Dec. 22, 2017 - Jan. 4, 2018 Volume 8 // Issue #26

Local firefighters battle California blaze

Chamber explores town council

Special sections:
Best of Big Sky | House to Home

Citizen of the year: Mark Robin (1961-2017)

A pan-African motorcycle trip



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oil-lantern-lit cabin for a family-style prime rib dinner and live cowboy entertainment. PHOTO BY LYNN DONALDSON

ON THE COVER: Sleigh ride dinners at Lone Mountain Ranch are well under way. Guests load up in a horse drawn sleigh and are taken to an





Dec. 22, 2017 - Jan. 4, 2018 Volume 8, Issue No. 26

Owned and published in Big Sky, Montana

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Citizen of the year: Mark Robin (1961-2017)

A pan-African motorcycle trip





Special sections:

- Best of Big Sky
- House to Home



Skiers at Big Sky Resort on Dec. 14 were treated to fresh snow, sundogs and playing above the clouds, thanks to a temperature inversion. PHOTO BY TYLER ALLEN

Do you want to see your photography in the pages of EBS? Submit a maximum of three images via email to carie@outlaw.partners or use #explorebigsky on social media to be eligible. One photo per issue will be chosen for the opening shot.



MARTHA JOHNSON VICE President of Sales | Founding Broker

Martha has been a resident of Big Sky since 1988 and has worked in real estate for approximately 20 years. CONTACT MARTHA: (406) 580-5891 MARTHA@BIGSKY.COM BIGSKY .COM



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Dick Allgood receives Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation

EBS STAFF

On Nov. 30, U.S. Rep. Greg Gianforte announced the recipients of the 2017 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation, a unique recognition of Montana veterans who served the country and continued to serve their communities.

Big Sky's Dick Allgood, a U.S. Air Force pilot during Vietnam and then a helicopter rescue pilot, was one of the recipients. The former owner of Allgood's Bar and Grill (now the Broken Spoke Bar and Grill), has been a member of the American Legion, a veteran service organization, for more than 20 years.

In October, Gianforte asked Montanans to help identify nominees for the special award. The 14 recipients will receive a special flag that was flown over the U.S. Capitol in their honor on Veterans Day.

"I am humbled to represent a state with such a large veteran population, and I am honored to recognize 14 exemplary veterans with the 2017 Montana Congressional Veterans Commendation," Gianforte said. "Their service and sacrifice for our country as well as their continued dedication to improving our communities merit special recognition in Congress. On behalf of all Montanans, I thank them for their selfless service to country and community."

Fate of groomed Town Center trails uncertain

EBS STAFF

The Big Sky Town Center trails, typically groomed for cross-country skiing in the winter, will not be maintained with classic Nordic tracks this season, and it's uncertain how often they will be groomed at all. Typically conducted by Lone Mountain Ranch, access to the Town Center trails has been impeded by construction that makes them difficult to access with a groomer.

The Big Sky Community Organization is working with Lone Mountain Ranch to ensure the trails are maintained, at least with a snowmobile and roller, but LMR cannot make a commitment as to how often they'll be able to do so.

BSCO is looking into training its own staff to fill in the grooming gaps, but as of EBS press time on Dec. 20, was still waiting until there was enough snow on the ground to start.

"Adam Johnson, our project manager, has really been spearheading the advocacy for the winter trails and working with LMR to figure out a sustainable network, inclusive of some walking [and] not just skiing trails, even as our community grows and develops out Town Center," wrote BSCO Executive Director Ciara Wolfe in an email to EBS. She added that Johnson has visited Bozeman, as well as Jackson, Wyoming, and Driggs, Idaho, for input on winter trail management and is working on a long-term plan for Big Sky.

"This season I think will raise awareness for the community about how important these trails are, and that we have to plan and partner to ensure they continue," Wolfe wrote.

LPHS Booster Club hosts New Year's Eve party at resort

EBS STAFF

The Lone Peak High School Booster Club presents the inaugural "Rockin' New Year's Eve" celebration on Sunday, Dec. 31, from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. The "dress to impress" event will be held in the Talus Room at Big Sky Resort's Summit Hotel. Live music will be provided by Paige and the People's Band, and refreshments, including a champagne toast, dessert and a cash bar, will be available.

All proceeds from the event will support the athletics and extracurricular activities for the 160-plus Lone Peak High School and Ophir Middle School students.

Tickets can be purchased through the Lone Peak High School Booster Club Facebook page.

Montana vehicle registration fees increase

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Car owners in Montana will pay a little more when it comes time to renew vehicle registrations next year.

The Montana Standard reported that starting Jan. 1, a new statewide administrative fee of 3 percent will be applied to all portions of registration costs except on the county option fee.

State lawmakers increased registration fees during the last legislative session in hopes of raising about \$25 million over the next two years to fund the Division of Motor Vehicles and the Montana Highway Patrol.

An annual tax on luxury vehicles also kicks in on Jan. 1. The tax adds an \$825 fee to register newer vehicles valued at \$150,000 or more.

Owners of newer motor homes valued at \$300,000 or more will have an additional \$800 fee.

Forest Service map prices set to increase Jan. 1

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

For the first time in nearly a decade, increasing costs of production, printing and distribution are driving the U.S. Forest Service to increase the price of its maps. Prices of Forest Service paper and plastic-coated maps will increase from an average of \$10 to \$14 on Monday, Jan. 1.

The Forest Service continually updates its maps and looks for ways to enhance them. The agency expects to shorten the revision cycle as cartographers continue to apply new digital technology to the map revision process.

The Forest Service is also working to increase the availability of digital maps for mobile applications, which can be downloaded at avenza.com/pdf-maps/store. Digital maps cost \$4.99 per side.

In an effort to help offset the pricing increase for volume sales, starting Jan. 1 discount pricing will be made available on sales of 10 or more maps of the same title. Discounted maps are only available when purchased through the National Forest Map Store.

Maps can be purchased at national forest offices throughout the state, and can also be ordered in advance. To order maps, visit national forest store.com, call (406) 329-3024 or mail inquiries to USDA Forest Service, National Forest Store, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807.



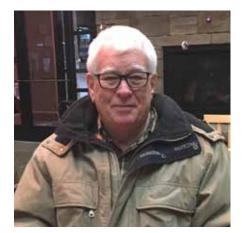
The chamber of commerce is bringing in an expert to advise Big Sky on local governance options like a town council, which would play a decision-making and advisory role, but would not have taxing or lawmaking authority.

Should Big Sky pursue a local governance option like this? Why or why not?



Gary McRae *Big Sky, Montana*

"With Big Sky Sewer and Water, the Big Sky Community [Organization] and the Big Sky Owners Association, we have three small agencies that are the governing bodies and personally I don't see where another board would fit in."



John Kludt Atlanta, Georgia

"I believe every time you create a committee you should destroy two. If it were in lieu of, I would be in support, if it were in addition to, then I would be opposed."



Denise KludtAtlanta, Georgia

"We live in the suburbs north of Atlanta and 10 years ago we went from unincorporated to a small city and it worked quite well."



Patrick McCauley
Big Sky, Montana

"I would agree assuming whomever is on said council is from Big Sky. I want people from Big Sky to make the decisions for Big Sky."







BHHSMT.COM | 406.995.4060 | 55 LONE PEAK DRIVE | BIG SKY TOWN CENTER



30 BEEHIVE BASIN RD | \$3,200,000 #305537 | CALL DON

Beautiful lodge style home with vaulted ceilings, and incredible views of Lone Mountain. Large great room with floor to ceiling wood burning fireplaces. 5 bd, 4.5 ba.



4 LITTLE PLUME RD | \$2,600,000 #216922 | CALL STACY OR ERIC

Fantastic custom, hand built, true post-and-beam timber frame home on 1.7± acres with unobstructed views of Lone Mountain. Ski-in/Ski-out. 5 bd, 6 ba.



235 FOUR POINT RD | \$2,100,000 #219569 | CALL DON

Ridge home in Antler Ridge with views of Lone Mountain. Reclaimed beams, granite, high-end appliances, convenient mid-mountain location. Designed by Jerry Locati. 3 bd, 4.5 ba.



36 LOW DOG RD | \$1,950,000 #310947 | CALL STACY OR ERIC

True Ski-in/Ski-out house on Low Dog Road accessible from Mine Shaft. Custom log home recently remodeled to convey modern mountain luxury. 5 bd, 3.5 ba, 3,960± sq. ft.



5 BANDIT WAY | \$1,650,000 #311037 | CALL DON

Incredible views of the Spanish Peaks from one of the highest and most scenic locations in Cowboy Heaven. Completely remodeled, 4 bd, 4 ba, 2,629± sq. ft. Excellent ski access.



10 ROSE BUD LOOP | \$1,249,000 #216776 | CALL STACY OR ERIC

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ALPENGLOW #35A | \$534,000 #220109 | CALL STACY OR ERIC

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31 BEAR TRAP LANE | \$419,000 #304180 | CALL DON

Great views from this 3 bd, 3 ba Deer Run Condo. End unit with vaulted ceilings, two decks and fireplace in the living room. Sold partially furnished.



LOT 114A, CASCADE | \$339,000 #309556 | CALL DON

Beautiful lot in the highest part of Cascade Subdivision. This lot borders Ulery's Lakes Subdivision to the North. Great views of Lone Mountain and the Mountain Village area.



HILL CONDO #1258 | \$215,000 #220805 | CALL STACY OR ERIC

2 bd, 1 ba, 3 level Hill Condo Loft. Chefs kitchen with new cabinets, SS appliances and breakfast bar. This unit is perfect for year-round living or as a secondary home.

Obituary: Mark Reid Robin

Mark Robin arrived in Big Sky in 1993 with his wife Jackie, their dog Niner, a cat, and baby Andrew. Mark was a poet and a Mets fan; a man who would spend nearly the next three decades raising his family, building a business that became an anchor of the Big Sky community, and pursuing his many, varied passions.

During these years he would learn to ski, fly fish, skate ski, mountain bike, perfect his handstand in yoga, curate one of the best wine selections in Big Sky and become known as a true and honest friend who had absolutely no ability to be disingenuous.

Mark loved what he did; he grew up as the son of two retailers in a mom and pop luncheonette and candy store. His own store, the Hungry Moose Market and Deli started as a roadside vegetable stand in 1994, and moved into a storefront later that fall, becoming Big Sky's first natural foods grocery. Eventually, the store moved to its current location in Town Center and later expanded with a second store in Big Sky Resort's Mountain Mall.

The Hungry Moose soon became a gathering place, a community center for a new and growing town. Mark knew his customers' names and stories, and loved the many returning clientele who came in and out with the seasons. The Hungry Moose sponsored nearly every local cause and Mark took pride in his deep connections to the growing community.

Mark was devoted to his parents. He lost his beloved mother, Pearl, to cancer in 1999. Later, when his father needed more care, he brought him out to Montana and cared for him until his death from Parkinson's disease in 2016, shortly before Mark was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

Mark handled his illness with the same grace, kindness, generosity and sense of humor with which he had lived his life. He brought people together. He attended football games, graduations, weddings and community events even when he had lost the ability to walk, move and talk. At each you could see that the community he had created followed him, always delighted by his beautiful and warm smile.

He was compelled to write and re-started his blog, markymooseinbigsky. blogspot.com, shortly after his diagnosis as a way of telling the very honest story of his struggle with ALS. In the spring of 2017 the family hosted a community-wide event called Soul Shine (bigskysoulshine.org), raising over \$20,000 for causes supporting living a full life with ALS as well as the efforts of those working on a cure. Just two weeks ago, he marked his 56th birthday with a community concert raising funds for a Lone Peak High School service trip to Nepal.

Mark was born Nov. 30, 1961, in Forest Hills, New York, to Stanley and Pearl Robin. He was the third of four boys— Louis, Harold and Benjamin—and grew up in Hewlett, New York, where he graduated from Hewlett High School in 1979. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree at Columbia University in 1983 with a major in economics and a minor in creative writing. William Carlos Williams was his favorite poet because, like Mark, he was the kind of poet who was all about observing the ordinary. Mark's poems also chronicled every day life in all its unvarnished, simple beauty and detail; Mark didn't like flowery or overly poetic language.



He met his life partner, Jackie Roberts, in New York City in 1986, the year the Mets won the World Series. Their first date lasted three days; they married in 1990 at his family's home in upstate New York. Before moving to Big Sky, they spent five years living in Venice Beach, California, where Mark worked at Beyond Baroque, a literary arts center. He resurrected and made profitable the small bookstore, helped facilitate a weekly poetry workshop and helped run the Friday night reading series. He participated in many poetry readings and had a series of retail-themed haiku published in the LA Weekly. A recent highlight for Mark was reading one of his poems on stage at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center before the Billy Collins reading a couple of years ago.

Mark was fortunate to be attended in his illness by his incredibly devoted, organized and tireless wife Jackie who made sure his life was full even as his disease took everything but his brilliant mind. He was also surrounded by a devoted group of women and friends including Candice Brownmiller, Tracy Jacobson, Curly Shea and many others.

His sons Andrew, Micah and Howie were by his side throughout his illness, coming home from college and jobs to care for him. Their home was also filled with a succession of family and friends who came from all over the country and the world to spend time with Mark.

Mark is survived by his wife Jackie, three sons, Andrew, Micah and Howie, his three brothers and their wives, Louis and Ruth, Harold and Cyndy, Benjamin and Stacy, by his brothers and sisters-in-law, Jennifer and Clark, Alex and Julie, Andy and Liz; and his devoted mother-in-law Peggy Roberts and father-in-law Jack Roberts and his wife, Carol, as well as numerous beloved nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts, uncles, and countless friends.

Mark Robin passed away Dec. 18. A memorial service was held Dec. 21 at the Big Sky Chapel followed by internment at Sunset Hills Cemetery in Bozeman. A celebration of life will be held Friday, Dec. 22 from 2-5 p.m. at The Rainbow Ranch Lodge in Big Sky.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to be made in Mark's name to any non-profit organization in Big Sky, Team Gleason, or Congregation Beth Shalom of Bozeman.

MSU expert to advise chamber on local governance for Big Sky

BY AMANDA EGGERT EBS SENIOR EDITOR

BIG SKY – The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce is tapping into a local resource, MSU Extension's Local Government Center, to research governance options for this unincorporated community.

Local Government Center Director Dan Clark will meet with the chamber's board of directors in early 2018 to help guide his research on governance options for Big Sky, which is largely run by a series of separate boards and organizations but lacks an overarching decision-making body.

Clark will be examining what Montana law states about options open to Big Sky, which has the added complexity of straddling Gallatin and Madison counties. He'll also present on advisory and decision-making frameworks other communities around the state have implemented.

"I think the opportunity to incorporate was probably a long time ago and the complexity of the community is only increasing and making it more challenging to achieve incorporation." -Dan Clark

Big Sky chamber CEO Candace Carr-Strauss said the chamber regularly fields calls from concerned community members who have a stake in how decisions about infrastructure and local needs unfold. "Everyone's urgency becomes our emergency," Strauss said. "I'm taking [these calls] and saying, 'How can we orchestrate these conversations so everyone can participate and be informed?'"

Such issues include transportation; energy, water and sewer infrastructure; and affordable housing, a subject this community has wrestled with consistently in recent years.

Clark's contract will be paid out of the \$25,000 that the Big Sky Resort Area District tax board appropriated to the chamber this June, to undergo a strategic planning effort.

Strauss said incorporation is not part of the scope of this effort. "The incorporation topic is a separate topic. We're just trying to answer the question: How do we better operate as a community with what we have now?"

"I think the opportunity to incorporate was probably a long time ago and the complexity of the community is only increasing and making it more challenging to achieve incorporation," Clark said, adding that the last community in the state to incorporate was Colstrip, in 1996. Two currently incorporated communities along the Hi-Line will likely disincorporate in the coming months, dropping the state total to 127, he said.

Clark points to Missoula County as one area pertinent to this discussion. The only municipality that exists in the county is the city of Missoula, but there are a handful of other places like Bonner, Frenchtown and Seeley Lake that are run by community councils. These councils are elected and act in an advisory capacity to represent the concerns of their constituents to Missoula County commissioners, he said.

Clark said another option might be the establishment of what's called a multi-jurisdictional district, which could address the fact that roughly half of Big Sky's geographic area lies in Madison County, with the other half—and the more heavily populated part—lying within Gallatin County.

Many of the options that Clark will be looking into would require approval from county commissioners on both sides, but Clark doesn't foresee that being an obstacle.

"I don't know why they wouldn't," he said, adding that it's easier for a county commission—which is generally tasked with delivering state services at the local level rather than managing small and dense communities—to deal with one entity instead of thousands of individuals.

If it's decided that it's in the community's best interest to implement some form of local government, details about that entity's structure, including its membership and authority, will come later. He said the members of that entity would likely not be paid—although their expenses could be reimbursed—and would not have lawmaking or taxation authority.

It's also possible Big Sky might decide its best not to continue in this vein at all. "At the end of the day, the community of Big Sky may say, 'Yeah, what you're proposing, Dan, it doesn't really fit," he said, adding that the prospect of another layer of government may be unappealing to some.

But, he added, it's also possible that the solution Big Sky finds could prove groundbreaking for the state. "Changes to future law [could] allow much more governing structure in places like Big Sky, Big Fork, Gardiner [and] River Rock, by Belgrade," Clark said. "It's kind of exciting because you're on the cutting edge."









217 GOSHAWK TRAIL | \$4,225,000

Stunning ski-in/ski-out property situated in a pristine setting. Breathtaking views, groomed ski access and the elegant home create this masterpiece. This 6 bedroom, 6.5 bathroom home is ideal for entertaining guests with large open living spaces, three ensuite bedrooms, two guest bedrooms, and a bunk room. Extensive log and stone detail highlight the surrounding mountain environment. Spanish Peaks Mountain Club membership required. Golf membership included in sale. // JACKIE MILLER | 406.539.5003



THE HOMESTEAD CHALET #6 | \$1,750,000

This is the last Homestead Chalet available! With a spaciously designed interior, oversized windows, and ample outdoor living spaces, this 6-bedroom, free standing condominium combines a mix of contemporary and rustic design. Nestled $\,$ at the base of Lone Mountain, this chalet provides close proximity to the base area of Big Sky Resort as well as unparalleled ski access to the White Otter chairlift. Photo is of a comparable chalet. // $MARY\ WHEELER\ |\ 406.539.1745$



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Million Dollar Views at less than half the price! Located in Big Sky Ski and Summer Resort's Mountain Village, this end unit, corner location on the top floor offers a feeling of privacy as well as incredible views from the large windows. Shoshone is adjacent to the slopes, has ski storage, an exercise center, spa, pool and laundry facility on the premises. Restaurants and shops are right outside the door. // LYNN MILLIGAN | 406.581.2848



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Mountain Lifestyle Living at its finest! Phase 2 of The Lodges at Elkhorn Creek is now under construction! With beautifully balanced mountain contemporary interiors, and rustic Montana exteriors, these stunning condominiums provide the ideal mountain basecamp location! 9 single-level units are offered ranging in size from $2,050-3,150\ sq.$ ft. and feature 4-6 bedrooms, 3-5 bathrooms, and a choice of 6 floor plans. Starting at \$1,165,000 // MICHAEL THOMAS | 406.581.2400



32 LOW DOG ROAD | \$1,295,000

Nestled in the trees, this private ski-in/ski-out home offers 4 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms in 2,759 +/- square feet of comfortable living space. Located at the base of the Wardance ski run at Big Sky Resort, this charming home is within close proximity to all Mountain Village amenities. Offering two master suites, a family room, radiant in-floor heating, a gas fireplace, large laundry, large patio, a recent remodel, and a gorgeous furniture package. // SANDY REVISKY | 406.539.6316



MORNING SUN CONDOMINIUMS | \$382,900+

This is the last 6-plex in the Morning Sun Condominiums and all units are finished and ready to occupy! Located off of Two Gun White Calf Road in the Meadow Village of Big Sky, these condos have 3 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, kitchen appliances, washer & dryer, deck, patio, and 1-car attached garages with ample storage and extra parking. The only project approved for Fannie Mae financing, qualified buyers may put down as little as 3-5%. // MARY WHEELER | 406.539.1745





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Big Sky, Montana





Resort tax board nears closure on question of taxing private clubs

BY AMANDA EGGERT EBS SENIOR EDITOR

BIG SKY – After more than four months of back-and-forth about whether or not to apply resort tax to private clubs, the Big Sky Resort Area District resort tax board is zeroing in on a central component of the question—a definition for "destination ski resort" and "destination recreational facility."

Resort tax board chair Mike Scholz is looking for language that more clearly indicates whether or not private clubs like the Yellowstone Club are taxable so resort tax compliance officers can act with clearer guidance. "We need to quit dancing around it [and] say whether or not a private club is or isn't a destination," he said at the board's Dec. 13 meeting.

Board member Heather Budd advised against wording that's too specific out of concern that it could unfairly tie the hands of future boards. "If we pin ourselves down to a definition that is very focused, I think that is a disservice," she said. "The area is constantly evolving."

In reference to applying the tax to private clubs, Budd brought up Moonlight Basin, which recently became private. "Does that mean that the items it sells are no longer taxable?" she asked.

Board member Jamie Kabisch said that reading about the amenities highlighted on the Yellowstone Club's website makes it sound a lot like a destination, citing seven restaurants, health and wellness facilities, retail and rental businesses, and a family center. "That kind of sounds like a destination," he said, acknowledging that the membership and property owner aspect complicates the question.

The board discussed several options before unanimously agreeing upon one provided by BSRAD legal council Betsy Griffing.

It's based upon a definition used in the tourism trade and characterizes a destination ski resort or destination recreational facility as "a facility that offers amenities, including but not limited to, food, drink, lodging, sports, entertainment, convention support, and shopping within the facility so that tourists or visitors do not need to leave the facility throughout their vacation."

The next step in this continuing taxation puzzle will be figuring out whether or not the definition applies to specific clubs. Scholz said there's more work to come and the board knows that it must determine which facilities fall under that definition.

The board is also moving forward with an ordinance amendment that will allow it to disperse resort tax allocations over a three-year period for particularly large and long-term projects. The board generally appears to be in agreement on that issue and will likely make a decision at its next meeting.

At the close of the meeting, current board member Ginna Hermann announced that she will not be pursuing a third term on the resort tax board in 2018. She said it's been fun working with the board, participating in the change BSRAD has undergone, and getting to know organizations, executive directors and community members better.

Budd's seat will also be open and she said she's undecided about whether or not she's going to seek another term.

On Dec. 20, Gallatin County Election Administrator Charlotte Mills said one person, Steve Johnson, has officially announced his candidacy for the position. Johnson is a retired resident who serves on a number of local boards including the Big Sky Zoning District Advisory Committee.

The outcome of that election will be decided by mail-in ballot on May 8. Registered voters who live within the district can vote. Mills said candidates could start announcing effective on Dec. 14, 2017, and the last day to announce is Feb. 12, 2018.

Prior to the start of the Dec. 13 meeting, attendee Sarah Blechta said she intends to file for candidacy in early 2018 as well. In addition to her role as the vice president of the Morningstar Learning Center board, Blechta is the property owners association manager for Yellowstone Club.

Locals Fishing Report from Gallatin River Guides

Brought to you by Jimmy Armijo-Grover, General Manager



Happy Holidays from the Gallatin River Guides crew! A busy time of year in Big Sky country, which makes for some quiet days on the river.

Maybe a good year to start some new traditions like casting and carving on Christmas day. Head out on the slopes for the morning and then mosey down to the Gallatin for a few hours of fishing. Or start the year right by catching a fish on New Years Day!

Winter fishing is an extraordinary experience. That being said the window of opportunity is short, but starting the 22nd every day is getting a little longer. Although you can take advantage of all daylight hours in winter the warmest window tends

to be between 11am and 3pm, especially in the Gallatin Canyon which doesn't see much sunlight this time of year.

Temperature also plays a huge role. Everyone has their limits and it is not our place to say what yours should be. It's good to know that fishing becomes incrementally more challenging as temperatures dip below freezing. Also, when nights get into the single digits or below expect a fair amount of slush to form on the surface of the river, as well as shelf ice along the banks. If we get a really cold shot of weather that gets into the double digit negatives ice formation will increase exponentially making for some dangerous wading in some areas. Avoid walking on shelf ice as it can break underneath you and avoid sections of river where anchor ice has formed. Colder temps also make for more lethargic trout and faster ice buildup on your fly line and rod guides.

Some of our favorite water to fish this time of year is the 10 miles or so north of Big Sky on the Gallatin, Raynolds and \$3 Bridges on the upper Madison, Beartrap Canyon to Warm Springs access on the lower Madison and the Paradise Valley spring creeks. These sections offer more consistent water temperatures and fish productivity.

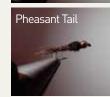
A standard winter nymph rig for the Gallatin river is 7 1/2' leader, smaller strike indicator like a 1/2" or 3/4" CorQ, point fly about 3-6" below the strike indicator, dropper fly about 12" below the point fly and a split shot, if necessary, about 12" above the point fly. Pat's Rubber Legs, Zebras, Green Machines, JuJu Midges, T Midges, red San Juan Worms and more are all good patterns to try. Red and black are our go-to colors for midge larvae patterns. The Madison isn't much different, but you may need to add more length to the whole rig and add split shot to get down into deeper runs.

Seasons greeting and hope to see you on the water! Join us for FREE Wednesday Fly Tying Nights all winter. Call 406-995-2290 for more details.













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Cairo to Cape Town Q&A with Chad Rothacher

BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Chad Rothacher owns the construction company RMR Group and has lived in Big Sky for 20 years. He enjoys the tranquility in the mountains and spends much of his time outdoors skiing or biking with his partner and their two kids. Of late he's taken to yoga, a practice he picked up on a recent trip to Africa.

This trip, however, was not simply a flight to Kenya for a khaki safari. Rothacher rode his KTM 1190 motorcycle the length of the continent, an 8,000-mile solo journey from Egypt to South Africa. He returned to Big Sky on Dec. 11. Over the course of the seven-week excursion, he witnessed the world's second largest continent firsthand, and the adventure reinforced his belief in self-experience.

"You have to go there in order to see it," said Rothacher, who turned 44 on Nov. 6 in Ethiopia. "We all have a risk scale and you're balancing risk and reward. I'm getting boots-on-the-ground real experience in these parts of the world that a lot of people don't want to or don't feel comfortable traveling to."

This was not his first brush with adventure travel. In late spring 2012, Rothacher toured his bike around Mongolia for six weeks, and three years later traveled to Central Asia, riding 6,500 miles from Turkey to Kazakhstan. Thieves attacked and hunted Rothacher on that trip, and *Mountain Outlaw* magazine published the story, adapted from his blog, in 2016.

In an interview following the ordeal, Rothacher said the Central Asia adventure might be his last. But the taste of adrenaline is sweet. As the Hunter S. Thompson quote reads at the top of Rothacher's blog page: "The Edge ... There is no honest way to explain it, because the only people who really know where it is are the ones who have gone over."

EBS tracked down Rothacher in Cape Town, South Africa, to learn about his time with Kenya's Samburu tribe, and what he learned about the realities of terrorism, the kindness of strangers, and how an "entrepreneurial seizure" can spark an adventure.



The market in Aswan, Egypt, where Rothacher shopped for food while he waited for required permitting to exit the country.



A young woman sells grilled corn from the roadside in Ethiopia. PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHAD ROTHACHER

Explore Big Sky: This is the third solo motorcycle trip you've taken to some far-flung areas of the world; some might call them dangerous. Why do you do it? **Chad Rothacher:** I was looking for another trip that was going to be lengthy and that didn't have the same danger factor as the last ones. I looked around the world and Africa kept coming to mind. I'd always wanted to travel here and I think on a fun factor and danger factor – I try to balance those – this one seemed to fit the bill. It's not the Four Seasons in Hawaii. It's not Tajikistan. So it's somewhere in the middle.

EBS: What made this trip different from the others?

C.R.: This one was a real eye-opening experience to the social studies of different parts of Africa and I didn't realize that at the time. I thought it was going to have a little higher danger factor and more challenging riding than it did. It certainly opened my eyes in a whole other way about what's going on in Africa with the poverty split and the real terrorism problems in North Africa.

The first two trips are right up there with some of the lowest-density populations in the world and on this one I was constantly surrounded by people, really at every moment.

EBS: Was that disconcerting?

C.R.: Yeah, certainly. It started off not too bad and then it reached a high point in Ethiopia, and got pretty dangerous ... I don't think people were meaning harm, but you get that many people around and all of a sudden you get this mob mentality. It was a trip for the senses, that's for sure.







Chad Rothacher sits next to a Samburu elder, whose decision it was to allow him into the village. The Samburu carry goat-herding staffs all day, regardless of whether or not they are tending livestock.

EBS: You kept a personal journal on that first trip in Mongolia. What prompted you to keep an online blog for these last two journeys?

C.R.: On the first one I was fairly checked out, so nobody really knew where I was for a week or two at a time. That didn't really sit well with family members, and even business-wise it was challenging. So I started on the Central Asia trip and got a little more connected on this trip, too.

EBS: Your Oct. 28 blog entry reads "Day one and I ran out of fuel." What feeling do these words prompt in you: "No benzene."

C.R.: Human trafficking. That was probably my biggest concern going into the trip. Human trafficking was at the forefront of my mind in North Africa, Sudan, Ethiopia. When I'm getting to the point where I'm struggling with fuel I'm just thinking, 'Oh s---, I'm beside the road and this is where it goes bad.' You always should be aware traveling that it's not the first mistake you make, it's the subsequent mistakes after that that usually get you in trouble.

EBS: According to your blog, six men with AK-47s in a blue pickup truck gave you a liter of fuel and tea. In central Egypt you had a semi-automatic rifle pointed at your chest, and just across the border Sudan was the friendliest country you visited. Did you experience a kind of paradox on this journey?

C.R.: Northern Egypt in the Cairo area is in the thick of it with terrorism right now. I mentioned in my [Oct. 28] blog that at one point a guy wanted to shoot me. He really did. He wanted to shoot the American. He was bummed when he got disciplined [by his superior officer]. They were probably thinking American spy; some guy out there by himself with camera equipment and a SAT phone and all this high-tech gear.

