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Life and land from the heart of the Yellowstone Region

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Big Sky

Nov. 22 - Dec. 5, 2019
Volume 10 // Issue #24

**Big Sky Resort:
Opening day!**

New hope for grizzly bears

Montanan takes bull-riding crown

Wolves and theater

BSRAD to lead visioning charge?




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OUTLAW PARTNERS

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ON THE COVER:

Four new Prinoth Bison S groomers will be tending the Lone Peak slopes this ski season. Big Sky Resort was able to add a new trail and increase their grooming capacity by about 16 percent thanks to the new machines. PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK CONROY

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Big Sky Resort: Opening day!

If bountiful plates of roasted turkey, mashed potatoes and cranberry sauce aren't enough to satisfy appetites this Thanksgiving, Big Sky Resort has offered an additional snack for Turkey Day: the official opening of the 2019-20 ski season, with select lifts operating at 9 a.m. sharp.

17

New hope for grizzly bears

Eighteen Montanans have been selected by Gov. Steve Bullock to be part of a citizen grizzly bear council, forming a panel that will meet at least six times before August of 2020. Bullock will look to the council for suggestions regarding grizzly management, and increasingly contentious topic in the Treasure State.

36

Montanan takes bull-riding crown

Volburg, Montana native Jess Lockwood captured his second PBR world championship title on Nov. 10 in Las Vegas, Nevada, at the 2019 PBR World Finals. Lockwood entered the competition trailing by almost 900 points to Brazil's Jose Vitor Leme, but managed to stage a tremendous comeback effort to bring home to hardware.

49

Wolves and theater

Between back-to-back performances on Nov. 15 and 16, nearly 500 members of the Big Sky community delighted in the Big Sky Community Theater's "HOWL! A Montana Love Story." The production chronicled the controversial reintroduction of wolves back into the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem some 25 years ago.

5

BSRAD to lead visioning charge?

At their Nov. 13 open board meeting, the Big Sky Resort Area District tax board struggled with their role in continuing the momentum generated by their commissioned Our Big Sky Community Visioning Strategy survey report.



Fourth graders from the Mini Miners basketball program practice their hoop skills before traveling to play their final game of the season. The program, in its eighth year of existence, introduces kindergarten students through fourth graders to the game of basketball. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

EDITORIAL POLICIES

EDITORIAL POLICY

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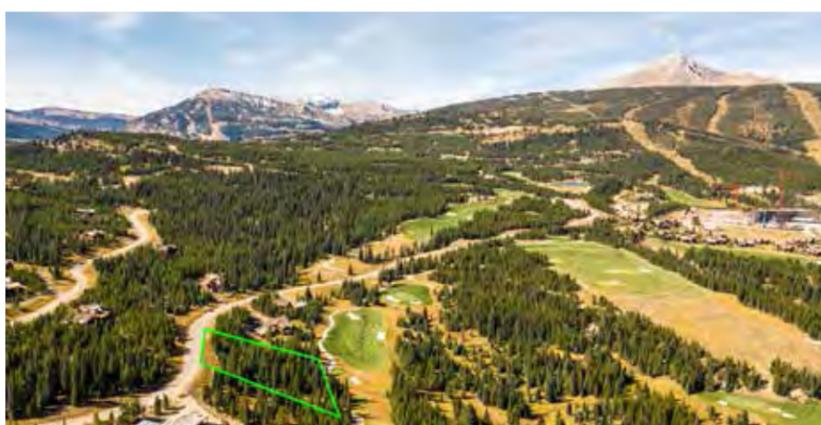
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Mini Miner youth basketball season wraps up

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – For the past eight years, the Mini Miner youth basketball program has provided students in kindergarten through fourth grade with an introduction and opportunity to learn the game of basketball. Over a four-week period every fall, the youngsters practice and play two nights each week for an hour at a time. Games consist of four seven-minute quarters with the score being reset after each one.

Lone Peak Athletic Director and varsity boys basketball head coach, John Hannahs, applauded the program for instilling an interest in the game in students at a young age. “Most importantly it exposes them to basketball and gives them an opportunity to develop a love for the game,” Hannahs said. “Al Malinowski deserves a lot of credit for putting together something that does that while teaching the kids rules, fundamentals and the spirit of competition. We have definitely noticed that the kids who come through this program are playing at a different level.”

Nov. 16 marked the conclusion of the season for the program this year. Registration for next year will open up in October and will be accessible through the Big Sky School District webpage.

Big Sky Resort expands grooming fleet

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Big Sky Resort is adding four new groomers to their fleet this season. It is estimated that the new machines will increase grooming capacity by about 16 percent.

The new trailblazers are Prinoth Bison S models. The environmentally friendly machines are part of the resorts effort to remain conscious about their environmental impact as the machines meet stringent exhaust emission standards.

The added groomers allow for the addition of another trail as well. Named Lupine, the trail is located on the South Face of Lone Peak and is rated as blue.

10th annual Turkey Trot fuels T-day appetites

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – This Thanksgiving, don't be a turkey—run in the 10th annual Turkey Trot on Nov. 28, presented by Big Sky Real Estate Co. and Authentic Inc.

Registration and check-in kicks off at 7:30 a.m. at Fire Pit Park, with the race starting at 9 a.m. Proceeds from this 5k will help the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation in its mission to train and elevate Big Sky's young skiers, providing services to the athletes, families and community.

Race entry includes a t-shirt and a participation medal—badges of honor as you tear into a well-earned mound of holiday food.

Head to visitbigsky.com for more information and registration details.

Big Sky Resort re-classifies runs

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – In an effort to make Lone Peak slopes safer this season, Big Sky ski patrol re-classified some runs to triple black diamonds. Ski patrol hopes the reclassification will make the public better aware of the terrain that they are about to embark on and reduce injuries.

According to the resort there are a total of around 25 areas that are classified as triple black diamonds on the mountain currently. Included in those 25 are runs such as the Big Couloir, Hellroaring, Whitetail and Three Forks. A complete listing of the triple black diamond areas can be found on Big Sky Resort's website.

Warren Miller's 'Timeless' comes to Big Sky

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Given late ski film director phenom Warren Miller's involvement in the early days of Big Sky, it's only fitting there's some serious stoke when a new Warren Miller Entertainment film comes to our local cinema.

“Timeless,” WME's 70th full-length feature film, which is presented by Volkswagen, is narrated by freestyle skier and television presenter Jonny Moseley and captures hardcore skiing and snowboarding feats in mountains from the Rockies of British Columbia to the towering Alps in Europe.

The stop at Big Sky's Lone Peak Cinema on Nov. 27 is but one of more than 100 screenings across the U.S. during the 2019 National Film Tour.

Don't miss the culmination of 70 years of ski filmmaking, right smack dab in Big Sky.

Visit visitbigsky.com for more information.

Madrigal Dinner to bring holiday cheer

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – On Dec. 5, the Arts Council of Big Sky will present the 23rd annual Madrigal Dinner in Big Sky, a festive evening of food and music hosted at Buck's T-4 Lodge.

Through a partnership with the Montana State University's School of Music, no less than 50 performers from the college will pack the lodge for a Ceremonial Procession of the Lord and Lady of the Manor, the Wassail Bowl and Christmas Toast, the Boar's Head Procession and the Flaming Pudding Dessert presentation, all backed by carols and Olde English songs of holiday cheer.

Don't miss this hallmark Big Sky event by purchasing your ticket in advance—the event tends to sell out.

Call (406) 995-2742 or visit bigskyarts.org for more information and reservations.

Resort tax faces new hurdles

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – From an outside perspective, no one would blame the members of the Big Sky Resort Area District tax board if they decided to hang up their boots for a stretch, relishing in a year marked by measurable progress.

Those landmarks are certainly worth celebrating: most recently, they ushered in a new resort tax ordinance that will, for the foreseeable future, dictate consumer and vendor taxes with a clarity that escaped previous ordinances; seeing through a Logan Simpson-commissioned community survey that will potentially dictate the spending of hundreds of millions of dollars in Big Sky over the next decade; successfully lobbying and following through on the passing of SB 241 in the 2019 Legislative Session, allowing for an incremental 1 percent resort tax levy for the purpose of infrastructure; and judiciously distributing just shy of \$8.5 million in collections between nearly \$11.5 million in appropriation requests, to name a few.

At the BSRAD's Nov. 13 open board meeting, the idea of complacency in the wake of domino successes came crashing down as it pertains to Ordinance 98-01 and the Logan Simpson Our Big Sky Community Visioning Strategy in particular. Some might argue the legwork for the latter hasn't even reached a halfway mark.

"We solicited the community to tell us what [community] priorities were, we heard from them, now the real work begins," said BSRAD District Manager Daniel Bierschwale.

Rolling out measures of compliance and accountability, specifically, dominated the Nov. 13 discussion—as the saying goes, and quite appropriate for a town located in the mountains of Montana, "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

Ensuring compliance for the ordinance appears a more approachable hurdle, especially now that the steps behind the "Three R's," Rules, Regulations and Registrations, have become crystal clear.

Still, as of the meeting, only 50-60 Big Sky businesses out of an estimated 1,000 had registered via the new online registration portal, although the ordinance does not go into effect until Nov. 25.

More daunting, however, is ensuring the Our Big Sky Community Visioning Strategy isn't shelved in the BSRAD archives, but instead sees to "continuing the momentum created through the process, including increased community engagement," Bierschwale said.

"I feel an obligation," said BSRAD Chairperson Kevin Germain. "We funded this report and if it goes nowhere then shame on us. I'm hoping that we do something to help this report move forward."



Tidying up: the BSRAD office is fastidiously organized, prepared for tentative upgrades or moves. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY



BSRAD District Manager Daniel Bierschwale has been a veritable game changer for the efficiency of the board since his onboarding in June. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

Present at the meeting was BSRAD outside counsel Kimberly Beatty, who pointed out BSRAD has no jurisdiction in the form of governance.

"I am concerned that the resort tax district is not the appropriate body to be discussing governance issues in the community, or how to implement this plan. The role of the resort tax is specific, it is funding ... you were not given the approval to act as a city council or government," Beatty said. "Your role is to fund projects and you can use this document to help guide how you're going to fund, what you're going to fund, and the priority you're putting on projects."

Beatty noted the issue of governance is something community leaders need to figure out, and is not the district's sole responsibility.

"Clearly we have a void in this community that needs to be filled," said Vice Chair Steve Johnson. "The only point I'd make is that in exercising our defined mission, we have to allocate funding with some plausible means of accountability for delivering the results that are sought [in the Community Visioning Strategy] ... That ain't governance, but we do have a responsibility to see that it's done in a credible fashion. Certainly for the large things being asked for in this report."

Other notable items included a discussion of costs and options for the tentative BSRAD office remodel as well as discussion on a working first-ever draft of bylaws, especially where a potential option for proxy voting is concerned—currently, a member of the board must be present in order to cast a vote.

"The bylaws is one of the governing documents that will help put into place the foundations for a strong organization to grow and support community needs, now and in the future," Bierschwale said.

The board's newest elected member, Ciara Wolfe, CEO of the Big Sky Community Organization, warned against abusing the potential allowance of proxy voting.

"I think we need to set very clear expectations about attendance for the board," Wolfe said. "[With proxies] then it's very easy to sit on this board and write in your vote and not have to be in front of the public expressing your view ... I think there's so much more value to being here."

The topic was tabled for a future open board meeting.

Opening Day at Big Sky Resort to showcase Mountain Mall renovation, new technology

BY DOUG HARE

BIG SKY – On Nov. 28, Thanksgiving Day, Big Sky Resort will open for its 46th season. Before returning to their favorite runs, snowsports enthusiasts are bound to notice improvements to mountain amenities from previous seasons.

This summer, Big Sky Resort renovated the Mountain Mall, reenvisioning their dining, après ski area, restrooms and lockers in the Mountain Village base area. All-new cuisine options will greet skiers this winter, including sushi flown in fresh from both coasts, a ramen station, a taqueria, stone-fired pizza, specialty coffee and crepe stations, as well as a deli and grill serving soups, sandwiches and other items.

The new food hall on the third floor will offer abundant indoor seating for guests taking a ski break, warming up or grabbing a bite to eat. Seating capacity has been nearly doubled with an increase of more than 350 seats for use from breakfast to après.

Après ski will be enlivened with new outdoor decks boasting prime views of Lone Mountain and a cozy outdoor fireplace. The enhanced deck seats more than 250 people, perfect for soaking up the sun and drinking in the quintessential Lone Mountain views.

Guests will also notice improvements to the facility's lower level, including complimentary day-use cubbies, day and seasonal-use lock-



One of four new Prinoth Bison S snowcats, which feature low energy consumption and sustainable environmental protection with increased efficiency and performance, tames the terrain at the top of the Powder Seeker lift.



A RFID-equipped gate similar to the ones installed at access points at Big Sky Resort that will allow tickets and season passes to be scanned from inside pockets PHOTOS COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

ers, a new changing area and expanded bathrooms to start the day in comfort.

A new public elevator installed in the central core of the building will be available to all, including skiers arriving to the 15-minute drop-off zone in Mountain Village, who may want to hit the slopes as quickly as possible. The elevator will enable guests to access retail and restaurants, and the resort hopes that the elevator will be most impactful for the large contingent of special ability recreationalists who visit Big Sky.

The renovated common area will also serve as a flexible event venue with a capacity of over 750 people. Total restroom capacity in the renovated space has increased by more than 50 percent. Staff locker facilities on the lower level have also been expanded and modernized.

The on-mountain experience will also be different from seasons past: gone are the days of paper tickets, removing gloves, and fumbling with lanyards to present a ticket or pass to load the chairlifts. This summer, Big Sky Resort installed Axess smart gates equipped with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology at select lifts that serve as access points to the mountain. RFID allows a ticket or season pass to be scanned from inside a pocket, keeping hands warm and ski days smooth.

All winter lift tickets and season pass products will be loaded on to a Sky Card equipped with RFID technology. RFID gates have been installed at select access lifts that will automatically open with active media.

“RFID technology allows for a guest-friendly lift ticket and season pass process, making it easier than ever to load lifts and add additional days to your pass without visiting the ticket window,” said Troy Nedved, general manager of Big Sky Resort.

All Sky Card media will be electronically reloadable for added guest convenience. Once guests have a Sky Card, days can be reloaded online, eliminating the need to visit the ticket window to update passes or lift tickets.

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Program helps veterans recover from PTSD, substance abuse



CC PHOTO

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

HELENA – A collaborative program between the Montana Veterans Affairs Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Montana WILD has earned national attention and has been proposed as a positive treatment option by the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The program provides veterans with an opportunity to learn about animal rehabilitation and then to use that experience in the veterans' own recovery process. Injured and rehabilitated falcons, owls, eagles, hawks and even turkey vultures from MT WILD's Wildlife Center have been used to teach different aspects of recovery, including patience, recovery plan, natural healing and the power of hope and positivity.

During the eight years of the program's existence, more than 1,000 veterans have participated. In a 2014 study of the program, veterans were tested on motivation, feelings of peace, feeling connected to life, enjoying the company of others, anxiety/stress, ability to focus and feelings of pain before they started the program at Montana WILD and after they completed it. The study showed that 70.6 percent of veterans had an overall improvement of these symptoms, and 30.2 percent had a marked improvement in symptoms.

Montana employers report decrease in workplace injuries

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HELENA – Montana employers saw a decrease in workplace injuries and illnesses, with the majority happening in private industry.

The Department of Labor and Industry released its annual survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses in November.

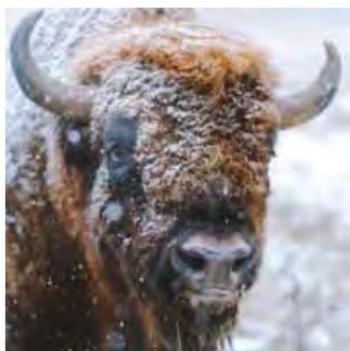
The report says Montana's injuries and illnesses fell by 11 percent from 2017, when there were 15,000.

The number of workplace injuries per 100 full-time workers in the state dropped in private industry from 4.4 in 2017 to 3.9 in 2018.

Despite the decrease, the figure was still higher than the national average of 2.8 injuries per 100 full-time workers.

The report says Montana is consistently higher than the national average.

Judge denies halt to bison hunt near Yellowstone



NPS PHOTO

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GARDINER – A District of Columbia federal judge has denied a Montana landowner's plea to halt the hunting of bison just outside Yellowstone National Park.

The "Billings Gazette" reports that in an order filed Nov. 11, Chief Judge Beryl Howell also ruled that Montana is the proper jurisdiction for a lawsuit filed by Gardiner-area resident Bonnie Lynn and Neighbors Against Bison Slaughter who argue that bison hunting so close to residences is life threatening.

In rejecting Lynn's arguments, Howell said tribal hunters were the ones who would be "substantially injured" if the hunt was halted.

Montana began a hunting season for bison that leave the park in 2005. The majority of the bison harvest is by tribal members with treaty rights, and four Montana tribes opposed Lynn's lawsuit.

Moose tests positive for Chronic Wasting Disease

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

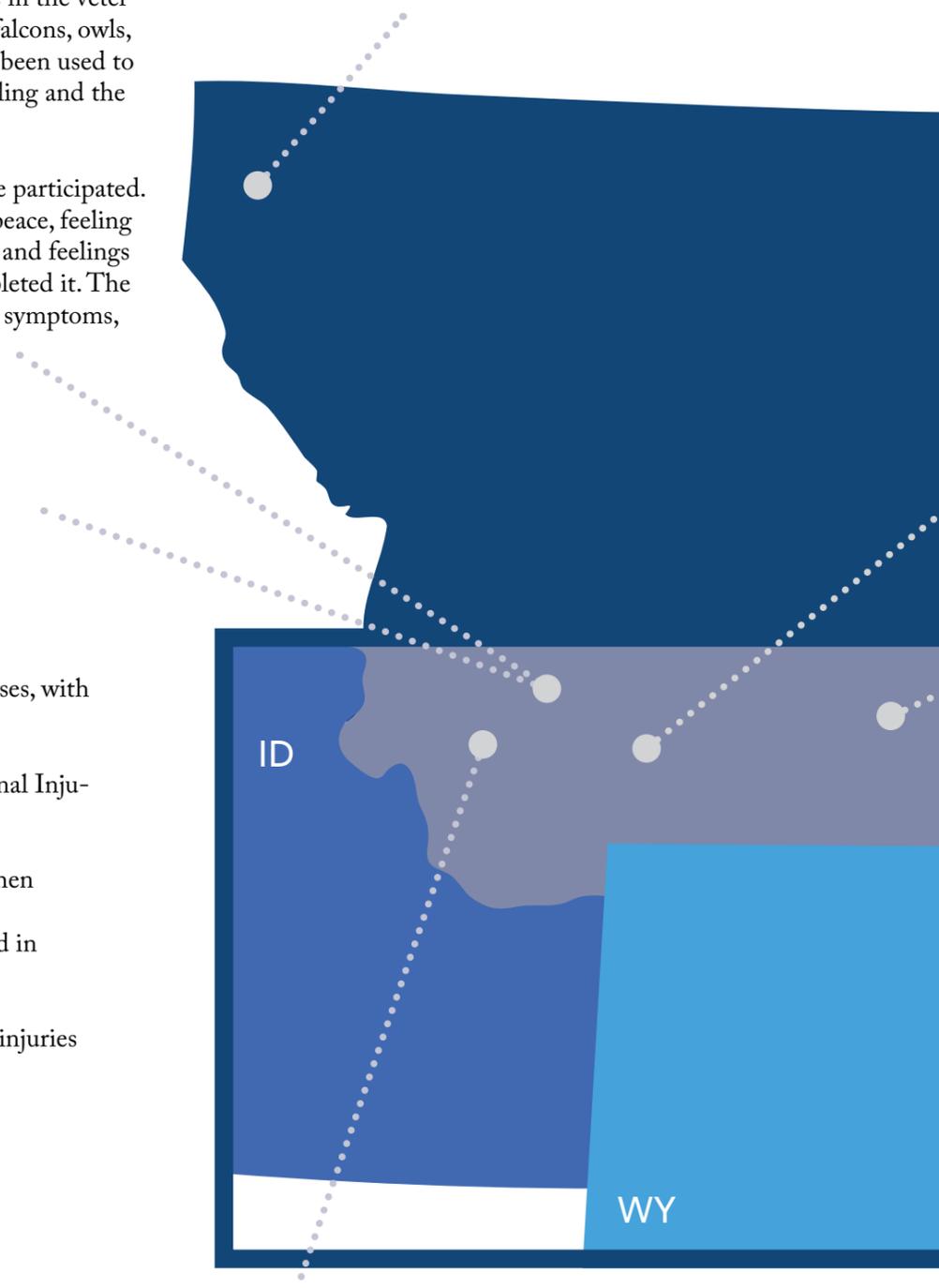
Troy – A moose in northwest Montana tested positive for chronic wasting disease, marking the first time the disease has been detected in the species in Montana.

