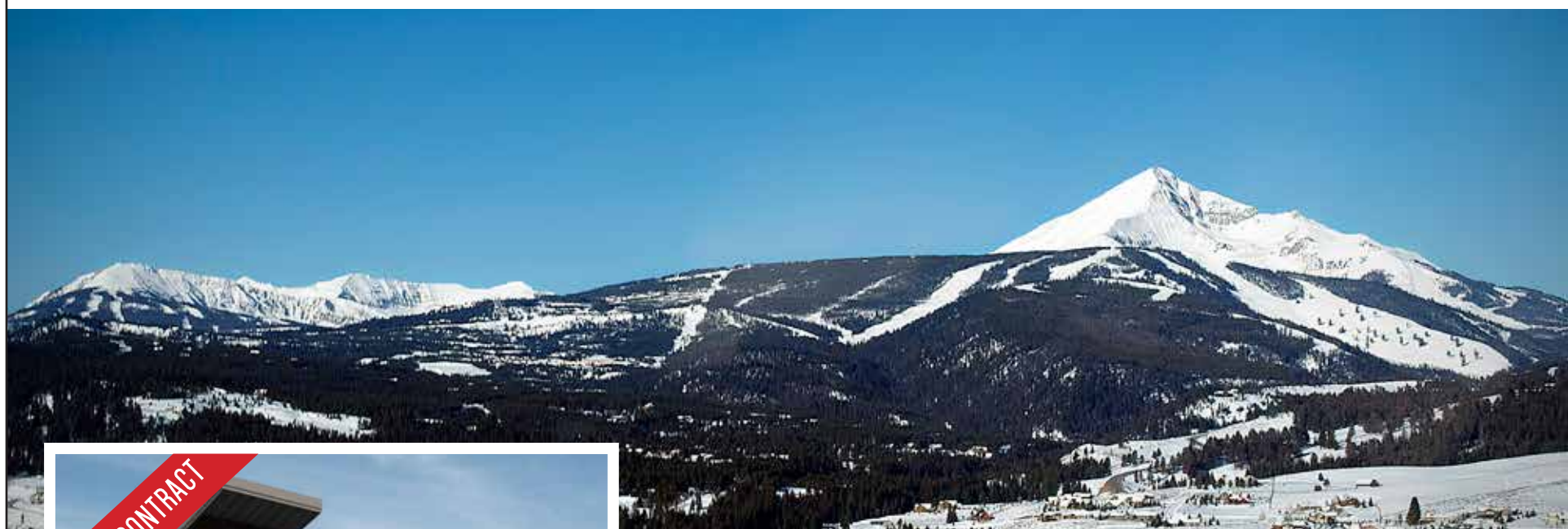
After the event, Davies read judges' comments and awarded LMR's Steen honorary mention for his creations, which included a "bacon and eggs" dish with pork belly and egg yolk. "The master sommeliers really thought Nick was second place for most creative," Davies said.



Top: The competing chefs bask in the fading sunlight after the event. Bottom: Jocelyn Kent of 14 North Restaurant rolls handmade parsnip-potato gnocchi during the Vine and Dine Pairsine competition. PHOTOS BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

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New elementary school opens in Big Sky

Voters reject building reserve levy

BSSD opened its new k-4 Ophir Elementary School for the 2015-2016 school year on Sept. 5, 2015. The facility consists of 12 new classrooms, expandable to 16, a full gym, a satellite kitchen and library, space for administrative and counseling offices, and a new parking lot and playground.

In March 2015, Big Sky area taxpayers voted against a building reserve levy of \$840,000 to finance completion of the new school, located just north of and contiguous to the current school campus along Highway 191.

The Gallatin County Election Office counted 660 ballots, 283 in favor of the levy and 377 against it; 47.5 percent of eligible voters participated. A building reserve levy is used to complete the

needs of a specified project, and funds are issued via Montana’s INTERCAP Loan Program, which offers short-term, low-interest loans to the state’s local governments, state agencies and universities.

While the levy didn’t pass, the new school opened for the 2015-16 school year – just not the way levy supporters had hoped.

BSSD requested the funds to pay for a number of items in the new k-4 building, such as furnishings and equipment; exterior landscaping; gymnasium furnishings and a laundry room; an outdoor playground classroom; and communication systems.

Costs for the new school were initially estimated at \$10.2 million to acquire two parcels of land on

Windy Pass Trail, as well as to design, build and equip a new complex to serve prekindergarten through fourth grade classes. Taxpayers approved the bond for that money in May 2013.