But then seven hours down the road I meet the Nubian people of southern Egypt and Central and North Sudan. And what I found was that the Nubians were just awesome. Man, what a great turning point getting out of central Egypt. And I got to sail up the River Nile. How cool is that?

EBS: What did you learn about the people of Africa that you didn't expect? **C.R.:** I look at North and Central Sudan, which has been cut off from U.S. financial aid for many years. They're not living a Western civilized life, but their

quality of life seems to be great. I could stop anywhere and get wood-fired bread out of the stone oven, and they were growing fruit and vegetables along the Nile so the people have learned to live a life of subsistence.

South Sudan and Ethiopia and northern Kenya are experiencing a tremendous amount of financial aid, and what became apparent immediately was their reliance on that aid. So, instead of living by the river and growing vegetables and farming, they've moved up to the roadside. The villages now line the roads and people wait for the aid trucks to come by. I know it's a huge debate but that does not seem to be a solution to solving that epidemic problem of poverty. You teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime. The real problem they're facing is a lack of education.

EBS: When we spoke after your Central Asia trip you weren't sure you'd take another solo motorcycle journey again. What made you decide to get back on the bike? **C.R.:** Literally a switch went one day and I thought about doing a vehicle trip. As I started researching areas and getting a little more excited, I wanted to be on the bike again. It is such a different way to travel because you're 100 percent connected to all elements: the sounds, the smells, the weather. You're getting wet. I got wet a lot this trip. You're hot. But you're so much more exposed. I felt like it was calling, and then at some point there's no turning back. Once you have that, what some people call an "entrepreneurial seizure," it's hard to get it out of your head.

EBS: It seems to me you're getting at the heart of the matter: People travel to understand themselves and to gain a more comprehensive worldview. How important is it to escape your comfort zone and explore?

C.R.: People put a lot of stress on this type of adventure travel with the "danger factor." The fact of the matter is, in Mongolia I wanted to see how the nomads were living. I really wanted to understand the Muslim community in Central Asia: Are they all terrorists? Hell no, they're not. They are some great people. In Africa, I wanted to understand this, too. I wanted to put my eyes on it. And you have to go there in order to see it. Florida has its fun factor but I'm not learning anything from traveling to Miami. Some guy is happy on the green run up at the hill, and another guy isn't happy unless he's skiing off the top.



Samburu elders, pictured here, rule their villages in a gerontocracy. The tribe is closely related to the Maasai in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania.



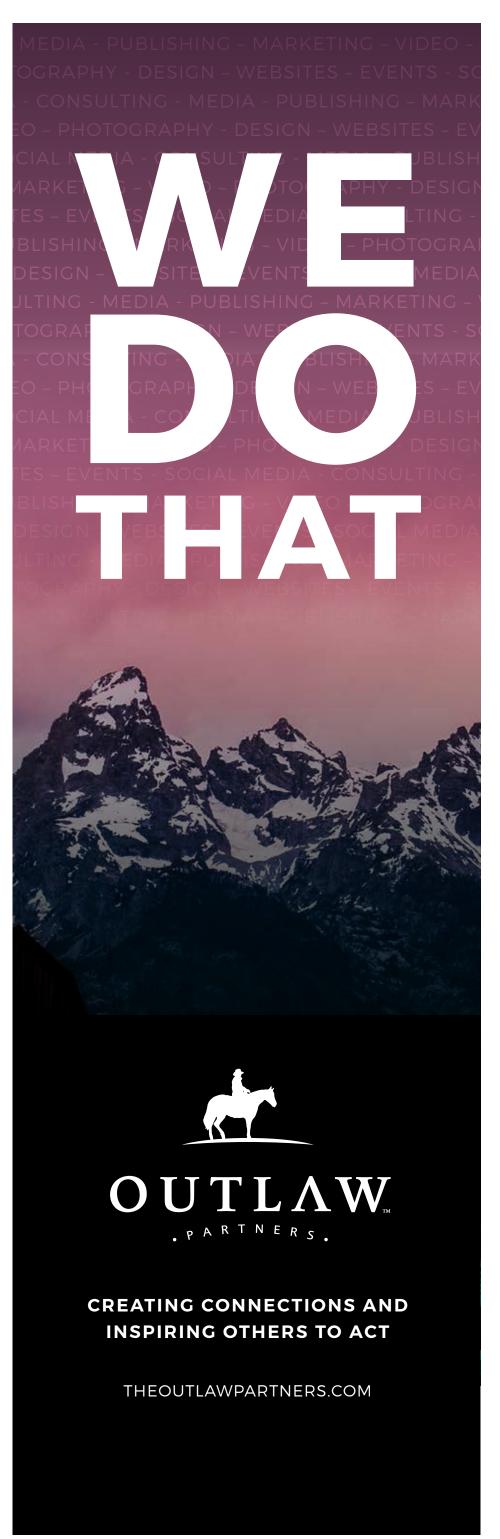


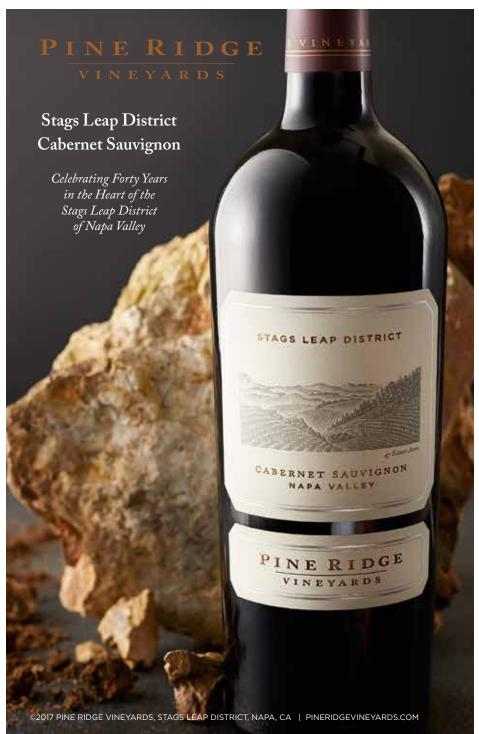
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Firefighters set to return home from monster California fire

BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY - When they arrived in Santa Barbara, California, on Dec. 7, Big Sky Fire Department Battalion Chief Stephen Pruiett and firefighters Greg Clark, Matt Mohr and Dennis Rush set right to work aiding Los Angeles County in fighting their raging wildland fires.

The national deployment was a first in Montana's history, and fire departments throughout the state sent teams to join firefighters from California, as well as other states. The Big Sky team joined forces with two units from the Missoula Fire Department, one from Missoula Rural Fire District and one from Columbus Rural Fire District.

After two weeks of work protecting structures, putting out hot spots and routing fire hose, the crew is set to return home Dec. 23, road worn and weary but in good spirits.

"I've been on deployment this long before, but I've never had to drive two days on the front and back end," Pruiett said. "We're really looking forward to being home. Everybody's got poison oak, a few of us have blisters and we haven't really been clean in two weeks. ... It feels really good [to be going home.]"

While the Big Sky crew was originally deployed for a 14-day assignment, there was a possibility of a week extension. The men left Big Sky knowing that they might not be home for Christmas.

"When you become a firefighter it just becomes part of the job," Pruiett said. "You end up missing some holidays. I don't think anyone wants to leave until the job is done."

The Big Sky crew was assigned to the Thomas fire, a wind driven inferno that became the second largest fire in California's history on Dec. 20, after burning 272,000 acres. More than 8,000 personnel have been assigned to the fire over the last few weeks and on Dec. 14, a firefighter from a San Diego unit lost his life while working the fire.

The fire broke out in Ojai, California, on Dec. 4 from unknown causes, and strong Santa Ana winds fanned the flames into Ventura. The winds, which are extremely dry downslope gusts, are infamous for fueling regional wildfires.

Pruiett called the winds "sundowners," saying they contributed to unprecedented conditions in the area. "You've got sundowners which are downslope winds, which are very dangerous. [The fire] becomes wind-driven versus topographic."



After 14 days on assignment fighting the Thomas fire in southern California, the four-man Big Sky crew is set to return home Dec. 23. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BIG SKY FIRE DEPARTMENT

On Dec. 16, winds gusting 70 mph sent the flames through the outskirts of Montecito, burning old-growth forest and stretching into Santa Barbara County. "We had a pretty rowdy Saturday," Pruiett said. That day, Pruiett recalls seeing the fire move 3 miles in a matter of 10 to 15 minutes.

Roxy Lawler, owner of Roxy's Market, lives part-time in Montecito. There for the holidays and to celebrate the first year of business for another store she owns, Montecito Grocery, Lawler was faced with evacuation of both her home and business. After eight days, she and her husband Mike were allowed to return home Dec. 19 and so began the process of resuming normal life.

"Everything was left in its place at the store," said Lawler, though she and a cleanup crew had to dispose of perished items.

According to Lawler, dry winds are common and this year saw little rainfall. "Everything is just sort of ripe and ready—and no rain—and then the wind came," she said. "[Firefighters] did the most incredible job. Considering the number of homes that could have been lost, there were only a few.

"It's been a monster," she added. "We've been lucky in that the wind has been cooperative the last few days and they've made big strides."

In the days before their return home, the Big Sky firefighters swept the mountains near Montecito in order to locate and extinguish any remaining hot spots, or areas where roots and other plant matter remain smoldering and are at-risk to catch fire with the wind.



From left to right, Big Sky fire fighters Matt Mohr, Greg Clark, Stephen Pruiett and Dennis Rush spent more than two weeks aiding LA County in fighting wildfires.

"It is good experience for them to be part of such a large event and they will bring that experience back to the department so that we can all learn from it," said BSFD Chief William Farhat. "Also, as we will need help from other departments if we have a large event, it is incumbent upon BSFD to assist others in the same manner so that we can benefit from that reciprocation."

"They came and helped us out in '88 so we're happy to get out and return the favor," Pruiett said, referencing the destructive fire season that burned much of Yellowstone National Park.

At EBS press time Dec. 20, the Thomas fire had grown 1,000 acres overnight and was reported at 55 percent contained, with possible winds forecasted into the evening. The total cost of relief efforts was reported at \$150 million and 1,045 structures have succumbed to the flames.

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Section 2:ENVIRONMENT, SPORTS & DINING







The New West: Yellowstone's Dan Wenk prescribes courage if we want to save our wild ecosystem



BY TODD WILKINSON EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Yellowstone National Park is what gives the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem its centrifugal force.

While the 22.5-million-acre region is indeed the sum of all parts, absent the presence of America's mother national park and, by dint of miracle, the long list of bio-geological wonders that still transcends its borders,

this part of the country would be just like everywhere else.

We have grizzly bears, wolves, geysers, migrating big game herds, mystical trout waters, unblemished views and plenty of terrain to explore.

But conspicuously missing is leadership to deal with mounting problems being explored in depth at Mountain Journal (mountain journal org).

There's no true galvanizing presence among Greater Yellowstone's conservation community; no vision coming from land management agencies arrayed together in the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee.

And there is little elected political leadership rising from the federal, state and local levels to formulate a cohesive strategy for dealing with issues such as growth, climate change, rising recreation pressure, chronic wasting disease and wildfire.

Thus, it makes dynamic figures stand out all the more. Last weekend, the most obvious in that category, Yellowstone Park Superintendent Dan Wenk, received an honorary doctorate from Montana State University in Bozeman.

Wenk gave a rousing acceptance speech, demonstrating courage that is now exceedingly rare.

"We are at a crossroads in our decision making as a community, a region and a nation in our attitude about protection of wild places," he said.

In 2016, I wrote a column in which I cited Wenk's former colleague, David Hallac, who served as Yellowstone's science chief. He warned that while the ecosystem's health is remarkable, it's facing unprecedented converging threats that,

unless confronted, will cause it to unravel.

Wenk picked up the theme, noting that it comes down to human decisions and a will to do the right thing by giving back more than we take

"The least studied species in Yellowstone is the human. We don't yet understand the affect of record visitation on either the visitor experience or the resources we protect," Wenk said. "If we don't understand these interrelationships, we may diminish, perhaps irreparably, the very things that attract people worldwide to this one-of-a-kind national park."

Wenk ended his advice to college graduates that applies equally to everyone in the ecosystem who care about its exceptional character.

Said Wenk:

- "Tell people what they need to hear, not what they want to hear";
- "Contribute to things bigger than yourselves";
- "It's easy to make decisions when you know what your values are";
- "When you find yourself on the side of the majority, it's time to pause and reflect";

- "If you are not at the table, you are on the menu";
- "Setting an example is not the main means of influencing others, it's the only means";
- "Misery is optional."

For Wenk, the latter point means this: Let adventure in nature inspire you to be a better, more compassionate, sensitive and humble person who delights in the possibility of saving a place unlike any other.

Find levity in moments of intense gravity; ferret out reasons to have hope when all is thought lost; think beyond your own generation, as previous conservationists did for you; and step up and be counted in advocating for wild places and wildlife that do not have their own voice.

Wenk quoted a woman rancher from Belgrade who told him we must all sacrifice to save the character of the land. "It's hard to condemn any one sector without acknowledging the warts and complexities of any other, but collectively we are degrading the magic that makes this region unique," she told the newly-minted Dr. Wenk. "Can we slow down, scale back, and proceed with less of an air of entitlement?"

Finally, he noted, "Protection and management of public lands has never been more important than it is today. It is as simple and as complex as providing a place to disconnect from our daily world and reconnect with the environment and nature, a place for emotional and, if we are lucky, spiritual renewal."

Finally, a note to all you great readers: Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and here's to an inspiring new year ahead.

Todd Wilkinson, founder of Mountain Journal (mountain journal.org), is author of "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek" about famous Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear 399 featuring 150 photographs by Tom Mangelsen, available only at mangelsen.com/grizzly. His feature on the delisting of Greater Yellowstone grizzlies appears in the winter 2018 issue of Mountain Outlaw and is now on newsstands.



Yellowstone National Park Superintendant Dan Wenk speaking at the Albright Visitor Center. Wenk was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Montana State University on Dec. 16. NPS PHOTO

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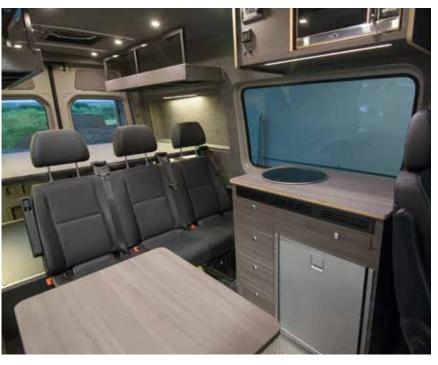




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YOUR ADVENTURE STARTS WHERE YOU PARK







Deer harvested in special disease management hunt in south-central Montana

BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BOZEMAN - After chronic wasting disease was found this fall in five mule deer and one whitetail deer in south-central Montana, state wildlife officials have authorized a special management hunt south of Billings that began Dec. 15 with more than 100 deer harvested in the first weekend.

CWD is a progressive, fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose. The disease was found in Montana for the first time this fall after more than 1,000 samples were taken from harvested deer, elk and moose as a part of a special surveillance effort due to the disease's presence in Wyoming, North and South Dakota, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

"It's not only a problem, it's a huge problem," said Bob Gibson, Region 5 information and education manager for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. "It's always fatal. It's a real slow-moving disease geographically ... but it's persistent." The disease is caused by a prion—or an infectious protein—which is believed to remain in the soil for years.

As one of the first steps in managing the outbreak, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission approved a management harvest known as the Bridger Special Chronic Wasting Disease Hunt. Officials believe the hunt, which spans 1,200 square miles south of Laurel, will aid in determining the prevalence and distribution of CWD, which is critical information for managers as they plan for long-term disease management in the region.

"There's really nothing we can do for each deer," Gibson said, adding that there are no vaccines or medications. "All we can do is manage."

Depending on the test results from the deer harvested during the surveillance hunt, officials may consider increasing hunting opportunities in order to decrease the density of deer "so there are fewer nose to nose contacts," Gibson said,

explaining that the disease is transmitted by direct contact. They might also try to limit congregation areas, perhaps by helping to fence haystacks.

In addition to the six deer found positive south of Billings, an additional mule deer buck shot about 30 miles north of Chester, near the Canadian border, tested positive for chronic wasting disease this fall. On Dec. 21, the day after EBS went to press, the commission held a conference call to authorize a special CWD hunt in district 401 on the Canadian border between Sweet Grass and Shelby.

Licenses went on sale for the special Bridger hunt on Dec. 11 at 5 a.m. online, and within three hours all 1,200 licenses had been sold. Officials have established a quota of 200 whitetail and 200 mule deer and the season will be halted or extended depending on how quickly the quotas are met. The special hunt is slated to end Feb. 15.

"There is a very high interest in this," Gibson said. "The bulk of the people who got the tags are people who are concerned about their way of life here."

All successful hunters are required to submit their animal for CWD sampling, either at the check station in Joliet or at the FWP Region 5 headquarters in Billings. Hunters have 72 hours from harvest to submit the animal for sampling, and test results are expected two to three weeks after they've been taken.

FWP has also established a transport restriction zone within Yellowstone and Carbon counties to limit the possibility of CWD-positive carcasses moving outside the general area of the hunt. Whole carcasses, heads and spinal columns are not to leave the area.

While CWD has not been shown to affect people or animals outside of the deer family, the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend not consuming animals that are infected with CWD.

For more information about FWP's response to this CWD outbreak, visit fwp.mt.gov/cwd.

Montana wildlife officials ask Wyoming to stop feeding elk

JACKSON HOLE, Wyo. (AP) - Montana wildlife officials are asking their Wyoming counterparts to stop feeding elk following the arrival of chronic wasting disease in the states.

The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission sent a letter last week to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, saying its elk feeding practices could accelerate the spread of the fatal, contagious disease, the Jackson Hole News and Guide reported.

In the Montana letter, officials said they respect how Wyoming handles its affairs, but management of chronic wasting disease in Montana is affected by what happens in the neighboring state.

"As a commission, we believe that we cannot successfully address CWD without Wyoming's help. As your neighbor, we ask you to begin the process of closing these feedgrounds," the Montana commissioners wrote.

Wyoming maintains 22 feedgrounds, which Montana officials said could be an incubator of the disease because elk become concentrated at these sites.

The letter is not a demand, but a request for the state to consider phasing out the feedgrounds, said Dan Vermillion, the chairman of the Montana commission.

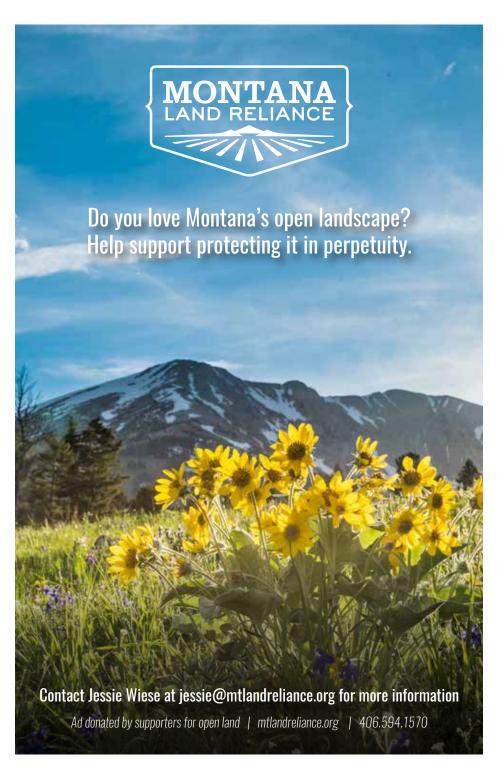
"It's a big sacrifice for the people of Montana to make," Vermillion said. "If those feedgrounds are still out there, that will counteract any progress we make potentially down the road."



NPS PHOTO

Wyoming Game and Fish commissioner Mike Schmid said he had not seen the letter as of Dec. 13.

"Wyoming's been feeding elk for many years, and in a lot of ways it's been beneficial to the state," said Wyoming Game and Fish commissioner Mike Schmid. "I think there's got to be a lot more discussion before I could say one way or the other if there's a potential for reducing feeding of the elk."







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Wyoming wildlife managers consider changes to elk tags

BY CHRISTINE PETERSON CASPER STAR-TRIBUNE

CASPER, Wyo. (AP) – Each year almost 60,000 people hunt for elk in Wyoming. It's about one-tenth of the state's population and about a third of the total number of big game hunters in the state.

Some of them apply for and receive a hard-to-draw license, giving them the chance to stalk a trophy bull in the Red Desert or migratory herds west of Cody. But many of the applications are simple transactions—over-the-counter purchases by Wyoming resident elk hunters for general areas where licenses are unlimited.

For a resident hunter in a general area, how many tags are available and who gets them couldn't be easier. For nonresident hunters, or a resident hunter with eyes on a special tag, who draws a tag gets complicated, and controversial—real quick.

How many tags are available to nonresident hunters has been a sticking point in Wyoming for decades, leading to heated meetings and even lawsuits.

Nonresident hunters pay handsomely for their licenses and often hire local guides and outfitters to complete their trips, infusing cash in rural areas.

Resident hunters, on the other hand, argue that by living, working and paying taxes in Wyoming, they have the right to hunt before someone from somewhere else. The end result is a complex formula created in the '80s that gives nonresident elk hunters a percentage of the overall special tags with a cap on the total number offered.

Now the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, the body charged with divvying up those licenses, plans to ask the public if that formula should change. No decisions have been made, but arguments are forming on either side, the Casper Star-Tribune reported.

Wyoming's outfitters say elk numbers have exploded in the last 30 years and they should have a bigger piece of the pie. Resident hunters say the system works, and the commission should simply leave it alone.

The Game and Fish Department began discussing how to divide up resident and nonresident elk tags in 1987, when elk numbers hovered around 65,000. Wildlife officials decided then that nonresident elk hunters could receive 16 percent of the tags offered in limited quota areas—parts of the state where only certain numbers of bulls, cows and calves can be hunted.

They also set a statewide nonresident license cap over the next couple of years that settled at 7,250. That meant when the limited quota draw was over, the remaining available nonresident licenses went to hunters who applied for a general tag. That cap only applies to full-price licenses in the initial draw. Nonresidents can also receive leftover, less desirable licenses such as those for cows and calves, which generally often nearly doubles the number of elk licenses nonresidents receive each year.

And then elk numbers expanded. Herds have grown across Wyoming, hitting a high of about 114,000 in 2014. But that cap stayed the same.

Now about 2,700 nonresident elk hunters receive limited quota tags, meaning another roughly 4,500 hunters come to the state with general tags in their pockets. A general tag means a hunter can go to any general area from Jackson to Laramie to the Black Hills and hunt.

"The agency has been interested in this and identified this as an issue quite a long time ago," said Doug Brimeyer, deputy chief of Game and Fish's wildlife division. "We evaluated this in 1993 and again in 2013 and in the interim we had it as a topic."

The result is a 120-page white paper detailing handfuls of options to change the way licenses are given with varying pros and cons.

When a group of outfitters came to Game and Fish Commission earlier in 2017 asking for the department to take another look, wildlife managers were ready with information.

Possibilities for changing how some of those roughly 60,000 elk licenses are distributed vary considerably, but a few themes run throughout.

The first is to raise the percentage of limited quota tags given to nonresidents from 16 to 20 percent in areas where there is not a high demand. The second is to

divide the state into regions for nonresidents so general tags can only be used by nonresidents in certain places. The third is to get rid of the cap of 7,250 nonresident licenses.

The Wyoming Outfitters and Guide's Association would like any of those, said Jeff Smith, president of the group and owner of Seven J Outfitters near Sundance.

"Whether people like it or not, it's a huge economic boost for Wyoming Game and Fish selling tags and Wyoming as a whole," Smith said. "I'm a big outfitter, we employ close to 30 people. I have 20 some guides, cooks and wranglers. I know I'm a big boost here, from the coop to grocery store to hardware store to NAPA parts store. Almost all my guides live around here and they're spending money. It's huge."

While he supports raising the percentage from 16 to 20, he would mostly like to see Game and Fish get rid of the 7,250 cap and make regions. The regions would allow Game and Fish to spread out hunters where they want them, and re-evaluate every year.

More nonresident tags means more money for the department, since elk licenses cost between \$577 and \$1,000 for a nonresident and \$52 for a resident. "Most likely, when they look at it and review it, since there's almost twice as many elk now, there will be more nonresident tags. That is a benefit. We're not hiding that it is a benefit to us outfitters," he said. "But it would have no ill effect on the resident hunter whatsoever."

Some resident hunters, however, disagree.

More hunters in general areas will create overcrowding, said Rock Springs hunter Steve Gili.

"The lack of hunters you would encounter here is so vastly different than anywhere else," he said. "Any additional tags diminish that tag, makes it less of a tag. You will encounter more hunters in the field, and they will kill more bulls."

Gili has hunted in Wyoming as a resident and nonresident for the past 20 years. He lives in Wyoming now, but figures he'll be a nonresident again as his job in the coal industry takes him somewhere else. Even then, he doesn't want more general tags available.

While Smith argues that regions will allow local biologists to spread nonresident hunters around the state, Casper hunter Jeff Muratore countered that it could require Game and Fish to have quotas for every region, which would add more licenses and put more pressure on bull elk.

"As a resident I feel our wildlife has been put up for sale enough," he said. The Game and Fish Commission heard arguments from residents and outfitters at its November meeting in Lovell and decided the public should be allowed to formally weigh in.

"I apologize to our field people for what we're doing to them, because this is really a volatile issue for a lot of people," said Commission President Keith Culver. "We will have people upset at us for even looking at it. But that's what this agency does best. We take public input before making decisions. This allows everyone to comment."

The Wyoming Outfitters and Guide's Association came to the commission asking for changes, Culver said. And Culver has already received emails from hunters on both sides of the issue.

He doesn't know if the commission will make any changes. Meetings will likely be sometime in late spring.

No matter what path they go down, opinions will likely be strong.

As part of the 120-page white paper analyzing the issue, wildlife managers talked to five former Game and Fish employees for their take.

"Historically, resident hunters have strongly opposed ... the idea of increasing nonresident elk quotas. Public meetings often became very contentious when those proposals were presented," the paper reads. "Any effort to increase nonresident elk quotas will fail without support from resident hunters."

Editors Note: An AP Member Exchange

Millennials, climate change altering Lake Tahoe tourism

STATELINE, Nev. (AP) – Skiing and gambling have dominated winter tourism on Lake Tahoe's South Shore for years, but travel experts say that's changing. Tourism marketing experts say travelers are hitting the slopes and slots less and climate change is threatening snowfall.

"Gaming and skiing have defined the destination for a long, long time," said Carl Ribaudo, president of tourism marketing firm SMG Consulting. "But there's been impacts within each of those areas. On the skiing side, we've been impacted by a fairly flat market in terms of skier-day growth, we've got changing demographics with millennials, and we've got climate change issues."

The baby boomers who grew the industry are skiing less and millennials are not hitting the slopes nearly as much as the previous generations, said Ralf Garrison, founder of DestiMetrics, a resort lodging analytics firm.

"We're finding that the historical attractions are no longer as popular as they used to be, in fact the kinds of things that are growing that work as attractions are not the outdoor sports of old," Garrison said.

Ribaudo agreed, noting that skiing is becoming one of the amenities that falls under the umbrella of recreation on the South Shore, just as gambling is becoming a part of the area's entertainment scene, not the majority of it.

"People are still skiing and boarding, but they are also hiking, mountain biking, and there's more snow-playing, so it's beginning to diversify within the recreation category," Ribaudo said. "The same thing in entertainment. We now begin to look at gaming as an element of entertainment. We have concerts and events that are broadening the definition of entertainment."

Ribaudo pointed to the success of Harveys' summer concert series and the rapid growth of the SnowGlobe Music Festival. The three-day festival has grown from 7,500 attendees in 2011 to 19,000 just five years later.

The South Shore is now home to six craft breweries with one more slated to open in the new year, The Record-Courier in Gardnerville reported.

"So when you look at it from a destination competitiveness standpoint, we become increasingly more competitive the more we broaden the appeal of the destination," said Ribaudo. "I think that's absolutely critical for us to succeed."



California's Heavenly Mountain Resort, with Lake Tahoe in the distance. CC PHOTO















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Lady Big Horns fall to Hornets in home opener

BY DAN KELLY EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – In their first conference game of the season, the Lady Big Horns lost to White Sulphur Springs by just a single point before a packed gym.

Students, parents and community members were there to cheer the girls on Dec. 15 as they played a close and hard-fought game against the 3-3 Hornets.

Led by Head Coach Ausha Cole, a former point guard at Montana State University, and assistant coaches Jaimey Hayes and Sam Lightbody, there are 10 girls on Lone Peak's roster this year, with five freshmen joining the squad. EBS will report on the young team's progress as the season unfolds.

As starters K.P. Hoffman, Jay Cole, Solae Swenson, Emma Flach and Ivy Hicks took the floor, the atmosphere in the gym was upbeat and excited. Senior post Hoffman scored Lone Peak's first basket, followed by a 3-ball from sophomore guard Flach,

but the Hornets edged ahead to an early 10-5 lead. The two teams traded points down the stretch, and as the first quarter drew to a close, the score stood 14-11, White Sulphur Springs' lead.

The Lady Big Horns pulled ahead early in the second quarter, bolstered by junior post Solae Swenson's 15-foot jump shot from the baseline. Swenson followed her jumper with a put-back layup on an ensuing possession to give Lone Peak a 15-14 lead. Freshman guard Sarah Wilson added two points to keep the lead at 18-16 with 2:24 on the clock.



Lone Peak High School freshman guard Ivy Hicks brings the ball up the court.



Senior post Katie Hoffman drives to the basket during a Dec. 15 game against the White Sulphur Springs Hornets. Hoffman scored the first basket of the night for the Lady Big Horns. PHOTOS BY DAN KELLY

Clamping down on their man-to-man defense, the Lady Big Horns held White Sulphur Springs to just five points in the second quarter, all of them scored by Megan Ogle, who led the Hornets with 12 points. Assistant Coach Sam Lightbody said the two teams matched up well and man-to-man defense was working for Lone Peak, but the Lady Big Horns came up short on the boards. "[The Hornets] were a strong rebounding team. They outperformed us on rebounding," Lightbody said, adding that they'll be working on defensive footwork and boxing out in upcoming practices.