A hunter harvested the bull moose in late October north of Troy and submitted a voluntary sample to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The moose was harvested less than a half-mile to the west of the existing Libby CWD Management Zone, which was created earlier this year when CWD

was detected

CWD is of mule deer can most cervids, a velvet from may serve well and that carcass

Visit fwp



Mine waste 'souvenirs' pulled from shelves

EBS STAFF



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANACONDA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANACONDA – According to the "Associated Press" Environmental Protection Agency was forced to issue a recall of the sale of "Bag O' Slag," sandwich bags filled with mining and smelting waste, after discovering traces of a known carcinogen, and lead, known to cause neurological damage in people, especially children and developing babies.

EPA officials in Anaconda working to oversee the site, created through decades of smelting copper, in 1980. The chamber came across the sale at the Anaconda Chamber of Commerce. According to the chamber's executive director, Marjorie, the EPA asked the chamber to stop selling the \$2.00 resealable bags and gave them recommendations for sealed containers.

The chamber told EBS in an email that the snack-sized bags contained approximately one-third of a cup of slag. "Most all reports from the EPA do state that the contents of the bags are inert unless heated to a high temperature," they said, adding that a warning label was on the backs of the bags.

Fast-spreading Disease

detected in the area's white-tailed deer.

a fatal disease that can affect the nervous system of deer, white-tailed deer, elk and moose. Transmission commonly occurs through direct contact between animals as well as shed in urine, feces, saliva, blood and antlers from infected cervids. Carcasses of infected cervids can serve as a source of environmental contamination as they can infect other cervids that come into contact with them.

www.mt.gov/cwd for more information.

Internet-based program has promising depression-reducing results

BY ANNE CANTRELL
MSU NEWS SERVICE

BOZEMAN — A program delivered entirely online that aims to reduce depression and anxiety symptoms has shown promising results in a new Montana State University study.

The findings by MSU researcher Mark Schure suggest that an internet-based interactive platform known as Thrive was effective in reducing the severity of depression and anxiety symptoms and improving functioning and resilience among a mostly rural community population of U.S. adults.

Waypoint Health Innovations, a Seattle-based technology company, developed and owns the Thrive program, which primarily uses video to deliver confidential, evidence-based care to anyone with internet access, Schure said, adding that Thrive's algorithms allow it to tailor to the needs of the person using it. The program's responses are based on participants' answers to a series of questions aimed at determining how much they are being impacted by depression and which aspects of the program would benefit them most. The program is further personalized in response to evaluations as participants continue using the program.

Montana seeks to keep feral pigs from Canada at bay

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BILLINGS — Officials in Montana are marshaling their resources and enlisting the public's help to keep encroaching feral hogs from Canada at bay with a program called "Squeal on Pigs."

It encourages people to report feral hog sightings to the state Department of Livestock, which officials say is critical to preventing an invasion. The hogs can spread disease and cause widespread property and crop damage. The most recent U.S. Department of Agriculture estimate put swine damages at \$1.5 billion annually.

There's been a population boom of feral hogs in Canada, and photographs taken last year show the swine within 5 miles of the U.S. border.

Wyoming aims for accurate census count of Native residents

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CASPER, Wyo. — Wyoming state and tribal officials are working to ensure Native Americans are accurately counted in the 2020 Census.

The "Casper Star-Tribune" reported advocates and officials are consulting with tribal leaders and planning an advertising campaign to attract attention to the U.S. Census Bureau's canvassing efforts. Officials say they hope the outreach leads to a more accurate count of Native American residents in Wyoming, who are believed to have been under-counted in the past.

Census data says 2.7 percent of Wyoming's population identifies as Native American.

The figures indicate about 27,000 people live on the Wind River Reservation west of Casper and off-reservation trust land, with about 7,800 identifying as Native American.

The Census Bureau says American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations were under-counted by nearly 5 percent in 2010.

Wyoming governor's budget would avoid cuts but use reserves

BY MEAD GRUVER
ASSOCIATED PRESS



CHEYENNE, Wyo. — A two-year state budget proposed Nov. 18 by Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon would avoid further agency spending cuts for now but dip into a reserve fund to make ends meet amid declining revenue.

The \$3.1 billion budget for 2021-2022 would also slash construction funding from amounts sought by state entities while leaving just a thin overall spending cushion for most of state government.

example of the state's grit and perseverance amid hardship.

"It is a budget intended to prepare our state to meet the coming storm head-on," the Republican governor wrote in a preface addressed to the Legislature. He warned that spending cuts for the upcoming biennium might be necessary.

Grim assessments of the state's finances have become almost routine as Wyoming struggles with protracted declining revenue from coal and natural gas production.

The budget proposal shows that Wyoming sooner or later will need to consider new revenue to handle permanent economic changes, said Chris Merrill, executive director of the Equality State Policy Center state government watchdog group.

Gordon's first budget since his election in 2018 invoked on its first page the Blizzard of 1949, which killed a dozen people in Wyoming, as an



What is your favorite opening day and why?



Cadence Railsback
Big Sky, MT

“I only had one opening day. I was in South Lake Tahoe and it was the first day I ever snowboarded, probably about five or six years ago now, and I’ll never forget it. It was on Thanksgiving [and] it was a blast.”



Josie Norrish
Big Sky, MT

“My favorite opening day would have to be the day after Thanksgiving a couple years back at Mt. Hood. My mom surprised my sister and I with a snowboard trip as an early Christmas present the night before. The sky was bright and beautiful, the powder was deep and dry, and surprisingly the hill was fairly empty. It couldn’t have been a better time.”



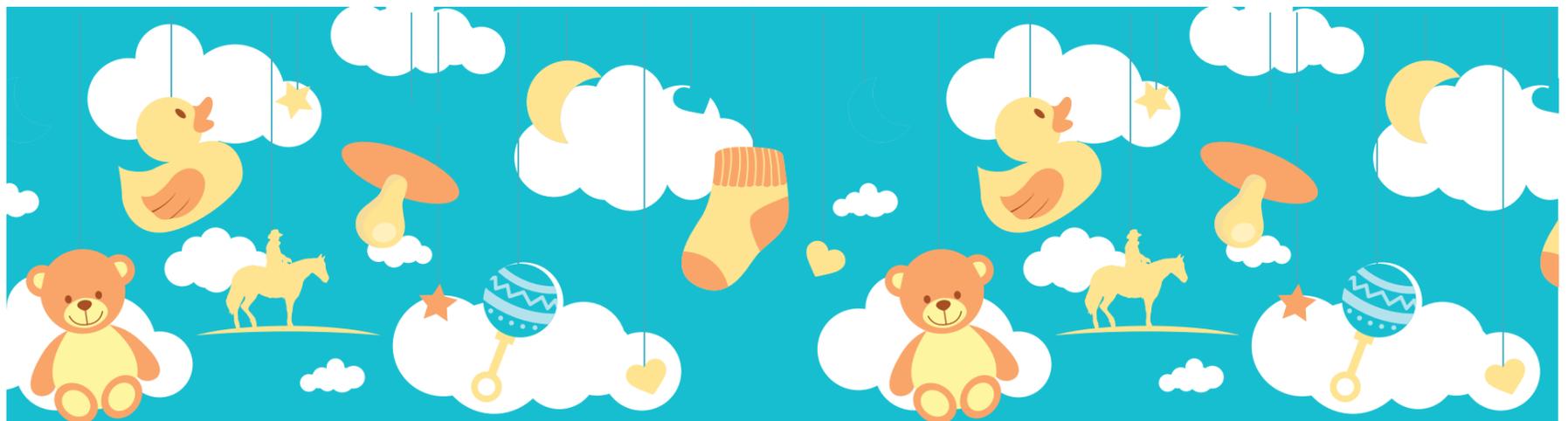
Ryan Schmitt
Big Sky, MT

“My favorite opening day was Nov. 7, 2015. It was an unofficial early opening for Big Sky Resort. It was bluebird and all the locals got out to shred.”



Serena Calder
Big Sky, MT

“My favorite opening day was probably, I think it was 2014, when it was like spring skiing conditions. They had Swifty open and everyone was just in a good mood, like it was pond skim, but it was Thanksgiving.”



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Letter to the Editor: Congress should provide funding for park maintenance

To the Editor,

Montana's national parks are some of the best in the country, but they desperately need repairs. Parks across our county, like those in Montana, are facing unreliable funding, record visitation and aging infrastructure.

That's why I am encouraged by a bipartisan proposal in Congress to address the \$12 billion in national parks deferred maintenance. The Restore Our Parks Act (ROPA) would set aside \$6.5 billion over the next five years to fix dilapidated trails, buildings, roads, bridges, monuments and historic markers in our parks. Amazingly, 330 members of the House of Representatives and 43 U.S. Senators—from both parties—are cosponsoring this effort.

With all this support, you would think this would be an easy thing for Congress to get done. You'd be mistaken. Despite all the support for national parks, Congress is still struggling to push this popular legislation over the finish line.

There is still time, and I hope they get the job done. Passage of ROPA and full and permanent funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund are both needed to ensure our parks stay open, safe and accessible.

Kim Lloyd
Helena, Montana



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Commemorating Montana veterans

Dec. 6 event honors veteran stories and photos

BY ANNE CANTRELL
MSU NEWS SERVICE

BOZEMAN — An exhibit of photos and audio recognizing the experiences of 12 local veterans—the first public event of a new Montana State University initiative designed to preserve and honor the history of Montana's veterans—will be held Friday, Dec. 6 in Bozeman.

“Project 513” will be open to the public 5-8 p.m. at The Market at Ferguson Farm located on Valley Commons Drive in Bozeman. A short presentation will be made at 6 p.m. The event is free, and everyone is invited to attend.

“This project is putting faces and voices to what the [MSU Veteran History and Arts Initiative] is all about,” said Marcus “Doc” Cravens, director of the MSU Veteran History and Arts Initiative, who is also a veteran and an MSU alumnus.

Cravens said the Veteran History and Arts Initiative aims to obtain, preserve and honor the history of U.S. veterans in Montana. It also works to educate and inspire thoughtful creativity through diverse perspectives within the arts and humanities so that veterans' history is never forgotten.

As part of the initiative, volunteers record oral interviews of Montana veterans who served in the U.S. military. Any veteran in any of Montana's 56 counties, from those who served in World War II to those who are currently serving, are eligible to participate. Each interview that is collected will then live in MSU Library's Special Collections and Archives. The idea, Cravens said, is that by housing the interviews in Special Collections, the veterans' stories will never be lost.

The initiative has several additional projects. In its first, “Project 513,” Cravens and MSU associate professor of history Molly Todd are piloting a collaboration this semester through a graduate seminar focusing on oral history methodologies. As the graduate and advanced undergraduate students enrolled in the course learn about the evolution of the field of oral history and the associated theories and professional ethics, they are also applying what they learn to interviews with Montana veterans. With guidance from Todd and Cravens, students are conducting interviews, transcribing those interviews and then sharing select portions at the Dec. 6 public exhibit. The exhibit will also feature photos made by Cravens of the veterans and their interviewers.

Another project of the initiative, called “Living Memories,” is a photographic essay that documents tattoos of or related to veterans, as well as the stories behind those tattoos. The essay is tentatively scheduled to be exhibited in February.

Finally, the initiative's “Shadows of our Past” project pairs local artists and businesses with families of veterans who have died. The artists will work with the families to create a unique and meaningful way to showcase the veterans' service medals and other keepsakes. “Shadows of our Past” is scheduled to be exhibited in May.

The MSU Veteran History and Arts Initiative is supported by a two-year, \$200,000 Humanities, Art and Social Sciences Grant from MSU, with the



Marcus “Doc” Cravens, director of the MSU Veteran History and Arts Initiative, is pictured with a collection of photos from his project, American Veteran, in the MSU Veteran Support Center. Cravens, a veteran and MSU alumnus, curated the first exhibit from the Veteran History and Arts Initiative titled “Project 513” that opens Friday, Dec. 6. PHOTOS BY KELLY GORHAM

possibility the grant may be extended for a third year. At its core, the initiative and its projects are intended to create connections among veterans and individuals throughout their communities, Cravens said.

“We're working to connect students and individuals to veterans, their memories and histories,” Cravens said. “It all comes down to how we are connected. It comes down to being human. Ultimately, we are searching for ways to connect our past with future generations by using art as [a way of communicating]. We want to build connections and open new lines of communication.”

Debby Greene, a doctoral student in American studies, is interviewing veteran Mike Everett as part of her work in Todd's oral history class. Everett served in the Marine Corps and was deployed in the Iraq War for four years. He has a degree in Earth sciences from MSU and now works as a water resource specialist for the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation in Bozeman.

The Veteran History and Arts Initiative is “a great project because it empowers everyday people to help collect the stories of our state's veterans,” Greene said. “This creates community for veterans so there is less feeling of being separate. When volunteers, high school kids, retirees are asking for veterans' stories, this demonstrates ... that everybody is veteran.”

Everett said he enjoyed talking with Greene and would recommend the experience of sharing an oral history to other veterans.

“It was really good to think about how someone from a different point of view would understand what I was saying,” he said. “And it was good to think about how to [communicate] my experiences more clearly to an outside audience.”

Everett said it often feels like veterans are stereotyped, and he hopes that people who attend the Dec. 6 event come away with a more complete and accurate understanding of the veterans whose histories are shared there.

“There is a stigma of a combat veteran being damaged goods, but I don't think people should assume that,” he said. “I would like people to know we're just normal people.”

Cravens said there is a sense of urgency that accompanies the MSU Veteran History and Arts Initiative.

“About 300 to 350 World War II veterans pass each day, with Korean War veterans right behind,” Cravens said. “Vietnam vets have the highest rate of suicide, with [Iraq War and Afghanistan War veterans] right behind them. We'll lose this piece of history if we don't communicate it to and preserve it for future generations.”

Visit montana.edu/vhai to learn more about the MSU Veteran History and Arts Initiative.



Memorabilia from two generations of U.S. military veterans. The Montana State University Veteran History and Arts Initiative aims to preserve and honor the history of Montana's veterans.

Forest Service opposes bear-baiting ban in Idaho, Wyoming

BY KEITH RIDLER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOISE, Idaho - Federal authorities are contesting a lawsuit filed by environmental groups seeking to ban using bait to hunt black bears in national forests in Idaho and Wyoming. The groups say allowing the use of bait could harm federally protected grizzly bears.

The U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in documents filed Nov. 15 say the decision to allow using bait to attract bears should continue to be made by the states.

Western Watersheds Project, WildEarth Guardians and Wilderness Watch filed the lawsuit in June, contending the federal agencies are violating the Endangered Species Act and other environmental laws because black bear hunters using bait have killed at least eight threatened grizzly bears since 1995 in national forests.

The lawsuit also said the Forest Service is violating environmental laws by failing to prepare a supplemental environmental review to update an analysis from the 1990s allowing the use of bait to hunt black bears. The conservation groups say there's significant new information to be considered.

The groups also said the bait stations get the bears used to human food, which can cause problems when bears expect to find food around humans.

Idaho, Wyoming and the hunting group Safari Club International are siding with the federal government.

Both states have restrictions on where bait can be used to hunt black bears. Idaho prohibits hunting black bears using bait in areas inhabited by grizzlies. Wyoming prohibits the practice in grizzly bear recovery areas.

Both states offer help to hunters in identifying black bears and grizzly bears.

"Distinguishing black bears and grizzly bears in the wild can be a challenge," Wyoming officials say in their 2019 black bear hunting seasons guide.

In September, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game reported that a hunter from Montana pursuing black bears in northern Idaho shot and killed a grizzly bear he mistook for a black bear. It's not clear if bait was involved.

The U.S. Department of Justice, which represents federal agencies, in the court documents filed Friday said the lawsuit fails to state a claim involving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Justice Department also said the lawsuit involving the Forest Service should be dismissed because there isn't a significant reason under federal environmental law for the Forest Service to do a supplemental environmental review of using bait for hunting black bears.

However, the conservation groups say not doing that review is a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act. They also say bait is allowed in areas important to grizzly bears, such as between the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem and the Bitterroot ecosystem in central Idaho, and between the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem in northwestern Montana and the Bitterroot ecosystem.

Hunters in Wyoming killed 457 black bears in 2018, according to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game didn't have that information immediately available on Nov. 18.



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News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Big Sky PBR wins PBR Event of the Year once again

BY EBS STAFF

LAS VEGAS – Under the lights of the T-Mobile Arena on the Las Vegas Strip, during the third night of the 2019 Professional Bull Rider's World Finals event, Big Sky PBR won Event of the Year for the 7th consecutive year.

The award is voted on by the top-40 ranked bull riders in the world, and Big Sky PBR continues to come out on top contending against nearly 300 competitions nationwide. While it has become a tradition for representatives from Outlaw Partners to head down to Nevada in November to accept the honor, Outlaw's appreciation for everyone who helps make the midsummer magic happen is as deep as ever.

"It's really exciting and rewarding to be in Vegas to receive this recognition and award. PBR is such an impressive sport with a rich history and impressive tour schedule," said Eric Ladd, CEO of Outlaw Partners. "For Big Sky to be recognized as the top event is an amazing testament to our staff, sponsors and fans. 2020 is our 10th year and this is a great way to kick off planning for next July's event."