Unforeseen costs led to the proposed building reserve levy, and came to light during the design phase, which began in summer 2013 – immediately following approval of the bond – and was completed in early spring of 2014.

These expenditures resulted from poor soil conditions requiring geotechnical remediation and structural upgrades; radon mitigation; and more expansive site construction due to topography challenges, such as leveling the site with wet soil.

BSSD considers broad academic program changes

Dec. 8, Big Sky School District School Board voted to adopt the International Baccalaureate program, a rigorous k-12 academic agenda recognized by universities around the world. Approval for the IB program followed a November community meeting where its proponents highlighted the program’s merits.

At the November meeting, BSSD administrators recommended the change in order to meet many of the objectives outlined in a strategic plan that is helping them shape the district’s future.

After presenting key components of the plan to a group of 40-plus parents, school board members, teachers and administrators at the Warren Miller

Performing Arts Center, the steering committee that drafted it answered questions and solicited input from those in attendance.

“[The International Baccalaureate] does pretty much what the Big Sky community wants,” said Skip Kotkins of the education-consulting firm Carney Sandoe and Associates, “It integrates academics, experiential international worldview, and 21st century skills – not just learning math times tables and learning how to spell, but critical thinking and problem solving.”

This fall, Kotkins extrapolated data from 731 survey responses and meetings with more than 150 Big Sky community members into a

document the steering committee used to shape BSSD’s strategic plan. Big Sky principal Alex Ide said the district’s last such plan was drafted seven years ago, and to his knowledge had not been updated since.

Superintendent Dustin Shipman said an IB diploma could effectively replace the first year of college by granting its recipient college-level credits and admission into a second year honors program at Montana State University, for example.

Ultimately, the goal is to turn the plan into something with “action steps, outcomes, and accountability strands,” Shipman said.



Forty-plus community members consider changes to BSSD’s academic program on Nov. 17, at one of several focus groups BSSD administrators are holding as they re-imagine the district’s future. PHOTO BY AMANDA EGGERT



The LPHS volleyball team played White Sulphur Springs in Big Sky in late October 2015. Dressed in pink for breast cancer awareness, the Big Horns lost 3-2 but entered the District 8C tournament as the fourth seed, after posting a 12-4 record this season. PHOTO BY TORI PINTAR

Big Horn volleyball notches historic 2015 season

The Lone Peak High School volleyball team nearly won its 11th straight match in October 2015 to secure a third seed in the District 8C tournament.

The Big Horns fell to White Sulphur Spring in Big Sky two matches to three, but still finished with the fifth-year program's best regular season to date. The 12-4 Big Horns entered the District 8C tournament as the fourth seed in October to face off with No. 5 Gardiner at Manhattan Christian.

The Big Horns improved from an eighth seed last year, and early in the season it was obvious to LPHS Head Coach Sarah Griffiths that this team was destined to make their mark.

“We had a group of juniors playing together

for their third [season] and the chemistry this year clicked," Griffiths said on the eve of the tournament. "I am truly awestruck about this season so far."

LPHS recorded a big win early on when they traveled to Shields Valley in September, and defeated the Rebels, a team they hadn't previously beaten in school history, 3-2.

“That really opened [their] eyes as to what was possible, and that they could compete with these teams,” Griffiths said. They also beat three-time defending state champions Gardiner in late September, another boost to the Big Horn confidence. The team’s 2015 statistics compared to last year demonstrate their improvement.

LPHS increased their kills from 297 to 410; blocks improved from 36 to 44.5; they had 715 digs this season compared to 362 last year; and assists improved from 195 to 403. They also earned significant individual accolades in 2015.

At the District 8C Tournament in late October, LPHS lost to the Gardiner Bruins, the three-time defending state champions. The Lady Big Horns bounced back with a win against Shields Valley before losing their next match to White Sulphur Springs, ending the season at 13-6. But without any seniors on this team Griffiths says next year looks bright for LPHS volleyball.

"I think we're going to have a great season [and] continue to impress people," she said.

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The Reserve at Moonlight Basin opens with ‘Golden’ drive

The long awaited front nine of Moonlight Basin’s private mountain-ringed, 8,000-yard golf course was celebrated in early August 2015 as one of the game’s legends, and also the course designer, ripped a perfect drive through a bluebird Montana sky.

Jack Nicklaus’ ceremonial first tee shot appeared destined to clear the Spanish Peaks and end up in Gallatin Valley before gravity took hold and it bounced onto the first hole’s fairway, 252 feet below the tee box.