The two teams traded baskets to open the second half, both squads scrapping for loose balls and hustling up and down the court. With 4:41 remaining in the third quarter, senior guard Jay Cole took a pass from Wilson and made a tough layup on which she was fouled. She converted the free-throw opportunity to give Lone Peak a 23-21 lead.

A long 3-pointer by Flach brought the score 26-23, but the Hornets equalized with a foul shot conversion of their own by second leading scorer, Kendel Jones. As the quarter drew to a close, Cole sunk another 3- pointer in the final seconds to bring the Lady Big Horns within three points of the Hornets.

Shots weren't falling for either team heading into the fourth quarter, and the Hornets stretched the lead to six points as the game began to draw to a close. Not content to go quietly into the night, Lone Peak battled back with Swenson adding another key baseline jumper and Hoffman duking it out on the low post for the Lady Big Horns' second foul shot conversion of the night.

With less than a minute left on the clock, the teams were neck and neck, Big Horns trailing 38-37 to the tough team from Meagher County. A series of tactical fouls in the final minute kept the Big Horns battling, but when the final whistle blew, the Hornets escaped with a victory, 38-37. "Our team played really hard and can be proud of their effort. We came up just short in the closing minutes," Lightbody said.

In other news, it might be a little while until Big Horns fans see Ausha Cole's face on the sidelines; she had a baby girl on Dec. 18.

The Lady Big Horns' will play an away game against Shields Valley on Friday, Dec. 22, followed by a Friday, Jan. 5 home game against Twin Bridges, a powerhouse team from the neighboring conference.

Big Horn





#80 Ivy Hicks



#4 Sara Wilson





#42 Katie Hoffman

LPHS Girls Baske

Dec. 15 | White Sulphur Springs | 7:00p.m.

Dec. 16 | @ Manhattan Christian | 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 19 | @ Shields Valley | 7:00 p.m.

Jan. 5 | Twin Bridges | 7:00 p.m.

Jan. 6 | @ Gardiner | 7:00 p.m.

Jan. 11 | West Yellowsto

Jan. 12 | @ Sheridan | 7

Jan. 19 | @ Ennis | 4:00

Jan. 25 | Shields Valley

Jan. 26 | Gardiner | 5:8



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#3 Solae Swenson



#24 Ruth Blodgett



#20 Brooke Botha

#14 Nadia Benjdid

tball Schedule

ne | 7:00 p.m.

:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

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Jan. 30 | @ White Sulpher Springs | 5:30 p.m.

Feb. 2 | Manhattan Christian | 5:80 p.m.

Feb. 3 | @ Twin Bridges | 5:30 p.m.

Feb. 8 | @ West Yellowstone | 5:30 p.m.

Feb. 9 | Sheridan Senior Day | 5:30 p.m.

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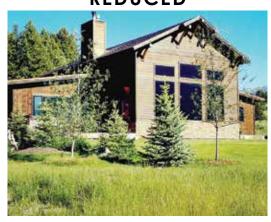


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Hornets beat Big Horns in physical home opener

BY DAN KELLY EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY- Despite a strong first half, the Big Horns couldn't quite overcome White Sulphur Springs' stifling zone defense and fell to the Hornets, 66-55, in their competitive Dec. 15 home opener.

Lone Peak faced off against the Hornets in their first conference game of the 2017-2018 season in front of a lively crowd of supporters wearing Lone Peak blue and white.

The Big Horns' starting lineup, composed of Jackson Wade, Liam Germain, Kolya Bough, Cole March and Frankie Starz were quick out of the gate, opening the game on a 6-0 run with early baskets by Wade and Germain. The Hornets responded quickly and battled back with senior Duncan MacDonald knocking down a pair of 3-pointers in the first quarter.

Lone Peak sought to establish their inside game, feeding the ball to senior center Jackson Wade, who netted 11 first quarter points in a strong start to the game that saw all five Big Horn starters tally points.

With the Big Horns leading the Hornets 21-19 at the end of the first, the Hornets switched to a suffocating 3-2 zone defense and pulled even with Lone Peak early in the second quarter, tying up the game at 21.

"When they switched to that 3-2 defense, we kind of lost our mojo," said Lone Peak High School Head Coach Austin Barth, who's joined this season by assistant coaches John Hannahs and Brian VanEps.

Each team scored two baskets in the first four minutes of the second quarter and with the game tied at 25, Liam Germain drained a 3-pointer with 3:19 on the clock to give the Big Horns a 28-26 lead.

Lone Peak played tough defense and rebounded well in the closing minutes of the second quarter, going on a 6-0 run to finish the half capped by a field goal by sophomore Brayden Vaile. As the teams headed to the locker room for half-time, the Big Horns led the Hornets 34-30 in a physical battle of two strong-willed teams on this Friday night matchup at Lone Peak High School.

The second half opened with the Hornets going on a six-point run of their own to make the score 36-34. White Sulphur Springs also dialed in the execution of the zone defense they employed at the outset of the second quarter, forcing the Big Horns to take tougher, more contested shots as the game went on. Physical post play by Wade evened up the score at 36, stymieing the building buzz of

the Hornets, but not for long, as White Sulphur Springs rallied to make the score 42-37.

A big 3-pointer by White Sulphur Springs' MacDonald put the score at 45-37, Hornets lead, midway through the third quarter. Undaunted, Lone Peak carried on, led by team captains Wade, Germain and Bough, whose steady hand at the point guard position helped the Big Horns continue to move the ball well around the staunch defense of White Sulphur Springs.

The momentum shifted as Lone Peak racked up eight points during an impressive run capped by sophomore guard Frankie Starz's 3-pointer to bring LPHS within three points of the Hornets. Basketball is a game of often see-saw like scoring runs, and this game was no different as these district rivals dove for loose balls, played tough defense and sought to pass the ball effectively, neither team giving ground as the quarter closed with the Bighorns down by one, 48-47.

As the fourth quarter opened the Hornets struck first, but Lone Peak answered with a baseline jumper from Starz. Back and forth it went, with White Sulphur Springs hitting



Senior guard Liam Germain goes up for a shot against the White Sulphur Springs Hornets on Dec. 15. PHOTO BY BEN SAAD

some tough shots as the Big Horns experienced some unlucky bounces, shots ever so slightly caroming off the rim. A four-point Hornets run put the game at 58-52, White Sulphur Springs' lead, and the Big Horns simply ran out of time at the end of what was a hard-fought early season battle. After a series of tactical fouls by Big Horns, the final score stood 66-55, Hornets.

Building on lessons from this early season game, the gritty Big Horns team looks poised to be competitive this season with Barth at the helm. "Looking at the talent of our team, we have it all, and now it's just putting the puzzle together coming into a new system," Barth said.

With many more exciting district match-ups coming up, the team from Lone Peak will be battling it out on the hardwood all winter as the snow flies under the Big Sky.

The Big Horns will hit the road for their next game with a Friday, Dec. 22 matchup against Shields Valley followed by a Friday, Dec. 5 home game against Twin Bridges.



Junior point guard Kolya Bough takes a shot from down low against the Hornets, who stymied the Big Horns' strong first quarter with an effective zone defense. PHOTO BY DAN KELLY







The lowdown on rice varieties

BY CARIE BIRKMEIER EBS STAFF

Rice is a staple in many parts of the world, and is among the highest yielding crops. A single seed of rice will produce about 300 grains of rice. In some cultures, this grain holds such importance it is incorporated into ceremonies and celebrations.

Many people have asked me how to cook rice or why, when they do, it turns out mushy or undercooked. The most common reason is the assumption that all rice should be cooked the same, with the same ratio of liquid to rice. Be sure to read the instructions on the container—some varieties require rinsing prior to cooking, and adding rice before bringing to a boil or after. These steps, although they may seem insignificant, will affect the end result. Some dishes, such as fried rice, require undercooking the rice so that it doesn't become mushy during the frying process.

Varieties of rice can be separated into three basic groups: long grain, medium grain and short grain. Each differs in size and starch content, resulting in different textures and uses.

Jasmine rice has origins in Thailand, and its flavor is floral and slightly sweet. After cooking, this long grain rice is soft and tender. Its delicate flavor makes it a good base for flavorful and spicy dishes such as curry.

Basmati rice, native to India, is similar to jasmine, but slightly less starchy. One of the longest grains of rice, when cooked properly, it should not stick together. I like to cook this variety in a flavorful cooking liquid, like broth flavored with herbs, or finish with a squeeze of lime and freshly chopped cilantro.

Brown rice comes in both long and short grain varieties. What distinguishes this rice from other varieties is that it is harvested with the bran still intact. This component contains a lot of nutrients and fiber, and has a nutty flavor.

Sticky rice is grown primarily in Asia, and has a high starch content. This is the rice you get on the side with Chinese takeout. It is also referred to as glutinous rice, although it does not contain any gluten proteins.

Wild rice, which is frequently grown in the Great Lakes region of the U.S., is not really rice at all—it's a type of grass. It grows in wet areas, such as river beds, and has a nutty, earthy flavor. It takes quite a bit longer to cook than true rice varieties, so keep that in mind if you're in a hurry.

Sushi rice is a very short grained rice that comes in both white and brown varieties. It has a very high starch content, which allows it to hold its shape in sushi rolls or as the base for nigiri. It is also a great option to use in dishes such as rice pudding—its starch content will naturally help thicken the pudding.

Arborio rice is Italian short grain rice. It is commonly used to make risotto, because of its high starch content and ability to absorb a lot of liquid. The end result is a creamy, but not sticky, texture without the addition of any cream or dairy. **Carnaroli rice**, a northern Italian medium grain rice, is also used to prepare this dish, and many consider it a more authentic risotto.

AMUSE-BOUCHE

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

It took over a century, but beer is finally back



BY SCOTT MECHURA EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

It took a long time, 143 years to be exact, but America now has more breweries than ever before. According to the National Brewers Association, at the end of 2016, the United States had 5,005 breweries.

But our journey has been a paddle upstream for decades.

In 1919, the 18th Amendment was passed, resulting in the prohibition of alcoholic beverage sales. This amendment was one of the country's best examples of setting the wheels of high crime in motion. It also set the stage for large, post-prohibition brewing conglomerates to take hold of the market in ways that will never be undone.

It was our very own state of Montana that organized the first vote to repeal prohibition in 1926. This was almost entirely due to the wealth and influence of Butte, then referred to as the "richest hill on earth," and other states soon followed.

On Dec. 5, 1933, the 21st amendment was ratified, making the production and consumption of alcohol legal once again.

It has been reported with limited accuracy that this single day saw the sale of over 1.5 million gallons of 3.2 percent beer sold, causing fears of a beer famine, but many of the breweries that had stayed in operation during prohibition brewing "near beer" were already positioned to have more beer ready for sale.

As recent as the early 1980s, the U.S. had less than 100 active brewing operations. Large breweries such as Anheuser-Busch and Miller Brewing Company had swallowed up most of the small, regional establishments. Only a fortunate few survived, such as the oldest continuously running Yuengling in Pottsville, Pennsylvania; and Anchor Brewing in San Francisco.

Thankfully today, we have rebounded with an unprecedented feat. All 50 states and Washington, D.C., currently have at least one brewery.

But between 2007 and 2016, beer sales declined by more than seven million barrels. Regional and national statistics, and surveys conducted by companies such as MillerCoors suggest that two scenarios are at play.

The millennial and Gen X generations are communicating more and more via text and social media in lieu of socializing at their neighborhood pub.

There is also the parallel renaissance of the craft distillery, and I believe it's no coincidence that these statistics coincide with the emergence of the craft cocktail movement.

We will probably never reach the per capita brewery volume we once saw in 1873, when there was a brewery for every 11,000 people. The 2016 brewery count, with our current population size, puts us at one brewery for every 65,000 people. We would need approximately 25,000 additional breweries nationwide to outshine 1873, which seems highly unlikely.

Although the brewing industry in America has been growing at an exponential rate since those parched early eighties, the foam bubble may have finally burst. It's my belief we are experiencing the tail end of our nation's greatest beer renaissance in terms of quantity and quality.

But, as a former beer judge, I can tell you our country's body of work is at an alltime high, and today's home and commercial brewer is making better beer than ever before. Not everything in America was better in the old days.

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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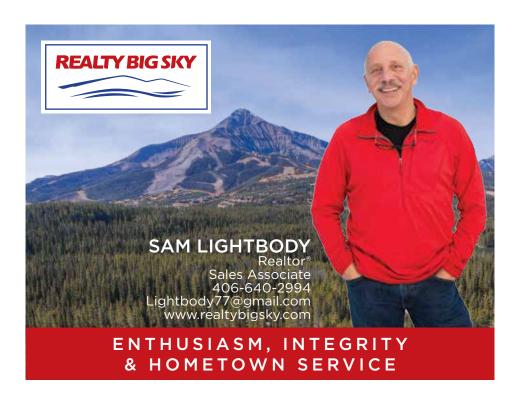
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Cooking on deadline: rib-eye steaks with thyme-garlic butter

BY KATIE WORKMAN ASSOCIATED PRESS

A perfectly cooked steak is what many people—with good reason—think of as a perfect meal.

This is a classy take on a restaurant-quality steak dinner, and other than remembering to salt the steak ahead of time (not a deal breaker, but recommended), it's only 30 minutes from start to finish.

Note these instructions are for a thick steak, at least 1 1/2-inches thick. Thinner steaks don't need the additional oven-roasting time, and will likely be overdone if they go into the oven after they are seared on both sides.

Here are five things that help make a good steak great, and a great steak marvelous:

- 1. Salting the meat a day before cooking it draws out excess liquid, concentrating and developing the flavor, and allows the meat to form a nice caramelized exterior. You can salt it an hour ahead too, but the longer time allows the seasoning to get past the surface into the middle of the meat.
- 2. Let the meat come to room temperature before cooking, or the inside will take significantly longer to warm up and cook, and by that time the outside of the steak will be overcooked.
- 3. Pat the meat dry before putting it in the pan. If the meat is wet, it won't sear well.
- 4. Use an oil with a high smoking point, like canola or vegetable, to cook steaks on the stove. Butter or oil with a lower smoking point will burn, and cause the steak to have a burnt taste, even if it is not overcooked itself. Butter is a lovely thought, but add it at the end and just allow it to melt in the hot pan.
- 5. This doesn't affect the quality of the steak, but turn on the exhaust fan! Odds are there will be a lot of smoke, so prepare by turning on the fan, opening windows and doors as you can, and thinking of this as a test to see if your smoke alarm batteries are still working.

And there you have it. Roast some potatoes once the oven is preheated, add a little sautéed spinach (cooked up while the steak is in the oven) or a green salad, and you've got that perfect steak dinner in your own home.

Katie Workman has written two cookbooks focused on easy, family-friendly cooking, "Dinner Solved!" and "The Mom 100 Cookbook." She blogs at themom100.com/about-katie-workman. She can be reached at katie@themom100.com.

RIB EYE STEAKS WITH THYME-GARLIC BUTTER

Serves four, generously.

2 rib-eye steaks, about 1 1/2 inches thick, and 1 to 1 1/4 pounds

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter

1 teaspoon finely minced garlic

1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves

The night before cooking the steaks, salt and pepper them liberally, and put them on a plate (if you have a wire rack, place them on the rack over a plate). Refrigerate uncovered overnight.

One hour before cooking the steaks, take them out of the fridge and allow them to come to room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Heat the oil in a large skillet (big enough to hold both steaks) over high heat. Pat the meat dry and add the steaks to the pan. Sear for 4 to 5 minutes, until the bottom is nicely browned, and then flip the steaks and brown for another 3 minutes. Transfer the pan to the oven and roast for another 5 to 10 minutes until the internal temperature reaches 120 to 125 degrees F for rare, 125 to 130 degrees F for medium rare.

Remove the steak from the pan to a cutting board, pour off any fat that has accumulated in the pan, and place the pan over medium low heat. Add the butter, garlic and thyme, and stir just until the butter has melted and you can smell the garlic (this will be quick, about 30 seconds, as the pan will be hot). Brush half of the seasoned butter over the resting steak and pour the rest of the butter into a small bowl. Let the steak sit for 10 minutes.

Slice the steak with a large, sharp knife, and fan out the slices on a serving platter. Brush the slices of meat with the remaining melted butter.





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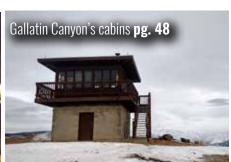




Section 3:BUSINESS, HEALTH & BACK 40







Making it in Big Sky: David O'Connor and Chuck Schommer of Buck's T-4 Lodge

BY SARAH GIANELLI EBS ASSOCIATE EDITOR

BIG SKY - Buck's T-4 Lodge has been a Big Sky tradition for 61 years. Co-owners David O'Connor and Chuck Schommer have a history with Buck's that long pre-dates their official partnership in the business in 2009. Since then, they have stayed true to the establishment's roadhouse roots while continuing to elevate the standards of the guest experience. A rustic elegance extends to the carefully conceived menu, the accommodations and the casual, yet professional service, attracting tourists and locals alike.

As part of this ongoing series, O'Connor shared his thoughts with EBS on the reasoning behind their success and longevity as a Big Sky small business

Explore Big Sky: What has been the key to your success?

David O'Connor: Buck's has always been known for consistency and authenticity. We have been a family-owned business—with one short gap—since our 1946 inception, and that brings a certain warmth and home-like feeling for both our guests and employees. Buck and Helen Knight had a very strong ethic of hospitality, and that love of caring for travelers still permeates the business today. Buck's has always managed to attract employees who share these values, and those people, over the years, have allowed Buck's to grow with Big Sky.

One of our team's agreed-upon core values is "relationships matter"; with our guests, our employees and our vendors. That basic idea was at the heart of Buck and Helen's success, and we try our best to let that drive our decision-making day to day.

EBS: What are the biggest obstacles to operating a small business in Big Sky?

D.O.: Right now, the highest hurdle facing most, if not all, businesses in Big Sky is staffing; a challenge which is mostly driven by the dire scarcity of attainable workforce housing. Chuck and I see many daily examples of

how fortunate we are to have the people around us that we do, but it grows more and more challenging every season to find those people.

Seasonality also contributes to this challenge, as it often is a detractor for career-minded individuals who might consider joining our team. Not to mention the myriad financial obstacles that arise from being seasonal.

EBS: How has the business landscape changed since you started out?

D.O.: Buck's has two complimentary businesses: the hotel and the restaurant, and each has evolved in different ways.

Big Sky, as a community, has been working hard to position itself in a closer relationship to Yellowstone National Park, and that effort is finally yielding a gradual reduction in the shoulder seasons for lodging. It was not very long ago that all of May, most of June and the majority of the fall were so slow that we closed outright. In the past few years we have seen an exponential increase in Yellowstone visitors making Big Sky part of their trip. The result is that the hotel is now (as of 2016) open 365 days a year, which was a huge step for us. Also, Big Sky's growth overall has allowed us to diversify and even out our market segments, so we are less dependent on any one kind of traveler. In the long run, this is the best insurance against a bad snow year, fire year ... becoming catastrophic.

Buck's restaurant has always been very fortunate to have the support of the Big Sky community at large, and we are incredibly grateful for that every day. However, increasing competition is outpacing the growth of the community right now. We are very confident this will even out, and relatively shortly, but in the meantime the slices of the pie are smaller for all of us in the restaurant business here.

The American restaurant industry as a whole has also irrevocably changed in the past couple of decades. The interest in, and access to, a wide variety of cuisine means we can really explore, along with our guests, all sorts of cool things in food. We are foodie geeks at our core, and it's been tons of fun to be a part of the wave in this country powered by Food TV, locavore-ism,

health consciousness and the rise of artisanship. From Chuck's representation of Montana at the Beard Foundation in New York City in 2000 to the wide variety of tools and ingredients we have access to today, there has been no better, no more fun time to be in the restaurant business.

EBS: What is it about Big Sky that compels you to stick it out through the hard times?

D.O.: The people, the people, the people. The nature of the Big Sky community, both for residents and businesses, is really one of inclusivity. For the most part, when things are challenging for us, they are challenging for all of us. We've seen countless examples of the community pulling together in tough times, in countless ways. That's incredibly rare in any community, and that sense of shared challenge and success across Big Sky is a huge lift when the chips are down.

Continued on page 34.



The owners of Buck's T-4 Lodge, Chuck Schommer (left) and David O'Connor, share secrets to their business' success and discuss the obstacles facing small businesses in Big Sky. PHOTO BY AMANDA EGGERT

Continued from page 33.

EBS: Why do you think so many new businesses fold relatively quickly?

D.O.: The cash management challenges posed by seasonality are a real killer. It's tough for many new business owners to wrap their mind around how they can be both profitable and broke at the same time. It takes a few years under your belt to get a sense of the rhythm of your business's financial resources.

EBS: What advice would you give to small business owners just starting out in Big Sky?

D.O.: Be grateful for every customer that comes in the door and every employee that punches the clock; and take every opportunity to let them know that you are. Keep your commitments, be open when you say you will be and make a conscious effort to stop talking and listen. If you wake up every day thinking "woe is me," find something else to do.

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

D.O.: Mike Scholz, who acquired Buck's from the Knights and built Buck's into what it is today, taught us pretty much everything we know about owning and operating Buck's T-4. His mentorship has been a foundation in both of our lives. There are so many valuable pieces of advice Mike has imparted over the years it's difficult to identify one as "best," but one that is constantly on our minds is that this business is won or lost on nickels and dimes. It is all too easy to lose sight of the small stuff while we try to think of the big picture, and losing track of those things, when taken in the aggregate, can be lethal.

Buck's T-4 by the numbers



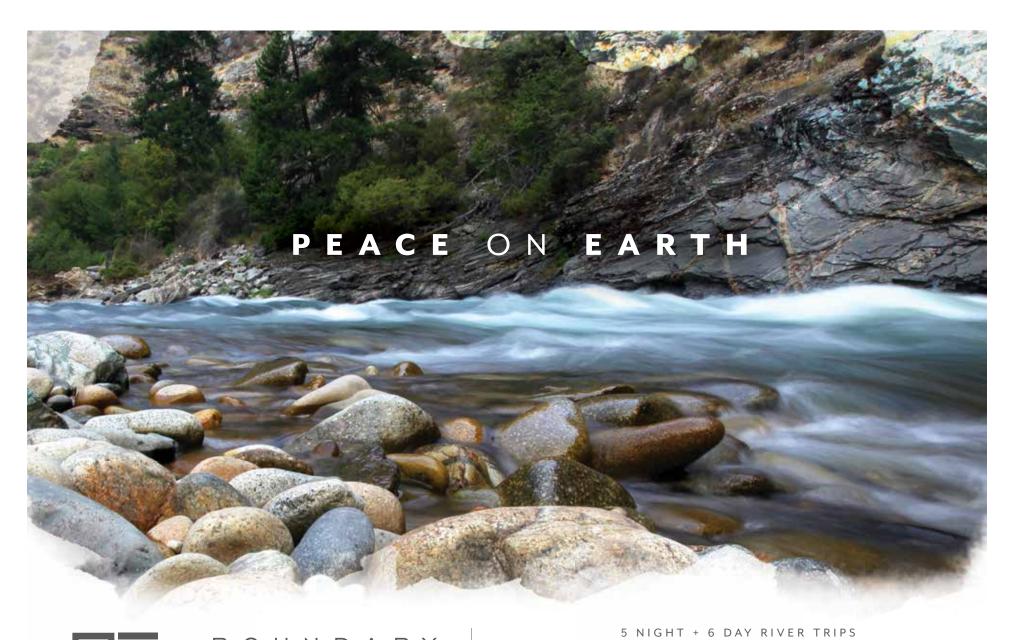
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Middle fork of the Salmon River, Idaho

Montana governor visits set of 'Yellowstone' TV show

BY EVE BYRON RAVALLI REPUBLIC

HAMILTON, Mont. (AP) - Actor Kevin Costner welcomed Gov. Steve Bullock last week to the set of the new cable TV series "Yellowstone," much of which is being shot at the Chief Joseph Ranch.

In the main living room of the lodge, decorated for the set with historic Navajo rugs hanging from the balconies and Remington bronzes on the tables, Costner and Bullock, along with writer/director Taylor Sheridan, discussed the pros and cons of filming in Montana.

Costner, looking relaxed in blue jeans and a dark sweater, said filming "Dances with Wolves'" in South Dakota and "Field of Dreams" in Iowa changed the way those states are perceived. He called the new series "a postcard for Montana."

"What a cool state to be the governor," Costner said. "If something like 'Yellowstone' has a way of highlighting, being somewhat of a dramatic love letter to your state, we'll be successful. The writing for it is superior."

"But how's the acting?" Bullock replied with a grin.

"Well, I'm being sent home right now," Costner joked. "Actually, my community is on fire. But I do think something like 'Yellowstone' can change people, making it so they want to go here."

Costner has a home outside of Santa Barbara, California, where the Thomas fire has charred more than 425 square miles and two new fires broke out recently.

Joking aside, both Costner and Sheridan noted the economic boost "Yellowstone" is bringing to the Bitterroot Valley as well as Montana overall. The Montana Department of Commerce estimates the production has paid about \$100,000 in labor, plus another \$1.45 million for lodging, supplies, props, location fees and other expenses—including \$25,000 for filming scenes in the Capitol.

"We spent \$500,000 on hotels and car rentals," said Perri Eppie, the publicity coordinator for "Yellowstone." "We've even stolen a few of your people and brought them to Utah," where some interior shots are being filmed.

They've hired at least 63 people as drivers, technicians and production assistants, and an untold number of laborers to build fences, redo the corrals and arenas, and become extras for filming.

One company they hired was Rocky Mountain Homes in Hamilton, to add a front porch to the 100-year-old log home with river rock accents, because Sheridan decided he wanted the main entrance to be on the north side of the house. The company had to dig a large trench 6 feet down for the foundation, then build the deck.

"We asked them how long they thought it would take, and they said four months when I first asked," said Ruth DeJong, the production designer. "I said 'That's not how we operate' and they had it done in nine days. They were amazing."

On Dec. 14, the grounds were buzzing with activity as Eppie took members of the press and state officials on a tour of the filming site. ATVs

ferried people and equipment around, while riders put horses through their paces.

According to a press release, "Yellowstone" chronicles the Dutton family, led by John Dutton (played by Costner) who controls the largest contiguous cattle ranch in the United States.

"Amid shifting alliances, open wounds, and hard-earned respect, the ranch is in constant conflict with those it borders—an expanding town, an Indian reservation, and America's first national park. Far from media scrutiny, it's a violent world of poisoned drinking water and unsolved murders. Yellowstone is an intense study of the modern West rife with land developers, energy speculators, assorted politicians, estranged family and tribal players. Within this pentagon of interests, land lust is insatiable and love is weaponized."

Sheridan, who is a Wyoming native and perhaps best known for the recently released movie "Wind River, said he came up with the idea for "Yellowstone" and started writing it in Livingston in 2013. DeJong was looking for a site to shoot it in the Paradise Valley when she stumbled upon the Chief Joseph Ranch.

"I could have shot this anywhere else, but I couldn't find this anywhere else. ... I decided to make a financial sacrifice to come here."

- Taylor Sheridan, writer/director of "Yellowstone"

"I wrote a show where I wanted to be, and that wasn't in California, but in Montana," Sheridan said. "So I came up with a story line I thought was relevant.

"I could have shot this anywhere else, but I couldn't find this anywhere else. ... I decided to make a financial sacrifice to come here."

The solitude and scenery was part of that incentive, but the lack of tax credits provided in other states, as well as the remoteness of the location, was a challenge. Sheridan said he's willing to testify before the Montana Legislature about the power of tax incentives for filmmakers.

"I took a funding hit to come to the state for this, so anything I can do to sweeten the pot would be great. But you're stuck with me now," Sheridan said, grinning.

"Yellowstone" will air on the Paramount Network, which will replace the cable channel Spike in January. The show, which has filmed off and on in Darby, Helena, the Crow Reservation and Utah since August, will return to the Bitterroot in March to shoot some final scenes before airing this summer.

Depending on reactions to the show, they just might be back for a second season.

"It's special to be here and do what we do," DeJong said.

Editor's Note: An AP member exchange



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AT A GLANCE

\$3.5 million

to local nonprofits since 2010

\$380,000+
awarded to
35+ local groups
in the past year

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

30,000 weekend KidsPacks annually to feed hungry kids

Big Sky Medical Center major donor

Creek restoration supports river and fish health

4 annual youth scholarships

YELLOWSTONE CLUB COMMUNITY FOUNDATION IS A REGISTERED 501(C)3 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION. YELLOWSTONECLUBFOUNDATION.ORG

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

December giving

As writer Teri Marshall once said, "The holiday season is a perfect time to reflect on our blessings and seek out ways to make life better for those around us." In the spirit of giving and the holidays, let's explore the work of the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, a local nonprofit embarking on its eighth year.

The foundation was originally started by Yellowstone Club members in 2010 as a grassroots effort to benefit and assist Yellowstone Club employees in the Big Sky area. Their current mission is to provide grants to nonprofit organizations that promote community services, arts and education, health, and conservation efforts.

The organization is funded through Yellowstone Club members and guests, and three annual fundraisers. Over the past seven years, the foundation has grown alongside the Yellowstone Club and town of Big Sky. Since its inception, YCCF has given \$3.5 million to local nonprofits. It could not do this amazing work without the generous support of the Yellowstone Club membership.



with you! Simplify your giving. Amplify your impact. Join Give Big! Please visit givebiggv.org for information on Give Big 2018. PHOTO COURTESY OF BOZEMAN AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

This December marks the end of their annual fall grant cycle in which the foundation secured funds for 28 local nonprofits. YCCF was thrilled to award a total of \$200,000—up from \$160,000 last December—highlighting grant recipient programs on mental health, substance abuse prevention and housing.

The organization continued to fund longtime grantees like the Big Sky Food Bank and Thrive, Inc., which runs Girls on the Run and the CAP mentor program. Nearly 50 organizations asked for almost \$700,000, setting a new record for demand.