Big Sky PBR continues to attract visitors from around the country who experience what Andy Watson of Freestone Productions has called



The Outlaw Partners and Big Sky PBR team holding up the hardware in Las Vegas. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

"lightning in a bottle," a high-energy, intimate event in an open-air arena in the shadow of Lone Mountain. Watson, who along with his wife Jacey Watson, has produced PBR events for over two decades, reported that this summer in particular Big Sky produced one of the most memorable nights of bull-riding that he has ever witnessed: "It's really a unicorn."

This summer, Big Sky PBR will once gain headline Big Sky's Biggest Week, celebrating its 10th anniversary with three days of world-class bull riding July 23-25. For an in-depth recap of the Sin City competition, see page 36.

TEDxBigSky lineup and groundbreaking film unveiled Outlaw Partners' inspiring event returns for 2020

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – Outlaw Partners, the Big Sky-based media, marketing and events company and publisher of this newspaper, captured hearts and minds this past summer with a slew of heart-pounding summer events.

The lineup included the ninth annual Big Sky PBR, which was awarded the PBR Event of the Year earlier this month, and the inaugural Peak to Sky Festival, boasting performances from the likes of Rock and Roll Hall of Famers Mike McCready and Chad Smith along with recent three-time Grammy winner Brandi Carlile, among others.

The company is proud to announce its fourth annual winter event changeup pitch: TEDxBigSky, an intellectual and inspiring series of presentations boasting 11 speakers in January 2020. TEDxBigSky, an independent, TED-sanctioned curation of presentations will be guided by the theme "Connection."

"We're connected digitally, personally and with nature, but I think what inspired us about the theme of 'connection' bring Outlaw Partners mission full circle," said Ersin Ozer, media and events director at Outlaw. "... The mission of our company is to create connections in order to inspire others to act through our media, marketing and events."

The event will be hosted at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, a world-class facility for performance and theater in Big Sky, and will launch on Saturday, Jan. 25.

This year's lineup includes speakers from varied disciplines and backgrounds, including Olympic skier and new Big Sky resident Bode Miller, Seattle rockers Molly Sides and Whitney Petty of the popular band Thunderpussy, and groundbreaking documentary duo of Michael Peterson and Steven Hawley.

Peterson and Hawley's film, "Damned to Extinction," an award-winning documentary chronicling the trials and tribulations of a Pacific Ocean orca pod whose existence is threatened by a dwindling Chinook salmon population as a result of damming the Snake River, will screen at Lone Peak Cinema on Friday, Jan. 24.



Professional Bull Riders and television star Cord McCoy speaking at the 2019 TEDxBigSky. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

The special presentation is also brought to the Big Sky community by Outlaw Partners under the umbrella of a larger Big Sky Ideas Festival, of which TEDxBigSky is the cornerstone.

TEDxBigSky is made possible by title sponsor Big Sky Real Estate Co., as well as sponsors The Wilson Hotel, Yellowstone Club, CLB Architects, Fay Ranches, Oxygen Plus, Jereco Studios, Natalie's Estate Winery, BuzzBallz and Snake River Brewing.

Additionally, speaker coaches Lori Addicks, Kari Gras, Tallie Lancey and Kate Ketschek will help prepare each presentation.

"A big thanks is owed to our coaches, Lori, Kari, Tallie and Kate Ketschek, and a big thanks to our sponsors," Ozer said.

Visit tedxbigsky.com for tickets, available starting Dec. 16.



Visit Big Sky

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SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS



Water and climate pg. 19



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Tales from afield pg. 31

Citizen panel meets on the topic of grizzly bears

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

BOZEMAN – Before a crowded audience in Bozeman, teeming with late arrivals and eager early birds, 18 Montanans took their seats around a table. They came through the doors wearing the weight and expectation of their own experiences, striding in from various walks of life, but upon taking a place at the table, they committed to a singular effort: finding common ground on the topic of the grizzly bear.

Those at the table on Nov. 13 and 14 were appointed by Gov. Steve Bullock to the state's first volunteer Grizzly Bear Advisory Council composed of private citizens in order to provide recommendations for how the state should handle management of grizzly bears. Over 150 people applied for the council and 18 were appointed. They will meet a total of six to eight times before August 2020 and are to provide a final report and recommendations to the governor by Aug. 31, 2020.

It is both with a badge of pride and word of caution that Montana supports the largest number of grizzly bears in the Lower 48. The bruins are recognized for their ecological and cultural values, as well as the risks they impose on human safety.

As conservation efforts see to growing population numbers and spreading distribution in some areas, while populations in other areas wax and wane, humans in the region are increasingly struggling with how to coexist. In the face of heated opinions, ongoing delisting litigation and rising political interest, wildlife officials with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks seek to find a balance.

The citizen-panel model for developing management recommendations for public resources hinges on representation of diverse viewpoints and their ability to compromise. Members include farmers, ranchers, representatives from conservation organizations, a naturalist guide, a manager of a waste disposal company and the manager of a forest products company.

During their second meeting, held at the MT FWP Region 3 office following their first meeting held in East Helena in October, Valier rancher Trina Jo Bradley described the way grizzly bears have challenged her ranching operations, eating feed supplements intended for cattle, and frequently spotting their tracks while walking her daughter to the bus stop.

Caroline Byrd, the executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, referenced the seasonal change in bear activity.

“This month has really been such an important month, with hyperphagia [when bears seek food before hibernation] and hunting season,” she said. “I’ve been dismayed at the number of conflicts and the work that we have in front of us to reduce those conflicts because we have to have social tolerance ... The challenge in front of us is how do we make sure that people feel safe and bears stay wild.”

As the first stage in formulating management directions, the citizen panel is gathering information on the current status of grizzly bears. In East Helena, IGBST biologists shared information about general grizzly bear biology and behavior, and the council also discussed the status of the delisting litigation. In Bozeman, biologists presented on the population



A grizzly bear in the core of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem: Yellowstone National Park NPS PHOTO

status, distribution and connectivity. Subsequent meetings will focus on conflict prevention and management actions.

According to biologists Mark Haroldson with USGS and Cecily Costello with MT FWP, the grizzly bear population in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem numbers about 725 while approximately 1,000 live in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem just within the state's northern border near Glacier National Park.

While both of these populations are expanding their range as numbers steadily tick upward—thereby occupying more and more public land—USFWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator Hilary Cooley reported that there are only about 55-60 in the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem in Montana and Idaho and about 100 live in the Selkirk Ecosystem spanning Idaho, Washington and Canada. No resident silvertips are thought to live within the North Cascades in Washington or the Bitterroot Ecosystem in Idaho and Montana.

Haroldson, Costello and Cooley also spoke on connectivity between ecosystems, noting that while the Yellowstone population remains isolated from the remaining populations, as the grizzly bears expand their ranges in the GYE and NCDE, the two populations have been documented within 45 miles of each other. While bears in the Selkirk, Cabinet-Yaak and NCDE are connected with Canadian populations to the north, there has not been strong evidence of bears crossing between the east and west populations.

The panel also heard presentations on grizzly bears and highways and how land trusts are working to secure habitat on public land.

The council's next meeting is scheduled Dec. 4-5 at the University of Montana in Missoula. Meetings are open to the public and public comment is accepted at a scheduled time on the agenda. Public input is also taken online.

Visit fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbac.html for more information about the Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisor Council and to submit public comments.

THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

There he is in a photograph taken 22 years ago—a young man, his eyes and grin wide across robust cheeks.

Full of optimism, the way we all are at that age, he is standing on the porch of a Grand Teton National Park ranger cabin next to his friend and in-country mentor, Jim Springer.

Ang Rita Sherpa came to the U.S. as a 26-year-old from Nepal. He and his family knew Edmund Hillary because of regular visits the late mountaineer paid to the village of Khunde—elevation 13,000 feet, about the same altitude as the top of the Grand Teton.

Hillary was a dear friend of Ang Rita's father, Mingma Tshering, dating back to 1961, and not long after the summiter of Mt. Everest founded The Himalayan Trust, to give back to the people who had helped make him and his climbing partner, Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, famous.

Ang Rita, in fact, attended a school Hillary helped build.

Mingma Tshering and Hillary counseled that what Nepal needed most were not more porters toiling subserviently for foreign climbers, but homegrown, well-educated stewards who could care for Sagarmāthā, the name the Sherpas have for Everest in the Khumbu region.

From their encouragement, Ang Rita won an internship to study park management in Yellowstone and Grand Teton and he hoped to carry knowledge back with him. It was his dream to do something more heroic than scaling 29,029-foot Everest. He aspired to be a conservationist, confronting destructive trends that were directly and indirectly caused by outside forces inundating his isolated province.

At Hillary's suggestion, he first went to see national parks in New Zealand, but he heard an oft-repeated advisement from Kiwi park rangers: "In New Zealand, everybody talks about Yellowstone," Ang Rita said. "They told me to see the first park in the world and learn what they are doing."

Ang Rita's chaperone in Jackson Hole was Venna Sparks, who regarded the shy student like a son, and she put the two of us in contact. We were about the same age and I wrote a column about him for the then "Jackson Hole News."

We kept in touch while he was in Wyoming, but over the years lost contact, until an email arrived from Ang Rita a decade ago.

Both of us, we learned, got married and started a family. It turns out that Ang Rita also got busy ascending the slopes of his dream.

Back in 1987, when we met, there was no talk of climate change. The greatest threats to the ecology of Nepal were deforestation caused by people cutting trees for firewood; trash being left behind by outsiders; water quality issues; and poverty, compounded by low wages in the emerging global economy.

Many travelers from this valley have seen the Khumbu with their own eyes.

During the 1990s, Ang Rita had an influential role in winning support for the new Makalu-Barun National Park southeast of Everest. And in 2005, he was promoted by his employer, The Mountain Institute to serve as senior program manager.

Mountain Institute's mission: "Advancing mountain cultures and preserving mountain environments."

From Tetons to Everest, Sherpa made a difference



Ang Rita Sherpa recently returned to Jackson Hole and showed Pawan Lama Sherpa around the valley. PHOTO COURTESY OF ANG RITA SHERPA

In our own shielded cocoons, some of us Americans choose to deny the existence of climate change, as if denial will make it go away, but Ang Rita lives with it. It is real, every day.

Hundreds of millions of people on the flanks of the Himalaya, from India to China, derive their drinking water from its ice- and snow-covered slopes. The frozen aqua is melting faster than it is being retained.

Along with the Arctic, alpine zones are the front lines of climate change and while wealthy nations can afford the delusion, for now, of feeling insulated, poorer countries along coastal areas and in rural Nepal have no such luxury.

Ang Rita Sherpa came to us, aspiring to learn, but in his transformation from young man to now an environmental elder and father, he is a carrier of valuable knowledge.

Ever humble, he credits his time with Kim and her husband Jim Springer, now a retired Jenny Lake Climbing Ranger, and Thelma Sparks for helping him realize his ability to make a difference.

I am proud of my friend, and how he followed through, carrying out the promise he made to himself, and bringing honor to the memory of Hillary and his late father, Mingma Tshering. My, how time flies.

As a post-note, the dream of Hillary and Mingma Tshering has taken form with creation of the home-grown Khumbu Climbing School, established with mighty help from noted climber Conrad Anker and his wife, Jenni Lowe-Anker in Bozeman. It exists to teach climbing skills to high-altitude workers in the Khumbu region. Not long ago, a third of all the fatalities on Everest were Sherpa people assisting outsiders in their ascent.

Todd Wilkinson is the founder of Bozeman-based "Mountain Journal" and is a correspondent for "National Geographic." He's also the author of "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek" about famous Jackson Hole grizzly bear 399.

Water Wisdom

BY KRISTIN GARDNER AND KAREN FILIPOVICH
EBS CONTRIBUTORS



An angler casts a line on the Gallatin River. PHOTO BY RICH ADDICKS

This fall has turned out snowier than average, but it also came with several days of temperature highs over 70 degrees Fahrenheit in Mountain Village. Overall, October had a mean temperature of 34 degrees, 10 degrees cooler than the 44-degree average.

“Weather,” according to earth sciences professor Cathy Whitlock of Montana State University, “is defined as short-term changes in the atmo-

sphere that occur over hours to months.”

Climate, on the other hand, is the long-term average weather. The National Weather Service compares today’s temperatures to the average from 1981 to 2010. Longer-term records are also used for comparison, though in this part of the world, temperature recordings rarely go back beyond about 100 years. Without knowledge of climate, there is no context for whether a day is unseasonable or average.

Climate can also vary due to specific natural events. The best-known event that affects Big Sky is the El Niño and La Niña cycle. This is a cycle of ocean temperature warming and cooling that affects local temperatures and precipitation, typically over the course of a winter season. This winter, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Climate Center has calculated an 85-percent chance that it will be neutral this year which means no likely impact on local weather.

Weather and climate

Whitlock lists other natural changes including short-term solar variability and volcanic eruptions that can also shape our weather.

Climate change refers to changes that have been occurring mostly in the last several decades. In southwest Montana, average annual temperatures have been rising about .35 Fahrenheit each decade since 1950, according to the 2017 Montana Climate Assessment. This adds up to a little more than 2 degree rise in temperature since 1950.

“Montana is warming at a faster rate than we’ve seen in the last 2,000 years and probably the last 11,000 years,” said Whitlock, who is an author on the Montana Climate Assessment. She says that “greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere are higher than any period in the last 800,000 years.”

“Two years of high snowfall don’t yet describe a climate trend, so we have to wait and see if our snowy winters persist,” she said, adding that projections of future climate changes show an increase in winter precipitation, but rising temperatures will mean more of that precipitation will arrive as rain in the future.

Weather continues to move up and down compared to this new, upwardly mobile average temperature.

A cartoon video produced by the University Cooperation for Atmospheric Research visualizes this like hiking up a slope with a dog. The dog will sniff above and below the trail while the hiker proceeds up the slope in a straight line. The dog is like the weather and the hiker is climate, but all the records are telling us the direction for both is up. Visit scied.ucar.edu/dog-walking-weather-and-climate to view this video.

Big Sky residents will still have plenty of days in ski jackets in the next 50 years, but snowpack won’t last as long, rendering the snow bank that stores water for summer less effective, leading to more frequent summer droughts.

Kristin Gardner is the Executive Director of the Gallatin River Task Force. Karen Filipovich is a facilitator and consultant and enjoys water in all its forms.

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INSIDE YELLOWSTONE



Yellowstone seeks comments on proposal to provide Wi-Fi

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

The National Park Service seeks public comment on a proposal to install indoor Wi-Fi networks and associated equipment throughout Yellowstone National Park's developed areas for the benefit of park visitors and employees.

AccessParks, a Wi-Fi service provider, has submitted an application for a right-of-way permit. If approved, the permit would allow for the installation of up to 484 small (10-by-10-inch or 7-inch diameter) antennas on employee housing and visitor lodging facilities at Canyon Village, Grant Village, Lake Village, Mammoth Hot Springs and Old Faithful.

To link the antennas to internet providers outside the park, 39 additional antennas would be required at Canyon Village, Grant Village, Lake Village, Mammoth Hot Springs, Old Faithful and on the existing tower at Mount Washburn.

Coverage could eventually extend to other developed areas such as Norris, Madison and Bechler for administrative and employee use.

Exterior antennas would be located in areas to minimize visibility. Where visible, the installations would be painted to match the buildings on which they are installed. The new wireless equipment would be installed on existing structures in existing developed areas and towers or antennas would not be installed in or servicing backcountry areas.

In an effort to have no adverse effect to historic properties or districts, many of the antennas on National Register of Historic Places eligible structures would be located in attic spaces or under eaves.

The proposed installations would provide internet service to park visitors and employees in hotels and housing in developed areas. Consistent with the Yellowstone National Park Wireless Communication Services Plan, wireless access to recommended wilderness and park road corridors would be excluded.

Comments must be received by Nov. 29 and may be submitted online at parkplanning.nps.gov/ap, by hand-delivery or by mail to Compliance Office, Attention: Access Parks Broadband Proposal, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 82190.

Yellowstone Forever raises \$1M for North Entrance Project Funds matched by the National Park Foundation

YELLOWSTONE FOREVER



NPS PHOTO

stone National Park for the North Entrance Project.

"We couldn't accomplish all that we do without partners like Yellowstone Forever and the National Park Foundation," said Cameron Sholly, superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. "These funds will help the National Park Service leverage the federal funding already allocated for this project."

BOZEMAN – Yellowstone Forever, the official non-profit partner of Yellowstone National Park, raised \$1 million in private funds over three days at the end of September. Those funds have been matched dollar for dollar using federal funds appropriated for the National Park Foundation, the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, delivering \$2 million directly to Yellow-

The current North Entrance Station in Gardiner is not equipped to meet the challenges of increasing visitation and traffic. Last year 365,397 vehicles came through this entrance, up 22 percent from 2013.

The upcoming project will add an additional lane and kiosk to improve traffic flow and reduce queuing lines, replace the existing two buildings with one larger building and two kiosks, improve the flow of employee and delivery traffic from Robert Reamer Avenue, improve pedestrian safety by realigning parking along Robert Reamer Avenue, and replace the water line along Robert Reamer Avenue.

"This \$2 million donation helps the park reach its funding goal for the North Entrance Project," said John Walda, interim president and CEO of Yellowstone Forever. "We would have not been able to capitalize on this remarkable opportunity for Yellowstone if it wasn't for the support of our generous partners and donors, and we thank them for the chance to provide a lasting impact on the park."

"This critically important project demonstrates the power of public-private partnerships to accelerate investments that improve park visitor experiences in a very tangible way," said Will Shafroth, president and CEO of the National Park Foundation.

Yellowstone Forever has provided over \$106 million of cash support and over \$64 million of in-kind support since 1933 for various projects in Yellowstone National Park.

Yellowstone releases report on visitor use

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

A peer-reviewed report summarizing the results of Yellowstone's 2018 Visitor Use Study was recently released online.

The National Park Service contracted Otak Inc., RRC Associates and The University of Montana Institute for Tourism Recreation Research to conduct the study to help better understand how visitors experience the park in real time, across the summer season, and across different parts of the park. More than 4,000 people responded to the surveys, one of the largest in the history of the National Park Service.

Yellowstone visitation has substantially increased over the past 10 years, ranging from 3.2 million in 2009 to 4.2 in 2016, and 4.1 million in 2018. The survey results provide a variety of park-wide and site-specific data that the park plans to use to make decisions in upcoming years.

Survey results indicate that 85 percent of respondents thought their experience in the park was good or excellent, with the top three reasons for visiting being scenery, wildlife and thermal features. Approximately 67 percent of the visitors participating in the survey were first-time visitors to the park. Overall, 92 percent waited less than 10 minutes to enter the park and 86 percent waited less than 10 minutes to find parking.

"This study gives us very actionable information on how we can better manage and plan for increasing visitation in Yellowstone," said Superintendent Cameron Sholly. "I largely credit the National Park Service team and our partners for the high visitor satisfaction levels. That said, there is no question that increasing visitation levels are having higher impacts on resources, our staff and infrastructure, and our gateway communities."

While the 2016 Visitor Use Study surveyed people who visited in early August after their departure from the park, the 2018 Visitor Use Study used in-person interviews and GPS-based tablets to survey visitors in real time as they traveled through the park. It was conducted during one week of each month from May through September 2018.