“It was absolutely perfect,” said Mike Wilcynski of Nicklaus’ drive. The Reserve at Moonlight Basin’s director of club operations and membership, Wilcynski has been involved with the construction and development of the Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course since 2005.

The back nine holes of The Reserve opened in 2008, but the last decade’s economic downturn and subsequent bankruptcy of Moonlight Basin kept the front nine from opening to golfers until late July this year.

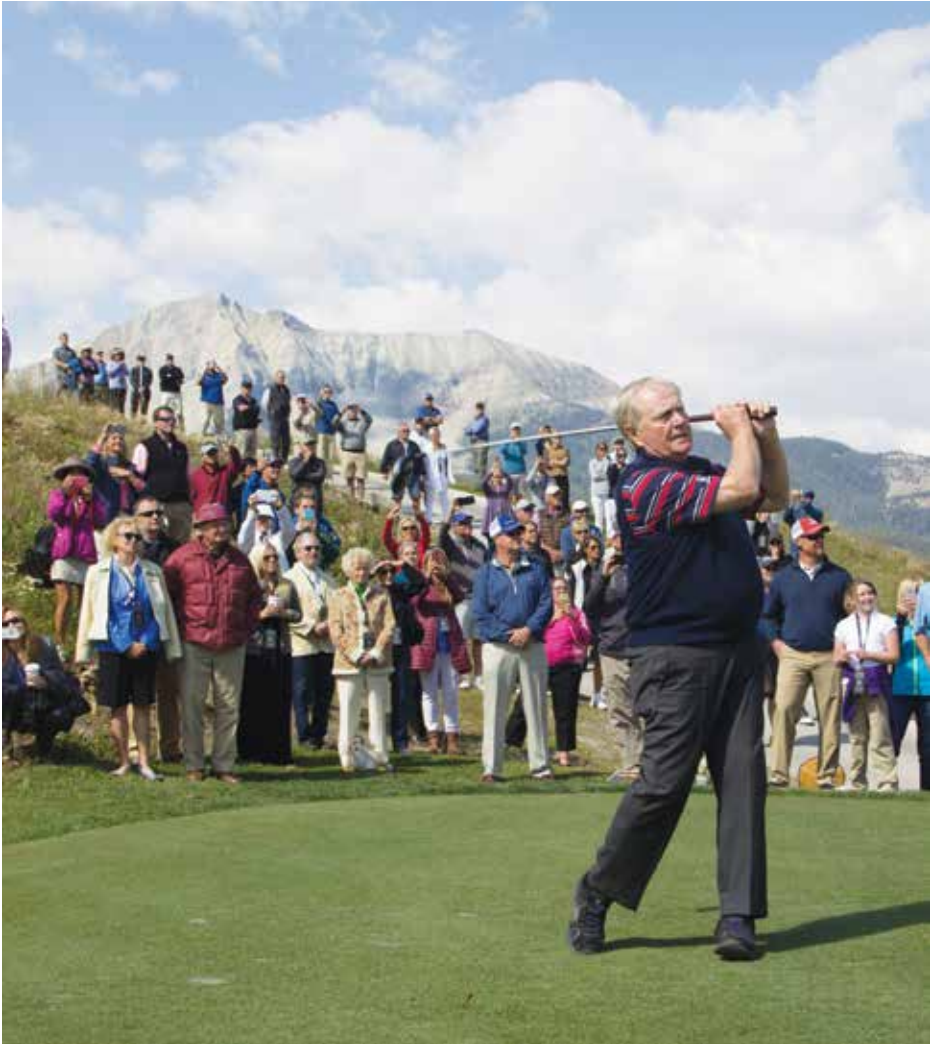
“I’m pretty proud of the fact that we’re all done with [the course],” Wilcynski said. “[The project] is pretty near and dear to my heart.”

Moonlight Basin in August also opened The Reserve’s clubhouse, a sprawling log structure at 6,600 square feet including the lower-level cart storage. On the morning of Aug. 6, a giant white tent stood west of the clubhouse where the Golf Channel’s Steve Sands moderated a member Q-and-A session with Nicklaus.

Nicklaus said he’d return to see how the course matures and possibly to ski when the course is covered in snow.

“[The last time] I skied was here about four years ago,” he said. “I took it up at age 35. I said I wasn’t going to take it up until after I was done with golf.”

Nicklaus retired from professional golf at age 65, and began his course-designing career in earnest.



Jack Nicklaus watches his ceremonial first tee shot sail into the alpine air at the grand opening of The Reserve at Moonlight Basin on Aug. 6. PHOTO BY TYLER ALLEN

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