In addition to their biannual grant cycle, YCCF will sponsor a local communications training with Big Sky resident Lori Addicks. They are underwriting most of the cost to allow many Big Sky nonprofit leaders to





Girls on the Run gather for the Run for Your Life 5K on Oct. 29, 2017. The mission of Girls on the Run is to inspire girls to be joyful, healthy and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum that creatively integrates running. PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIE GRIMM

receive critical training to understand stakeholders better. The training will also allow the groups to learn more about each other and their organizations.

To increase focus on capacity building, effectiveness and collaboration between nonprofits, the foundation is funding the Give Big Gallatin Valley 24-hour online giving program on May 4 and 5, 2018. This helps all nonprofits in our area build capacity in fundraising, with an emphasis on social media and online campaigns. It's also a fantastic day of collaboration to highlight the nonprofit sector. Please consider this event in your 2018 annual giving.

There are a lot of good reasons to make donations to charity, but most boil down to one simple truth: giving feels good. Thus, it's not surprising that many of us give money or property or time to organizations we care about. In addition to contributing to the greater good, there are also tax benefits to charitable giving. A gift to an eligible organization may entitle you to a charitable contribution deduction against your income tax. Contributions are deductible in the year made, so be sure and get those gifts in by Dec. 31. Keep a record of your gift, whether it's a tax acknowledgement or a credit card receipt, and consult with your tax advisor to determine the value verses the donation of the gift.

Happy Holidays, Big Sky! Let it snow.



Big Sky Community Food Bank's vision is to help Big Sky become a stable and livable year-round resort community for all. BSCFB promotes a vibrant local economy by utilizing community resources to preserve the food security, health and dignity of those in need in the Big Sky area. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN VALLEY FOOD BANK



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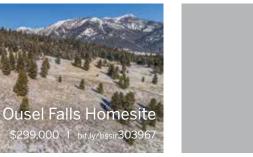






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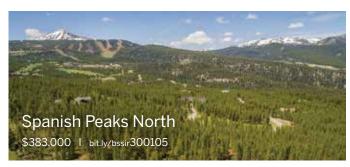


Agents

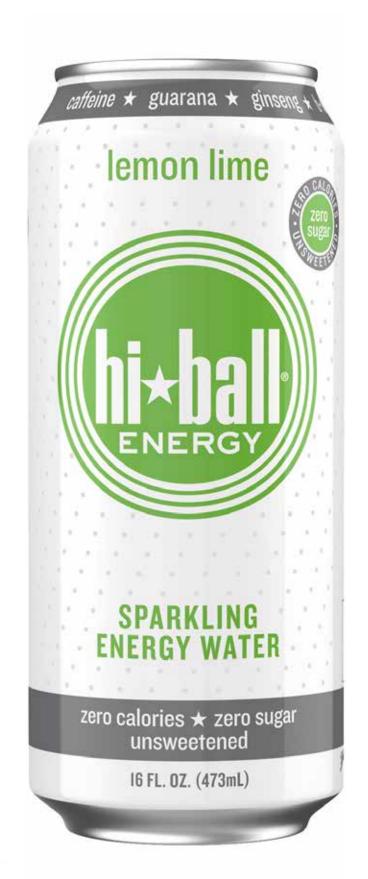
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Last-minute shoppers encouraged to buy local with Made in Montana gifts

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

With little time remaining to buy for the holidays, the Made in Montana program at the Department of Commerce is available to help shoppers find the perfect gifts for their friends and family by connecting them with authentic Montana-made products.

The Department of Commerce recently launched the new Made in Montana website, madeinmontanausa.com, where shoppers can browse an online directory with dozens of product categories. Popular gifts like clothing and accessories complement more out-of-the-box options like maps and pet supplies.

"The new Made in Montana website has been expertly designed to serve producers and buyers," said Commerce Director Pam Haxby-Cote. "It helps to promote Montana's small businesses by highlighting their products with bold photography, and it helps buyers discover new products with its robust database of Montana-made goods."

For the hands-on shopper, the website also features a directory of nearly 250 retail stores across the state where Made in Montana products

According to the Small Business Index produced by MetLife and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, more than half of retail small business owners say their success for the whole year depends on the holiday season.

"Buying authentic Made in Montana gifts helps to support your friends and neighbors while also keeping the money you spend close to home in Montana," Haxby-Cote said.

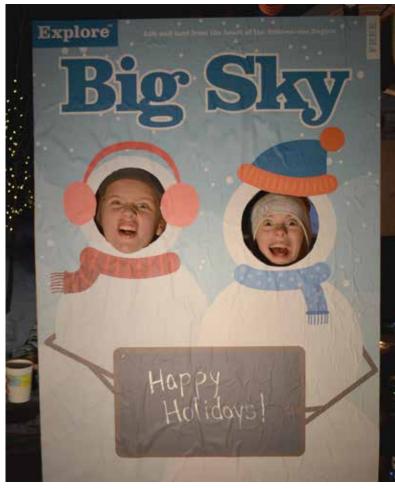
The Made in Montana program, which also includes Grown in Montana and Native American Made in Montana, helps businesses to market qualifying products by labeling them with a special logo. More than 3,400 businesses belong to the program, and new members join every month.



Shoppers are encouraged to purchase Made in Montana gifts this holiday season. More than 3,400 businesses belong to the program and a new website launched by the state includes a directory of more than 250 retail stores that carry these products. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

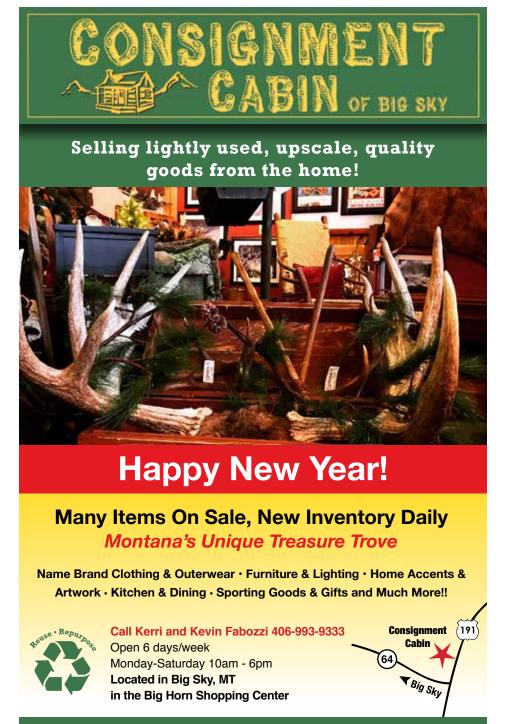
Big Sky Christmas Stroll 2017

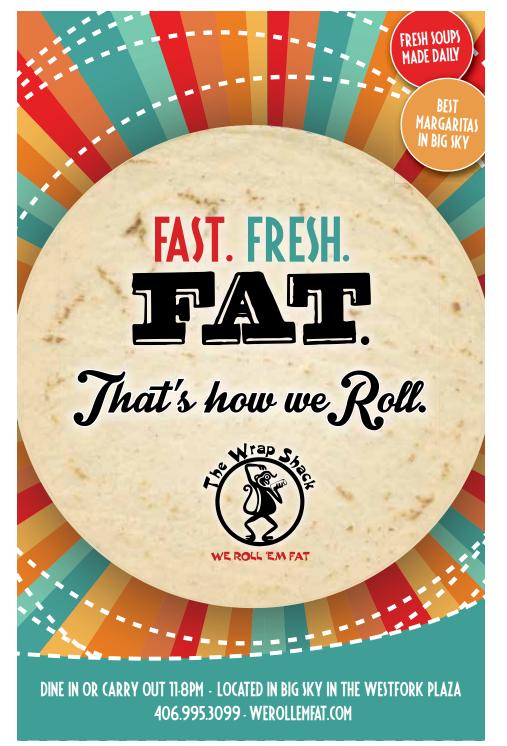
Big Sky came out to revel in and share a little holiday cheer during the 20th annual Big Sky Christmas Stroll on Dec. 15. Activities included sleigh rides, fireworks, ice-skating, s'mores at Fire Pit Park in Town Center and visits with Santa Claus. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTOS











DOCTOR'S NOTE

Skier suffers rare posterior cruciate ligament tear in terrain park crash



BY JEFF DANIELS EBS MEDICAL COLUMNIST

The ski and snowboard season of 2017-2018 is getting off to an unusual start. The snow and cold before opening day has petered out, and now we are praying for a good dump to get us up to par compared to previous years. It certainly seems to be keeping the crowds away, but we know that by Christmas, good snow or bad,

things will be hopping at the Medical Clinic of Big Sky.

We did get a couple of bad knee injuries recently, one of which completely fooled me because the mechanism of injury was hard to decipher. A young man was skiing in the terrain park and decided to slide down a rail. At about the middle of the rail, he decided to do an about-face, but his skis did not follow the rest of his body and he ended up doing a split on the rail.

He did not feel a pop, although he was sure that his left knee twisted. The rail gave him a vertical gash in his left shin, and left him with a painfully swollen knee. He was able to ski down to the clinic, where we sutured the leg wound. We started to examine the knee but couldn't come to a conclusion or a specific diagnosis. I did leave out one test that I wish I would have done, and that is looking for a sag of the lower bone, the tibia, off the upper bone, the femur. This is the opposite movement of what would be seen in an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injury. It indicates a tear of the posterior cruciate ligament, or PCL, which is an injury that I've seen once or twice on this mountain over the last 24 years. I've diagnosed thousands of ACL injuries in that same period.

I was suspicious enough for some injury, so I sent him down for an MRI that afternoon, and it showed a complete tear of the PCL off of its attachment on the femur. This will end his season and necessitate surgery.

I'll have to add this mechanism of injury—a split on a terrain park rail—to my list of ways to really screw up a knee. It wouldn't happen in snowboards, where any kind of knee injury is much less common than in skiing. And I'll always look for that sag.

The other nasty knee injury occurred in a very tall man from South Dakota who was skiing down the Bowl. He ejected from his skis and fell forward. He thought that the ski then came back and struck him in the shin. He needed a sled ride down to the clinic, but was hoping that we wouldn't find further injury.

I put my hands on his painful swollen right knee and decided to get an X-ray for what I knew would not turn out to be a bruised shin. The first X-ray showed a crack across his tibia, and subsequent images showed that the crack traveled all the way up to his knee joint, making this a tibial plateau fracture of the worst kind, and our first of the ski season. Surgery for this is usually done within a week.

Having had his right knee and leg shattered in a previous ski accident, as well as a broken hip in a third ski accident, he seemed resigned to his fate. His son drove him back to South Dakota that day. He said he would be back next year!

Be prepared for some changes at the clinic. I'll write about them in my next column. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Dr. Jeff Daniels was the recipient of the 2015 Chamber of Commerce Chet Huntley Lifetime Achievement Award and 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 800 medical students and young doctors to train with the Medical Clinic of Big Sky.

From Jackie with love How to make resolutions stick



BY JACKIE RAINFORD CORCORAN EBS HEALTH COLUMNIST

Authors Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey reference a study in their book, "Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization," that found that even when doctors told heart patients they would die if they didn't change their lifestyles, only one in seven complied.

Change is hard.

As a holistic health coach, I see this firsthand. My clients are smart, driven and successful people, yet many of them struggle with a change they've been trying to make in spite of knowing what to do and having a strong desire to do it.

Here's the rub: changes that we can't make stick are what Kegan and Lahey call "adaptive challenges," meaning they are caused by unidentified beliefs, fears or values that block our efforts and make us immune to change. Instead of using an "adaptive solution" and discovering how hidden beliefs are holding us back, we use "technical solutions" that don't work and leave us feeling bad about our seeming lack of discipline.

For example, if losing weight was a simple technical challenge, then following technical solutions like a diet plan and exercise routine would work easily and permanently for everyone. But they usually don't.

Instead, we have to discover the hidden beliefs that are keeping us from change and appreciate that the subconscious has rooted them in our psyche in an attempt to protect us.

If you have an adaptive challenge that's keeping you from change, here's a New Year's gift: a simple writing exercise that will help you discover your underlying blocks.

Draw four columns on a piece of horizontally positioned paper. Label them

as follows: 1. Desired Change 2. Doing/Not Doing 3. Hidden Competing Commitments 4. Big Assumptions.

Fill in the columns as follows:

- 1. Write the change you seek and list the actions that will help you achieve this, i.e., that you want to exercise every day.
- 2. List all the behaviors that you're doing and not doing that keep you from this change. You don't need to explain or understand them. Define your actions, not your feelings. For example, one behavior might be that you don't make time to exercise.
- 3. Here's where things get exciting. Look at each behavior listed in column two and ask yourself what fears you have about doing the opposite. Go big here. Write worst-case scenarios. This is where you identify your hidden commitments. You can now see how you have one foot on the gas (column one) and one foot on the brake (column three). This is the immune system "protecting" you from undesirable outcomes, i.e., if you make time to work out every day, you fear your work will suffer and you'll let your clients down causing them to quit working with you.
- 4. Identify what's at the heart of your competing commitments listed in column three. Use "if _____, then ____" statements to help you identify your big assumptions, i.e., if you exercise every day, you'll fall behind on work, lose clients and won't be able to pay your mortgage, and ultimately your family will be homeless. No wonder you haven't been able to make you exercise goal stick!

Now that you've identified your blocks to change, create small safe tests that allow you to discover if your big assumptions are true.

If you'd like guidance and accountability in discovering your immunity to change and support along your change journey, I'd love to hear from you.

Happy New Year!

Jackie Rainford Corcoran is an IIN Certified Holistic Health Coach, culture consultant, TEDx speaker and podcaster. For a complimentary health consultation, visit her



Montana dentists fear cuts' effect on vulnerable patients

BILLINGS (AP) - Montana dentists fear state budget cuts for adult dental care will hurt people with disabilities and elderly people most.

Montana's dental care for those populations have been praised by dentists, but the state's Medicaid program is now facing an \$8.9 million funding cut as part of lawmakers' efforts to balance the state budget.

States must provide certain dental coverage for children on Medicaid but adult benefits are optional, Lee Newspapers of Montana reported Sunday.

Dentists across the state said the cuts will mean less coverage for people in nursing homes and those with disabilities who will struggle to get dental care.

"As a clinician, my hands are tied behind my back to be able to help people as they come in now," said Dr. Matt Calkins, who operates Sand Creek Dental in Glendive. "If they have a tooth that's infected and needs to be taken out, now there's nothing to replace that tooth. If someone has no teeth left or a couple, it's not a good situation."

Others said they are most concerned about people in nursing homes who depend on Medicaid coverage to afford dentures and other care.

Dr. Jane Gillette operates a small practice that travels to nursing homes. She said healthy teeth allow residents of nursing homes to keep eating their favorite meals—a highlight of many patients' days.

"We take away their one joy in life and that's to eat their pot roast and green beans," she said. "The only thing they have left is to eat their cake and now we are going to take away their teeth to do that."

Dentists also fear that poor oral health will have ripple effects on patients' physical and mental health. For example, providers said people who have teeth pain or have lost many teeth have difficulty eating and can lose weight quickly.

"If you have poor oral health, there is evidence it can lead to a variety of conditions including severe infections, cardiovascular issues and effects on pregnancy," said David Hemion, executive director of the Montana Dental Association. "If dental services to adults are being eliminated, those are going to show up as conditions that can be more severe and have more impact on the budget."

State health officials plan to write rules about exactly how the budget cuts will be implemented by March. Dentists said they hope their concerns will be considered.



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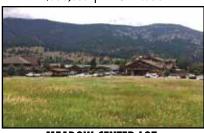
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Open a Montana medical savings account before Dec. 31 for 2017 tax savings

MSU NEWS SERVICE

BOZEMAN - Opening a Montana medical care savings account by Dec. 31 to help with medical expenses not covered by a health insurance policy or flexible spending account can help individuals save on taxes, according to Marsha Goetting, a family economics specialist with Montana State University Extension.

"Up to \$3,000 of a deposit into the account, per taxpayer, is deductible from an individual's 2017 Montana adjusted gross income, thus reducing taxes," Goetting said.

"This tax advantage does not apply to your federal income taxes, however, and should not be confused with the Federal Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) or Federal Flexible Spending Plans (FSAs)," she said.

To establish a medical care savings account, individuals should contact their financial institution, such as a bank, savings bank or credit union, Goetting said. She added that a Montanan with taxable income over \$17,600 could save about \$207 in state income taxes by depositing the maximum \$3,000 in a Montana medical care savings account.

"It doesn't matter if you have already paid your 2017 medical bills either by check, credit or debit card," said Goetting. "You can add up those eligible expenses, make a deposit by Dec. 31 of this year and reimburse yourself from your Montana MSA as late as Jan. 15, 2018."

The key word is "paid," Goetting said.

"You can reimburse yourself for paid eligible medical expenses as late as Jan. 15, 2018. But if you haven't yet paid those bills because your health insurance company hasn't sorted out what it will pay and what you still owe, you still can reimburse yourself for those 2017 expenses after Jan. 15, 2018."

"The amount available to reduce your Montana income is the total deposited, not the amount used for medical expenses during the tax year," Goetting said.

"For example, if you deposited \$3,000 in an MSA but only used \$100 for eligible medical expenses during 2017, you still get to reduce your income for Montana income tax purposes by \$3,000. The remaining \$2,900 is available for paying medical expenses in future years."

A married couple that establishes medical savings accounts individually can receive a \$6,000 deduction if they file a joint Montana income tax return, Goetting said. The couple will then save about \$414 on their state income taxes. However, joint medical savings accounts are not allowed.

Medical care savings account amounts held in the name of one spouse can be used to pay the medical bills of either spouse or their dependent children, Goetting said.

"For example, if a husband had \$6,000 in medical expenses during 2017, \$3,000 from his own MSA and \$3,000 from his wife's MSA could be used for his bills," Goetting said.

Eligible expenses include medical and dental insurance premiums, long-term care insurance, dental care (including orthodontists), eyeglasses or contacts or prescription drugs that are paid during the year. Not covered are medical-related bills that have been already covered by a supplemental, primary or self-insured plan.

Goetting said that Montana generally accepts as eligible expenses any that are listed in the IRS 502 Publication Medical and Dental Expenses, which is available at irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf-p502.pdf.

An MSU Extension MontGuide can help individuals decide if they would benefit from a Montana medical care savings account. The publication (MontGuide 199817 HR) is free if picked up from a local MSU County Extension office. Or, it can be downloaded for free at msuextension.org.





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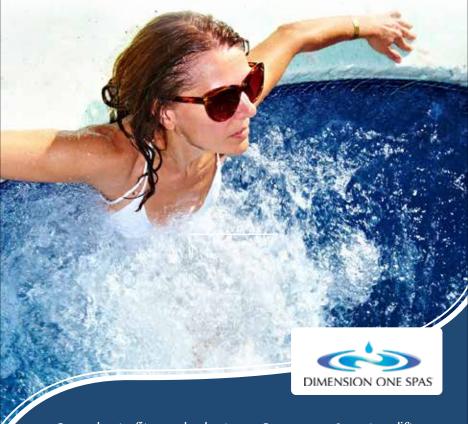
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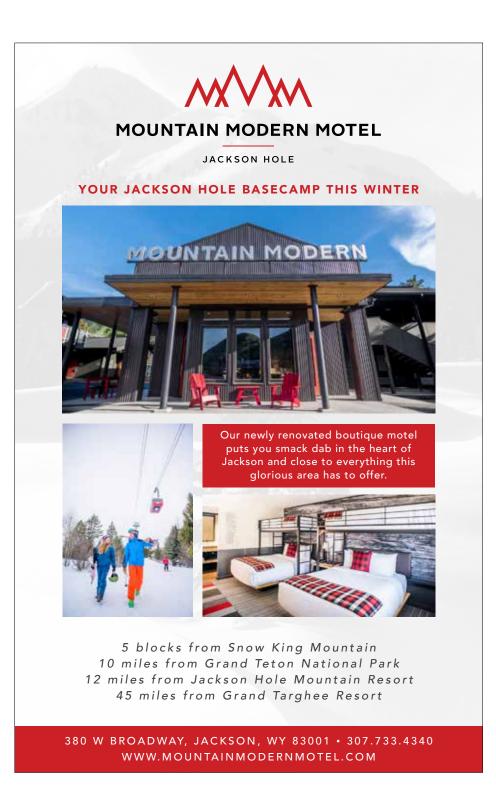
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BACKLI

For Explore Big Sky, the Back 40 is a resource: a place where we can delve into subjects and ask experts to share their knowledge.

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

Adventure awaits in Gallatin Canyon's cabins

BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Time spent outdoors is made all the more intimate when snow is falling and temperatures dip well past freezing. Certainly, there's something humbling about seeing a moose furry with winter's coat, knee deep in new snow and sending frosty breaths into the air as you shiver in your down coat. The sound of a coyote carries well through crisp, frozen air. And glimmering snow gives easily to the waxed edge of a ski.

Opportunities to enjoy and explore the wonders of our natural world are plentiful throughout the winter. A personal favorite, which has rapidly become a winter tradition, is seeking out our local U.S. Forest Service cabins.

There are 24 Forest Service cabins available to rent in the wintertime throughout the Custer Gallatin National Forest, and four are found within the Gallatin Canyon. Many of these cabins are a link to the past, having served as shelter for Forest Rangers on patrol in the 1920s and '30s. Today, these cabins still offer shelter for those seeking a kind of wildness and adventure.

Spanish Creek Cabin

The Spanish Creek Cabin is about 4 miles from the end of the plowed portion of Spanish Creek Road, and is accessible by ski, snowshoe or bike, depending on snow conditions. This area is near the Lee Metcalf Wilderness and is closed to snowmobiles, but the 1930s cabin itself serves as a great base camp to adventure. There's a nearby network of trails heading right into wilderness, and remote backcountry skiing abounds. A set of bunk beds and a loft with two twin beds sleep four people.

Garnet Mountain Fire Lookout

Sitting atop the apex of Garnet Mountain (elevation 8,245 feet), the huge glass windows of the Garnet Mountain Fire Lookout reveal a panorama of the Gallatin Range. The structure was built in 1962, over the top of the former fire lookout established in 1930. This lookout sleeps four and visitors should plan on a cold night of winter camping, as the large windows do little to retain heat. To get there, travel to Storm Castle Road and ski, snowmobile or snowshoe up to 10 miles, gaining over 2,000 feet in elevation along the way. The paths to this cabin cross potential avalanche areas, so be sure to check the avalanche advisory.

Yellow Mule Cabin

Tucked away in the rugged backcountry, the Yellow Mule Cabin was constructed based upon the builder's preference rather than standard Forest Service design. The 1920 structure is comprised of a 12-by-14-foot room that accommodates three. It's close to McAtee Basin and Buck Creek Ridge Trail,





Garnet Mountain Fire Lookout is one of four Forest Service cabins in Gallatin Canyon available to rent during the winter. PHOTOS BY GRAHAM GOFF

the latter of which is a popular snowmobile route that offers a 1,000-foot elevation gain. To access the cabin via snowmobile, park off the highway east of Buck Creek Ridge Road or at the Lower Buck Creek Trailhead near the Corral Bar and Steakhouse and ride approximately 18 miles. For those wishing to travel by fat bike, park at the Ousel Falls Trailhead. Note that this is a remote cabin, and cooking facilities and firewood are not provided.

Wapiti Cabin

The rustic Wapiti Cabin is the picture of a traditional Forest Service cabin, with forest green windows, doors, tables and chairs. The cabin sits within the Taylor Fork drainage, offering good terrain for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, and the Big Sky Snowmobile Trail passes nearby. There are cots to sleep four. Parking is available at Sage Creek Trailhead south of Big Sky, and visitors can travel by snowmobile 6 miles on the Big Sky/Carrot Basin Trail. Depending on road conditions, visitors may also drive up the intermittently plowed Taylor Fork Road to Wapiti Creek Road and continue the remaining 2 miles by ski, foot or snowmobile.

Know before you go

While each cabin is rustic, amenities vary. All cabins come with a wood-burning stove for heat, and usually there is split wood available. Expect not to have cell phone service and remember you'll be using an outhouse during your stay. You'll need to melt snow or bring your own source of water, and you should be prepared with your own bedding, flashlight, cookware, dish soap, matches, toilet paper and first aid kit.

Just like any trip to the mountains, be aware of what could go wrong and prepare for it. Bring a copy of the combination to unlock the door and bring extra propane for the lantern. If you are staying in one of the more remote cabins, bring emergency items in case you have to spend the night outdoors.

Forest Service cabins are rented through an online reservation system and it's not uncommon for the most popular ones to book six months in advance. However, there may still be a hidden gem out there that hasn't yet been reserved this winter.

To check reservations or find out more on a specific cabin, visit recreation.gov. Avalanche advisories are available at mtavalanche.com or by calling (406) 587-6981.

Section 4:OUTDOORS & FUN







INSIDE YELLOWSTONE



Experiencing Yellowstone's Winter Wonderland

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK LODGES/XANTERRA

When Yellowstone National Park is covered in a blanket of snow, things can get a little weird.

Throughout the winter season, the park becomes a 2.2-million-acre visual smorgasbord, full of strange sights and sounds that delight the park's visitors and residents alike.

"Even those of us who have lived here for years can still feel like a kid in a candy store when we experience the wonders of the park in the winter," said Rick Hoeninghausen, director of sales and marketing for Xanterra Parks & Resorts in Yellowstone.

"When you combine the park's geothermal stew of geysers, hot springs, fumaroles and mud pots; a dizzying array of wildlife from survival-focused bison to feisty wolves; an average of 150 inches of snowfall; and a vast and diverse landscape, visitors are rewarded with an experience like few other places on Earth."

Here are just a few of the strange experiences visitors can expect during a winter visit to the park:

Snowball beards. Bison have it pretty rough in the winter. These massive creatures spend their winters foraging for food beneath the snow, and they can sometimes be seen with large clumps of snow and ice dangling from their chins by their hair. These oddly shaped "beards" dangle precariously from a bison's jaw until the weight forces them to break off, sometimes taking fur with them.

Ice Fog. When the conditions are just right, visitors will see light-reflecting ice crystals floating in the air, giving the illusion of a fog. As the crystals drift through the air, they reflect the sun's rays.

Monkey flowers. Only a few inches tall, these strange yellow wildflowers grow exclusively around hot springs. They are able to survive because of their short stature as well as the heat of the springs. There's a summer-season monkey flower too, but it is much taller, and it grows around streams and springs.

Ice sheets. In the winter, Yellowstone Lake can have 136 square miles of ice, making it one of the largest ice sheets in the lower 48 states. Ice can be two feet thick on the surface but some spots on the bottom of the lake might still be boiling because of the park's thermal activity.

Ghost trees. During periods of extreme cold, rime from hydrothermal mist accumulates on the branches of trees. When combined with falling snow, trees take on an eerie appearance and

are known as "ghost trees." These much-photographed trees are stunning to behold, but they can eventually cause tree limbs to break.

Snow sculptures. The park's powerful winter wind blows snow around like dust, and the resulting drifts, patterns and formations, some strikingly and eerily symmetrical, are breathtaking.

Snow mirrors. Shiny, icy patches of snow form when the snow melts slightly and then refreezes, creating a smooth, reflective surface. When conditions are right, entire fields and mountains can appear shiny and reflective from a distance.

Geyser rain. When the near-boiling water from a geyser shoots into frigid air, the resulting "geyser rain" looks like frozen ice pellets floating back to Earth.

Rivers that never freeze. Despite the park's cold temperatures, the Madison River and many other rivers in the park never freeze because the rivers' flows come from geothermal sources.

Starlight shadows. Thanks to Yellowstone's dark skies, it's possible to see one's shadow created by starlight alone. The winter snow cover helps create the perfect surface for the shadows. The shadows can be faint, so allow enough time away from other light in order for your eyes to adequately adjust to the dark. But don't forget to look up as well, as the star show is incredible, again thanks to the lack of light pollution.



Rime, or frost forming from the hydrothermal mist, collects on a tree at Mammoth Hot Springs. NPS PHOTO

Sore mouth disease suspected in Yellowstone bighorns

BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT EBS CONTRIBUTOR

GARDINER – A common viral disease in domestic sheep and goats is the suspected cause of scabby sores around the mouths of bighorn sheep in Yellowstone.

Known as contagious ecthyma, or sore mouth disease, this illness is widespread in wild bighorn sheep populations within the Rocky Mountains from Alaska to California, however park spokeswoman Vicki Regula said this is the first time sore mouth has been observed in Yellowstone.

Sore mouth disease is caused by parapoxvirus and is transmittable to people if direct contact occurs. The illness is typically spread from ewes to lambs, and affected animals usually recover without scarring. The scabby sores often disappear in two to four weeks.

In severe outbreaks, however, deaths may occur when the sores limit an animal's ability to eat. This tends to have the greatest impact on lambs that refuse to nurse because of the sore mouths.

As of EBS press time Dec. 20, only breeding age rams have been observed with the lesions, after the park's videographer noticed some rams between Mammoth Hot Springs and Gardiner with mouth sores on Nov. 21.

Park officials reported in a news release that the cause of this recent outbreak is unknown, but its impact on rams is likely the result of frequent contact with each other and possibly infected ewes during the breeding season.

Wildlife biologist Karen Loveless, who is based in Gardiner, said she has received several reports of sheep with the disease north of the park near Cinnabar Mountain and Tom Miner Basin.



A breeding age ram suspected of carrying sore mouth disease, a viral disease found in domestic sheep and goats that causes scabby sores around the face and mouth. NPS PHOTO

"I suspect they're the same three rams, moving because of the rut," she said. Loveless confirmed one sighting of a diseased bighorn outside of Yellowstone, having spotted a ewe with lesions on her mouth. "She was eating and did not look skinny," Loveless said.

Officials report that the disease is difficult to control in bighorn sheep. Often, control efforts are not warranted since animals build up protective antibodies and are usually able to recover from the disease.

Biologists continue to monitor the infected animals and herd, both within Yellowstone and near Gardiner.