Yellowstone is focused to a great extent on constructing a visitor use strategy that understands and responds to increased visitation in the following key areas: 1) impacts on resource conditions; 2) impacts on staffing, operations and infrastructure; 3) impacts on visitor service levels; and 4) impacts on gateway communities and partners.

The park has and will continue to use a range of data, including this survey, to develop actions that improve performance in these four key areas.

Visit nps.gov/yell/learn/management/visitor-use-study-2018.htm to view the 2018 Visitor Use Survey results.

Survey shows Montanans support conservation funding

MONTANA OUTDOOR HERITAGE PROJECT

There is a strong appetite for new state funding to support wildlife protection, improve public access, and conserve more working lands in Montana according to new findings by the Montana Outdoor Heritage Project.

The findings are based on a significant statewide public outreach effort that solicited input from one percent of the state's population, including 50 community conversations and 11,000 individual survey responses collected from Montana residents between May and September.

"This was a massive effort to understand what Montanans value, what they are concerned about and how we should move forward together as a state to protect our outdoor heritage," said Christine Whitlatch, a volunteer for the Montana Outdoor Heritage Project based in Billings.

Whitlatch cautioned that while every effort was made to ensure geographic, ethnic and political diversity in the outreach, results should not be considered a scientific poll because more people participated from easier to reach areas.

Support for dedicated funding

Results of the outreach show a majority of survey respondents—a whopping 83 percent—say they would support more dedicated funding, even if it means increasing some state taxes.

In addition to more funding, Montanans suggested they would like to see more public-private partnerships created to address conservation needs, forums to give communities more input into how funding is spent and better education opportunities for visitors and youth.

"My takeaway is Montanans are ready to invest more in our state's outdoor resources," said Dave Chadwick of the Montana Wildlife Federation. "The data suggests this is coming from a shared concern about the pace of growth and how it's impacting Montana's land, water and wildlife."

A shared value

According to the report, Montana's outdoor heritage is a shared value regardless of where participants live, how much money they make or whether they use the outdoors for work or play.

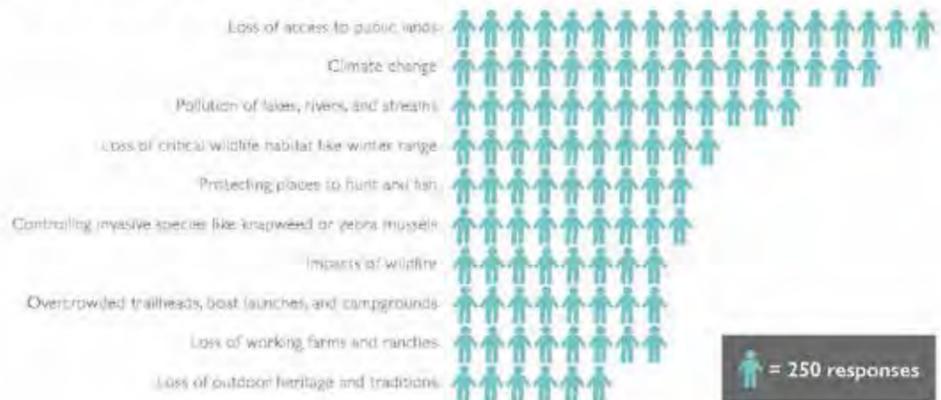
That's no surprise according to Cole Mannix, a fifth-generation rancher from the Blackfoot Valley and associate director of Western Landowners Alliance.

"Rural or urban, we all depend on Montana's land and water," Mannix said. "In rural areas, people focused on passing on the responsibility for



SURVEY QUESTION: In your opinion, what are the TOP THREE most pressing challenges facing Montana's outdoor heritage?

Survey participants say loss of public access, climate change, and pollution of lakes, rivers, and streams are the top three most important challenges facing Montana's outdoors.



agriculture and land stewardship to future generations, while in urban areas, people focused on the value of outdoor recreation and protecting wildlife and public access. Those values can work hand-in-hand, especially when you can bring more funding to the table."

Assessing challenges and priorities

Protecting wildlife habitat and ensuring public access are the top issues to address in the state according to the 11,000 Montanans who ranked funding priorities.

Eighty-six percent of those surveyed say loss of access is the most important challenge facing the state's outdoor heritage.

When asked to rank how funding should actually be allocated, protection of fish and wildlife was the most important priority according to 81 percent of survey respondents. That was followed by water quality improvements at 73 percent, invasive species control at 69 percent, improving access to public lands at 63 percent, and protecting places to hunt and fish at 57 percent.

Moving forward

When it comes to creating new revenue to invest in these priorities, participants suggested a diversity of options. However, there are two areas where Montanans found the most common ground.

Participants generally agreed that out-of-state visitors should be asked to contribute a higher share of new funding compared with state residents. Suggestions included giving gateway communities more leeway to impose sales-tax on visitors and higher fees for out-of-state second homeowners or vacation homes.

There was also agreement that Montana should diversify user revenue beyond the sale of hunting and fishing licenses by asking more outdoor users to invest in land and wildlife protection. Suggestions included a sales tax on outdoor gear and new user fees or licenses for non-hunting and non-fishing outdoor activities.

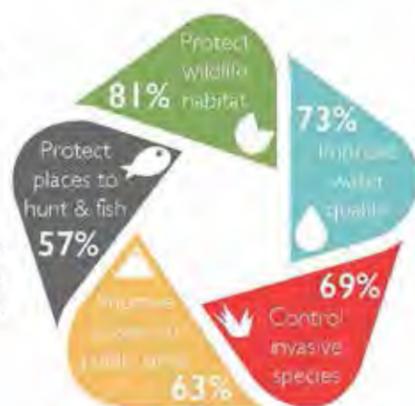
"At the end of the day, we are pursuing a Montana-made solution to long-term conservation of our state's rich natural resources, and now we have a number of ideas to bring forward to our lawmakers for consideration," Chadwick said.

Visit montanaheritageproject.com/support-for-conservation-funding-high-among-montanans to read the report.



SURVEY QUESTION: Recognizing that there frequently is not enough funding for all of these, please indicate how important it is to you a certain priority be funded.

Survey respondents were asked to categorize a list of 10 funding priorities as either very important, somewhat important, or not important. Protecting wildlife habitat is the most important category.



Opinion: A few words about plastic

Don't buy any

BY KATHY BOUCHARD
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

I have been blessed with seven lovely granddaughters—and zero grandsons, but life sometimes is unbalanced. To the best of my recollection, none of them have received a toy from me that was made of plastic. The sandwiches I made my kids for lunches were wrapped in wax paper. I've been recycling paper, cardboard and plastic for nearly 40 years.

So, imagine my dismay to learn that in America, only 9 percent of all the plastic we have ever used has been recycled and 12 percent of it has been burned. My used plastic was shipped, most likely, to China—which has recently closed its doors to the rest of the world's recycled plastic—and quite possibly found its way into the ocean. Further, with plastic being cheap, light and a product of natural gas, the American Petroleum Institute has plans to spend billions of dollars to increase production by 2024 to twice that of 2016.

There seems to be two camps seeking solutions to our plastic addiction. One promotes better recycling, such as what European countries are doing, but their success rate according to an August story by NPR sees to only 30-40 percent of plastic getting recycled. There is not much money to be made by recycling in the United States so far, so it is difficult to produce a product like shoes or decking materials and be profitable. For that reason, the demand for virgin plastic far exceeds that of previously used plastic.

The other camp promotes reducing or eliminating plastics as frequently as possible, especially single-use plastics like water bottles, shopping bags, straws and cutlery. It requires a change of habit, but we in Rotary Club of Big Sky are pushing in that direction.

The Sustainability Committee of Rotary has worked with Outlaw Partners and the Gallatin River Task Force to eliminate single-use plastic bottled water at the PBR

events and Peak to Sky concert, plus Town Center and Roxy's. We're also working with YES Compost to add compost collection and transition the food and beverage vendors at the Farmers Market to compostable containers. Additionally, we've expanded recycling collection at the Farmers Market by using our blue collection cans from the Music in the Mountains concerts.

There are quite a few vendors looking to fulfill the relatively new demand for plastic-free packaging. It is possible to buy toothpaste tablets in glass containers. I have bought paper products like toilet paper and paper towels delivered in a large cardboard box, each wrapped in colorful shiny paper. Bulk items like shampoos, cooking oils and cereals can be purchased by using repurposed plastic or glass containers. My latest purchase was a bar of shampoo that arrived in a metal container.

Instead of paying to bottle and transport water that is used in liquid cleaners, some companies will ship their cleaning supplies in concentrate or powder to be reconstituted with water by their customers. Additionally, in the northeastern states, Loop (loopstore.com) is a company that sends customers everything from ice cream to juice boxes in returnable containers via UPS. Once the product is used, the container goes into a bin that, when filled with others, goes back to the vendors who wash and use the containers for fresh products. I'm hoping this idea expands quickly.

We will pay a premium for this return to the 1940s style of packaging. The use of plastic has an awful price beyond its convenience. Consider how you can use less: use your personal hydration device or buy your water in boxes, and carry a reusable shopping bag wherever you go.

This is the first of several articles by the Rotary Club of Big Sky that will explore various aspects of plastic in our country.

Kathy Bouchard is a member of Rotary Club of Big Sky.

Master Hunter Program accepting applications

EBS STAFF

The Montana Master Hunter Program is now accepting applications for their third year of advanced hunters' education. Offered by Bozeman nonprofit One Montana, the program is intended to increase hunter competence, skills, knowledge and ethics while also bridging gaps between sportsmen and landowners.

Successful graduates are given the opportunity to hunt on partnering ranches that may not otherwise allow public access.

The program includes 50 hours of classroom instruction as well as online work and time in the field. Participants are required to complete a written exam and field tests that assess their competence. Upon completion, graduates receive a Montana Master Hunter Certificate that is valid for three years and can be renewed through additional in-person training, volunteering and service days.

Program instructors include ranchers, farmers, landowners, university faculty, professional shooting instructors, private land managers and wildlife biologists.

In 2020, One Montana will offer classes in Missoula, Helena and Bozeman over three consecutive two-day weekends. Interested applicants must complete a competitive application online by Jan. 10, 2020.

Visit mtmasterhunter.com for more information.

FWP wardens seek information on wildlife crimes

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

BOZEMAN — Wardens with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks are seeking information on two cases involving wildlife crimes in southwest Montana.

In early October, wardens responded to a tip that waterfowl carcasses had been dumped at the Cameron Bridge Fishing Access Site south of Belgrade. Wardens found carcasses of 20 Canada geese and 11 mallard ducks. Of those, five geese and six ducks had significant portions of meat that was abandoned and wasted.

Dumping carcasses on fishing access sites and other public lands is considered littering, which, when done in connection with hunting activities, may result in fines and suspension of hunting privileges. Littering, moreover, creates a nuisance for other recreationists and land managers and can attract scavengers. Waste of game meat is also illegal and can come with similar penalties.

In addition, wardens are asking for the public's help to identify persons responsible for shooting and killing two juvenile red-tailed hawks in Bozeman. The dead birds were discovered on Oct. 19 after wardens received a report that a raptor had been shot on state land west of Mandeville Road, near Murdoch's Ranch and Home Supply. Both raptor carcasses were taken to the Montana Raptor Conservation Center, where significant amounts of bird shot were found in the carcasses.

Raptors are federally protected and cannot be hunted. Shooting firearms within Bozeman city limits is also prohibited.

Those with information in either of these cases are asked to call 1-800-TIP-MONT. Informants can remain anonymous and may be eligible for monetary rewards.

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Royal Coachman Ranch
160 ACRES / \$5.9M



Lot 38 Bitterbrush Trail
1.27 ACRES / \$800K

BIG SKY



2005 Upper Chief Joseph
7,690 SQ FT / \$4.3M



64 Lodgepole
6,160 SQ FT / \$3.895M

BIG SKY - LAND



UNDER CONTRACT

Mountain Meadows
120 Acres / \$3.495M



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
2A-1B
526 Acres / \$5.8M



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
Tract 3B-1
23 Acres / \$875k



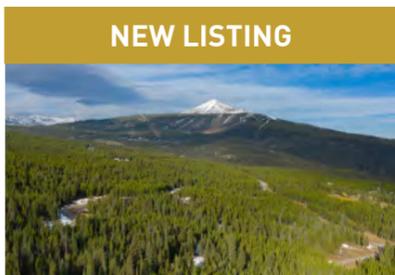
The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
Tract 1A-1
21 Acres / \$795k



Lot 42: \$
Lot 43: \$
Com

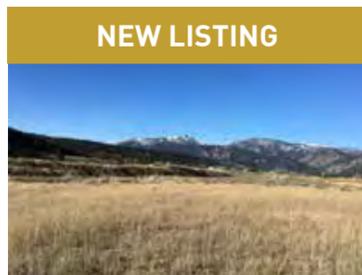
BIG SKY - LAND

BOZEMAN & GREATER MONTANA



NEW LISTING

Lot 71 Morning Glory
3.65 Acres / \$375K



NEW LISTING

COS 2071 Tract 1 Gallatin Road
3.14 Acres / \$299K



SxS Ranch
Bozeman, MT
483.78 ACRES / \$7.5M



Homestead at the Beacon
Butte, MT
640 Acres / \$1.65M



Rocking S7 Ranch Lot 4
Bozeman, MT
20.232 ACRES / \$650K

RECENTLY SOLD



SOLD

Yellowstone Ranch Preserve
List Price: \$19M



SOLD

Big Sky Corner Property
List Price: \$3.24M



SOLD

78 Meadow Village
Dr. Big Sky, MT
4,769 SQ FT / \$2.1M



SOLD

245 Rain in Face
3,446 SQ FT / \$1.695M



SOLD

Crail Ranch Unit 40
List Price: \$1.35M

RECENTLY SOLD



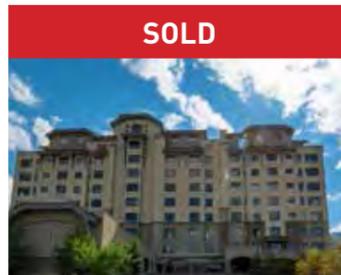
SOLD

Lot 44 Diamond Hitch
1.25 ACRE / \$699K



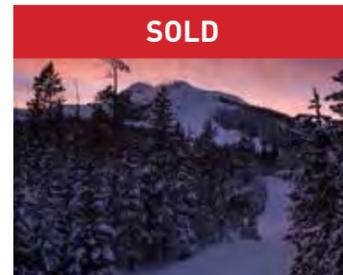
SOLD

Hidden Village
15 Blue Flax Place
2,788 SQ FT / \$599K



SOLD

Summit 911/912
List Price: \$595K



SOLD

Lot 39 Diamond Hitch
1 ACRE / \$595K



SOLD

Cottonwood Crossing #15
1,854 SQ FT / \$539K

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30 Beehive Basin Rd.
6,203 SQ FT / \$2.9M



211 B Pheasant Tail
\$720K



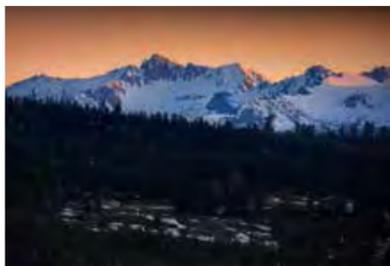
Cottonwood Crossing Unit 5
1854 SQ FT / \$565K



Hill Condo 1321
440 SQ FT / \$185K



Big EZ
\$339K / 20 ACRES
\$375K / 20 ACRES
Combined: \$699K



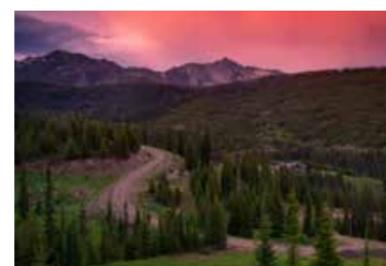
Lot 2 Big Buck Road
20 ACRES / \$480K



Lot 4 Beaver Creek
20 Acres / \$539K



Bear Paw Ponds Parcel 7
20.04 Acres / \$399K



Lot 3 Joy Road
6.83 Acres / \$395K

COMMERCIAL



NEW LISTING

3197 Rose Street
Bozeman, MT
1,970 SQ FT / \$430K



NEW LISTING

412 Enterprise Blvd., Unit 30
Bozeman, MT
1,304 SQ FT / \$315K



Marketplace Unit 104
Big Sky, MT
1,204 SQ FT / \$560,920



Marketplace Unit 202
Big Sky, MT
966 SQ FT / \$389K



Airport Garages
Bozeman, MT
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Taking reservations for
building G



SOLD

Black Eagle Lodge Unit 30
List Price: \$1.35M



SOLD

2078 Little Coyote List
List Price: \$1.079M



SOLD

Ski Tip Lot 10
List Price: \$975K



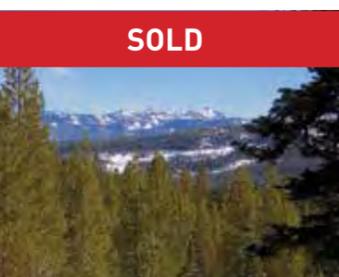
SOLD

81 Pheasant Tail Ln. Unit 2
2,707 SQ FT / \$839K



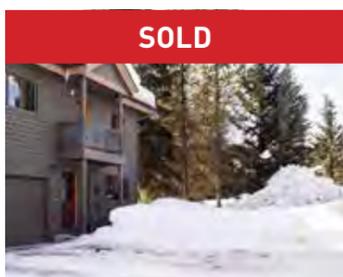
SOLD

Lot 64 Goshawk
1.04 ACRES / \$775K



SOLD

Lot 119 Old Barn Rd.
3.13 Acres / \$490K



SOLD

118 Rose Hip Circle
1,940 SQ FT / \$489K



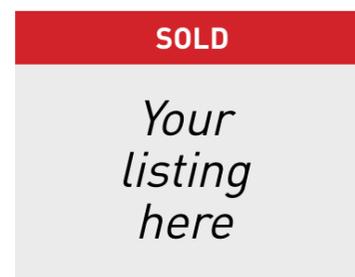
SOLD

3170 Winter Park #B
Bozeman, MT
1183 SQ FT / \$295K



SOLD

Hill Condo 1316
770 SQ FT / \$280k



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Commission rejects Madison River recreation petitions, seeks further public input

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

BOZEMAN – Progress—albeit small—is underway for a comprehensive recreation management plan on the Madison River, a blue-ribbon trout stream lauded as one of the most popular rivers in Montana.

During the regular Nov. 12 meeting of the Fish and Wildlife Commission, commissioners heard regulation proposals from four stakeholder groups and took public comment from individuals on the topic of three separate petitions.

Amid strong representation and opinions coming from the Madison River Foundation, fishing outfitters, the Ennis business community, affiliated anglers and area landowners, the commissioners voted unanimously to deny the three petitions, agreeing that further public input was necessary from interested parties that were not in attendance at the meeting.

“Everything we’ve heard today, or pretty much everything, deals with less than 20 percent of the usage on the Madison,” said Commission Vice-Chairman Richard Stuker, referring to the department’s statistics that approximately 20 percent of Madison recreation comes from outfitted angling and the remaining 80 percent is non-commercial use.