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Evening Workshop

Series

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7:30-8:30am
All Levels Yoga
9:00 - 10:00am
All Levels Yoga
4:15 - 5:15pm
Roll & Recover Yoga
(warm room)
5:45 - 7:15pm
Sacred Sweat

WEDNESDAY

7:00-8:00am
All Levels Yoga
9:00-10:15am
All Levels Yoga
11:00 - 12:30pm
The Practice
Yoga Level 2-3
2:00 - 3:00pm
Chair Yoga
7:00-8:00pm
Awareness
Wednesdays

THURSDAY

7:30-8:30am All Levels Mat Pilates

9:00-10:00am

All Levels Yoga

5:45 - 7:00pm All Levels Yoga

FRIDAY

7:30 - 8:30am Dance to Fit

9:00 - 10:15am All Levels Yoga

12:00 - 12:50pm All Levels Yoga

9:00-10:15am

All Levels Yoga

Check our Website for Weekend Workshops and Special Events.

Open-source software improves snow research

BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BOZEMAN – All over the world, snow researchers and snow scientists dig holes in the snow. They look at the snow crystals, feel for strong and weak layers, and take measurements in order to predict and better understand avalanches. But snow science recently took an about-face, thanks to the open-source software known as SnowPilot.

Doug Chabot of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center launched the SnowPilot Project during the winter of 2003-2004 after software developer Mark Kahrl wrote the program, hoping to find a way for researchers to collaborate and share their data on snow.

"Avalanche forecasters and snow researchers all over the world, they record snow pit data," Chabot said. "We all dig holes in the snow and say what we see using a common language."

But what Chabot realized in the early 2000s was that a large portion of snow data was being put away in desk drawers, never to be used. So he asked the question, what if we create a platform where researchers can enter their data into a worldwide database? And what if that database is accessible to everyone?

In 2016, the software program was made available online, and due to Bozeman mountaineer Conrad Anker's assistance finding a donor, the program is available for free. Over 1,400 users from 19 countries have entered data into the program, amounting to 11,500 individual snow pits.

Tom Leonard, Yellowstone Club's Director of Snow Safety, said SnowPilot is allowing for a remarkable change in how snow science is done.

In the past, researchers drew graphs and took notes by hand, in notebooks that ultimately were stored in dusty desk drawers. Now, rather than boxes upon boxes of measurements and observations gathering dust, snow data is stored electronically and can easily be accessed by many.

"A local guy spearheaded that change from old school to new age electronics," Leonard said. "We should all appreciate how much effort he has put into this and the way everybody in the business records their data."

A typical user's experience with the program might include a member of ski patrol entering snow pit data for a certain basin, which can then be made public or can be shared privately. If the data is made public, another researcher may access the database with a specific question in mind and could use the ski patroler's snow pits for data.

"It's physically hard digging these snow pits," Chabot said, adding that the challenge and time it takes can be a limiting factor in the number of pits a researcher studies. "Instead of only looking at 50, we've got 11,500 for you to work with."



By digging into layers of snow, researchers are able to understand how snow changes over time. This information, known as a snow pit, can then be entered into the online database SnowPilot for further research and testing. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST AVALANCHE CENTER

In using the SnowPilot database, researchers are able to answer questions and make forecasts based upon a robust dataset that includes snow data taken in different climates at various times of the year, something that has never been available before.

"SnowPilot is backwards in that we're gathering all of the data, then we can ask questions," Chabot said.

Chabot added that anyone who's taken a level 1 avalanche course should be able to use the program. And according to Leonard, "If you're a snow nerd, if you get your head in the snow and you read the avalanche reports, it's just another tool to understand the area snowpack before you head out for the day."

To learn more about SnowPilot or to request access to the software, visit snow-pilot.org.







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BIG SKY CHAPEL



Reflecting on a year spent fly fishing

BY PATRICK STRAUB EBS FISHING COLUMNIST

My fly-fishing rod is always rigged to fish the Gallatin River. But for the past few days, it's been a little lonely and cold sitting in the rod rack without seeing daylight. The holiday bumrush is nearing the finish line. Shopping lists are getting checked off, presents are nearly all wrapped and families are getting together. Whether you're grateful this season only comes once a year, or you happily embrace the chaos and camaraderie of the holidays, 'tis the season for reflecting on the past year.

Even if you can't get on the water because you're too busy making sure aunts and uncles have clean sheets or grandma and grandpa get to the airport on time, you can at least read this on your smartphone while waiting in the check-out line.

The past year was an exciting one in our local fly-fishing world. Here are some of the highlights:

Hebgen Dam repairs nearly complete. The 102-year old dam is only a few inspections away from wrapping up nine years worth of repairs, a \$40 million project. The dam withstood a magnitude-7.5 earthquake with an epicenter 17 miles away in 1959. The updated dam will not release colder water from the bottom of the reservoir and can withstand magnitude-7.3 quakes with an epicenter within 100 miles. Cold water is a good thing for trout. Withstanding an earthquake—especially since the dam lies in a seismically active area—is also a very good thing.

Yellowstone River healthy and full of water. Blessed with above average snowpack in its headwaters, the Yellowstone River and its tributaries enjoyed a plentiful season. Anglers enjoyed a brief pre-runoff Mother's Day caddis hatch in late April, and then had to wait out nearly two months of runoff. By early July the river dropped and cleared, and salmon flies popped. Fortunately, the above-average snowpack meant that the late summer terrestrial fishing was the best in years. Unlike last

year, the river was clean of any invasive epidemics such as PKD, however the river is still threatened with the potential for mining development in tributary drainages.

Moose Creek Restoration

Project. Years of hard work and local dollars came to fruition this fall as the Moose Creek Restoration Project began. Gallatin River Task Force ran lead on this exciting project to stabilize and restore stream banks near Moose Creek Flat Campground. Work on a boat ramp was completed, allowing less degradation by users at the popular

boat launch. With help from community donations, GRTF planted 3,700 willows to restore eroded banks.

Big fish on the Gallatin. Similar to the Yellowstone, the Gallatin River drainage saw an above average snowpack. Local anglers reported larger than normal fish pre-runoff. That trend continued after runoff and into fall. Several years of good snowpack and average summertime temperatures helps grow big fish. It also helps to have the river's long-term interest at heart. With help from organizations like GRTF, Madison-Gallatin Trout Unlimited, and the Upper Missouri Waterkeeper, anglers can feel good about the future of the river.

Development in Big Sky and Gallatin Valley. Look around Big Sky's Town Center, drive north or south on Highway 191, or venture outward from Bozeman in any direction and you'll find anecdotal evidence to support the facts: Our area is being developed at rates seen in few other places throughout the country. Continued hard work must occur if we are to preserve open space, protect access to and quality of our local fisheries, and ensure affordability for our citizens. The solutions are often the result of compromises and patience in the process is important, but ensuring the next generation can experience the Montana we enjoy now rests in our capable hands.

As you check off items on your holiday to-do list—or if you're still in the check-out line—embrace the spirit of the season for it only comes around once a year. Due to our great fortune to live where we do, our opportunities to fly fish exist year-round. But like staying off Santa's naughty list, keeping those opportunities plentiful and productive requires a little extra effort.

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.



Montana's Yellowstone River in Paradise Valley is an angling inspiration. 2017 was a very good year for the river, its fish, and for those who were able to enjoy it. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVER GUIDES



Inside the Big Sky

Top 5 Instagram-worthy locations in Big Sky

VISIT BIG SKY

People come from all over the world to enjoy the plentiful year-round outdoor adventure and thrills found in Big Sky. In today's digitally connected society, an important part of any trip is sharing your adventures with friends and family back home. We've compiled a list of the top five Instagram-worthy locations in Big Sky that are likely to make them envious of your travels.

The top of Lone Mountain – Ride the tram at Big Sky Resort in summer or winter and take in the magnificent views. On a clear day you can see the iconic Teton Range, 110 miles to the south. An angled catwalk allows you to look down over Big Sky and is your best bet for the perfect picture.

Green Bridge – Not only a popular IPA at Beehive
Basin Brewery, the Green Bridge is the perfect spot
to take a photo to commemorate your time in Big Sky. Whether you're jumping
off the bridge into the cool waters of the Gallatin River in the summer or standing on the shore admiring how the crisp, white snow contrasts with the green
metal of the bridge, Green Bridge is a not-to-miss photo opportunity.

Chairlift at Big Sky Resort – The Swiftcurrent chairlift, with its stunning views of Lone Peak, is a perfect place to cozy up with some friends and take a group shot.



Big Sky Resort's covered magic carpet is one of many spots to snap an Instagramworthy photo in Big Sky. PHOTO BY CAITLIN LUNDIN

and grab a photo on the deck.

com/category/blog/.

If you're newer to the sport, the recently added canopy on the magic carpet casts the perfect blue glow and ambiance to increase your excitement to get out and learn to ski.

Ousel Falls – The 100-foot waterfall cascading at the end of a picturesque yet easy hike in town is the perfect spot to visit any time of the year. Be sure to wear some studs on your shoes if you're heading out in the winter as it can be a bit icy. Take the stairs down to the landing in front of the falls and gather together for a group shot.

"Pardon the View" at Gallatin Riverhouse
Grill – Stand on the deck of Gallatin Riverhouse
Grill where the owners have placed a sign asking
you to "Pardon the View." Take a quiet moment
to look out at the Gallatin River, surrounding
mountains and forest. Along with serving classic
Texas-style barbeque, the Riverhouse affords
some of the best views in town. Gather your friends for a frosty Montana mule

Read more interesting content about the area on Visit Big Sky's blog at visitbigskymt.



Ski Tips: A lifetime sentence

BY DAN EGAN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

It's an old joke but one that rings true every time I hear it or tell it.

Question: Why are ski resorts like prison?

Answer: Because you do 3-5 months, 3-5 years or life.

Well I'm a lifer. My sentence started in 1983 at Magic Mountain, a small ski area in southern Vermont. I was the NASTAR guy—my tasks every Saturday and Sunday were to set up the NASTAR race course, set the pace, sign up the competitors and award the medals.

Since then I've been transferred around the globe far and wide, from Chamonix, France; Squaw Valley, California; Killington, Vermont; Grand Targhee, Wyoming; Valle Nevado, Chile; and, these days, Big Sky, Montana.

One of my favorite musicians is John Eddie, who has a great song called "Forty." In that song one of the verses goes like this:

"I'm a petered-out Peter Pan, Well sometimes I feel foolish, I make my living singing in this band."

In other words, when will he ever grow up? I get asked that question a lot.

Years ago, I met a brother of a famous skier who was attending Harvard and I asked him why he gave up skiing, and if he ever wished he'd continued based on his brother's success.

His answer hit me like a ton of bricks. "When I realized skiing was just an extension of my adolescence, I had to give it up," he said.

I've pondered that answer for a long time now because, for me, skiing is an extension of my own adolescence. I feel youthful every time I ski. The internal smile, the uncontrollable joy and pleasure sliding over and through snow is magic, it never fails me.

I've also allowed my adolescent experiences to shape me.

At 16 I had the opportunity to race a boat from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, to Bermuda and it was a hard trip, with big storms and lots of rain, mixed with long periods of dead calm. The storms were so big that one boat sank during the race.

When we were safely on the dock, the navigator on our boat asked me what I thought of the trip and I told him, "I loved it." He replied, "Really? You looked miserable much of the time!"

I replied to him saying that that was how I knew I loved it—because I was willing to endure the hard parts.



For ski coach Dan Egan, skiing is a lifestyle, an art form and an extension of adolescence. PHOTO COURTESY OF DEGAN MEDIA

Henry David Thoreau once said, "Truth and roses have thorns about them."

That's how I feel about making my living as a ski bum. It's hard, very hard. I've paid a big price for this choice. I've almost died several times and financially it might not be the most stable of careers.

However, emotionally, spiritually and physically I can think of no other choice for my life. Skiing is my art form, my expression that has provided me an impressive canvas to teach and to be taught.

In Dan Millian's book, "The Way of the Peaceful Warrior," the main character asked his spiritual advisor how to find his way in life and the advice came back, "You will fail many times, but in failing you will learn, and in learning you will find your way."

In the mountains I have been blessed to live multiple lifetimes, which has taught me to embrace my adolescence while being transformed by a life sentence of mountain living.

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 Feb. 22-24, March 1-2 and March 8-10, as well as throughout the season (contact Big Sky Mountain Sports for availability). To find more information on Dan Egan camps and clinics, go to skiclinics.com.







RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Bozeman natives, the Simkins family has been responsibly guiding the planning and development of the Town Center neighborhood for over 20 years, always supporting their commitment to leave a legacy of which the community and their family can be proud. They have owned land in Big Sky since its pioneering days of the early 1970's.

BUS SCHEDULE Town Center ←→ Mountain Village

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Town Center to Mountain Village Bus Schedule (Heading Up)

Departing Town Center: 5:50a / 6:25a / 6:55a / 7:40a / 8:35a / 8:45a / 9:15a / 9:35a 10:30a / 10:35a / 11:35a / 12:35p / 1:35p / 2:35p / 3:35p / 4:35p / 5:35p / 6:35p / 7:35p 8:35p / 9:35p / 10:35p / 11:35a

Arriving Mountain Village: 6:05a / 6:40a / 7:10a / 7:20 a / 7:55a / 9:00a / 9:30a / 10:00a 10:45a / 11:00a / 11:50a / 12:00p / 1:00p / 2:00p / 2:50 p / 3:00p / 4:00p / 5:00p / 5:50 p 6:00p / 7:00p / 8:00p / 8:50p / 9:00p / 10:00p / 10:50p / 11:00p / 12:00a / 2:00a

Mountain Village to Town Center Bus Schedule (Heading Down)

Departing Mountain Village: 7:15a / 8:15a / 9:15a / 10:15a / 11:15a / 12:15p / 1:15p / 2:15p 3:15p / 4:15p / 5:15p / 6:15p / 7:15p / 8:15p / 9:15p / 10:15p / 11:15p / 12:15a / 2:15a

Arriving Town Center: 7:35a / 8:35a / 9:35a / 10:35a / 11:35a / 12:35p / 1:35p / 2:35 p 3:35p / 4:05p / 4:35p / 5:05 p / 5:35p / 6:35p / 7:35p / 8:35p / 9:35p / 10:35p / 11:35p 11:55p / 12:35a / 2:35a

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Skiing kicks off in Jackson Hole

JACKSON HOLE MOUNTAIN RESORT

After an enormous amount of early season snowfall, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort was able to open early for the 2017-2018 winter on Nov. 24. One month later and the resort is open top to bottom and the skiing has been great as snowfall pushes toward 150 inches.

Snow is in the forecast for the coming weeks according to most meteorologists and it'll be welcomed with open arms. In the meantime, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort has several events set for the holiday season.

The Jackson Hole Mountain Resort holiday round-up begins Dec. 24 as Santa arrives in Teton Village via Big Red—or the Aerial Tram. The following seven days each have an après activity for families ranging from ice skating in the Teton Village Commons, to cookie decorating at the Kid's Ranch. For the first time in nearly a decade, the Village Rink on the Commons returns with ice skating available every afternoon from 3-9 p.m., perfect for local families and visitors alike.

Moving into 2018, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort will offer the Golden Ticket beginning Jan. 6. The Golden Ticket offers 40 percent off daily lift tickets at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort to all season passholders of any resort, worldwide.

The Golden Ticket runs from Jan. 6-31 and doesn't require an initial purchase at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. Simply

show up to the ticket window with your valid 2017-2018 season pass from any other resort and you'll receive 40 percent off the daily rate. Golden Ticket lodging specials are also available.

To learn more visit jacksonbole.com.



A skier enjoys the nearly 150 inches of snowfall at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. PHOTO COURTESY OF JACKSON HOLE MOUNTAIN RESORT



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Holiday cheer at Big Sky Resort

BIG SKY RESORT

Celebrate the holidays on the slopes this season at Big Sky Resort with a torchlight parade, skiing Santa Claus and firework displays sure to wow even the biggest Grinch.

For decades, Big Sky Resort's Mountain Sports instructors have meandered their way down Andesite Mountain for the awe-inducing annual torchlight parade on Christmas Eve. Holding flares while skiing and riding in a single-file line, about two dozen of the resort's instructors snake their way down the hill in the dark. Hundreds turn out to watch the event, which begins at 8 p.m., and many secure a prime viewing spot at the base of the Ramcharger chairlift.

After years of practice, these employees have nearly perfected the careful timing of the torchlight parade, not skiing too fast in order to stay together, but also not too slow so the torches don't burn out prematurely.

It's also possible that Santa Claus may stop in for the torchlight affair to distribute treats to the crowd. Prior to the torchlight parade, Santa will read aloud the holiday classic, "T'was the Night Before Christmas" in the Huntly Lodge Sunken Lobby at 7 p.m.

Additionally, the Huntley Dining Room will serve a Christmas Eve dinner buffet from 5:30-8:30 p.m.

The next day, Dec. 25, guests should keep their eyes peeled on the slopes as Santa and one of his elf helpers has been known to ski the Lone Peak Tram, hit the terrain parks and enjoy the groomers on Andesite Mountain. In the afternoon, around 1:30 p.m., look for Santa visiting with guests in the Mountain Village and Madison Base areas.

On Dec. 31, there will be two firework shows to bring in the new year, one beginning at 8 p.m. and the other at the stroke of midnight. These shows are best viewed from the Mountain Village plaza.

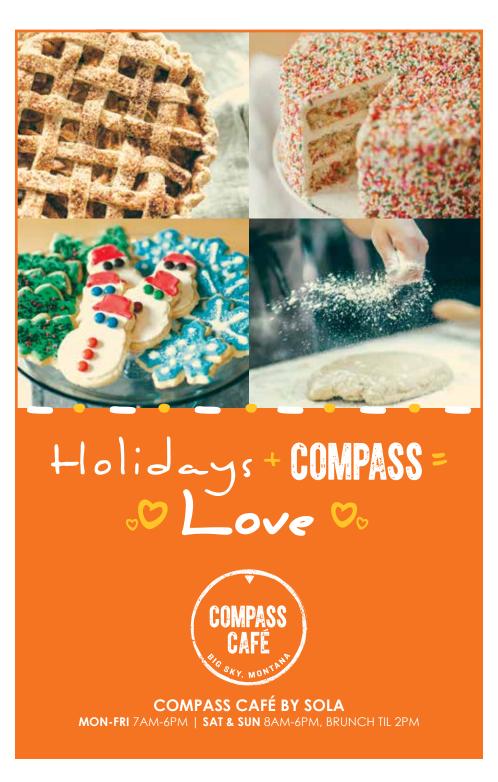


Big Sky Resort's torchlight parade is a holiday classic. At 8 p.m. on Dec. 24, skiers will make their way down Andesite Mountain, torches in hand. Viewing opportunities are best from the bottom of Ramcharger chairlift. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

There will be a New Year's Eve party in the Talus Room of the Summit Hotel, and live music by the Dusty Pockets will bring down the house at Montana Jacks. Kids ages 4 and up have a supervised party all of their own in the Yellowstone Conference Center from 6-11:30 p.m. Reservations are required.

For an elegant, intimate New Year's Eve celebration, Everett's 8,800 on top of Andesite Mountain is offering gourmet alpine cuisine perfect for ringing in the new year. Limited seats are available.

For more information on holiday events or to see the snow conditions on the mountain, visit bigskyresort.com.





The Silver Element

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

BY BRIGID MANDER EBS CONTRIBUTOR

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

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

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

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



.Guides Aaron Brill and Skylar Holgate scope terrain in Seward, Alaska, December 2015. PHOTO COURTESY OF SILVERTON MOUNTAIN GUIDES

But 16 years ago, a brash move by Aaron and Jen Brill, then a pair of broke, upstart, but intensely passionate snowboarders, famously challenged the accepted order. As it turns out, in a happy by-product of chasing their dream, they proved you can still make money from just simply offering skiing and riding.

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

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

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

Skiing and snowboarding purists, turned off by the commercialism of other resorts, flocked to this promising new place only to find it exceeded expectations. Initially ma-

ligned as a simplistic deviation, Silverton's concept quickly earned the founding duo legendary status in the ski industry. They've been called the saviors of skiing's soul, an antidote to vapid, luxury, mass-market ski experiences, and some of the few remaining believers that skiing alone—the kind of skiing that not everyone can or even wants to do—is enough to attract business.

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

"It's definitely something [that gets] more to the roots of skiing and snowboarding," says Fabio Grasso, a guide at Silverton for the last 14 years, of the operation and the Brills' management style. "It's for clients who want to focus on the skiing."

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

In order to give more guests opportunities to get on their program, they decided to expand beginning in winter 2015-2016. Fittingly, it wasn't the usual approach to add another helicopter. The Brills added a new season: early winter in Seward, Alaska. Due to traditional helicopter leasing costs, no other heli operation flies those months in Alaska, but all Aaron saw was cold powder, plenty of light for a full day, and the added bonus of shredding big faces and spines in pink alpenglow and long winter twilights.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jackson, Wyoming-based cinematographer and producer Sasha Motivala is a veteran with various heli-ops, both filming and as a client, and he's a convert to Silverton's program. "While it might not be film lines, it's the closest I've come, and we didn't even have to coax the guides into it," Motivala says. "That was just the norm. You do have to have [the money] to heli-ski, but also have to have spent the real time in mountains

to ski with Aaron and his guides, who are damned if they are going to spend their precious time skiing 35-degree powder or anything that resembles a warm-up run."

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

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

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

SMG sends two guides for every group, as opposed to the usual one-guide industry standard. That means one less paying client in the heli, but it's another piece of the Brills' carefully crafted puzzle. With two guides, groups can shred much more challenging and interesting terrain. It's a safer, smoother experience, not to mention more fun for the guests—and the guides. "Their safety talk and protocol are amazing, and really professional. They don't care what you think you know—you have to listen to them," says Bjarne Salen, a filmmaker and ski mountaineer who spent time in the Chugach with Aaron and SMG in spring 2016. "And they were really smart with the business. There's so many good skiers that work a lot and have the money for this. I'd send any friend to Aaron."

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

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

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



Sven Brunso skiing 'Riff' on the backside of Silverton Mountain. PHOTO COURTESY OF SILVERTON MOUNTAIN GUIDES

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

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

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

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





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Martha has been a full time resident in Big Sky since 1988. She and her husband Scott have raised there two boys here.

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On the Trail: Mountain View trail

Explore local hiking, biking and equestrian trails with Big Sky Community Organization's trail series.

BY CIARA WOLFE BSCO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mountain View trail provides an excellent aerobic workout and beautiful views during a steady climb and along your descent on the approximately 8.5 km Nordic ski trail. Starting from the Lone Mountain Ranch outdoor shop, head north.

At approximately 0.5 km, you will come to your first marked intersection. Follow the signs for Mountain View, taking a left and then a quick right on the North Fork trail. Expect a steady, gradual climb along a forested hillside for 1.3 km before coming to an intersection.

At this junction take a left, following the signs for Meadow View rather than continuing uphill on the North Fork trail. This 1.1 km is an easy stretch through the forest with the creek bed below on your left.

At the next intersection, take a right to ski the Mountain View loop, which adds 2.1 km of uphill, and 1.0 km intermediate downhill terrain with expansive views of the surrounding mountains throughout the entire loop. For a shorter ski, take a left instead and head back to the ranch.

Follow the trail signs closely, as you cross several different intersections to access the network of trails.

Once you begin your descent to the ranch, there is only one road crossing before passing over the creek bed and back to the outdoor shop where you began.

Although the loop provides plenty of aerobic activity on your way up, you are rewarded with a long ski after your hard work. Stop by the Horn & Cantle Saloon for a bite, warm drink by the fire and to enjoy the lively après atmosphere.

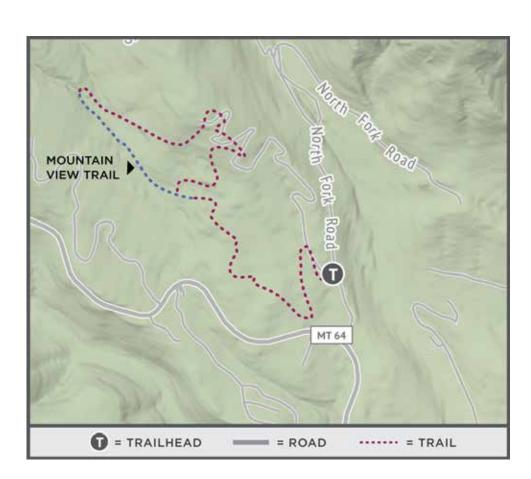
You can purchase a season pass or day pass in the Lone Mountain Ranch outdoor shop. All proceeds from pass sales go toward the cost of grooming Big Sky's winter Nordic trail system. For a complete map of the 85 km of



Maggie Luchini and Ashley Dodd on the Mountain View trail, an 8.5 km groomed cross-country trail that begins at Lone Mountain Ranch. PHOTO BY CIARA WOLFE

groomed Nordic trails, visit lonemountainranch.com/winter-things-to-do/nordic-skiing/.

For more information about Big Sky's parks, trails and recreation programs, visit bscomt.org. The Big Sky Community Organization is a local nonprofit that connects people to recreational opportunities by acquiring, promoting and preserving sustainable places and programs for all.





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8.5 km



skiing



cross-country Intermediate





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groomed trails

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development and execution of website traffic growth strategy, and social media traffic and growth strategy. This role will also require the oversight and launch of an Explore Big Sky application for iOS and Android in 2018.

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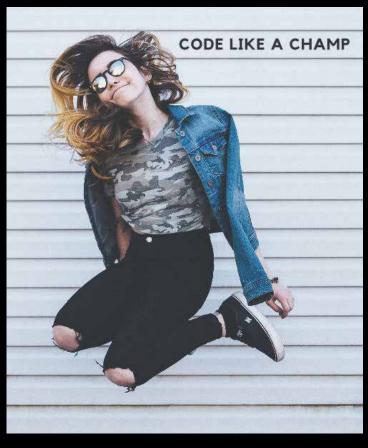
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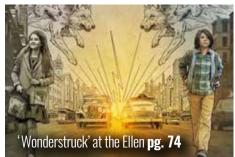






Section 5:ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT









Tapping into the sentient soul: The photography of Tracie Spence

BY SARAH GIANELLI EBS ASSOCIATE EDITOR

BIG SKY – There's something ethereal about Tracie Spence's photographs—a wildness to her horses; the way they gaze directly at the camera with a palpable, almost unnerving, sense of recognition. She infuses this same sentient quality in the subject of her "Ghost Trees" series—snow-laden lodgepole pines become playful or stoic anthropomorphic spires; spindly aspens whisper secrets.

Spence attributes this quality to the spirituality she brings to every moment she deems special enough to capture with her camera. A highly attuned intuition, sharpened by her years as a practicing psychoanalyst, also guides her choice of a shot.

Spence, her husband and two daughters relocated to Big Sky from Laguna Beach, California, just three months ago, but the family has been vacationing in Big Sky for close to 15 years, and Spence has shown her work in Creighton Block Gallery for nearly two.

Admittedly prone to head injuries, the most serious of her nine concussions happened on Dec. 29, 2010, while skiing at Big Sky Resort. She hit a mogul, flipped back on her head, smashing the helmet she was wearing, and slid 60 feet down the slope.

"Within eight hours my entire personality had changed," she said, explaining that she turned aggressive and mean, and her blood pressure was skyrocketing. In 18 hours, the swelling in her brain caused her to lose her vision.

She recovered slowly; her short-term memory was damaged and it was eight months before she could drive a car again.

"I did weird things like put the blender on the stovetop, turn it on and wait for the water to boil," she recalled.

At the time of the accident, Spence was an ambitious freelance advertising photographer, relatively new to the industry but quickly building a name for herself.

The accident ended her burgeoning career, but in what turned out to be a blessing, it shifted her focus to fine art photography. She hasn't looked back since.

"It reshaped my journey and I'm more grateful and happy with who I am today than who I was before [the accident]," Spence said. "I feel like I have a better appreciation for the fragility of life and how common it is not to notice or experience what's right in front of you."



Spence's horse photography as well as her wintry "Ghost Trees" series are featured at an exhibition at Creighton Block Gallery that runs through Jan. 29, 2018, with an artist reception on Dec. 29.



Photographer Tracie Spence will wait as long as necessary to land the perfect shot. PHOTO BY CAROL SKIPPER

This awareness comes through in Spence's imagery, and elevates a huddle of trees, a still or streaking horse, to something more holy. Having a highly discriminating eye, and heart, also helps.

She may spend four days tracking wild mustangs in Montana's Pryor Mountains and amass 10,000 images. Of those images 8,000 might be "damn good," but Spence will pass over them until she finds a specialness she only knows when she comes across it.

"Maybe it's not the perfect shot but it makes me feel the most," Spence said.

Sometimes she won't shoot at all. "Even if I have all the visual elements, if I don't have that inner fire, or inspiration, I won't photograph it," she said.

When Spence feels the childlike excitement, awe and wonder that signal she is in a highly creative state, she tries to maintain that mood for the entirety of the shoot.

"When I feel that 'wow' moment, that's when I shoot," she said. "For me, everything is about 'how does it make you feel; what does it make you think?' I always like my work to be inviting more conversation, thought or feeling."

Spence photographs wildlife in very much the same way she did fashion—sticking to clean backgrounds and playing with negative space. Rather than manipulate her images, which she seldom does, she will change her physical positon. For example, for "Puer Ateternis," an image of a narrow-faced mustang with a long, windswept, dreadlocked mane, Spence dropped to her knees and contorted herself to the ground to get the angle she wanted.

Spence creates highly limited edition prints of her photographs, typically between three and nine, in total.

Excited to have such immediate access to the wilderness and the wildlife that inhabits it, Spence has wolves on her mind for her next series, although she will wait until her inner creative knowing tells her the time is right.

"The cool thing about [creating] fine art is that I'm not chasing something anymore—there's no ego; there's no mind; there's no intellect in it," Spence said. "I'm just following my heart now."

Spence's work is currently featured in an exhibition at Creighton Block Gallery that runs through Jan. 29, 2018. An artist reception will be held Friday, Dec. 29, from 5 to 7 p.m. Ten percent of sales will benefit the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center.

To view more of the artist's work visit traciespence.com or creightonblockgallery.com.



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Stars align for civil rights and the environment

'Concert for America' comes to WMPAC

BY SARAH GIANELLI EBS Associate Editor

BIG SKY – On Dec. 27 and 28, the touring benefit production "Concert for America" makes its Montana debut, and marks the official start of the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center's winter season.

Developed by husbands Seth Rudetsky and James Wesley of the SiriusXM radio program "On Broadway," "Concert for America" features big name stars of the stage and screen in a performance that benefits five national charities: the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Sierra Club Foundation, the National Immigration Law Center, and the Southern Poverty Law Center. All ticket sales from the two concerts will be split evenly among the charities.