“My concern is I’m not hearing anything about the other 80 percent of usage ... The pressure is only going to continue to grow from that non-commercial use,” Stuker added. “We need to get this right. We do need to get it done, I think, as soon as possible.”

Stuker echoed sentiments expressed during the public testimony that some form of management action is needed, though some members of the public and commission expressed an immediate need for regulation while others preferred pumping the brakes in order to devise a precise management plan.

“We need a time to coalesce and write our future. Our future is dependent upon that river,” said fly-fishing outfitter and Ennis fly shop owner John Way during public testimony. “I look at this issue as there are too many people.”

The three petitions brought forward to the commission were developed by stakeholders and included proposed regulations that would have limited commercial use.

“We submitted the petition ... because of our disappointment in the lack of action from the commission,” said Quincey Johnson on behalf of the Madison River Foundation. She is the project and outreach coordinator for the member-based non-profit, which filed the first petition.

The Madison River Foundation petition urged the commission to initiate recreation rules that would be effective in 2020. This was also requested by a petition filed by the George Grant chapter of Trout Unlimited, Skyline Sportsmen Association, Anaconda Sportsmen Association and Public Lands Water Access Association.

These rules were originally proposed in April 2018 and rejected by the commission at that time. They included banning glass on a stretch of the river, establishing wade-only areas, capping the number of commercial-use permits and creating year-round non-commercial stretches of the river.

“To let a river decline before taking action is beyond negligent, and possibly a fatal mistake that both the river and local economy could never recover from,”

Johnson said. “In April of 2018, Montanans’ voices weren’t heard, as most Montanans can’t attend meetings from 9 to 5. Not to mention, the conversation around the recreation plan has been far from civil. When people have disagreed, they’ve been threatened with violence, their home has been vandalized and their car broken into. This is not conducive for people who want to speak up.”

During public testimony, landowner Faith Conroy echoed Johnson’s concerns.

“I’m reluctant to speak out because I do live in one of those wade ... areas and I have experienced the wrath of some of the guides personally and there has been vandalism on our property,” she said. “In asking guides and their clients to remain in the water I have been verbally attacked ... Not all guides are like that, there’s probably just a handful of them, but the problem still exists.”

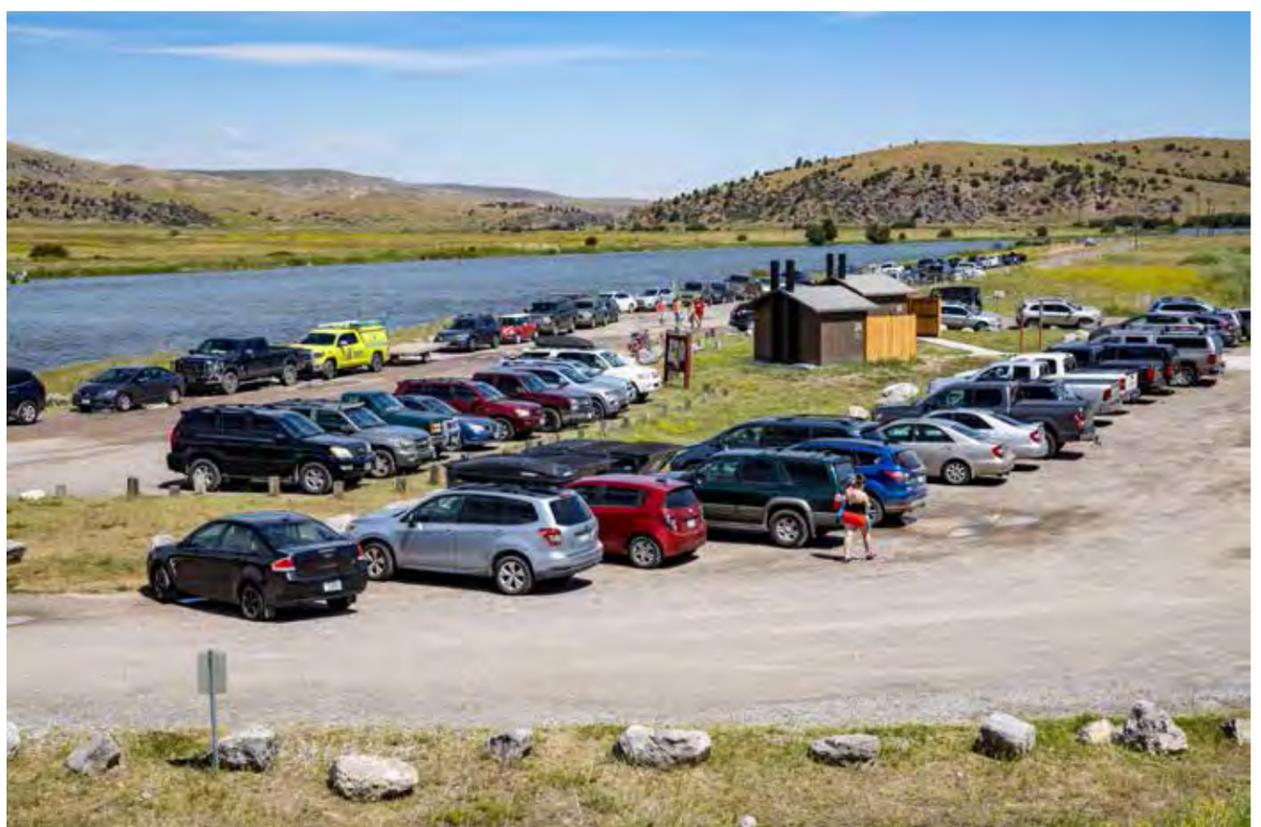
The third petition was presented by Mike Bias, the executive director of the Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana. He offered suggestions to manage commercial use after holding a series of meetings with Montana angling outfitters, ultimately endorsing an allocation-type system as opposed to some form of rest-and-rotation or boat closures.

While the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association did not submit a petition, executive director Mac Minard was granted time to speak on the organization’s support of a fourth regulation option comprised of implementing a Fishing Access Site ambassador program, stopping the issuance of special-use permits and seriously pursuing recreational land easements that would give wade anglers more access to the river.

“MOGA’s interest has to do with a statewide application,” Minard said. “I think when we’re done here, we hope that we have a model that is transportable and that we can apply as these issues grow onto other rivers.”

Following their rejection of the petitions, the commissioners directed FWP Fisheries Division Chief of Staff Eileen Ryce to collate the most recent inventory of comments and submit a series of draft regulations to the commission, with the intent to release a selection of these draft regulations for public comment soon.

This story has been shortened from its original version published online on Nov. 14. Visit explorebigsky.com/commission-rejects-madison-river-recreation-petitions-seeks-further-public-input to read the full story.



The Black's Ford Fishing Access Site on the Lower Madison River in July, a popular take-out spot for recreational floaters PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

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ROTARY CLUB SEEKS FAMILIES FOR THE CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

The Rotary Club of Big Sky, with the help of the Big Sky Community, is once again sponsoring the Christmas Giving Tree.

The Giving Tree is an annual program that helps families during Christmas by providing gifts for the children and a Christmas dinner for the family. If you would like to participate in this project, please pick up a Santa Letter for each child from either one of the two banks, the Food Bank or the Country Market and help each child fill out their Santa Letter.

Please mail the Santa Letters in the provided self-addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible and no later the December 6th.

Once the Santa Letter is received, Big Sky Rotary will place one angel ornament on the Christmas Giving Tree for each of the child's gift requests. Community members will pick up an angel ornament and fulfill the child's wish by purchasing the gift.

A Rotarian will schedule gift delivery on December 18th. The Rotary Club will also provide the family with a Christmas dinner basket at the time of gift delivery. Please know this program is completely confidential.

Wishing you Happy Holidays.
P.O. Box 160473 - Big Sky, MT 59716



MAKE A CHILD'S WISH COME TRUE THIS CHRISTMAS!

1. Choose an 'Angel' (the gift request) from the tree, then take the gifts to American Bank and First Security Bank by December 12th.
2. Choose a Red Stocking from the tree and mail a donation with the provided envelope.

Have Questions? Call or Text Mia 406-641-0051 or email mia@bigsky.com



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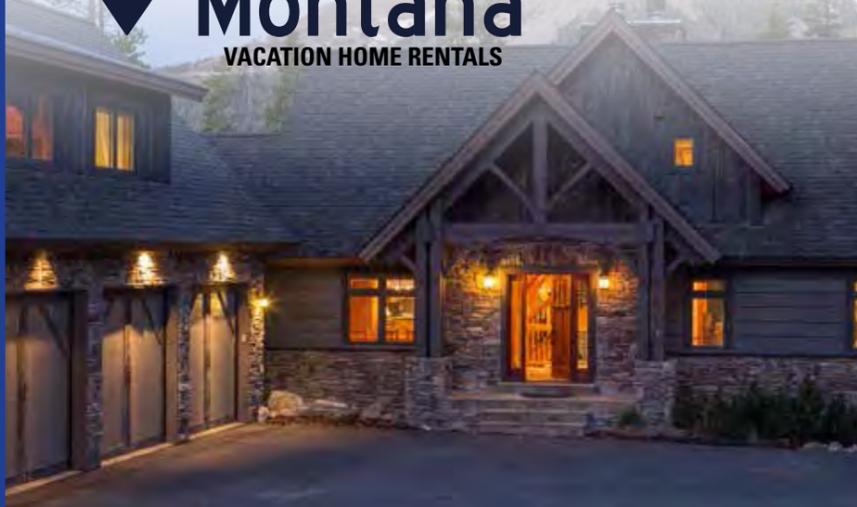
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Tales from Afield: Brow tines in the timber

BY RYAN CASTLE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

As I push open the flap of the wall tent I embrace the crisp, cold early morning air against my face. I walk across frozen crunchy snow, my headlamp beam casting shadows off the trees in the dark as I stumble through a small willow patch into a meadow. I look upon the silhouettes of our horses and mules awaiting me after having grazed all night. They stand still in a calm silence, and I try not to shine my light directly in their eyes as I greet them.

Frozen leather is thrown upon warm horses' backs and I take one last sip of coffee. I turn off the white gas lantern and notice that sweet smell of the leftover gas looming in the air for a moment. I get on my buckskin horse and look behind me at my friends Tom and Singeli. We shut off our headlamps and stride out across the meadow and up the mountain.

Tom and I have been guiding mountain goat and elk hunts together all season long. We had one camp that needed to be packed out and not having had much of a chance to hunt for ourselves, we took advantage of the one day we had to try and successfully take a bull elk, then pack out our camp. Singeli, a videographer who had been traveling all over the West to capture the true meaning of why people hunt, needed a horseback wilderness elk hunt to go with her film. Tom and I were the ones for the job.

At the break of daylight, we tie our horses in a patch of scraggly Douglas fir and crawl onto a nob. Fighting my binoculars as they fogged, I look out at a mountain side with long sweeping finger meadows divided by dark streaks of timber.

The first thing I see is tracks, a lot of tracks. Elk were here last night. It was confirmed when we spotted a small bull elk cross a sliver of open field. Tom and I decide to get a closer look at this hillside.

We tie our horses in another spot and walk in elk tracks on and off, skirting the tops of meadows and weaving back and forth ever so quiet. It became disorientating walking through that country. As we break out into one meadow after another, they all start to look the same. We aren't exactly sure where on the mountain we are.



Mule Arby packs out a bull elk.



Ryan Castle horseback riding during a successful elk hunt. PHOTOS COURTESY OF RYAN CASTLE

As we walk, we smell the musky odor of elk—a scent I have oddly learned to love. Singeli bounces around stealthy and swift bearing her camera to capture every moment. We walk out into the top of a large snow-covered meadow. I recognize it—we're just above where we saw the bull this morning.

The day growing warmer, the snow begins to soften. We sit down, eat a snack and whisper about our next move. Tom suggests I walk over a rise and make a loop to see what tracks I cut while he stays put in case I bump something into the meadow we're looking at. Singeli decides to stay with Tom for the sake of not having to lug her camera equipment around further than necessary. I take off.

I barely get out of sight of my companions when I notice the tan back-end of a cow elk in the dark timber. I slither quick and quiet down the hill to get closer. I sit in the wet snow, put my rifle up and peer through my scope. One by one, cow elk walk through an opening in the trees well in range. I watch as cow after cow walks through my shooting lane.

When the brow tines of a bull enter the opening and stop, I take a deep breath, knowing I only have a split second. I steady my crosshairs in the opening and wait. My shooting lane is only big enough for about one step of an elk.

As the bull elk's shoulder passes through my scope and my crosshairs center behind the shoulder, I pull the trigger. Smiling ear to ear, I walk back to my wide-eyed friends.

The horses and mules, with feet sprawled out slipping and sliding, head down the muddy narrow trail, loaded with elk. Back at camp that evening, we retell the story as our tired stock grazes in the dark meadow. Tomorrow, we go back to work, saddle up, tear down camp and pull our pack string down the trail to home.

Ryan Castle resides in the Shields Valley and has spent his life as both a local outdoorsman and professional hunting guide.

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SECTION 3: SPORTS, BUSINESS, HEALTH & FUN



Jess Lockwood wins second PBR World Championship pg. 35



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MIBS: TogetHR Consulting, Kari Gras pg. 41

Riley Becker: Flying under the radar

BY DOUG HARE

BIG SKY – 18-year-old Riley Becker’s earliest memories of skiing are being toted around in her father’s backpack when he was a ski patroller at Big Sky Resort. Once she strapped on her own skis, she would follow him around everywhere he went.

As a sophomore at Lone Peak High School, Becker and her father summited the Matterhorn, an iconic 14,692 ft. mountain straddling the border of Switzerland and Italy. The following year, for her 16th birthday, her dad had promised her from early on that her present would be a heli-skiing trip in Alaska. True to form, the father-daughter pair ventured to the Chilkat Mountains of Haines, Alaska to explore one of the most daunting mountain ranges in the world.

“When I got there, I guess I was having so much fun and when I’m not stressed I’m able to ski really well and play around with the different terrain and conditions,” Becker said. “They liked how I skied on everywhere they dropped me, I guess,” Becker said.

The guides and SEABA HELI representatives were so impressed by her skiing that by the end of the trip, they approached her about becoming a sponsored athlete. She recalls her excitement the following winter when she got a call asking if she could go heli-skiing the next day to help them film. “I was like ‘Dad, please!’”

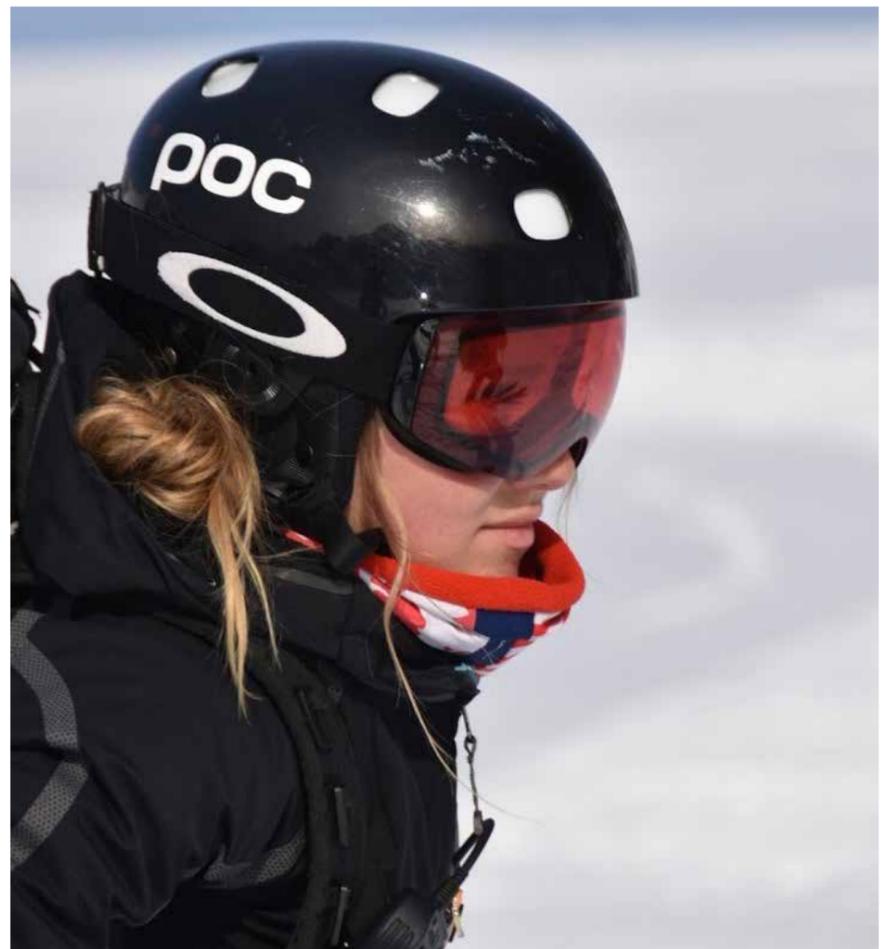
Asked how she manages to deal with the fear of standing atop Alaskan spines, Becker smiles and says that she was never scared. “It was like Christmas with all that powder,” Becker said. Before climbing the Matterhorn, Becker and her dad travelled to Chamonix, France to practice mountaineering for a week and train for their ascent. That experience is what she credits with overcoming any anxiety about being in the mountains. “I had to get over myself real fast.”

Last year, Becker transferred to the Big Sky Discovery Academy. “It’s a lot more flexible. Grades and education are super important to me and I thought that way to excel at academics and skiing was to make the move to Discovery,” the senior said. Becker intends on attending the University of Utah next year which she notes has access to six ski resorts less than an hour away.

Becker credits her talent for sliding on snow with her genuine love of all aspects of skiing. She has been racing since she was 6 years old and still competes with the BSSEF ski team. But she also enjoys backcountry outings and ripping through powdery glades at top speed. “It’s actually really fun until you run into a tree,” Becker said with a laugh.



Riley Becker in her element—putting down big lines the Chilkat Mountains of Haines, Alaska



Born and raised in Big Sky, Riley Becker has quietly established herself as an up-and-coming skier and earned a sponsorship from a renowned Alaskan heli-skiing operation. PHOTOS BY ERIC BECKER

She’s also no stranger to ending up on podiums after big mountain freeride competitions. In 2017 at her first ever freeride competition on the Headwaters terrain, she won her division and then parlayed the confidence from that result into another win at Beartooth Basin later that year.

“I’m able to watch videos of myself and I’m pretty good at seeing what I need to work on and fixing it,” Becker said. “I don’t think [skiing] is something that you can ever master, you can just get better and better every year, every time.”

Becker is also quick to credit her coach Keely Kelleher with helping her improve her skiing abilities. During the warmer months, the precocious athlete stays in shape by trail running, playing soccer and working out at Lone Peak Physical Therapy.

When asked about if she wants to pursue a career as a professional skier, she says that the thought has crossed her mind. The toughest obstacle for her might be reaching out to sponsors. “I don’t like to reach out to them. It feels like cheating. I need to work on that,” she said with a smile.