"After the [2016] election, James and I wanted to do something to help," said Rudetsky, referring to issues of social justice

and the environment that they felt were threatened by Donald Trump's political upset. They decided the best means of doing so was through music.

"Yes, we'd raise money, but we really wanted to cheer people up," Rudetsky said. "We like to do [a concert] every month as a sort of 'refueling station' so people can watch, cheer themselves up and go out to continue to be active citizens."

The WMPAC performance will showcase six well-known talents in theater, television, and film singing hit songs from their performing arts careers—along with comedy and commentary by "Concert for America" founders, Rudetsky and Wesley.

"This type of production is unprecedented in WMPAC's short history," said WMPAC Executive Director John Zirkle. "Every person and entity involved is donating a portion of their time and services to the cause in the hopes of protecting human rights, civil rights and the environment. If that weren't the case, we could never dream of producing a show with this type of star power."



Stars of the stage and screen, including actress-singer Vanessa Williams, perform at WMPAC in a touring benefit production called "Concert for America" on Dec. 27 and 28. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Those familiar with the Broadway stage will likely recognize Audra McDonald ("Porgy and Bess," "Carousel"), Vanessa Williams ("Kiss of the Spiderwoman," "Into the Woods"), Abby Mueller ("Beautiful"), Jessie Mueller ("Beautiful," "Waitress") and Andrea McCardle ("Annie").

Television viewers might recognize McDonald from "Private Practice" or "The Good Wife"; and Williams from "Desperate Housewives"; on the big screen, McDonald has performed in "Annie" and "Beauty and the Beast."

Among them they've earned seven Tony Awards, one Emmy Award, and a National Medal for the Arts from President Obama received by McDonald in 2015.

In describing how "Concert for America" came to be, performing artist Jessie Mueller said she was talking to Rudetsky and Wesley after the election, "a bit mired in confusion and fear," and decided to contribute her musical talents to the cause.

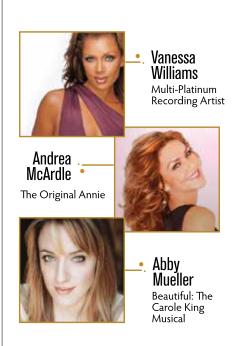
"It's necessary to be good to one another and reclaim the idea that we could be a nation that cares about one another; that we're not built on

divisiveness but inclusion," Mueller said. "And music brings people together—always has, always will."

Zirkle thinks the combination of the holidays, the caliber of talent and the cause will pack the theater, citing high tickets sales weeks before the event.

"We are so thrilled about Montana because we are bringing such an amazing group of stars who are not only committed to social justice but are world class performers," Rudetsky said. "Get ready Big Sky, here comes Broadway!"

"Concert for America" performances are 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 27, and Thursday, Dec. 28, at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center in Big Sky. Visit warrenmillerpac.org for tickets and to learn more about the performers and the charities that are being supported by the event. The event will also be streamed live at concertsforamerica.com.







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EVENTS CALENDAR

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22 - THURSDAY, **JANUARY 4**

*IF YOUR EVENT FALLS BETWEEN JAN. **5 AND 18, PLEASE SUBMIT IT BY DEC.** 28 BY EMAILING MEDIA@OUTLAW. PARTNERS.

BIG SKY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22 Ophir Elementary School Winter **Music Program Warren Miller Performing Arts** Center, 9 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Diamond, music Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Mike Haring, music Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Trivia Night Lone Peak Cinema, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

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

Lone Mountain Trio, music Chets Bar, 4:30 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

Live Music Compass Café, 11 a.m.

Santa at Big Sky Resort Big Sky Resort, 5:15 p.m.

Christmas Eve Dinner Huntly Dining Room, 5:30 p.m.

Torchlight Parade Mountain Village, 8 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 Santa at Big Sky Resort Big Sky Resort, 11 a.m.

Lauren & Jeff, music Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m. Mike Haring, music Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26Top Shelf Toastmasters

Town Center Sales Office, 12 p.m.

Lauren Jackson, music Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Milton Menasco duo, music Chets Bar, 4:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

Diamond, music Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Brian and Ben. music Chets Bar, 4:30 p.m.

Concert for America Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

Kent Johnson, music Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Denny Diamond, music Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Lauren & Jeff, music Chets Bar, 4:30 p.m.

Concert for America Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.

Jazz Night Carabiner Lounge, 8:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29 Diamond, music

Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Mike Haring, music Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Trivia Night Lone Peak Cinema, 8 p.m.

Krazy Karaoke Montana Jack, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

Milton Menasco, music Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m. Lone Mountain Trio. music Chets Bar, 4:30 p.m.

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

Saturday Sessions, DJ Montana Jack, 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY. DECEMBER 31

Live Music Compass Café, 11 a.m.

New Year's Eve Dinner Huntly Dining Room, 5:30 p.m.

New Year's Eve Kids' Party Big Sky Resort, 6 p.m.

New Year's Eve Firework Display Mountain Village, 8 p.m.

Sharon Iltis. music Gallatin Riverhouse Grill, 8:30 p.m.

Lone Peak High School Booster Club Presents Rockin' New Year's Eve Summit Hotel, 8:30 p.m.

Dusty Pockets, music Montana Jack, 9:30 p.m.

MONDAY, JANUARY 1

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

Mike Haring, music Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

Top Shelf Toastmasters Town Center Sales Office, 12 p.m.

Lauren Jackson, music Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Milton Menasco Duo, music Chets Bar, 4:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY. JANUARY 3

Diamond, music Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Brian and Ben. music Chets Bar, 4:30 p.m.

Surviving Cancer Support Group Santosha Wellness Center, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

Kent Johnson, music Montana Jack, 3:30 p.m.

Kenny Diamond, music Carabiner Lounge, 4 p.m.

Lauren & leff, music Chets Bar, 4:30 p.m.

Jazz Night Carabiner Lounge, 8:30 p.m.

BOZEMAN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

Jazz Night Red Tractor Pizza, 7 p.m.

Annie. The Musical Ellen Theatre, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY. DECEMBER 23

Winter Farmers' Market Emerson Ballroom, all morning

TUESDAY. DECEMBER 26

Weston Lewis, music Red Tractor Pizza, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY. DECEMBER 27

Wonderstruck, film Ellen Theatre, 7 p.m.

Josh Moore, music Bozeman Taproom, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

Bridger Creek Boys, music Red Tractor Pizza, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

Jazz Night Red Tractor Pizza, 7 p.m.

TUESDAY. JANUARY 2

loe Knapp, music Bozeman Taproom, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

Ashly Holland, music Bozeman Taproom, 7 p.m.



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Historic Rialto theater gets a makeover

Venue slated to open in January

COLUMBIA HOSPITALITY

Renovations to the historic Rialto theater in downtown Bozeman are nearing completion with the venue scheduled to open in January 2018 with a lineup of top-tier musical talent from around the country.

Originally built in 1908 as a two-story storefront and converted into a theater in 1924, the Rialto has a long history of importance to Main Street in Bozeman's central commercial district although it has been vacant for more than a decade.

Bozeman's ThinkTank Design Group, along with general contractor North Fork Builders, is refashioning the vacant theater to reclaim its past incarnation as an artistic and cultural hub in the community. Honoring the Rialto's historical relevance, iconic features will be replicated, such as the art deco–style marquee and signage at the front of the building, designed by local artist and metal sculptor Erik "Ole" Nelson of Media Station.

"We are excited to revive an underutilized remnant of our history that brings culture and inspiration to the city," said Brian Caldwell, project architect at ThinkTank. "It's an iconic theater that will become a modern and creative outlet for local and traveling artists, with an entirely new design that reflects the imaginative spirit of Bozeman."

The reinvented venue will include a ground-floor theater called the Black Box, which will accommodate up to 400 people and feature a mezzanine level, offering a variety of options for artists, live performances and private events.

The theater acoustics and sound system were designed by the award-winning consulting firm Charles M. Salter Associates, Inc. Theater programming will range from some of the country's most sought-after bands to local musicians, spokenword performances, movie nights and more.

The second floor will house the Burn Box, a stylish space overlooking Main Street that will serve wine, beer and a rotating menu from local chefs and food artisans, crafted around the aesthetic of that evening's entertainment. The Burn Box will be open to the general public, as well as ticket holders, on days of scheduled programming.

Adjacent to the Burn Box will be the Light Box, a gallery that will showcase the work of local artists, host special events for the community and serve as an additional space for private events for 15 to 150 people.



The newly renovated Rialto theater reopens as a multipurpose venue for musical acts, art, local cuisine, and public and private events in January 2018. RENDERING COURTESY OF THE RIALTO

"We are creating a vibrant, one-of-a-kind hub where people can experience Bozeman's evolving culture," said Productions and Operations Manager Drew Fleming. "The Rialto will attract exceptional and unique acts, artists and audiences, becoming a place where artistry truly thrives."

The theater is slated to reopen with an all-ages show on Jan. 16, 2018, by indie rock band Hippo Campus. The Victor Wooten Trio will take the stage on Jan. 17, followed by Car Seat Headrest on Jan. 26 and musician-comedian Reggie Watts on Jan. 27.

Visit rialtobozeman.com for more information and a complete list of upcoming programming.

New Bozeman film festival calls for submissions

BOZEMAN FILM CELEBRATION

The Bozeman Film Celebration is calling for entries for the inaugural BZN International Film Festival, which will take place June 7-10, 2018.

The organizers of BZN International Film Festival have created the event because they believe that film can effectively challenge racial, sexual and gender-based power structures, and help pave the way for lasting change.

In support of women's fair and equal rights in the film industry and the world at large, the first annual BZN film festival will cast a spotlight on women film-makers, directors, actors and producers who are pioneering projects to change current statistics and elevate women's visions and voices. Through screenings and events, BZN will celebrate the advancements, and explore the challenges, of womanhood in film and beyond.

Keeping in line with this theme, BZN is seeking submissions that feature strong women with self-respect who know their worth. These characters—whether fictional or real—may choose to be intrepid adventurers, as well as strong partners, mothers, friends and businesswomen. Along their paths they should inspire, energize and embolden people of all ages regardless of their sex or ethnicity.

BZN will screen more than 70 short and feature-length films, and will host events in venues throughout downtown Bozeman, including The Ellen The-

atre, the Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture, the Willson Auditorium, and the highly anticipated, renovated Rialto. Montana State University will also host screenings in the Reynolds Recital Hall, Procrastinator Theatre, Cheever Hall and other campus buildings.

"It is a pleasure to collaborate with the many diverse companies and organizations in the Bozeman community as we work toward building the inaugural BZN," said Managing Director Beth Ann Kennedy. "Our team is dedicated to the BZN mission and committed to creating an event that is sustainable, fosters good will and embraces all those who wish to participate."

In a letter recognizing BZN, Montana Governor Steve Bullock wrote, "Bozeman, with its stunning landscape and thriving local culture, offers the ideal location for the upcoming festival. I commend the efforts of the Bozeman Film Celebration and the community of Bozeman to bring BZN to fruition. I encourage all who are involved in the art of film to submit a project, and all who love film to attend."

While BZN is an international festival, statewide submissions are encouraged to bring a local flair to the event.

Submissions will be accepted through March 1, with a late window open through March 16. Submissions can be made at filmfreeway.com or withoutabox.com. Visit bozemanfilmcelebration.com for more information.



TEDx brings 'Positivity' to Big Sky

EBS STAFF

An independently organized version of TED Talks, called TEDx, is coming to Big Sky on Jan. 27. The second annual TEDxBigSky will feature seven hand-picked, inspiring people at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center. The speakers will share ideas and personal stories related to the 2018 event's theme of "positivity."

The 2018 event will feature a woman whose life was transformed by her mother's death, and subsequent journey through her father's Alzheimer's; a Nepalese mountaineering guide; the founder of a media outlet devoted to uplifting news; the co-founder of an innovative technology startup company; a passionate outdoorsman; and special guest, musician Martin Sexton.

Stay tuned in to upcoming issues of EBS to get to know the 2018 presenters. EBS will feature Q&A interviews with the speakers in each issue leading up to the event.

Visit tedxbigsky.com for tickets, updates and to view all of the TEDx videos from last year's inaugural TEDxBigSky event.

CAMERON SCOTT



Cameron Scott is an avid outdoorsman. His top four passion pursuits are steel-bead fishing, white water rafting, photography, and getting lost in the Cascade Mountains backcountry while searching for giant off-trail waterfalls. He is also a part-time river guide for Boundary Expeditions on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. When he can't pursue his outdoor passions, he settles into his role as owner of Ollin Construction, a small custom homebuilding company in Bend, Oregon.

Explore Big Sky: Why do you think your voice is an important one at TEDxBigSky?

Cameron Scott: I have a very colored, textured past and have learned a lot of life's hardest lessons in about the most challenging way one can. After finding sobriety I dove into a world of self-improvement that has led me down a number of helpful paths, such as yoga, meditation and breath work.

EBS: The theme of TEDxBigSky is "positivity." What does positivity mean to you?

C.S.: Positivity to me means living life in gratitude, in seeing the glass as half full, always.

EBS: Can you provide an example when you witnessed the effects of maintaining a positive mindset?

C.S.: I began to see the rewards of living in positivity and living in my right path ... My business started growing exponentially; my relationships are all based in love and compassion—the world just started to make sense.

EBS: What do you experience in your outdoor pursuits that has led you to devote so much of your life to adventuring in the wilderness?

C.S.: I think it's the same for all of us that do it—it's a deeper connection to self and an opportunity to come up upon obstacles in that outdoor world that force me to step beyond my fears.

EBS: What advice would you give to someone who is struggling to remain positive in the face of life's challenges?

C.S.: Basically, the answers we look for are within us, so in order to find a solution to our problem we first have to realize we are the problem—and also the solution. When we're struggling with the problems the world throws at us, we all have to stop and sit in our suffering and look for our answers.

EBS: A guest on a Boundary Expeditions' river trip relayed a story about your Zen approach to fly fishing. Can you share more about your philosophy on the sport?



C.S.: Fly fishing to me is an art. It's not about catching fish. It's about the presentation, connecting to the water, feeling the entire ecosystem and immersing myself in that place. Then I make a cast. It doesn't have to be perfect. I don't have to be rewarded. When the presentation is over, I get the opportunity to try again.

EBS: How would you like the audience at TEDxBigSky to feel after hearing your talk?

C.S.: Inspired to step past their fears.

EBS: Do you have a favorite TED or TEDx program? If so, which one and why?

C.S.: [Justin Baldoni's "Why I'm done Trying to be Man Enough."] It was basically challenging men to step past the old ideologies of what it means to be a man in today's society so that our female counterparts don't have to stand up to protect themselves and say "me too." – *Sarah Gianelli*

PEM DORJEE SHERPA

CHI !

Born in the remote Nepali village of Chyangba, Solukhumbu, Pem Dorjee Sherpa bas summited Mount Everest twice, the second time with his then-fiancée Moni Mulepati. The couple became the first to wed on Everest's summit of nearly 30,000 feet. A government-certified guide, Pem Dorjee has garnered numerous awards throughout his climbing career. In 2008, he immigrated to the U.S., eventually settling in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he lives with his wife and two daughters Pelzom and Mezel. Pem Dorjee is now the owner of a local fair-trade store called the Himalayan Bazaar, a global adventure travel business, and a restaurant featuring Himalayan, Nepali and Indian cuisine. In addition to his mountaineering and business achievements, Pem Dorjee has dedicated himself to improving the quality of life in his native village, especially regarding issues of healthcare, drinking water and education.

Explore Big Sky: What is your connection to Big Sky?

Pem Dorjee Sherpa: I was doing a trek in the Everest area and spent a night at a teahouse and [Bozeman resident] Peter [Schmieding] was there with a friend and daughters. That was 2012. Peter is helping educate [Nepali] girls who don't have access to school. Peter said [his nonprofit, Tsering's Fund] would sponsor 10 girls from my home town, and took them to Kathmandu to go to a private school. In 2015, the earthquake happened so our project got even bigger.

EBS: In 2008, you immigrated to the United States. What led you to make that decision?

P.D.S.: For better opportunity and [the ability to] make more of a difference [back home]. Also, I'm a professional guide in Nepal, and [almost] all the clients come from here, so I can talk to people and [help] more people back in my country.

EBS: What has been the greatest challenge of being a first-generation American? **P.D.S.:** The most challenging has been [navigating] the legal [aspects]. Also, being a first generation, you don't have any family members to help with



raising children ... you're kind of starting from scratch. You also have a responsibility to look after your family and friends in Nepal.

EBS: In 2010, you completed the 3,100-mile-long Continental Divide Trail as part of a Rotary International challenge. What attracts you to trekking and mountaineering?

P.D.S.: Just the natural beauty ... when you're out there, you're not thinking about bill payments. Your mind is so fresh, you feel so healthy. When you walk all day, you wake up and want to do it again the next day.

EBS: You are very involved in Rotary and other service-related projects in your home village in Nepal. Why is giving back to your community so important? **P.D.S.:** Life is terrible there—we don't have drinking water at home, we have to go to a small pond. ... Education is the most important thing, especially for girls. In Nepal, they think girls are not important or useful enough to the community to send them to school. Even if one girl from one family [is] educated, the whole village can change. – S.G.



In Gratitude...

Dear L&K Real Estate Clients,

We would like to thank all of our clients who have worked with us in 2017 and throughout the years. It has been a pleasure working with you. We appreciate your belief in our team as we worked together with you buying or selling a property--something we recognize is an important and personal decision.

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512 Old Farm

128 Sawtooth 13 Beartooth 134 E Magnolia 134 Whitefish Dr 157 Woodman 212 S. 1st 2263 Ferguson 23 E. Main 2415 Ferguson

31 North Shore #4 330 Beaver Mtn Trail 503 Jack Creek Rd



Lot 107 Elk Valley



Lot 144 Pumice Rd.



Lot 472 White Spruce



Lot 8 Ski Tip

Lot 434 Foxtail Pine Lot 49 Springhill Lot 60 Goshawk Lot 77 Eagle View Trail Morning Sun #64 Mountain Selah/18 Low Dog

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Family-friendly fable 'Wonderstruck' screens at The Ellen

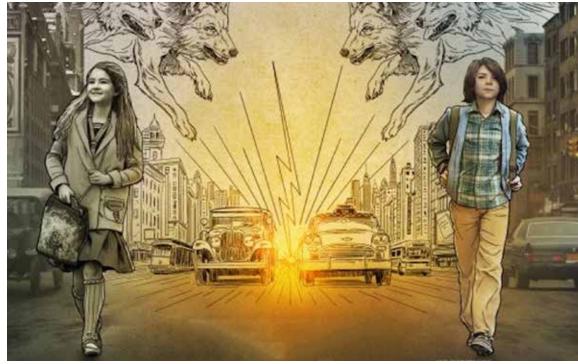
BOZEMAN FILM SOCIETY

On Wednesday, Dec. 27, Bozeman Film Society presents "Wonderstruck," director Todd Haynes' screen adaption of author-illustrator Brian Selznick's 2011 critically acclaimed fable of the same name.

The cleverly divided tale follows Ben (Oakes Fegley) and Rose (Millicent Simmonds), two deaf children living in different eras—1977 and 1927—as they embark on an epic quest to New York City. The youth are connected across time as they look for family members, and eventually both end up at the American Museum of Natural History. Like the film "Hugo," also based on a Selznick novel, "Wonderstruck" is a family-friendly historical adventure that also explores themes of family, friendship, and the importance of perseverance, curiosity, art and science.

While adults will be drawn in by another pairing of Haynes (director of "Carol" and "Far from Heaven") and his muse, actress Julianne Moore, children will be captivated trying to piece together the clues of the puzzle-like narrative. With a magical score and state-of-the-art production design for two distinct New York City time periods, "Wonderstruck" is a cinematic feat appropriate for all ages.

"Stars glitter and worlds collide in Todd Haynes' 'Wonderstruck,'" wrote New York Times critic Manohla Dargis. "A lovely ode to imagination and to the stories that make us who we are." Also starring Michelle Williams, the film is rated PG and runs 117 minutes.



"Wonderstruck" follows two deaf children from two different generations on a magically epic New York City adventure. PHOTO COURTESY OF BOZEMAN FILM SOCIETY

In recognition of the deaf community that inspired the film, "Wonderstruck" includes open-caption subtitles for its duration.

Tickets are available online at thellentheatre.com, or in person at the box office. The Ellen Theatre lobby opens at 6 p.m. for concession and bar; seating begins at 6:30 p.m., and the show at 7 p.m. Visit bozemanfilmsociety.org for more information.

Martin Sexton on air guitar, busking and seeing the glass half full

When Martin Sexton discovered his older brother's vinyl collection in the basement of his Syracuse, New York home, his musical fire was ignited. Sexton, whose soulful blend of blues, rock 'n' roll and folk defies easy categorization, will perform at Big Sky Resort's Montana Jack on Jan. 26, followed by a special appearance at TEDxBigSky on Jan. 27, at The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center. Both events are productions of Outlaw Partners, the publisher of EBS.

Explore Big Sky: Is there one particular album that you remember being especially impactful on you as a young boy?

Martin Sexton: [The Beatles'] "Abbey Road." I remember finding it in the basement. It was a very scratched up vinyl.

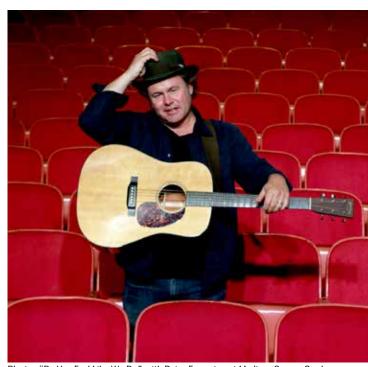
EBS: Did you already play an instrument at that time? **M.S.:** I played an air guitar that I made out of a bed slat and gypsum board. I started learning to play [the] actual guitar years later when I was about 13.

EBS: What is one of the most memorable experiences from the early days of your career busking on the streets of Boston's Harvard Square?

M.S.: That would have to be at 7 a.m. at the Porter Square station in Cambridge, when an elderly African-American woman had heard my singing from around the corner, and when she caught sight of me with a surprised look in her eyes said, "You black! There's some black in you somewhere." Then she pulled out a crumpled one-dollar bill out of her purse and placed it in my case.

EBS: How has getting your start that way stayed with you as you've experienced increasing success?

M.S.: Those days of busking were like performance 101. The skills I learned of attracting and keeping the focus of a crowd will be in my shows forever.



Playing "Do You Feel Like We Do" with Peter Frampton at Madison Square Garden was a highlight of Martin Sexton's musical career. PHOTO COURTESY OF MISSING PIECE GROUP

EBS: Can you tell me of a time when you were awed or humbled by a venue you played, or by collaborating with an artist you bad long admired?

M.S.: Playing "Do You Feel Like We Do" with Peter Frampton at Madison Square Garden. Period. Kind of like three dreams come true in one. "Frampton Comes Alive" was the album that ignited my musical fire.

EBS: The theme of January's TEDxBigSky event is "positivity." What does positivity mean to you?

M.S.: Positivity to me is seeing the glass half full. It means being grateful for what I have. It means getting out of myself to help someone else. It means getting off the couch and away from a screen to answer my son's call to go outside and play hide-and-seek.

EBS: How do you think streaming services like Spotify have affected the music industry in general and you personally?

M.S.: It's a double edge sword, as it's helpful purse it disincentivizes people from purchasing

as airplay and marketing, but of course it disincentivizes people from purchasing music. If it ultimately results in getting someone to a show, we all win.

EBS: Your artist bio says that you're always seeking bigger truths through your music. What are a few "truths" you've discovered in your musical journey?

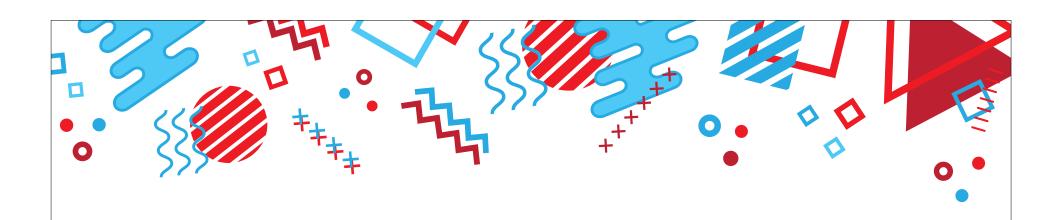
M.S.: The biggest truth I've learned is that there is only love and fear, and I'm trying to choose love on a daily basis.

EBS: There are a lot of talented musicians in southwest Montana; what advice would you give to these musicians who are hoping to make it big?

M.S.: Stay true to your heart and jump in all the way, like you have no other options. – *Sarah Gianelli*











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I've been a board member for this organization since 2012, and have witnessed firsthand the profound impact it's had on avalanche education and awareness in southwest Montana. **mtavalanche.com**

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Alexis Deaton | Women in Action



WIA's focus is the support and enrichment of our community's children. They also provide options to adults and families in our community needing care. Their efforts are critical for the continued positive development of Big Sky. bigskywia.org

Amanda Eggert | Tsering's Fund



Tsering's Fund educates girls in Nepal at the primary, secondary and university levels—and it does so with virtually no overhead. A nonprofit with local roots and global impact, Tsering's Fund also aids with natural disaster relief. **tseringsfund.com**

Sarah Gianelli | Arts Council of Big Sky



The Arts Council is responsible for much more than Music in the Mountains. In addition to cultural events, the organization has launched public art initiatives, and art education programs for youth and adults alike. By supporting the Arts Council of Big Sky you are helping our local arts scene continue to grow into its potential. **bigskyarts.org**

Ersin Ozer | **Big Sky Youth Empowerment**



BYEP uses a platform of love, respect and education to get teens outside and raise their self esteem with mentor-based adventure programming. Over the years this organization has seen teens once dubbed "at risk" reach unprecedented heights. **byep.org**

Doug Hare | **RYDE Foundation**



Local skier Scottie Williams founded the RYDE (Respect Your Dome Everyday) Foundation to protect the brains of Big Sky youth who participate in action, gravity-fueled sports. RYDE provides well-fitting, state-of-the-art helmets to our next generation of rippers.

Eric Ladd | Yellowstone Forever



Yellowstone Forever partners with Yellowstone National Park to create opportunities for all people to experience, enhance and preserve Yellowstone forever. Its educational programming, products, and services help people appreciate and understand the park's wildlife, geology and cultural history. **yellowstone.org**

Megan Paulson | Gallatin County Love INC



Love INC is a Christian ministry bridging relationships between church volunteers and neighbors in need in Gallatin County. Love INC serves residents with no judgment, helps foster relationships and spreads greater good throughout the community. **loveinc.org**

Marisa Specht | Heart of the Valley

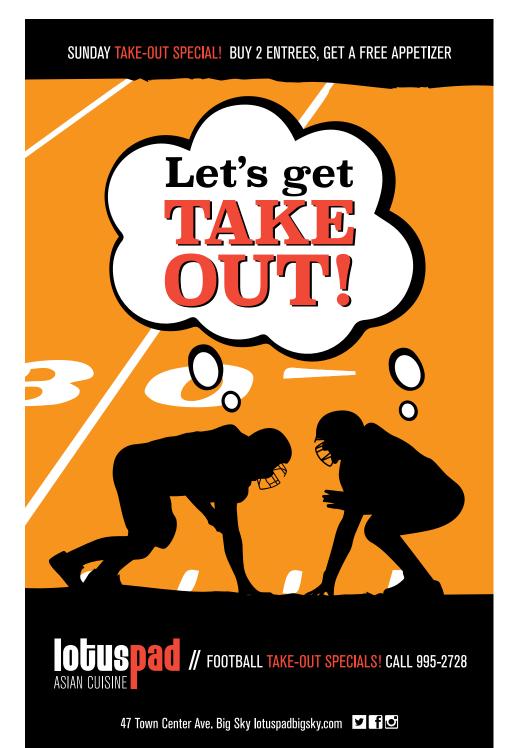


Heart of the Valley is a nonprofit animal shelter dedicated to housing lost and surrendered pets. Last year, HOV reunited 730 pets with their families and found new homes for over 1,806. heartofthevalleyshelter.org

Ryan Weaver | Mind and Life



Mind and Life merges modern neuroscience with the wisdom of contemplative traditions in an effort to permanently reduce suffering. Imagine a world in which we have 7 billion Dalai Lamas peacefully cocreating a new reality. mindandlife.org







The American West has produced some of the most thoughtful and moving literature in U.S. history. Read on and enjoy the Cowboy's Quill: insight into the best writers, books and poetry this side of the Mississippi.

Rick Bass: The sage of Yaak Valley

BY DOUG HARE

Bespectacled, unassuming with a wiry build, Rick Bass can look the part of professor or an elk hunter returning to camp depending on circumstance. A native of Houston, Texas, Bass attended Utah State University in Logan where he studied petroleum geology, often slipping into the wilderness of northern Utah with little more than a sleeping bag and a backpack full of books.

After college, Bass took a job and spent seven and a half years digging around for gas and oil reserves in Mississippi and Alabama. Despite a grueling work schedule, he'd visit independent bookstores on lunch breaks and read voraciously—eventually he got his hands on Jim Harrison's "Legends of the Fall," a novella he credits with giving him the courage to try his own hand at putting pen to paper. He still writes longhand to this day.

As Bass tells it, one fateful afternoon he just "got in his truck and drove north and west." He didn't stop until he made it to the remote Yaak Valley in northwest Montana. Since answering the call to become a full-time writer in what's left of the American frontier, Bass has spilled both ink and sweat trying to protect his chosen home from over-development.

"It's amazing how much time I spend working on environmental advocacy pieces," he said. "I'm still active with the Yaak Valley Forest Council: a lot of lobbying, fundraising and volunteering on the board."

When asked about his writing routine, Bass recommends getting an early start for clarity of mind. "Morning is best," he says, "before the hard realities of the day intrude with their sharp edges upon the thin membrane of the dream world." In the hands of true craftsmen, the short story can have incandescent moments of revelation. With his keen eye for observing the natural world, an ear for the rhythmic cadences of sparse prose, and ability to move from elemental imagery to the mystery and awe of being alive inside of a paragraph, Bass' best stories can have a transformative effect. The reader is somehow lulled into a false sense of security by a deceptive simplicity and disarming authenticity, only to be struck with observations that burst like Roman candles across a still night sky.

How did a petroleum geologist transform himself into a major American writer? His attention to tradition—his literary predecessors—his perseverance as a writer, dedication to his craft, and his immersive methodology of writing fiction were essential to his successful career change.

When Bass moved to Montana, Jim Harrison invited him and his wife, Elizabeth, to dinner. It was the beginning of a friendship that died only when Harrison did in the spring of 2016, pen in hand. "He was someone who made writing look like a lot of fun," said Bass of his longtime friend. "He made living look like a lot of fun. ... He became a role model for me whether I knew it or not."

While his activism will never take a back seat to his literary ambitions, Bass' latest collection of short stories in "For a Little While," published in 2016, offers a portrait of an artist growing old, yet one whose imagination and craftsmanship only seem to grow stronger and more refined.

Bass himself sees little importance in being overly introspective. "The tunnel vision that a writer brings to his or her craft is intense. The focal point is binocular and precise," he said. "You want to be down in the subconscious, watching the dream of the real time of the story."

This article was adapted from "Rick Bass: The Sage of Yaak Valley on Writing, Teaching and the Late Jim Harrison," published in the summer 2017 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.

Doug Hare is the Distribution Director for Outlaw Partners. He studied philosophy and American literature at Princeton and Harvard universities.



Between the shelves

BY AMY HUNTER ASSISTANT COMMUNITY LIBRARIAN

It's that time of year again, an ending and a beginning. It's the time of new hopes for 2018 and New Year's resolutions. While the library might not immediately come to mind when thinking about resolutions, we would like to invite you to add library resolutions to your list. For example:

- 1. Go to the library more often.
- 2. Volunteer at the library.
- 3. Read one classic for every two personal preference books (for those who do not read the classics).
- 4. Read one fiction book for every two non-fiction books (for those who prefer nonfiction).
- 5. Check out one movie per month to watch with family or friends and then discuss.
- Once a month, check out a book from your childhood to reminisce.
- 7. Study a language with Rosetta Stone.
- Keep a book on CD in the car for Bozeman drives.
- 9. Always have an audiobook from OverDrive for Bozeman drives (for those without a CD player).
- 10. Pick one topic a month or quarter to learn more about and check out books, audiobooks and documentaries to learn about it.

Happy New Year!





The Clark's nutcracker has a unique pouch under its tongue used to carry seeds long distances. The nutcracker collects seeds from pine trees and carries them away to hide for later use.

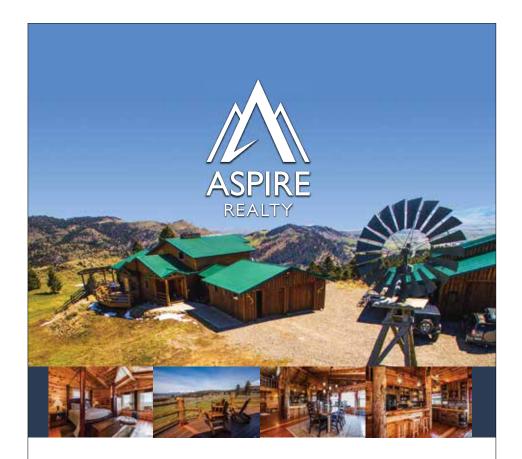
This bird hides thousands of seeds each year, and studies have shown that they can remember where they have hidden nearly all of their seeds.

The Clark's nutcracker is one of the only members of the crow family where the male incubates the eggs.

Local declines in Clark's nutcracker populations may be due to a pine beetle epidemic and the arrival of white pine blister rust, both of which kill the whitebark pines that many nutcrackers depend on.

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Owner: Blythe Beaubien

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Dislikes: Being left alone, the vacuum, obedience

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Big Sky SPECIAL SECTION

HOUSE to Home



From foundation to furnishings: Experts in architecture and aesthetics share pro tips on how to build your house into a home

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Grand-scale ceiling mural installed in Yellowstone Club residence

EBS STAFF

On Dec. 14, after seven months of creating, planning and preparing, artist Theresa Stirling installed a 300-pound encaustic ceiling mural in a home theater at the Yellowstone Club with the help of Big Sky's Haas Builders. Taking into account the iron channels used to mount the piece, it weighed a total of 800 pounds.

The installation process required a crew of eight, four mechanical lifts, and meticulous execution to protect its fragile surface.

Stirling, who is based in the Pacific Northwest, was commissioned by Yellowstone Club charter residents to paint a mural with nature imagery. Consisting of four panels totaling 25,600 square inches, the scene incorporates rainbow trout and an eagle swooping down for its prey, as if viewed from underwater looking up.

"The image was a dream the homeowner had," said Stirling, who also finds inspiration in nature and the "dreamy landscapes" that surround her. "This project has been a wonderful chance to work with the teams on all subcontractor levels [to] make the dream come true. This is highly customized art at its finest."

Stirling works closely with her clients and a graphic designer to ensure she gets the base imagery just right. "This piece will tell the stories of its creators who thought of the imagery, the places they have lived and visited, the trout they love, the eagles that preside over nature," Stirling said. "And it will enchant all lucky visitors to the home theater in which it is the [centerpiece]."

Working primarily in encaustic, a beeswax-based medium, Stirling created a mural with luminous depths, a quality that many encaustic artists cite as a reason they are drawn to the organic medium. "I often let the wax take me



With help from Haas Builders, artist Theresa Stirling installed an 800-pound ceiling mural in a home theater at the Yellowstone Club. PHOTO BY JEFF HARTLEY

where it wants to," Stirling has been known to say.

After leaving a marketing career in biotechnology, Stirling experimented with multiple art forms before discovering encaustic. She has now been working with natural beeswax, dammar tree sap resin and oils for more than 14 years and remains enchanted by the medium.

Stirling's encaustic paintings are built slowly. Each begins with an image, over which she paints up to 20 layers of pure, hot beeswax; cold wax; colorful pigments and oils. She calls her pieces "a labor of love and luxe."

She brings a contemporary approach to the ancient technique, while

respecting the origins of the painstaking process. Each brushstroke is carefully fused with a blowtorch, creating a textured surface that can capture any mood for a result that is somehow both raw yet sophisticated.

Although Stirling can create works in a wide range of styles and sizes, she's become increasingly focused on highly customized art and installations, with most of her commissioned projects coming from the Big Sky area.

Publicly, her work can be found at The Architect's Wife in Bozeman, and select interior design showrooms in Bozeman and Whitefish, Montana.

Stirling donates 20 percent of all proceeds from her work to animal shelters, education and the arts.

Visit theresastirling.com to view more of the artist's work.



Stirling works in encaustic, a beeswax-based medium, to create custom works for many residents in the Big Sky area. It took seven months for the artist to complete this grand scale commission that was installed on Dec. 14. PHOTO BY ERIC STIRLING



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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

Mountain modern: A building concept with staying power



PHOTO COURTESY OF PEAK PHOTOGRAPHY

2017 was an incredible year in the building world, with clients, designers and builders collaborating to produce stunning and timeless projects. Some trends that appear to be continuing are the use of steel, exposed concrete and large expanses of glass. That does not mean, however, that reclaimed materials are out of vogue, because in Montana people will always dream of the "little cabin in the woods."

Teton Heritage has been very fortunate to work on some of the coolest homes in southwest Montana and Jackson, Wyoming, over the past 21 years. In 2018, we'll have homes in both locations going through the construction phase in one way or another.

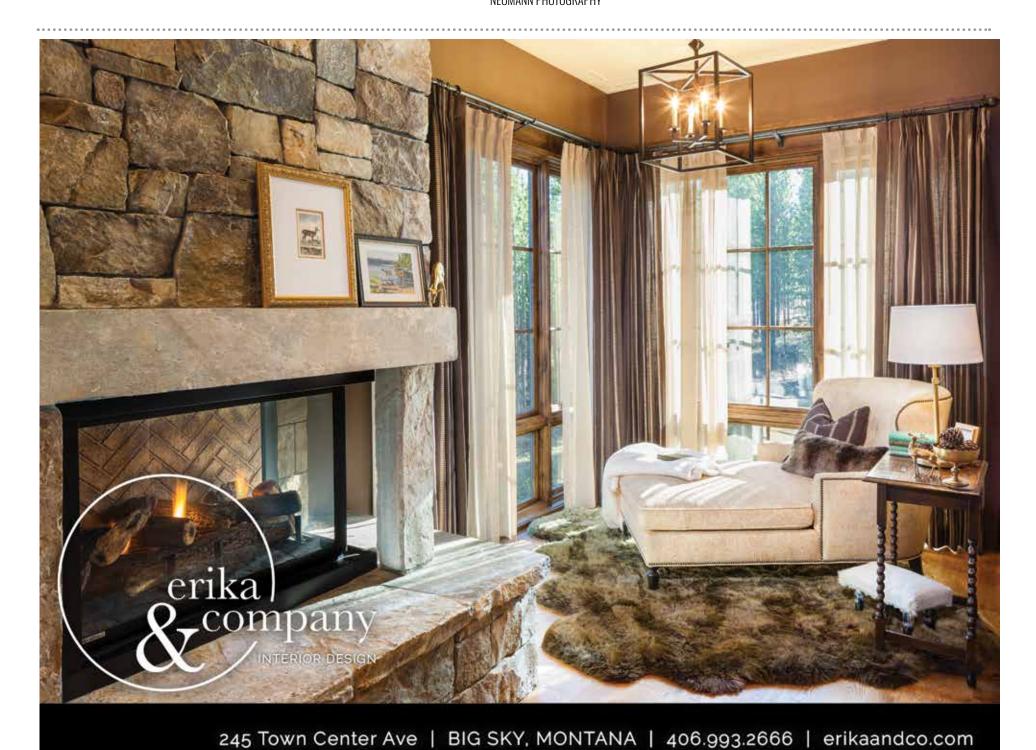
People always ask if the modern home will become dated, like it did in the '70s, and our response is not necessarily. Today's mountain modern concept blends large glass and steel expanses with other materials from the Rocky Mountain palette, which is still stone and wood. The combination of rustic materials and modern structure and glazing is what truly separates this vernacular from the modern trends of the '70s.

Teton Heritage Builders loves to build cool homes, regardless of design type and material selections. Get in touch with us as soon as possible to reserve a slot in our 2018 building schedule. If you're just starting the planning stage of finding property or beginning design, reach out and we can make sure that your dreams and your budget go hand-in-hand.

For more tips and information contact Teton Heritage Builders at tetonheritagebuilders.com or call (406) 522-0808.



This mountain modern home just outside of Bozeman was designed by Brechbuhler Architects and built by Teton Heritage Builders. It sits on a private parcel with over 300 acres and has stunning views of the surrounding mountains. PHOTO BY NEUMANN PHOTOGRAPHY





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Testimonials from two grateful patients and donors to Big Sky Medical Center through Bozeman Health Foundation:

"We were impressed. It's very nice to know that there is a completely qualified, capable and caring team here in Big Sky, just a ten minute drive from our house. I've been coming out here my whole life and it is now hard to imagine Big Sky existing without this facility in the community – it has been a huge benefit."

- Daphne Chester, Parent of patient

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- Les Loble. Patient



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From mid-Dec 2015 – Oct 2017, a total of 8,125 patients were seen at Big Sky Medical Center. These 8,125 patients generated 17,198 encounters/visits to BSMC, implying that a total 34,396 roundtrips through the canyon were avoided.

Mortise + Tenon showcases Montana's rustic side

BY TYLER ALLEN EBS MANAGING EDITOR

BOZEMAN – Rustic furniture is in vogue in southwest Montana. One need only drive south on Highway 191 from Four Corners, past the many shops and lumberyards advertising reclaimed barn wood.

Mortise + Tenon in Four Corners has been riding that wave since Rory Egelus opened his shop, Rory's Rustic Furniture, seven years ago. The reclaimed wood business was so brisk that in June 2015 he opened a showroom called Homestead '89 in the same building—in October 2017 he merged the businesses under one name, Mortise + Tenon, to avoid confusion between the two. They've also expanded into bunkrooms, kitchen cabinets and on-site built-ins, "expanding our horizons," he said.

The showroom features Egelus' furniture—made from reclaimed barn, fence and corral wood—as well as custom work from other Montana craftsmen. Featured artists include Bozeman metal sculptor Brad Van Anderson, Big Sandy landscape photographer Craig Edwards, as well as custom sinks from Missoula's Mountain Copper Creations.

Egelus says they're now showcasing 35-plus Montana artists, with work ranging from pottery and sculpture, to oil painting and photography. He's also been collaborating recently with Belgrade's Crucible design and fabrication studio, which specializes in customized metal work.

"From what I see there's a lot of people that come into Big Sky that want that rustic Montana feel," Egelus said. "Whether [it's their style] at home or not, they want their getaway to be rustic."

The term "rustic furniture" can be traced back to the Great Depression and other hard times in U.S. history, when people used any material they could find to build tables and chairs. However, the intended use of reclaimed materials for aesthetic purposes likely began in New York's Adirondack Mountains in the 1800s, where wealthy Americans of the time built their "great camps." The ubiquitous Adirondack chair originated during this period.

Egelus grew up in Palmer, Alaska, and says woodworking has always been a hobby. Before moving to Montana he made bent-willow furniture, and peeled logs part time while earning a degree in construction engineering technology from Montana State University.

Before the showroom opened in 2015, Egelus' work was exclusively direct-to-customer—by word of mouth, through his website, or to those who found his shop on Highway 191.



Rory Egelus in his Four Corners showroom in 2015. PHOTO BY TYLER ALLEN

Bob von Pentz has owned a log home for nearly 20 years near the mouth of Gallatin Canyon, and did a comprehensive remodel of the building beginning in 2014. Egelus built and installed a bedroom cabinet, three bathroom vanities, a custom bar, a fireplace mantle, kitchen shelving, and an entertainment center.

The custom bar wood was reclaimed from an old granary on nearby Axtell Road and that's part of the appeal, von Pentz said. "I get a psychic pleasure knowing where the materials came from."

That's one reason Mortise + Tenon stands out from other reclaimed-wood craftsmen, Egelus' said, because they reclaim all the wood themselves and can tell customers the story of its origins. While he and his team handle the whole process from start to finish, it's not without its challenges.

"I call it angry wood," said Chris St. Don, one of Egelus' five full-time employees. St. Don said the old wood can be full of knots, or twisted from decades of exposure to sun, wind and rain. "You have to know where to use it, and a vision of the project from beginning to end."

Egelus says the green movement has encouraged people to use reclaimed material, and their work isn't limited to one aesthetic—
Mortise + Tenon experiments with other reclaimed material like metal, as well as stains and burning techniques.

"Just because its reclaimed doesn't mean we're always rustic," Egelus said.

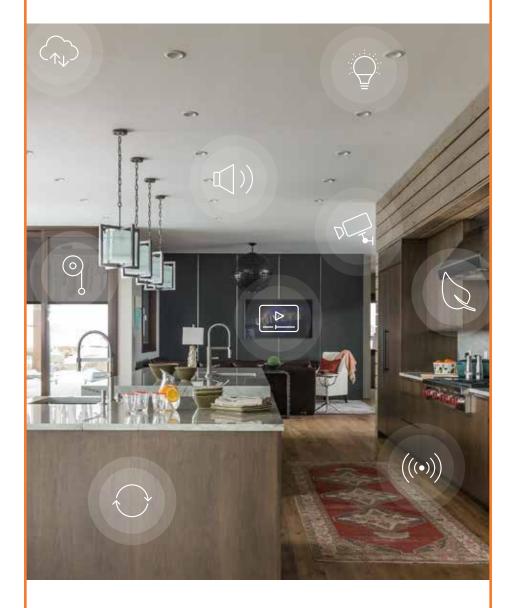
A version of this article ran in the June 12, 2015, issue of EBS.



The Mortise + Tenon showroom just before it opened as Homestead '89 in 2015. The space showcases Egelus' woodwork, as well as 35-plus other artisans from around the state. PHOTO BY RORY FGELUS



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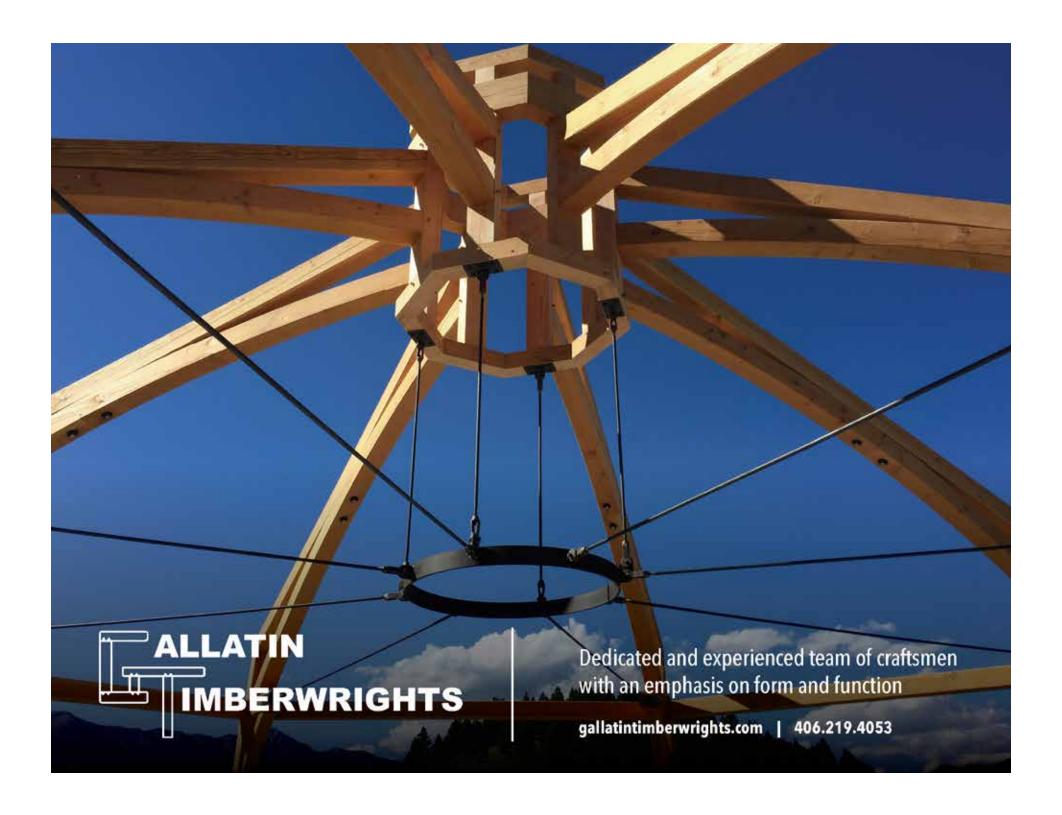




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What is performance fabric? Available in many beautiful fabric lines, Crypton home fabric is durable, stain and odor resistant and repels liquid. What's even better? Gallatin Valley Furniture offers a wide array of furniture styles to meet any taste—traditional, contemporary, mountain modern, Montana rustic and everything in between. All of their furniture pieces can be custom ordered with Crypton fabrics featuring performance technology that is built into every fiber, so it won't ever wear away. Your fabrics will stay beautiful, last longer and give you and your guests the freedom to enjoy your Montana home without worry.

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With the help of Crypton Home Fabrics, let your kids be kids and let the dog rule the roost. PHOTO COURTESY OF CRYPTON MARKETING

forms that provide even support with no bars, no springs and no snagging. With the American Leather Comfort Sleeper, there will be arguments over who gets to sleep on the sleeper sofa, not who has to.

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With an American Leather Sleeper Sofa there's always room for more (fun). PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN LEATHER

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No springs, no bars, no sagging. Just comfort.







The Big Sky community has spoken! With more than 3,000 votes cast—a record amount—locals and visitors recognized the restaurants, retailers, artists, architects, nonprofits, builders and bartenders that make this place we know and love tick.

Some of our readers may be visiting from afar, and others might be lucky enough to have called Big Sky home for a decade or more, but we can all agree that this is a pretty special spot. Dig into the write-ups that follow as we celebrate the finest Big Sky has to offer.

COMMUNITY MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Mark Robin

Mark Robin passed away on Dec. 18 at the age of 56. As most people in the Big Sky community are aware, Mark was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a progressive neurodegenerative disease, in September 2016. Since that time, despite his deteriorating physical condition, Mark maintained a positive outlook and a commitment to living life as fully as possible. A longtime owner of The Hungry Moose Market and Deli, a hub of the Big Sky community since he and his wife Jackie started the business in 1994, Robin continued to share his experience through a poetry blog, raise money for ALS and other causes, attend community events, and travel, in the days leading up to his death.

He and Jackie have repeatedly expressed awe and gratitude for how the community has rallied around their family. In a June 2017 interview with EBS, by which time Robin had lost all muscle function below his neck, Robin said, "I've never had any regrets; we make choices and we live by those choices. The positive thing is I'm still around and I'm still living a very full life. I could live for a week or another 10 years—we just don't know. But I want to be around for my kids, my wife, my community, my friends—you stick around to enjoy them and have fun together."

A celebration of life will be held in Mark Robin's honor at 2 p.m. Friday, Dec. 22 at Rainbow Ranch Lodge.







'Deep Thoughts and More Football with Markymoose'

By Mark Robin

what is the meaning of life? what is deep in your heart? the answer lies within each of us some people would say it's all about family some people would say it's all about happiness I say happiness is fleeting there are moments of pure joy I still have some of those especially at Howie's football games I would still say it's all about family a healthy family and friends our friends have always been family to us we are very fortunate to have this extended family in our case, it reaches far and wide our customers, vendors, employees I can't believe how many good friends we have made through the store when I say healthy I am speaking relatively we all have our own stuff that brings us up or down

This poem is an excerpt from Mark Robin's blog post published on Oct. 20. - markymooseinbigsky.blogspot.com

BEST RESTAURANT





2nd Olive B's

Chef and owner Warren Bibber opened Olive B's on Valentine's Day in 2011. Big Sky has been in love with his bistro style gastronomic creations ever since. Specializing in fresh seafood, wild game, and creative desserts in a romantic setting, Olive B's never disappoints. olivebsbigsky.com (406) 995-3355

1st Lotus Pad Asian Cuisine

One of Big Sky's most popular dining establishments, 2017 marks the sixth year Lotus Pad Asian Cuisine has been voted "best restaurant" in Big Sky. Since owner-chef Alex Omania opened the business in 2007, it has outgrown its no-elbowroom location in Westfork Meadow and now inhabits a chic, much larger space in Town Center—and is having no trouble packing the square footage. Lotus Pad's expansion is not limited to Big Sky. In late November, Omania opened a Lotus Pad just outside of Cincinnati, Ohio. In either location, you can expect their signature, bold Thai-inspired flavors, family-style portions, impeccable service and a lively, but intimate atmosphere. lotuspadbigsky.com (406) 995-2728



#3 Ousel & Spur Pizza Co

When they opened in June of 2012, managing partners Jen Ketteridge and Josh Kone made a menu focusing on artisan pizzas featuring local ingredients. Other specialties include fresh pasta and gnocchi dishes that rotate seasonally. And all meats are sourced from Montana farms. The staff, many whom have been there since day one, are friendly and hardworking. ouselandspurpizza.com (406) 995-7175

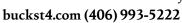
BEST DATE NIGHT RESTAURANT





2nd Buck's T-4 Lodge

Buck's T-4 is one of the longest standing restaurants in Big Sky with a history dating back more than 50 years. Executive Chef Scott Mechura has crafted a creative menu that features everything from wild game, to hand-cut steaks and incredible daily specials. Buck's is a great getaway with your special someone, and the recent remodel makes it even more enjoyable.



1st Olive B's

olivebsbigsky.com (406) 995-3355

When looking for a romantic getaway with your special someone Olive B's takes home the gold medal. It's appropriate that the winner of the best date spot is owned and operated by amazing longtime locals, Warren "Bibber" and Jennie Bibbins. Bibber and Jennie have created an intimate restaurant setting with incredible cuisine. Olive B's has an open kitchen and it's common to see one of the owners cooking up your special meal while enjoying a paired glass of wine, watching the sun set behind Lone Mountain. Located in the Meadow Village Center, Olive B's has become a local favorite and if you're on a date night be sure you request one of the private booths and let the food do the talking.



#3 Michaelangelo's Ristorante Italiano

Nothing says date night like fine Italian food, and Michaelangelo's is a welcome addition to the Big Sky dining options. Located in the Meadow Village Center, Michaelangelo's features an award-winning culinary team that has created a menu complementing the incredible setting, with its hip yet warm and cozy setting. Many say that the Filetto di Manzo is one of the finest steaks served in Big Sky Country. michaelangelosbigsky.com (406) 995-7373

BEST DIRTBAG MEAL DEAL





2nd Wrap Shack

For 14 years, The Wrap Shack has been "rolling them fat" for customers in Big Sky. With wraps, tacos, margaritas and tallboy beers, this is a locals' hangout that feeds many. Owners Karen Macklin and Don Mattusch take pride in serving Big Sky fast, healthy and affordable food, and using the freshest of ingredients in their homemade salsas and sauces. werollemfat.com (406) 995-3099

1st Yeti Dog

Yeti Dog, located a one- to two-minute jaunt from Big Sky Resort's Swift Current chairlift, is the winner of the cherished "Dirtbag Meal" category. And what better way to sum it up than by looking at Yelp reviews?

"No one throws down flavor in Big Sky better than Yeti Dogs. I honestly almost enjoy getting Yeti Dog more than I enjoy skiing," wrote Christopher D.

"Wander to this small establishment for quite a treat," wrote Jason P., who was impressed with the "snappy" flavors—and the pricing. "For \$6.75, you can score any hot dog, a bag of chips/candy, and a soda. You can substitute the soda for a 16 oz. can of Pabst Blue Ribbon (PBR) for an additional \$1.00."

bigskyresort.com/things-to-do/dining/yeti-dogs



#3 Gallatin Riverhouse Grill

The Gallatin Riverhouse boasts great vibes, music and food at an amazing riverside setting. Locals on a budget love the Riverhouse for all sorts of well priced menu items—and generous portions to boot—but the three-piece fried chicken meal is the fan favorite. gallatinriverhousegrill.com (406) 995-7427

BEST BURGER



1st Lone Peak Brewery and Taphouse

Three things to know about these burgers: 1. They're big. 2. They're spicy (if you want them to be). 3. They're best accompanied by Lone Peak Brewery's waffle fries. Wash down the works—we recommend their anniversary burger featuring locally grown Montana Wagyu, a fried egg, and sautéed onions and peppers—with one of the rotating brews on nitro and partake in a little game shuffle board while you wait. **lonepeakbrewery.com** (406) 995-3939



2nd By Word of Mouth

Winner of Big Sky's Best Burger in 2014, By Word of Mouth serves up seasonal globally-influenced fare for lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch. BYWOM's a great place for an elegant meal as well as a casual bar to enjoy après after a deep day on the hill. Can't get enough of their flavor? Contact owners Pam and John Flach for catering for your next event.

bigskycatering.com (406) 995-2992



3rd Gallatin Riverhouse Grill

This is a prime spot for any after party whether you're toasting a successfully executed event or celebrating a day or fishing, skiing or hunting. Ask to have your burger prepared "Carnie style" for extra flavor and heat. gallatinriverhousegrill.com (406) 995-7427

BEST PIZZA





2nd Milkie's

Milkie's has been serving thin and crispy pizza since 1994 and has become an institution for Big Sky locals to watch football or play pool and tell stories over a round of beers in a casual setting.

milkiespizza.com

(406) 995-2900

1st Ousel & Spur Pizza Co.

With a nice Italian flair on their menu, Town Center's Ousel & Spur was voted the best pizza in Big Sky for the second year in a row. The salads and small plates are tasty, but it's the pizza that keeps locals and visitors cheering for more. The foundation is high-quality ingredients and a great thin crust topped with fun items like elk sausage, roasted wild mushrooms and dried figs. The result is an unbeatable pizza. Ousel and Spur has an intimate setting among Town Center businesses and a great menu for the kiddos. While the pizza category was extremely competitive, Ousel & Spur's consistency, quality and vibe put it in the gold spot. **ouselandspurpizza.com** (406) 995-7175



3rd Blue Moon Bakery

Big Sky's local bakery is known for its lunch special, which will get you two big slices of pizza and a soda for \$8. Blue Moon has the thickest crust in Big Sky, but if you want still more doughy goodness, you can get it—beware of the glass display case full of other amazing baked goodies.

bigskybluemoonbakery.com (406) 995-2305

BEST APRES





2nd Beehive Basin Brewery

Located in Town Center, Beehive
Basin Brewery crafts a large and
frequently rotating collection of beers
with its specialized seven-barrel brewing system. Stop in to try some of their
locally crafted beers and catch their
brewmaster Andy Lieberg at work.
beehivebasinbrewery.com
(406) 995-7444

1st Scissorbills Saloon

Scissorbills Saloon is where the locals go, and the occasional enterprising tourist in the know. Tucked up on the third floor of the Arrowhead Mall, the après ski scene is boisterous and friendly, and the nachos are served in heaps. Operating partner Keith Kuhns, and fellow owners Adam, Kyle and Scott Olson, changed the name of the restaurant back to Scissorbills—the name it held during the '80s and '90s—from Bambu Bar and Asian Bistro after listening to popular demand. Any Scissorbills regular knows that familiar faces will be waiting for them with stories of their powder exploits on Lone Mountain. scissorbills.com (406) 995-4933



3rd Michaelangelo'sRistorante Italiano

For those whose après tastes tend toward fine dining, Michaelangelo's Ristarante Italiano serves exquisite Italian cuisine prepared by Executive Chef Michael Annandono, who has been awarded Best Chef in America and Diner's Choice from Open Table. michelangelosbigsky.com (406) 995-7373

BEST HAPPY HOUR





2nd Lone Peak Cinema

Lone Peak Cinema has been serving up cold drinks and the hottest new movies since the fall of 2011. Happy hour takes place seven days a week from 8-9 p.m. The later time coincides with late movies, sports and their ever-popular Friday night trivia. Offers include \$2 cans of beer, \$4 draft beer, \$6 glass of wine, and \$1 off wells drinks.

lonepeakcinema.com (406) 995-4478

1st Rainbow Ranch

Happy Hour at the iconic Rainbow Ranch on the famed Gallatin River takes place seven days a week from 4-6 p.m. Wander down the canyon to enjoy this very special happy hour in one of the most picturesque settings in Big Sky. Available at the bar or in the cozy sitting area near the fire in the winter months and on the wrap around deck during the summertime, the food menu includes the Twin Cabin Burger, Wild Game Pot Pie, Smoked Trout Cheesecake, Wild Mushroom Bruschetta and Rock Shrimp Baguette. Drink specials include wines by the glass, half- priced beer and select well drinks.

rainbowranchbigsky.com (406) 995-4132



3rd Alberto's

Quenching Mexican food cravings for locals and visitors alike, Alberto's offers happy hour Tuesday - Sunday from 4-6 p.m. Drink specials include their frozen or house margaritas for \$4 and Pacifico brew on draft for \$3. It's a great place to warm up after a long day on the hill or to cool off after a long day at work. (406) 995-2326

BEST BARTENDER





2nd Tanya Simonson

No. 2 in the polls this year, but still No. 1 in our hearts. Whether she's slinging drinks to locals at the Riverhouse, working an après behind the bar at Scissorbills, or keeping the party going late-night at The Brothel, Simonson likes to play her music loud and pour 'em stiff. "It's all about the playlist," said this year's silver medal winner. If you hear Gerry Rafferty's "Right Down the Line" come on, be careful ... you're about to have a good time.