With the ski season fast approaching, Becker is excited to continue to refine her ski technique. Becker emphasizes that she is very much a visual learner on the slopes. “Listen to people who are better than you, and not only listen but watch them. I feel that I’m able to improve by skiing behind someone really good and I’ll watch them and take what I like and kind of blend it into my form,” Becker said, describing her style as scrappy, structured and playful.

For her next big adventure, Becker dreams of returning to Chamonix, where burly mountains and big exposure continue to beckon the best skiers in the world. “It’s just fun skiing with her. She has a lot of fun skiing and it shows in her style,” Eric Becker said.

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Nov 21 WMPAC Parent Informational Meeting TBD
 Nov 21 Home First Day of Practice/Equipment Check-Out 3:45

JV BOYS = JVB

JV GIRLS = JVG

VARSITY BOYS = B

VARSITY GIRLS = G

Day	Date	Game & Location	Match Time
Sat.	Dec. 7	Hybrid Tip Off Jamboree vs. Absarokee	5:00 / 6:30
Sat.	Dec. 14	Hybrid Tip Off Jamboree @ Absarokee vs. Sheridan	11:00 / 12:30
Thurs.	Dec. 19	Home vs White Sulphur Springs	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Fri.	Dec 20	Home vs. Manhattan Christian	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Fri.	Jan. 3	Home vs. Harrison / Willow Creek	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Sat.	Jan. 4	Away @ Shields Valley	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Fri.	Jan. 10	Away @ Gardiner	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Sat.	Jan 11	Away @ vs Twin Bridges	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Fri.	Jan. 17	Home vs West Yellowstone	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Sat.	Jan. 18	Away @ Sheridan	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Fri.	Jan. 24	Home vs. Twin Bridges	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Sat.	Jan. 25	Away vs Ennis	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Thurs.	Jan. 30	Home vs. Gardiner	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Fri.	Jan. 31	Home vs. Shields Valley	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Thurs.	Feb. 6	Away @ Manhattan Christian	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Fri.	Feb 7	Away @ White Sulphur Springs	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Fri.	Feb. 14	Away @ West Yellowstone	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00
Sat.	Feb 15	Home vs. Sheridan (Senior Night)	2:30/4:00/5:30/7:00

Feb 17-22 District Basketball @ TBD TBD
 Feb 24-29 Divisional Basketball @ TBD TBD
 Mar. 12-14 Boys & Girls State Basketball TBD

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Montana native Jess Lockwood wins second PBR World Championship

BY DOUG HARE

LAS VEGAS – On Nov. 10, Jess Lockwood was crowned the 2019 Professional Bull Riders World Champion, becoming the youngest two-time champion in the sport's history. Over the five-day event in T-Mobile Arena on the Las Vegas Strip, Lockwood had a 5-for-6 showing, producing 4 qualified rides over 90 points, and winning him the World Finals event title as well. Lockwood became the youngest PBR World Champion ever when he won the title in 2017.

The 22-year-old made history with his come-from-behind victory, joining a short list of cowboys who have won the PBR World Championship multiple times in bull riding record books: Adriano Moraes (1994, 2001, 2006), Silvano Alves (2011) (2012) (2014), Chris Shivers (2000) (2003), Justin McBride (2005) (2007), and J.B. Mauney (2013) (2015).

For his efforts, Lockwood left Vegas with his second gold buckle and close to \$1.4 million in prize money. Just four years into his career, Lockwood is the sixth all-time money earner in PBR history. Throughout the five-day event, Lockwood went toe-to-toe with Jose Vitor Leme, eventually overcoming the Brazilian's 852 point lead heading into the World Finals. Lockwood missed nine PBR events this year while recovering from a broken collarbone.

The Volburg, Montana native wasn't the only one to leave Vegas with hardware. Dalton Kasel, 20, captured Rookie of the Year honors finishing eighth in the world standings after a meteoric rise late in the season. After winning the Big Sky PBR in July, Kasel made his debut on



Jess Lockwood became the youngest two-time PBR World Champion after scoring 5-for-6 qualified rides in Las Vegas over five days of competition to win the 2019 PBR World Finals event title. Nine time Stock Contractor of the Year Chad Berger looks on with approval in the background. PHOTO BY ANDY WATSON / BULL STOCK MEDIA

the Unleash the Beast tour in Tulsa, Oklahoma on Aug. 10 as the No. 43-ranked bull rider in the world. Since then, Kasel went 14-for-35 (40 percent qualified rides) to finish the season ranked No. 8 in the world, edging out Alan de Souza as the most dominant first year pro in the PBR.

Chad Berger won Stock Contractor of the Year honors for an unprecedented ninth time, the sixth consecutive year that his deep bullpen has earned him that title. The Mandan, North Dakota native also saw Smooth Operator put up his career-best 47-point bull score on the last day of the event to become the 2019 PBR World Champion Bucking Bull. The nine-year-old bovine athlete took two victory laps after bucking off Chase Outlaw in 4.1 seconds on Sunday, seemingly aware that he had captured the title and accompanying \$100,000 prize.

The veteran bull went 13-3 on the season, averaging 46 points per outing, also winning Bull of the Finals (\$25,000) and regular-season top bull honors (\$25,000). Smooth Operator is Berger's first World Champion bull since Code Blue won in 2009, who he co-owned.

Another Montanan, Columbia Falls-based Matt Triplett closed his season out with five straight eight-second rides to finish second place in the World Finals, ending the year ranked No. 7 in the world.

The 2020 PBR Unleash the Beast season kicks off Jan. 3-5 at Madison Square Garden in New York.



The explosive opening ceremony for the PBR World Finals, held from Nov. 6-10 in Las Vegas, Nevada. PHOTO BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

Bobcats-Grizzlies slated to clash

EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – The Montana State University and University of Montana football teams are set to compete for the 119th time in the historic intrastate rivalry on Nov. 23 at MSU’s Bobcat Stadium. Both teams will enter the contest on winning streaks. The Grizzlies have won their last four contests, while the Bobcats have been victorious in their previous three.



CC PHOTO

The matchup will have conference standing implications as well with UM tied for the conference lead with a record of 6-1. MSU is one game behind and in a deadlock for fourth place sitting at a 5-2 conference record.

The Grizzlies have the upper hand over the Bobcats in the all-time series with 33 more victories, but the Bobcats have won the last three meetings between the two teams.

Montana State, 8-3 overall, has only fallen once at home on the year, while both of the Grizzlies (9-2) defeats have come on the road.



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Featured Outlaw: Phil Capy



Photo by Wes Overoid

Phil Capy stands outside the Big Sky Ski Patrol clinic in December 2016. He patrolled for nearly 60 years. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

It's been said that ski patrollers work long hours; that they ride chairlifts before dawn, in snowstorms pushed by 80-mph winds; that avalanche control and the term "blaster" are listed in the job description; that a safe return isn't guaranteed.

Phil Capy doesn't know for sure, but people have told him he's the oldest professional ski patroller in the country. This winter marks Capy's 20th season at Montana's Big Sky Resort, and he's been patrolling on and off for the last 54 years. He's 87.

When Phil Capy was born in April 1928, St. Moritz, Switzerland had just hosted the second Winter Olympic Games – without alpine events. That same year metal edges were first introduced to skis. And Herbert Hoover was elected president.

In 1961 Capy, a Texas native, began his ski patrol career in Vermont at Mount Snow and then at Haystack Mountain. After a decade writing in Hollywood, he moved to Oregon in 1978 and worked as a pro patroller and lead medic at Mt. Bachelor for 17 years. Then he found Montana.

"I love the mountains here," Capy says. "I can hike and I can ski, and I like looking at them. That drive from Big Sky up to [Bozeman], when you look at Castle Rock, that's the same beauty you get in Yellowstone. I don't get tired of looking at that."

Big Sky Resort employs roughly 105 paid patrollers and 140 volunteers, and this season will again find Capy alongside his comrades patrolling the slopes of Lone Mountain. Capy no longer runs avalanche routes but still patrols the ski area as a rover, checking sleds and rope lines, responding to incidents, and tracking medical supplies. He teaches mass casualty incident training at the resort, and helped write MCI plans for Oregon's Deschutes County and Gallatin County here in Montana.

While Capy hasn't dropped into the resort's famed Big Couloir since 2007, he's committed to the patrol at least through the 2015-2016 sea-

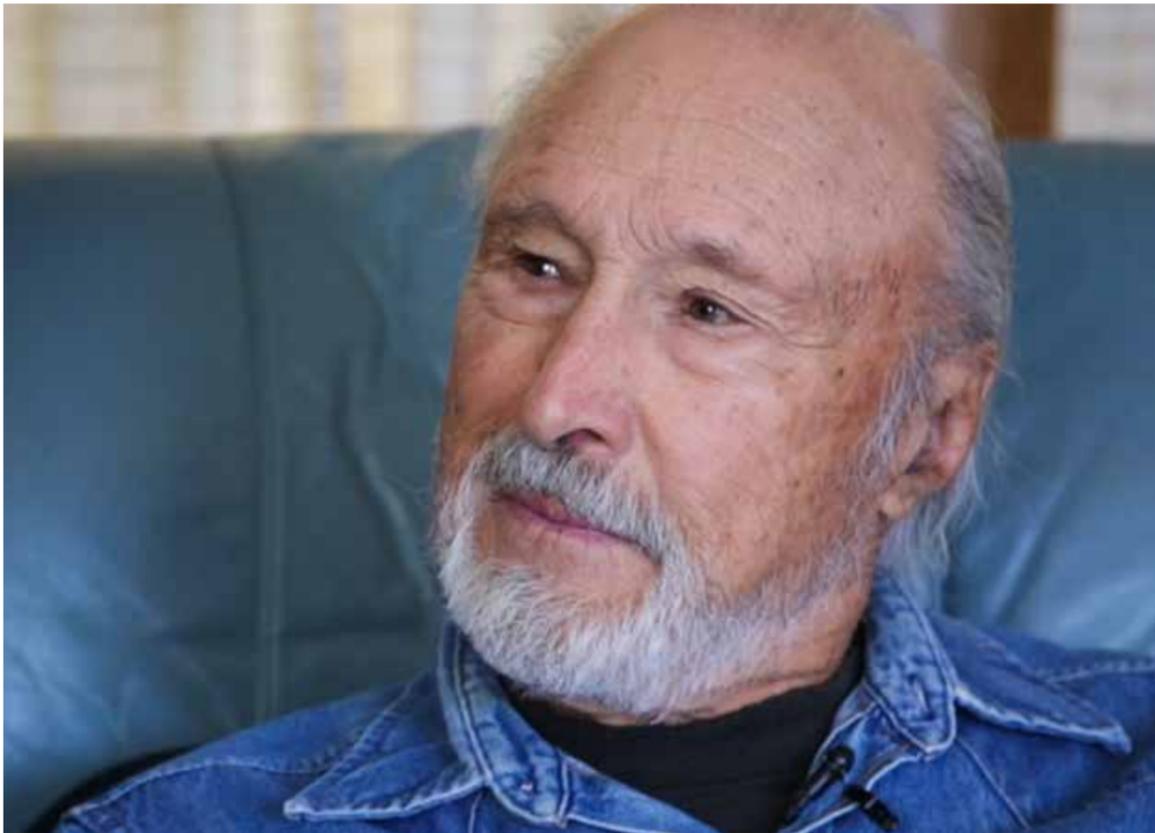
son. "It's year to year now," he says. "I just do what I like to do, [and] try not to fall. I'm getting too old for that."

As a measure of his calculated approach to skiing and life these days, Capy's only injury in more than 65 years of skiing was a torn thumb ligament after he was knocked over by another skier in 1990.

"Phil is just a legend," said Big Sky Ski Patrol Director Bob Dixon, who hired Capy in '95, the same year the Lone Peak Tram began haul-



A young Phil Capy poses in New York City for a promotional photograph to accompany his musical acting portfolio, circa late 1950s. PHOTO COURTESY OF PHIL CAPY



Phil Capy at his Bozeman home in November 2015.

ing skiers to the summit. “He’s very focused and very knowledgeable, and extremely experienced – a great role model for the ski patrollers coming up. He should probably be nominated for the [National] Ski Hall of Fame.”

It’s safe to say Capy has squeezed the most out of the last 87 years. He’s been shot down while flying an Army plane in the Korean War; sang in a traveling jazz trio; sailed on the Navy’s first Arctic Ocean icebreaker ship; wrote pilots for TV shows including “Gunsmoke”; and trekked to Everest base camp.

Capy claims he’s no adrenaline junkie, but he still rides his 1976 BMW motorcycle to work in Big Sky Resort’s maintenance department during the summer. He sometimes rides it to the patrol locker room in winter, affixing a studded rear tire to the bike.

“He’s an all-American, professional badass,” mused fellow Big Sky patroller Patrick Robbins.

Phil Capy answers the front door of his Bozeman home with a grandfatherly smile and a well-kempt white beard. Balding on top, Capy’s snow-white hair is slicked back, feathery wisps peeking out from behind his ears. He stands 5-feet-6-inches tall, but claims he was once 5-foot-8. “I keep shrinking every year,” he says, gripping my hand firmly.

At home, Capy is more prudent than daredevil. He reads spy novels and history books, and listens to jazz and folk music with his partner of nearly 30 years, Linda Herrick. “He likes to cook and bake bread, and if he has enough time he likes to make his own yogurt,” says Herrick, who met Capy in Oregon in 1987. “He’s a very kind and caring person [and] very generous with his laughter. He laughs at all my jokes even if they aren’t very funny.”

Ornate knives and ivory statuettes of Ganesh from India and Nepal decorate a wooden shelf along one wall of the house. Capy, a 50-plus-year Hindu convert, has visited the region five times. He practices yoga. He’s a vegetarian.

Photos of Nepal treks adorn Capy’s walls – of trips to Annapurna and Everest base camps – along with ski patrol plaques marking 35 years of

National Ski Patrol service, and 17 seasons as lead medic and patroller at Mt. Bachelor. A framed image of Lone Mountain, signed by the entire Big Sky patrol at Capy’s 80th birthday celebration in 2008, hangs in his bedroom. In red marker across the top is written, “Phil, you inspire us all.”

Capy had enlisted in the Navy after high school, with hopes of becoming an air crewman at the tail end of World War II. But in 1948, after serving as an engineer and member of the Scouts and underwater demolition team – precursors to the SEALs known as frogmen – Capy completed his service and returned stateside.

In 1950, Capy learned to ski at Vermont’s Bromley Mountain at the age of 21. The Korean War started in June of that year. Capy had earned a pilot’s license on his own, and with the hastiness of U.S. involvement in Korea, the Army was looking for every good man it could get.

During the war, Capy’s Piper J-3 Cub fixed-wing was shot down mid-air. “I could hear the thump, thump, thump on the plate,” he said, referring to enemy fire hitting armored plates retrofitted under the plane to protect the pilot. But as the bullet thumps moved forward, they began piercing the fuel tank and one hit Capy in the wrist. Luckily, he says, it only grazed him.

“I just said, ‘I’m gonna die,’” Capy told me. “It was that serious. We were behind enemy lines.”

As fuel poured out of the tank, Capy thought back on his extensive training in forced landings. He steered the craft back toward the battle line and landed safely in a South Korea field. “I was back flying the next day,” Capy says, running an index finger over the scar on his right wrist. “It taught me an appreciation for life. I’m still alive; friends aren’t. If you can walk away and nobody gets hurt, that’s a good landing.”

Camaraderie runs deep in the military. It’s critical, as well, on any emergency response team. Capy sees these similarities in ski patrol. “What keeps me around is the family. Everybody looks forward to getting back to the ski area just because we get to see each other again.”

It’s 8:30 a.m. at Big Sky Resort, and the blowing snow from a rogue April storm stings the face. Phil Capy peers through yellow lenses and wipes melting snow from his goggles. “PHIL” is scrawled in black Sharpie on the index finger of his worn Kinco work gloves.

“This is what it’s all about,” he says, and, looking over his shoulder, shoves off down the fall line. “Public can’t even get on the lift until 9 a.m.”

With arms akimbo, and balanced on still-steady legs, Capy makes deliberate turns in the fresh snow, and disappears into the storm. He has sleds to check.

This article was originally published in a 2015 winter edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.

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Making it in Big Sky: TogetHR Consulting, Kari Gras

BY DOUG HARE

Kari Gras spent the bulk of her childhood years in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After graduating from Georgia Southern University majoring in outdoor recreation, with a minor in business and biology, she lived in eight different states before moving to Big Sky two decades ago.

Her company TogetHR Consulting has hired three consultants in the last two years, providing HR, payroll, recruiting and bookkeeping services to small businesses across the Gallatin Valley.

Like most good Montanans, Gras enjoys the outdoors—wakesurfing on Hebgen Lake in the summer, exploring Lone Mountain in the winter, and scuba diving and sailing on vacations. In her interview with Explore Big Sky, Gras offers plenty of sage advice for both employers and employees alike.

Explore Big Sky: *You moved to Big Sky in 1999. What drew you to a ski town in Montana?*

Kari Gras: I moved to Big Sky in 1999 to land a career job at the Yellowstone Club and followed my boyfriend, at the time, along with our roommate from Vail, Colorado, Eric Ladd.

EBS: *Can you tell me more about your employment history since moving here?*

K.G.: I worked for the Y.C. from 1999 until 2005 in various roles, but my true passion was working with kids in an outdoor setting. I began as their Children's Director overseeing and creating these programs along with the children's ski school.

In 2005, I decided to explore another career opportunity and I accepted a seasonal position with the Big Sky Fire Department as a firefighter and EMT. In April of that year, I transitioned into working as a property manager with Continental Concierge, a sister company of Continental Construction. Around 2007, another position became available at Y.C. working in the payroll department, so I returned. Working there through the bankruptcy, as people left and were laid off, I emerged as the HR and Payroll Manager in 2009. I remained in that position until leaving in the spring of 2013.

EBS: *How did you decide start TogetHR consulting?*

K.G.: I first started my business under the name Gras HR Consulting, with the help of my friend Lindsey Pruiett at Pruiett Creative and Prospera Business Network in Bozeman. The more I shared the idea of helping small businesses with their human resources needs, the more my business has grown and continues to grow today! There are a lot of small businesses in the Gallatin Valley and most of them don't need an HR or payroll person full-time and that's where TogetHR Consulting fits in perfectly.

EBS: *What is the most memorable client that you've had? How were you able to help their enterprise?*

K.G.: This is a tough one to answer because I've had the opportunity to work with so many wonderful business owners and employees throughout the years. I have a couple of success stories about coaching owners and managers to have difficult conversations with employees about their performance and watching those employees turn their performance around and become a better employee and teammate. It doesn't happen that often, but when it does, it's wonderful to see that good HR practices do work.

EBS: *What is the best business advice that you've received over the years?*

K.G.: We get what we tolerate. I wish I could remember who I heard this from. It's great advice for anyone with employees and can be applied to all aspects of life. It's



Kari Gras's expertise in human resources and payroll solutions have helped improve the operations of small businesses throughout the Gallatin Valley. PHOTO COURTESY OF KARI GRAS

about setting healthy boundaries and communicating clearly. I use this quote in my trainings quite a bit.