1st Josh Kone

If you're looking for a good martini in Big Sky, most locals know to head to BYWOM. If Jason Isbell is playing in the background, there's a good chance that Kone is tending bar. Equipped with extensive wine knowledge and quick wit, the owner of Ousel and Spur Pizza Co.'s high standards of service and maybe an occasional pineapple-infused vodka shot helped him clinch the title of best barkeep—in a town without a shortage of watering holes.



3rd Mike Lanzarini

A transplant from Telluride, Colorado, Lanzarini pours beers in the winter at Lone Peak Brewery (his favorite is the XPA) and guides fishing trips for Gallatin River Guides in the summer. Are there similarities in the two gigs? Yes, Lanzarini says: "You've got to deal with new people on a daily basis and make them like you. You just have to be personable."

BEST BUSINESS



PHOTO COURTESY OF LONE MOUNTAIN RANCH

1st Lone Mountain Ranch

Lone Mountain Ranch is a perfect example of what makes Big Sky a special place to both live and play. A National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World, the expansive views and quiet solitude you find on more than 85 kilometers of groomed Nordic trails, combined with the warmth and friendliness of the staff, guests and locals, make LMR one of Montana's best kept secrets. Offering luxuriously rustic accommodations with world-class amenities, including the recently reinvented Horn & Cantle Restaurant and Saloon, sleigh ride dinners, and year-round activities, Lone Mountain Ranch offers an experience not to be missed. lonemountainranch.com (406) 995-4644



2nd Ace Hardware

As the 2017 recipient of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce's Business of the Year award, Ace Hardware - Big Sky is helping our community save the drive to Bozeman with their selection of home products and tools, attention to detail and customer service. Ask Kelly, Rhonda, Craig, Dean, Kevin, Dan or any of their amazing staff for help on your next project. acebigskytools.com (406) 995-4500



3rd East Slope Outdoors

A staple in Town Center, East Slope is your headquarters for just about every recreation activity the valley has to offer, whether you're downhill skiing, fishing, hiking or cross-country skiing. Check in with owner "Super Dave" Alvin before heading out to fly fish and he will give you the latest tips on what flies have been getting action.

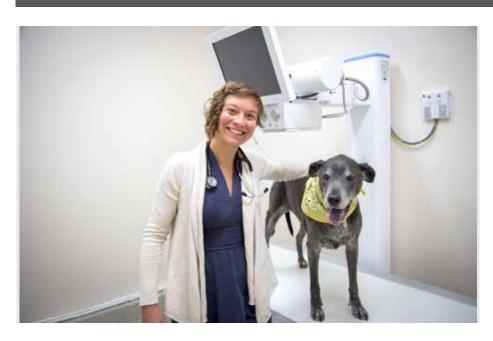
eastslopeoutdoors.com (406) 995-4369

2nd SAV Digital

SAV is a newcomer to the Big Sky business scene but has history in the Bozeman area dating to 2004. Cory Reistad and his team offer the most cutting-edge technology and service for Big Sky homes. From AV systems and lighting to home controls and energy management, SAV is a welcome

Environments

BEST NEW BUSINESS



1st Lone Peak Veterinary

Since Sydney Desmarais purchased and remodeled the former Veterinary Clinic of Big Sky earlier this year, she's handled everything from dental procedures on both cats and dogs to spays and neuters. She's even completed a leg amputation. Most importantly, she's handled procedures large and small with proficiency, professionalism and grace. Clients have remarked on her compassionate bedside manner—with both people and animals.

Following a four-month remodel, which included the addition of a new X-ray machine and a state-of-the-art surgical table and light, Desmarais opened the doors to Lone Peak Veterinary in September and is joined by vet tech Sarah Whitehead and relief tech Erin Priest.

lonepeakvethospital.com (406) 995-2266



3rd Montana Supply

addition to the Big Sky landscape. savinc.net (406) 586-5593

Montana Supply is a lifestyle apparel shop with the hippest storefront in Big Sky. This trendy store owned by Josh Tozier and Alaina Stinson is a great place to shop for gifts—or buy outdoor apparel or new shoes for yourself—after grabbing a mocha latte and gluten-free muffin from neighboring Compass Café.

instagram.com/montanasupply (406) 995-3490



BEST ANNUAL EVENT



1st Big Sky PBR

Big Sky PBR had quite a year. Not only did it win the PBR's "Event of the Year" title for the 5th consecutive year and sell out in less than 24 hours, but it was voted as Big Sky, Montana's best event for the third year in a row.

2017 featured all the things that make this event the Best of Big Sky, with rowdy bull rides, more than \$115,000 raised for charity, three nights of live music, and record event attendance. "This event generates a \$2.6 million dollar economic impact for Big Sky, with businesses bustling, full lodging, and packed restaurants," said Ersin Ozer, Outlaw Partners' Events Director, "plus it's fun to welcome 40 of the world's best bull riders to be a part of our community for the week.

bigskypbr.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

3rd MountainFilm on Tour Festival

the great time stays the same.

bigskyarts.org

2nd Music in the

Summer Thursday nights in Big Sky belong to Music in the Mountains. Residents of Big Sky and Bozeman alike join a robust visitor crowd to pack Town Center Park for the weekly concert series, sending music high into the Big Sky. The musical acts vary, but

Mountains

A newcomer to the list, Big Sky's Mountainfilm on Tour expanded this year, captivating the sold out audience through their collection of documentary films for not one but two nights. Leaving viewers in awe and inspired, this event will continue to grow into a premier festival in the region.

bigskyarts.org/mountainfilm

2nd East Slope Outdoors

Narrowly missing the No. 1 slot, East Slope is quickly gaining popularity as they nestle in to their new Town Center location. Since 1986, East Slope has been known for its laid-back atmosphere and selection of goodies while owners Dave and Katie became staples of the community. A sick fleet of rental skis and fishing



PHOTO BY RICH ADDICKS

BEST OUTDOOR RETAILER



1st Grizzly Outfitters

Going head-to-head in one of the most competitive categories and winning by less than 2 percent of the vote, Grizzly has returned as champion of the cherished Outdoor Retailer category. Grizzly Outfitters has been a staple in Big Sky for more than 20 years and offers a year-round selection of everything needed to live and play in the mountains. Owners Andrew Schreiner and Ken Lancey have assembled a great team who are passionate about getting you geared up to play outside. Located in town center with racks and shelves full of all the top outdoor brands, Grizzly's known for its state-of-the-art ski tuning equipment and being one of the top boot fitters in the nation.

grizzlyoutfitters.com (406) 995-2939





gear are East Slope's specialty. eastslopeoutdoors.com

(406) 995-4369

When it comes to a shop that's passionate about bikes and snow sports Gallatin Alpine Sports, affectionately dubbed GAS, is it. Owner Tom Owens has created a great shop and while you can get just about anything there, Nordic skiers, snowboarders and bikers will love GAS.

gallatinalpinesports.com (406) 995-2313



BEST SKI RUN



1st Liberty Bowl

PHOTO BY LONNIE BALL

Skiers of Big Sky Resort's Lone Peak Tram invariably cut their teeth on Liberty Bowl, the only single black diamond run off the summit of Lone Mountain. Access to Liberty Bowl has become significantly easier this winter after an excavator cut new switchbacks into the south face of the peak this summer. The excavator was flown, in pieces, to the summit by helicopter and has made the approach to Liberty nearly rock free. Once the Dakota chairlift opens for the season, from the top of Liberty Bowl to the bottom of Dakota, skiers enjoy 4,000 vertical feet of uninterrupted fun.



2nd North Summit Snowfield

Formerly the prized domain of Moonlight Basin skiers, after the 2013 merger the North Summit Snowfield became part of Big Sky Resort's legendary alpine terrain. Requiring one to three partners, avalanche safety gear and confident skiing abilities, you must sign out with ski patrol in the affectionately named "penalty box."



3rd Mr. K

Coming in at No. 3 in the Best of Big Sky survey, Mr. K is an iconic green circle run. Some years, it's the only ski trail that experts spend their time on until there's enough snow to open the resort's steeper terrain. We love you Mr. K!

BEST PLACE TO TAKE YOUR DOG



1st Uplands/Hummocks Trails

A right of passage when moving to a ski town is having a dog and a place to walk Fido—it's as important as groceries or a good bar. The 2017 Best of Big Sky survey had a tie for the best place to take your dog with Uplands/Hummocks trails. Uplands and Hummocks are an incredible 5-mile trail system built by the Big Sky Community Organization with easements generously donated by the Simkins Family. The trails have some of the finest views of Lone Mountain, offering a great mix of rolling hills, steep climbs and wetlands, ideal to wear out your four-legged friends. **bscomt.org** (406) 993-2112

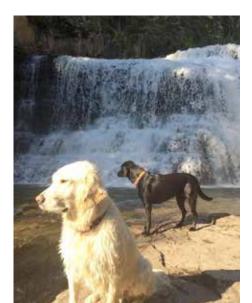


2nd Beehive Basin Brewery

One of Big Sky's favorite watering holes for custom-made brews is also a favorite place to bring your pooch. With a dog-friendly porch and watering bowls, Beehive Basin Brewery is a welcome place to bring furry fiends while tasting the latest single-hop pale ale.

beehivebasinbrewery.com

(406) 995-7444



3rd Ousel Falls

There's nothing like taking your dog for a walk to a 30-foot waterfall, on one of the finest built trails in the region. Ousel Falls took third place for best place to take your dog, and while it's becoming one of the busiest trailheads in the county, it still welcomes well-behaved K9s. bscomt.org (406) 993-2112

BEST REAL ESTATE AGENCY





2nd L&K

L&K Real Estate is a boutique brokerage owned by Eric Ladd and Ryan Kulesza. With over 50 years combined experience, they specialize in luxury lifestyle properties and have brokered over \$1.5 billion in sales. Their personal approach stands out in the industry, and made for a tight race in this coveted category—just 10 votes separated first and second place. **lkrealestate.com** (406) 995-2404

1st Christie's International Real Estate

An exclusive affiliate of Christie's International Real Estate, this agency posts some impressive numbers in a town with an exceptionally robust real estate market. In 2017, Christie's Big Sky agents sold nearly \$80 million in single-family homes, more than \$79 million in condominiums, and \$31 million-plus in land—and that's just in the first three quarters.

Representing dozens of exclusive listings, the seven agents at PureWest Christie's International Real Estate of Big Sky broker sales for luxury ski-in/ski-out homes, riverfront properties great for fly-fishing out your backyard and large parcels well suited to a ranch transformation.

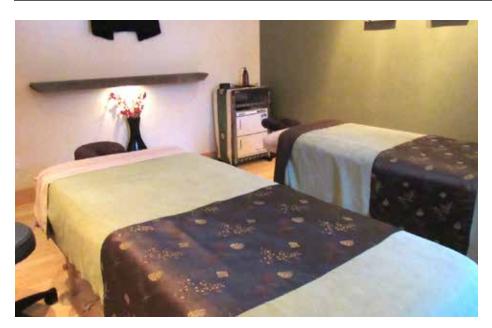
bigskypurewest.com (406) 995-4009



3rd Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty

Big Sky Sotheby's is owned by Tim Cyr and Cathy Gorman and has been in business since 2002. Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty brokers are a handpicked team of full-time Big Sky residents who bring indepth knowledge of the area to every transaction. They're immersed in the community, the people and the real estate of southwest Montana. bigskysir.com (406) 995-2211

BEST SPA



1st OZssage

In a new category this year, OZssage Therapeutic Spa in Meadow Village took the win as the best spa in Big Sky. Owner Jacquie Rager and her team of more than 10 estheticians and massage therapists have been offering massages, facials and spa treatments to the Big Sky community since 2001, complete with their own line of skin care products specific for the Montana climate.

Ozssage has enjoyed very little employee turnover, and Rager says, "The success of the business is the work of the therapists that have worked here over the years."

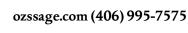




PHOTO BY KENE SPERRY



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

2nd Santosha Wellness Center

Under the ownership of Callie Stolz, Santosha Wellness Center offers massage, a variety of body therapies, yoga, psychotherapy and a new infrared sauna as a holistic approach to health. The team at Santosha strives to help people live life to the fullest with optimal health.

santoshabigsky.com (406) 993-2510

3rd Solace Spa & Salon

Nestled in the heart of Big Sky Resort's Mountain Village, in the lobby of the Huntly Lodge, Solace Spa & Salon offers treatments to soothe the effects of high altitude and dry climate. With products from Epicuren, Jurlique, Babor and Ugg, Solace ensures each individual has opportunity to relax and find tranquility and rejuvenation.

bigskyresort.com/things-to-do/so-lace-spa-and-salon (406) 995-5803

BEST SALON



1st Monica's Salon

New mom Monica Kulesza opened Monica's Salon in 2010 and has helped Big Sky look a little fresher ever since. Kulesza and the gals at Monica's certainly have proven their mad cosmetology skills in this full-service salon that offers a wide array of treatments for hair, face and nails. Their clientele range from your neighbor in for a quick trim to a blushing destination bride getting gussied up for her big day. To keep your locks looking their best, Monica's Salon also offers an assortment of quality hair care products.

bigskyhair.com (406) 995-2722



2nd Mountain Haven Salon

Mountain Haven Salon has earned quite the reputation over the many years of being open on Gallatin Road, and it shows. Owner Jaci Clack's offers up every service at her Big Horn Center salon to get you looking your best. A trained Aveda cosmetologist, she can help get you the right hairstyle, color, and cut with polished nails to top it off.

(406) 993-4543



3rd Hairninja

Unique in Big Sky for offering hair and eyelash extensions, Hairninja also offers cutting-edge color service and keeps stylists hip to the times with a commitment to advanced education. Owner Leah Clendenin employs two other full-time stylists at her Meadow Village salon. hairninjasalon.com (406) 995-7510

BEST GROCERY STORE



1st Roxy's Market & Café

In a tight race with each store receiving over 30 percent of the vote, Roxy's Market & Café near Town Center was recognized as the best grocery store in Big Sky. The second of three stores opened by Roxy and Steve Lawler, Big Sky's Roxy's is a hybrid market that offers a variety of products ranging from natural and organic to conventional, and also includes specialty items.

"We try to add a lot of local products, whether it's produce or artisan products like cheese," Roxy said. "We are independently owned and operated ... that's pretty much non-existent in the grocery store business."

Roxy's opened in November 2014, following the opening of a store in Aspen, Colorado. Currently, the Lawlers' third grocery in Montecito, California, is under threat by wildland fires in the area.

roxysmarket.com/big_sky (406) 995-2295



PHOTO BY IACKIE ROBIN

2nd Hungry Moose Market & Deli

The Hungry Moose has been offering local products under local ownership since 1994, complete with an easy-touse delivery service. With a flagship store in Town Center and a ski-in skiout location in Big Sky Resort's Mountain Mall, as well as regular community outreach, owner Jackie Robin savs. "The Moose is the local's grocery store." hungrymoose.com (406) 995-3045



3rd The Country Market

Lynne Anderson and her team do their best to meet the grocery needs of Big Sky, always with a smile on their faces. The Country Market opened in 1972 in the Meadow Village Center and has been under Anderson's ownership with her husband Steve for about 10 years, offering "a little bit of a lot of things."

BEST ARCHITECT



PHOTO BY WHITNEY KAMMAN

1st Centre Sky Architecture

Owner Jamie Daugaard and his team specialize in mountain architecture inside and out, focusing on resort, custom residential and ranch projects throughout the Mountain West including Big Sky and the private communities of Yellowstone Club, Moonlight Basin and Spanish Peaks Mountain Club. "We are humbled and thrilled to be recognized and want to thank the Big Sky community, clients, general contractors, subcontractors and artisans [who] allow us to experience what we design," Daugaard said.

A commitment to sustainable design and site integration pairs with mountain architecture flair in a winning combination—and one that Big Sky has agreed is the best for the third year running. **centresky.com (406) 995-7572**



2nd Bechtle Architects

Since the early 2000s, Scott Bechtle has created custom design solutions ranging from commercial projects to residential homes. Bechtle's team has been at the center of Big Sky's rapid growth by helping plan and design cornerstone projects like Town Center. He draws inspiration from creating a collaborative vision with clients that shape mood, show personality and connect people with their environment. bechtlearchitects.com (406) 993-2693



3rd Reid Smith Architects

Reid Smith Architects uses the stunning landscapes of the Mountain West as an inspiration springboard to create some of the most innovative spaces out there today. The Reid Smith team balances creativity with budget and function while capturing the spirit of the land. reidsmitharchitects.com (406) 587-2597

BEST BUILDER



1st Big Sky Build

Owner John Seelye's team builds for both locals and second homeowners, and tackles a broad range of remodels. "No job is too big or too small, and that's helped carry us through economic downturns," Seelye said, adding that his coworkers at Big Sky Build and the subcontractors, architects and interior designers they work with are integral to the business's success. "We are in good company in this sophisticated building community. ... We have such great competitors that are equally deserving of this but I think our employees are what set us apart." Big Sky voters agreed for the third year running. bigskybuild.com (406) 995-3670



2nd Haas Builders

Going on two decades now, John Haas has been building custom boutique homes in Big Sky. His employees appreciate being rewarded for the hard work they do on projects ranging from the Essentia Townhouses to a building currently under construction in Town Center that will include residential spaces, offices, a restaurant and an expansion of The Cave liquor store. haasbuilders.com (406) 995-4552



3rd Lone Pine Builders

Lauded by one client for bringing "a level of perfectionism into the field of construction that is rare," Lone Pine Builders' Brian and Kate Scott have developed a reputation for attention to detail. Or, as their website puts it: "At Lone Pine Builders, we don't just build a house, we craft a home."

lonepinebuilders.com (406) 993-2400

BEST ARTIST/PHOTOGRAPHER



PHOTO BY TOMMY JEROME

2nd Ryan Turner

Ryan Turner has been shooting extreme adventure and fine art photography for more than two decades. He and his wife Angie operate a gallery in Bighorn Shopping Center next to Bugaboo Café. Turner's work has been featured in many national publications, including Powder, Men's Journal, National Geographic Adventure, and Ski magazine, where his work is currently featured in an article about Big Sky Resort. ryanturnerphotography.com

ryanturnerphotography.com (406) 580-5997

1st Kene Sperry

Whether shooting weddings, portraits or epic powder adventures, photographer Kene Sperry brings a sense of gratitude and curiosity to his art form. He spends most of his time taking photos and recreating in southwest Montana, but also travels to lands near and far, and it is during those solo journeys that he does most of his "visionary thinking." The greatest lesson Sperry has learned from taking millions of photographs of people all over the world is that we are all connected. "What I have discovered is we all desire to by seen, heard, respected and loved," reads his artist bio. "The best gift you can give anyone is your complete presence, truly it is the best gift you can give yourself." kenesperry.com (406) 581-2574



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOUNTAIN TOWN PHOTOGRAPHY

3rd Heather Rapp

Mountain-scapes and wildlife figure prominently in artist Heather Rapp's colorful canvases and murals. Rapp's work can be found brightening many local businesses such as Caliber Coffee and Beehive Basin Brewery; and now, Town Center utility boxes as part of an ongoing public art initiative.

heatherrappart.com (503) 750-9831

BEST PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CO.



1st Beehive Property Management

A relative newcomer to Big Sky, Beehive Property Management has been in business for six years and manages 32 properties, from the meadow to the mountain. Founded by Anne Gagne (center) and her brother Travis Wangsgard, Beehive was opened after one of Wangsgard's neighbors was being taken advantage of by another property management company, according to Gagne. The sibling duo, originally from Salt Lake City, employs Brittney Ford (right), Lane Foster and Amanda Doty (left) out of their dog-friendly office on Highway 191. beehivemanagement.com (888) 571-0119



2nd Hammond Property

Founded by Scott Hammond in 1997, Hammond Property Management services nearly 500 properties throughout Big Sky. Hammond provides weekly home inspections and offers a network of associated subcontractors for additional services and maintenance. They also represent numerous homeowners and condominium associations in this resort hamlet.

hpmmontana.com (406) 995-7220



3rd Big Sky Vacation Rentals

Despite being more of a vacation rental company than property management outfit, EBS readers still voted Big Sky Vacation Rentals the No. 3 business in this category. Opened by Kirsten and Mike King in 2010, BSVR moved into a new office building behind Ace Hardware in February 2015, which features stunning views of the West Fork of the Gallatin River. Fifteen of their 16 full-time, year-round employees live right here in Big Sky.

bookbigsky.com (888) 915-2787

BEST NONPROFIT



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

GALLATIN RIVER

2nd Gallatin River Task Force

"It was a big year for on-the-ground projects for us," said GRTF Education and Communication Coordinator Stephanie Lynn. In addition to their long-term water quality monitoring work and community outreach and education efforts, GRTF broke ground on a river access improvement project at Moose Creek Flat and tackled a restoration project on the Big Sky Golf Course. gallatinrivertaskforce.org (406) 993-2519

1st Arts Council of Big Sky Many of Big Sky's favorite events—Music in the Mo

Many of Big Sky's favorite events—Music in the Mountains, the Nutcracker and Mountainfilm on Tour, a relatively recent addition—are productions of this staple in the community. But their focus extends beyond events into growing Big Sky's budding arts community. Initiatives like ART venture are adding to the arts programming in Big Sky's schools, and public art installations are making Big Sky into a more colorful—and beautiful—place. "We believe that a thriving arts and cultural scene is critical for our residents and visitors to enhance the numerous recreational opportunities that make Big Sky such a special place," said ACBS Executive Director Brian Hurlbut. bigskyarts.org (406) 995-2742



3rd Big Sky Community Organization

Long celebrated for its role building and maintaining trails, hosting summer camps for kids, and organizing sports for the older set (softball, anyone?), BSCO also spearheads important infrastructure development for public safety. BSCO was integral to the new stoplight installation in Town Center and has been tirelessly pursuing grants for roadway improvements to enhance motorist, pedestrian and cyclist safety. bscomt.org (406) 993-2112



BEST TEACHERS



Tony Coppola (left)

Tony Coppola has been teaching in and out of the Big Sky School District district for nearly 10 years, finally finding his niche in high school social studies where he believes that blending humor, rigor and accountability helps inspire results from his students. "I came here to ski, like many others, and found a deeper personal connection in the education world," Coppola said.

Brittany Shirley (center)

Hailing from Anaconda, and one of the district's only Montana-raised educators, Brittany Shirley finds solace in the classroom by inspiring her students to find their voice through creative writing, blending technology into the curriculum, and building meaningful relationships with her students. "The greatest days are spun from random acts of dancing, singing, and students finding their love for reading," Shirley said.

Jeremy Harder (right)

Jeremy Harder first started teaching in Big Sky in 2000. Over the years he has learned the most important component to inspiring lifelong learners is to create positive relationships with his students through trust, respect and humor. He also has a knack for bringing technology into the classroom, which he balances with weekly outdoor expeditions.

Speaking for all three teachers who received this award, Harder added, "Our district is a prime example of how a living and working healthy school ecosystem can prepare students to become active, caring, lifelong learners who demonstrate respect for themselves and others and have the capacity to participate in the world around them."

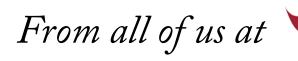
Votes for best teacher were widespread across the district—Big Sky kids are lucky to have a broad mix of inspiring and enthusiastic educators to engage with daily.















THANK

To our Clients, our Friends, our Community:

We are incredibly grateful for all of you and the support you have shown our office over the years. Because of you, we can proudly accept the Best Real Estate Agency title for a second year in a row! Simply put, we couldn't have done it without you! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We are so thankful to be surrounded by such an amazing community!

Your PureWest Christie's Team

Jackie Miller



Lynn Milligan Broker



Sandy Revisky Broker



Michael Thomas Broker



Mary Wheeler



William Feher



Brenna Kelleher









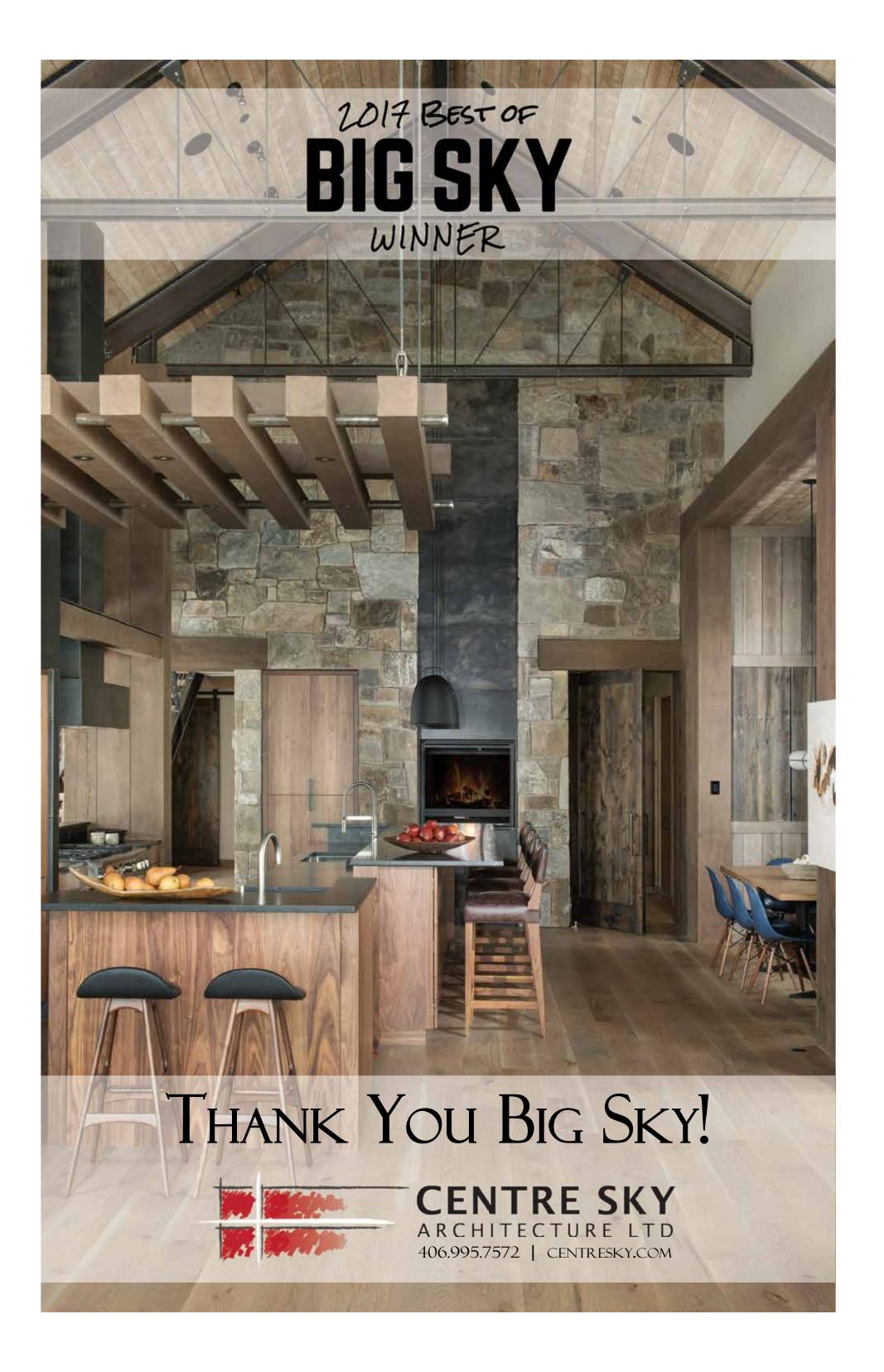




VOTED BIG SKY'S BEST PIZZA 2016 & 2017 **THANK YOU BIG SKY!**

47 TOWN CENTER AVE. BIG SKY (406) 995.2728







Dearest Big Sky,

It is with absolute humility, pride, and honor that Big Sky Build has been voted Best Builder in the Best Of Big Sky Survey for the third year in a row; this is an award we do not take lightly. I cannot express enough what this means to the men and women of this company and I would like to thank them and all of our clients, architects, design teams, subcontractors, and suppliers who contribute to our success.

When I started this business in 1997, I never thought, in my wildest dreams, that I would get to work with such talented and committed people on these spectacular projects. To see how our little ski town of Big Sky has progressed over the years, to see how we have grown into a world-class ski resort, both winter and summer, is a testament to everyone who calls this beautiful place home. The team of Big Sky Build takes pride in building not only second homes but also homes for those who make this a year-round residence. We have always believed that no project is too large or too small, we just want to build for you! You are the ones who make this town what it is, and for that, I thank you all!

To my co-workers at Big Sky Build, you are the ones that I take my hat off to. Thank you, I love you, and now get back to work, we have projects to build! Happy Holidays everyone!

Love, John Seelye