EBS: *Many of the small businesses in Big Sky don't have an employee dedicated to human resources. What do they tend to miss out on?*

K.G.: If a small business doesn't have someone dedicated to HR they run the risk of not being up-to-date with employment law or in compliance when things are changing. I make sure my clients have up-to-date policies in their handbooks, compliance practices with paperwork, and hopefully soon I will get back to teaching classes for managers and/or owners.

For example, there are a couple big changes coming in 2020 with regard to exempt versus non-exempt employees and those classifications—not to mention a new W4 and minimum wage increase for Montana to \$8.65/hour.

EBS: *What are some ways that small companies mismanage their payroll operations?*

K.G.: Generally speaking, it's a common practice for employers to require their employees to get approval before working any overtime hours. While this is a great practice, where companies get into trouble is when they remove those overtime hours already worked, don't pay the employee what is owed and simply tell the employee it wasn't

approved, and therefore, they aren't paying them.

The other common mistake I see is upon termination, when the company doesn't have a policy that outlines when the employee will receive their last paycheck. It's Montana law that the employee must receive their final paycheck at the end of business that day, unless there is a company policy that states otherwise. That policy must be worded in a specific way and indicate when the employee will receive their final paycheck.

EBS: *What regulations are the most common ones that are not followed by companies, that might be unaware they are not treating employees fairly/legally?*

K.G.: This is definitely the situation of paying an employee as an exempt versus non-exempt employee. Common business terms and practice is to pay employees hourly versus salary and most businesses think that as long as an employee has 'manager' in their title, they don't have to pay them overtime.

Under the FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) there is a duties test that qualifies an employee to be paid as an exempt employee and this is a white-collar exemption. If the employee doesn't qualify or perform work within the five classifications, as defined, then that employee must be paid as an hourly employee, even if they are a manager.

EBS: *What do you see as the most difficult part of growing an organization rapidly?*

K.G.: Currently, that would be more jobs to fill than people available. The unemployment rate in Gallatin County is currently 2.6 percent and below the state's non-seasonally adjusted average of 3.3 percent. Not to mention the affordable housing dilemma in Big Sky. Despite these hurdles, I think Big Sky businesses are doing their best to collaborate with each other, offer affordable housing options for their employees along with competitive wages and benefits packages.

EBS: *What is your advice for an employer to retain the most talented/effective employees?*

K.G.: Build a benefits package that suits your employees, be fair, equitable and mainly ask your employees, "What matters most to you?". Sometimes, the answers may surprise you!

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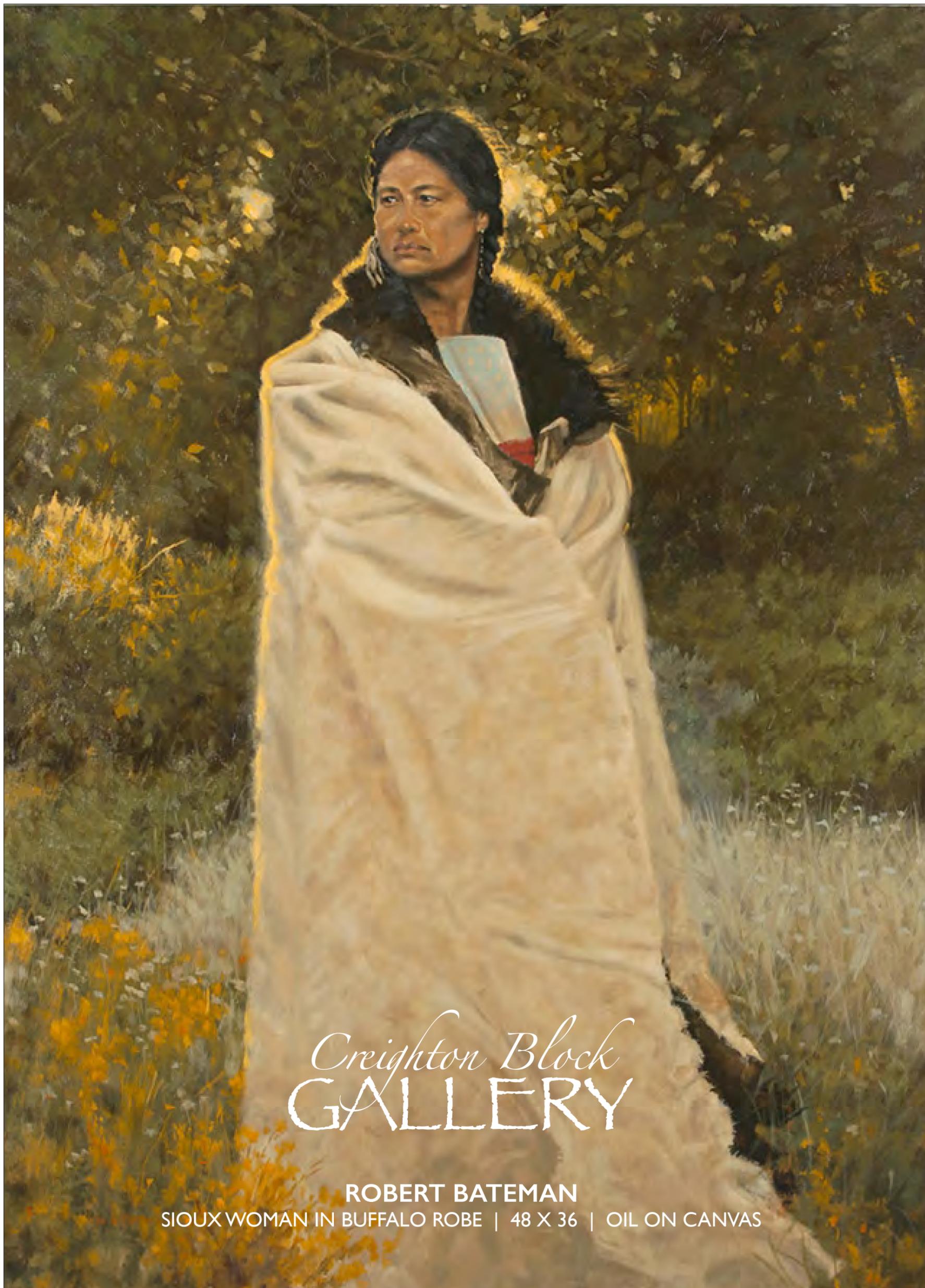
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Yours in Health

The art of giving and receiving

BY DR. ANDREA WICK
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

November is the month of giving thanks and gratitude. Most of us forget the importance of receiving, and are taught from an early age that giving and sharing are more noble than receiving. However, if we all gave, gave and gave who would be there on the receiving end?

During my internship in chiropractic school, I worked in Dr. Suzan Rossi's office, and she noticed that I had a difficult time receiving compliments or gifts. She pointed out to me, "Whenever I give you a compliment, you bounce it right back to me! If I say I like what you are wearing you tell me you like what I'm wearing also. Instead of replying with, 'You're welcome,' you reply with, 'Oh no problem,' or 'No, thank you.' You need to start being able to receive from people."

This soon hit home with me because I constantly felt like I wasn't good enough. I soon started to consistently practice saying, "You're welcome," and it was very tough for me at first.

People that do not like receiving will subconsciously surround themselves by people that don't like or know how to give. The more I learned to focus on really receiving compliments and gifts, the happier I became in my life. I loved giving even more and I became much more appreciative. Write down every day what you are thankful for and it will be returned to you ten-fold.

The practice of giving is a masculine trait, the practice of receiving is a feminine trait. In our culture, masculine traits are more sought after than feminine traits. Learning to nurture and passively give, without expecting anything in return is a receiving, feminine practice.

Examples of people who give all their time are parents caring for their children, adult children caring for their parents, and those who work in service professions. It's important to give to yourself and care for yourself when you give all your time to everyone else. Practicing mindfulness and self-care can be one of the most important, life-saving rituals to adapt.

Self-care can be as easy as taking 15 minutes a day for yourself, or dedicating a whole day to taking care of yourself. The length doesn't matter, but receiving that time daily will change your life.

Here are some ideas:

1. Take a bath (include a good book, candles, oils)
2. Do a morning meditation
3. Receive body work (massage, acupuncture, chiropractic, yoga)
4. Take a girl's night or man's night out
5. Go for a walk or hike
6. Eat healthy, nourishing food that you enjoy
7. Do something you are passionate about

When you are always caring for others, you will put others before yourself. This can be a dangerous practice giving from a half empty glass. If your cup is full you can give and give and come from a place of balance and happiness.

During the season of giving, don't forget to take time for yourself in order to have a joyous, less stressful holiday season.

Dr. Andrea Wick is a chiropractor and applied kinesiologist. She graduated from Life University in Marietta, Georgia, and now practices at Healing Hands Chiropractic in Big Sky. She has a passion for holistic health care and being active in the outdoors.

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American Life in Poetry: Column 764

BY TED KOOSER
U.S. POET LAUREATE

I highly recommend a new anthology called *Healing the Divide: Poems of Kindness and Connection*, edited by James Crews and published by Green Writers Press in Brattleboro, Vermont. Here's just one of the many fine poems, this one by Jeffrey Harrison, whose poetry we've published here before. His most recent book is *Into Daylight* (Tupelo Press), in which this poem was originally published, and he makes his home in Massachusetts.

A Drink of Water

When my nineteen-year-old son turns on the kitchen tap
and leans down over the sink and tilts his head sideways
to drink directly from the stream of cool water,
I think of my older brother, now almost ten years gone,
who used to do the same thing at that age;

And when he lifts his head back up and, satisfied,
wipes the water dripping from his cheek
with his shirtsleeve, it's the same casual gesture
my brother used to make; and I don't tell him
to use a glass, the way our father told my brother,

because I like remembering my brother
when he was young, decades before anything
went wrong, and I like the way my son
becomes a little more my brother for a moment
through this small habit born of a simple need,

which, natural and unprompted, ties them together
across the bounds of death, and across time . . .
as if the clear stream flowed between two worlds
and entered this one through the kitchen faucet,
my son and brother drinking the same water.

We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2014 by Jeffrey Harrison, "A Drink of Water," from Healing the Divide: Poems of Kindness & Connection, ed., James Crews, (Green Writers Press, 2019). Poem reprinted by permission of Jeffrey Harrison and the publisher. Introduction copyright ©2019 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- Helper
- Hall (Ger.)
- Berne's river
- Full of (suf.)
- Eight (pref.)
- Late
- Fuel
- Castle (2 words)
- He (Lat.)
- Queue
- Weird
- Sacred image
- Blackthorn fruit
- Impudent person
- Confederate soldier
- Flightless bird
- Easy job
- Cool
- Sp. article
- Concert halls
- Poker stake
- Mosque in Jerusalem
- Cant
- Bobbsey twins
- Sling around
- Nonchalant
- Boor
- Ring of light
- Pleasant
- Energy unit
- Persia today
- Mark (Lat.)
- Sheep's cry

DOWN

- Tooth
- Father of Jehoshaphat
- Fain
- Arch. base
- Longing
- Condition (suf.)
- Article (Fr.)
- Administration (abbr.)
- Time period
- Wildly talk
- Dutch commune
- One of the seven deadly sins
- Recline
- Ass or donkey (Ger.)
- Borden calf
- Inside
- Cocaine source
- Queensland
- hemp plant
- Tinea
- Outer (pref.)
- Vegetable
- Fr. philosopher
- One hundred square meters
- Silk substitute
- Hamlet (Sp.)
- Wild pig
- Feminine (suf.)
- Denomination
- Greek letter
- Television channel
- Uncle (Sp.)
- Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
- Food and Drug Admin. (abbr.)

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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

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Corner Quote

Wretched men cringe before tyrants who have no power, the victims of their trivial hopes and fears. They do not realise that anger is hopeless, fear is pointless and desire all a delusion. He whose heart is fickle is not his own master, has thrown away his shield, deserted his post, and he forges the links of the chain that holds him. ~ Boethius

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SECTION 4: ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & DINING



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WMPAC 2020 winter season pg. 59



Big Sky open studio tour pg. 61

Big Sky Community Theater presents an evening of wolves

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY -- Twenty-five years have passed since the wolf's reintroduction to Yellowstone National Park, and on Nov. 15 and 16 the contentious tale was revived at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center via a performance of "HOWL! A Montana Love Story," a Big Sky Community Theater production.

The play, written by local playwright Allyson Adams and directed by Bozeman native Cara Wilder, recounted the tangle of social tension alive in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem after the controversial decision to bring back one of the ecosystem's top predators, which had formerly been eradicated by way of hunting over seven decades beforehand. Although centered on big picture themes as a result of the infamous biocontrol frenzy, the story focused on the narrative of the mysterious and enigmatic wolf No. 39, one of the original female wolves from the Druid Peak Pack.

Wolf No. 39 was portrayed through haunting dance sets by the play's choreographer Jennifer Waters, and became the subject of dreams for Carly, a singer-songwriter and rancher's wife played by Kali Armstrong, who also composed original music for the play. Niece of the famous astronaut, it's clear greatness is in the family as she seamlessly danced between song and spoken story.

Carly is enchanted by the animal in her dreams and empathizes with the wolves, despite the prospect of being ostracized in her rural community. On the other hand, her boyfriend Quinn, played by Josh Allen, was among the many ranchers in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem that despised the wolves, finding them to be pesky predators that threaten their herds of livestock and therefore their livelihood. He characterizes himself within minutes of the actor's first debut, claiming that "the only good wolf is a dead one."

The disparity in positions fueled a growing sense of animosity throughout the show, interrupted only by moments of tragic longing and love.



Carly, played by Kali Armstrong, crooning at The Grizzly. PHOTO BY MATT DODD

Booze-drinking locals who frequently gathered at a Whiskey bar called The Grizzly echoed both Quinn and Carly's beliefs, and the dialogue that took place at the watering hole painted a fair image of the mounting social battles incited by the wolves.

Among the typical locals, one patron of the bar was Sydney Rogers, played by Ashley Dodd, the wolf biologist charged with overseeing the reintroduction process. Rogers becomes somewhat of an ally to Carly, attempting to help her fight for on behalf of the canines.

Despite Carly's attempts to protect wolf No. 39 and the integrity of the reintroduced species, her efforts ultimately ended in palpable heartbreak, with the death of her wolf companion and the dissolution of her fragmented romantic relationship.

Although the play is set in the 90s, the West is still embattled as it pertains to the watershed event. On Nov. 16, a panel discussion followed the show, comprised of Wilder and Adams, ranchers Roger Lang and Amber Mason, Yellowstone National Park Senior Wildlife Biologist Doug Smith and journalist Todd Wilkinson sought to shed a light on the issue as it stands today.

The diverse group was a testament to what many of them described as partially alleviated tensions related to the wolf reintroduction. Smith, who Adams admitted Rogers' character was originally based on, praised the play's rendition of the wolf project and its implications. "I didn't know that the impact would be so extreme," he said, "and you guys did that really well."



Wolf no. 39, portrayed by Jennifer Waters, captivating Carly despite her rancher roots. PHOTO BY MATT DODD

Mason of the Ruby Dell Ranch said they currently employ range riders to mitigate wolf interaction with livestock, a concept introduced at the end of the play. This program allows for protection for ranchers while ensuring the wolf population remains intact, which Smith said will be roughly balanced at around 100 wolves this year after an overshoot in carrying capacity.

While time has remedied some social strain, Adams still seeks to forge a path to empathy. The playwright, a former mayor of Virginia City, said, "I want to give a voice to the extreme and the middle." Adams is also trained in mediation and found that her background contributed to the intention of "HOWL!": to allow people to see themselves on both sides.

Adams believes art has great power in mending rifts. John Zirkle, WMPAC executive director, parallels the sentiment. "Theatrical explorations of local issues are a great way to bring the community together around important topics," he said.

And the Big Sky Community Theater, established in 2013, not only connects the community with relevant issues but also with each other. According to Zirkle, "HOWL!" attracted nearly 500 audience members over the two performances.

"There's just something incredibly powerful about friends in the audience supporting friends on stage. That connection point is what forms the glue of community, and what roots us into the soil."

Zirkle said the community theater takes projects as they come, and what performance the local audience will enjoy next year is still to be decided. Until then, the community will be left with the emotional reminder of an important piece of this area's past, perhaps delighting in the "fruitful dialogue" intended by Adams.



A Big Sky community cast bows to a full house at the WMPAC on Nov. 16. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

‘Her Gift, Her Creation’ highlights local female artists

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY



BIG SKY – Too often, people decide the transition into adulthood is a time to shelve talents and passions outside of their professional field. The excuses mount: “I’m too busy with work,” “I’m too busy with my kids and spouse,” “I’m just too busy.”

So at those school plays, youth recitals and performances for family friends, children, nieces and nephews, we might feel regret. “Why hadn’t I tried my hand at acting, or singing, or painting, whatever, when the opportunity was omnipresent?”

“Her Gift, Her Creation,” hosted at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center on Dec. 3, will allow a cohort of female Big Sky artists, both visual and performance based, to tap into the prospect of

adult public performance.

While several of the artists represented on the bill are established and well known in Big Sky, such as Jill Zeidler, Stephanie Kissell and Lorri Lagerbloom, others haven’t performed publicly for years. In some instances, never.

For chief organizer Klaudia Kosiak, this was by design, breaking these talents into the public light.

“I realized we have so many talented women in this community and they don’t

have a chance to perform ... So I called a few other women and moms,” Kosiak said. “Some were pretty scared and were like ‘I don’t know If I can do this, I only sing in the shower,’ but then they said OK lets do this, we need this, we need to show our power.”

A co-founder of Big Sky Broadway and regular performer of notable events in Big Sky throughout her time living in the community, Kosiak is trained in elevating musical performance through 19 years of teaching piano in the U.S. and her native Poland.

She moved to Big Sky with her husband, Mariusz, over 13 years ago, encouraged by a trip Mariusz made in 2001—he returned to Poland with fantastical stories of a beautiful and pristine mountain town, appealing to Kosiak’s dreams of living in a “village surrounded by mountains.” Together, they ultimately founded High Altitude Property Management in 2008, a business they still own and operate.

With help from friends and colleagues from Big Sky residents, art patrons and organizers like Sarah Mitchell and Jill Bough, Kosiak has assembled a bill of artists that is well-rounded.

Aside from a variety of visual mediums, one can expect music by artists from Mozart to Lady Gaga, including a performance by Kosiak: “Nocturne of Questions” composed by Konstancja Kochaniec, a close friend from the music academy in Poland, where Kosiak earned her master’s degree.

After months of organizing and dreaming, the performance is just on the horizon, starting at 6 p.m., with the visual art show kicking off an evening that will go beyond the arts themselves.

“We need to show our kids impossible things are possible,” Kosiak said. “I think it will be a beautiful evening.”

Arts Council installs two new sculptures in Town Center

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – As part of their ongoing mission to “enrich our community through artistic experiences,” the Arts Council of Big Sky has yet again proven its effectiveness in bringing a wide breadth of styles and mediums to Big Sky.

In this specific instance, only a week apart, ACBS installed and unveiled two statues in Big Sky Town Center—one in the Big Sky Town Center Plaza near the newly-minted Blue Buddha Sushi Lounge and the other just north of Montana Supply at the entrance to Town Center.

The latter, aptly titled “Ram,” is a Jim Dolan piece made from steel. The sculpture, considered by ACBS Education and Outreach Director Megan Buecking to be the “grandfather of Big Sky public arts,” was housed at the River Rock Lodge for nearly three decades, receding from view in a stand of aspens that literally began to grow around its horns.

“We wanted to give him a new, more prominent location so he could be better enjoyed by Big Sky residents and visitors,” Buecking told EBS.

Dolan is among Montana’s most notable and prolific sculptures, and “Ram” is just one of three of his pieces in the ACBS’s public art offerings.

The Big Sky Town Center Plaza statue, titled “Continuity,” by Robert Winslow, is made from a slab of dark grey granite, smoothed to a shine in some areas and coarse in others.

As a permanent installation in Big Sky, Buecking says the piece adds to the diversity of the town’s Public Art Collection, deviating from the norm of representations of regional wildlife forged from metal.

“Continuity” boasts an abstract design, one that is non-representational, the first of its kind in the growing mountain hamlet. This was a big selling factor for ACBS, according to Buecking.



‘Continuity’ by Robert Winslow is Big Sky’s first abstract piece. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY



‘Ram’ by Jim Dolan, now sits on the north side of Montana Supply. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

The sculpture will also serve as a central feature for a long-term goal of ACBS: forming a Public Art Trail in Big Sky, with pieces scattered between Town Center and Meadow Village and the trails in between.

“There’s just so much development going on it’s really important we make a plan for public art,” said ACBS Public Art Committee Chair Patty Rhea.

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REEL REVIEW

'Gemini Man'



BY ANNA HUSTED
EBS FILM CRITIC

I had the pleasure of attending the world premiere of "Life of Pi" in 2012 at the New York Film Festival where Director Ang Lee introduced the film. There, Lee announced he could not believe so many people wanted to see his movie, and I will never forget his humility, as "Life of Pi" was a bona-fide work of art. Therefore, it is with some hardship that I must give Lee's "Gemini Man" a poor review.

In the film, Henry Brogan (Will Smith) is the world's greatest assassin but has decided to retire. The rub? Classic to spy and assassin films, he knows too much. After discovering he is being tailed by Danny (Mary Elizabeth Winstead), who ultimately decides to help him rather than turn him in, the two of them take out a dozen or so men trying to kill them. Cue the government's execution of Operation Gemini.



Will Smith and Mary Elizabeth Winstead must fight a younger version of Smith's assassin character to save the older version. PHOTO COURTESY OF SKYDANCE MEDIA

Gemini was crystalized 25 years earlier in a bid to harness Brogan's skills as a hitman through clones, and the operation's leader Clay Verris (Clive Owen) cloned Brogan without his knowledge. Now Brogan must fight the younger version of himself to save himself.

The plot alone is absurd even for fans of science fiction.

Not to mention, Smith is overused as two characters, Owen is mediocre and Winstead spends so much time explaining what is going on that we lose faith in Lee's storytelling because he has lost faith in us as a smart audience.

Not only is the storytelling flimsy, but the computer-generated imagery (CGI) is not realistic enough yet to base an entire film around replicating Will Smith, only 30 years younger. Enough is enough; directors should stop trying to outdo James Cameron, only he can pull this type of cinematic stunt off.

Speaking of stunts, and a good example of Lee's shortcomings in leaning too much on Cameronian CGI: There is a motorcycle chase scene early in the film that looks fake—because it was fake. The entire sequence is computer-generated. For now, using mostly stunt people and actual motorcycles looks better than an entire CGI scene. Lee should have opted for the tried and true.

The film's redeeming quality is in its hand-to-hand fight choreography, which, thank God, there is a lot of, and the action is impressive because Smith and Winstead are fun to watch in action.

There was an opportunity for comedic relief in the film, but Baron (Benedict Wong) is killed off. They tried to bring some back in the final scene, but it ultimately feels hokey and forced.

"Gemini Man" is overall entertaining. It took me some time to get past the absurdity, but once I did, I enjoyed myself. We may ultimately look back and regard "Gemini Man" as a groundbreaking film, leading the charge for new leaps in CGI and, for Lee's sake, I hope we do. As for now, stick with one Will Smith at a time.

"Gemini Man" is now playing in theaters.

Anna Husted has a master's in film studies from New York University. In Big Sky she can be found skiing or at the movies at Lone Peak Cinema. When not gazing at the silver screen or watching her new favorite TV show, she's reading, fishing or rough-housing with her cat, Indiana Jones.

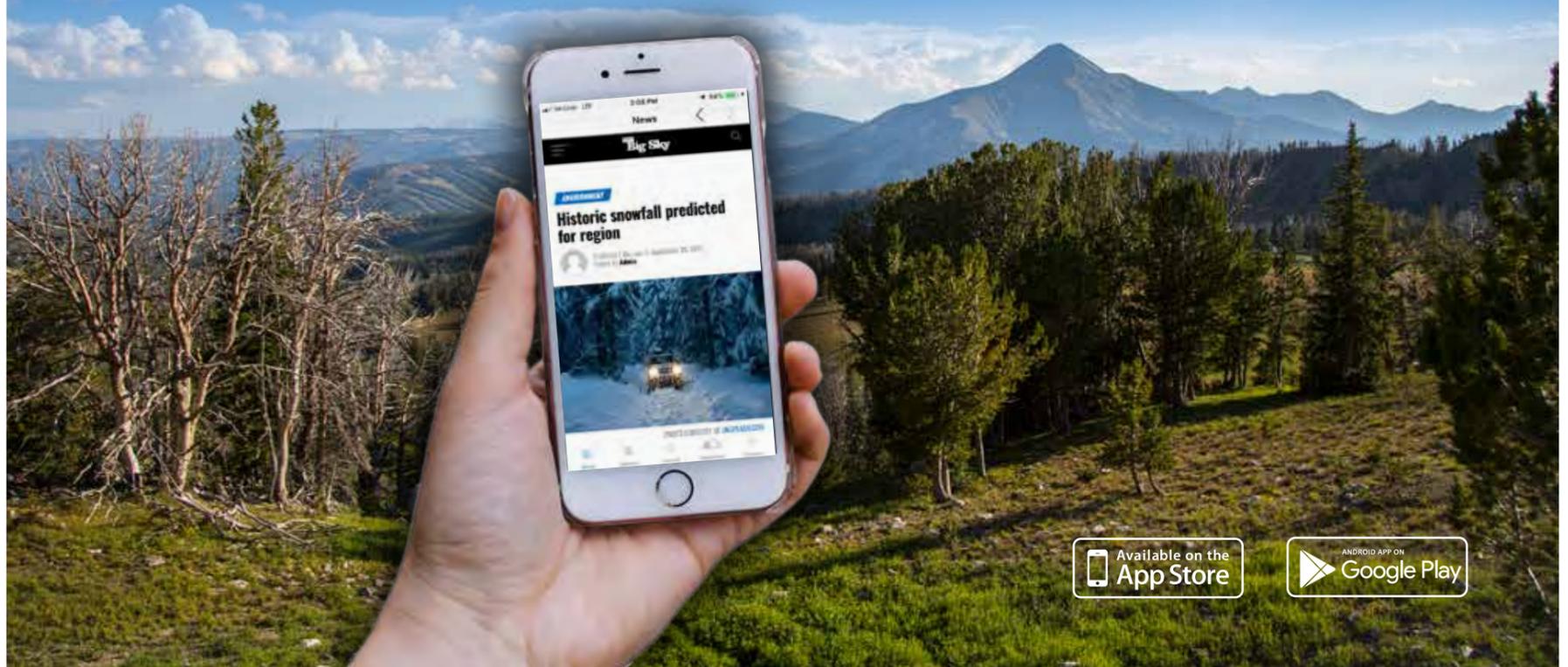
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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

FRIDAY, NOV. 22 – THURSDAY, DEC. 5

If your event falls between Dec. 6 and Dec. 19, please submit it by Nov. 27 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

FRIDAY, NOV. 22

Live Music: Dave Provost
Norris Hot Springs, Norris, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOV. 23

Sweat and Serve Saturday
Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

Football: 119th Brawl of the Wild
Montana State University vs. University of Montana
Bobcat Stadium, Bozeman, 12 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 27

Film: Warren Miller “Timeless”
Lone Peak Cinema, 6 p.m.

Live Music: The Dusty Pockets & Friends
The Rialto, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOV. 28

10th annual BSSEF Turkey Trot 5k
Fire Pit Park, 7:30 p.m.

Big Sky Resort Opening Day
Big Sky Resort, 9 a.m.

FRIDAY, NOV. 29

Film: “Western Stars”
The Ellen Theater, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Trivia Night
Lone Peak Cinema, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOV. 30

Sweat and Serve Saturday
Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 4

Gallatin History Museum Lecture
“He Might Strike it Still: A Brief History of Cooke City”
Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 5

23rd annual Madrigal Dinner
Buck’s T4 Lodge, 5 p.m.

WORTH THE DRIVE



Santa Claus will be in Jackson on Nov. 29. PHOTO BY SRIKANTA H. U

TOWN SQUARE LIGHTING Jackson, Wyoming Nov. 29, 5:30 p.m.

There’s a running joke in American culture where, due to a tradition of consumerism, one holiday picks up the reins right when another drops them. But this is our way of life, and facetiously mocking the practice does not take away from the fact that we do, for the most part, truly enjoy the constant sense of festivities, tradition and celebration. So, on the day after Thanksgiving, head on down to Jackson, Wyoming, for the annual lighting of Town Square, in which thousands of holiday lights will brighten the famous Antler Arches. Santa will be there, as will the singing of Christmas carols, the eating of holiday cookies and the drinking of tasty hot chocolate. Why let the good tidings fall to the wayside after a Thanksgiving filled with family and joy? Clean the dishes, make leftover sandwiches for the road and head south to Jackson for some Christmas spirit.

Director’s Behind the Scenes Tour
Musuem of the Rockies, Bozeman, 5:30 p.m.

Art on The Rocks: Pints and Prints
Rocking R Bar, Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture, Bozeman,
6:30 p.m.

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- In some areas, bobcats are still trapped for their soft, spotted fur. North American populations are believed to be quite large, with perhaps as many as one million cats in the United States alone.

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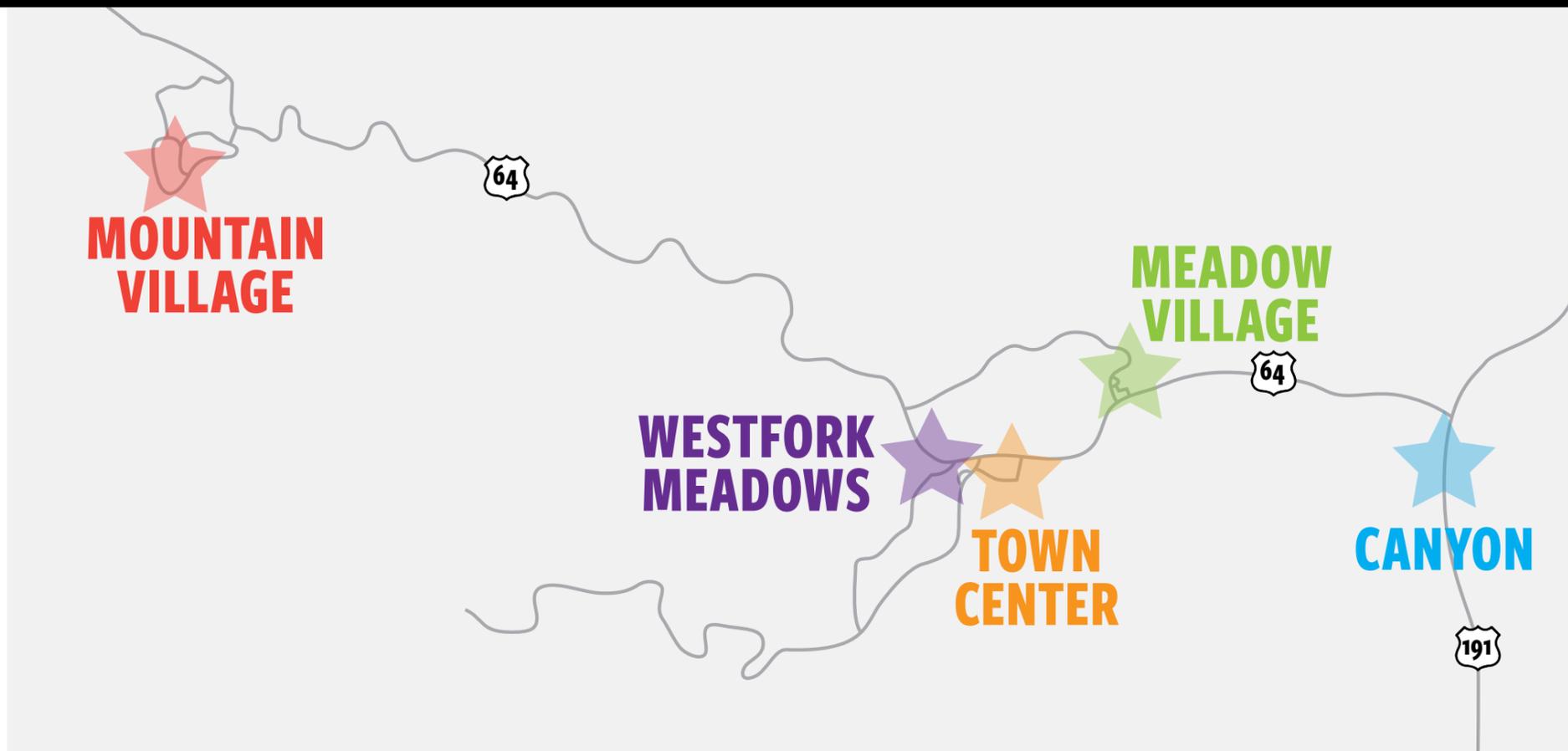
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WMPAC announces 2020 winter season

WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center is pleased to announce the lineup for its seventh winter season.

The 2020 season kicks off with magician Mike Super on Dec. 28. Super first came to WMPAC in 2017, and returns for an encore double-header performance of mind-bending illusions.

Next are the Five Browns, a family of piano virtuosos who will play five grand pianos—simultaneously—on Jan. 11, followed by stand-up comedian Mo Amer on Jan. 18.

Then, the Peking Acrobats, a troupe of nearly 30 Chinese acrobats performing jaw-dropping feats of balance and athleticism, will take the stage on Feb. 8.

James Sewell Ballet, often called Big Sky's favorite dance group, returns Feb. 22 for their annual winter performance, and nationally acclaimed theater group Aquila Theatre brings their rendition of George Orwell's seminal novel "1984" to Big Sky on March 7.

The season's most family-friendly performance arrives on March 14, when Lightwire Theater brings their unique brand of theater to WMPAC; the actors will don costumes crafted from lighting elements and spin a tale of a mad scientist and the dinosaurs he brings to life on an otherwise dark stage.

The season closes on March 28 with another encore performance, this time by the Jitro Czech Girls' Choir, one of the world's most elite children's choirs, who first performed at WMPAC in 2016.

Tickets for the eight feature shows went on sale Nov. 15, and the center is offering discounted ticket packages for the first two weeks of sales. From Nov. 15 through Nov. 30, guests can buy tickets to any



Lightwire Theater is a sure-win with all members of the family, bringing a performance of lights and dinosaur-infused fantasy. PHOTO COURTESY OF WMPAC

three of the feature winter season shows and save 20 percent on their total purchase. Tickets to individual shows go on sale Dec. 1.

"The discount package is really a thank you to Big Sky locals," said John Zirkle, WMPAC's executive director. "We wanted to give back to the community that's supported us from the beginning and are here year-round by offering a special deal."

"If there's a unifying theme of this upcoming season, it's fun," Zirkle added. "We're going to see a lot of spectacle, a lot of surprises, and unparalleled creativity. Every show is appropriate for families, but they're geared toward everyone. We truly can't wait to share this season with the Big Sky community."

Discount ticket packages available Nov. 15-30. Single tickets go on sale Dec. 1. Visit warrenmillerpac.org for tickets and additional information.



The Peking Acrobats will wow Big Sky audiences with jaw-dropping feats of acrobatics. PHOTO COURTESY OF WMPAC



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Arts Council to host first annual Big Sky Open Studio Tour



'Joy,' a sculpture by Craig Krzycki. COURTESY OF ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

The Arts Council of Big Sky is excited to present the first annual Big Sky Open Studio Tour, taking place on Dec. 7 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at various locations throughout the community. This self-guided studio tour will allow you to meet and mingle with 13 of Big Sky's best artists.

To take the tour, visit bigskyarts.org to download and print the tour guide and punch card. Printed tour guides can also be picked up at Tart in the Big Sky Town Center or The Trove West in the Meadow Village Center. Once you have the guide, you'll be able to hit the road and look for the studio tour signs around the community.

At each stop, you can explore the artist's studio space, learn more about their creative process, enjoy light hors d'oeuvres, and

view new artwork. Artwork will also be available for purchase so you can check off your holiday gift list while directly supporting our local artists. Visit all 13 artists, collect their custom stamps on your punch card, and you will be entered to win original artwork by Donna LaHue or Michelle Kristula-Green.



An oil painting of a grizzly bear by local artist Georgia Baker. COURTESY OF ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

"This is great opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of our local artists at work," said ACBS Education and Outreach Director Megan Buecking. "It's also a great way to support the artists directly."

Participating artists include Georgia Baker, Silly Tilly, Michelle Kristula Green, Dave Pecunies, Kira Fercho, Ryan Turner, Julie Gustafson, Sue Lindley, Heather Rapp, Craig Kzyzcki, Donna LaHue, Maggie Shane and Lorri Lagerbloom. The event is sponsored by Tart Boutique, Erika and Co., Melanie Turner Home and The Trove West.

For more information please call 995-2742 or visit bigskyarts.org.

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BIG SKY BITES

Chicken fingers and ketchup

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY



Puréed ketchup for a more even consistency.
PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

At 25 years old, I still worship a plate of chicken fingers and ketchup.

For me, one of the most exciting things to do in a kitchen is to take a simple childhood favorite—grilled cheese, spaghetti with meat sauce, ice cream sundaes, etc.—and elevate them via from-scratch processes and matured-ingredient selections.

So when I say I love chicken fingers and ketchup, I'm not saying frozen Bell & Evans strips with a noisy dollop of Heinz to accompany it (this combo is still remarkably tasty), I'm talking strips of chicken breast breaded and baked with a vinegary, sweet and chunky ketchup-esque sauce to spoon on top.

Everyone has at least one food they abandoned with age, thinking it suddenly below their palette or socially acceptable cuisine choice. If you liked a dish as a kid, there's a good chance you still appreciate it as an adult. Why not give it another shot?

Recipe:

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour

Servings: 3

Ingredients:

- 3 beefsteak tomatoes, chopped
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 yellow onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 1/2 tablespoon allspice
- 1/2 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cracked pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce, preferably sriracha
- 1/8 lemon, juiced
- 1 pound skinned and boned chicken breast
- 2 fresh eggs, whisked
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup shaved Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dry rosemary
- 1 teaspoon dry thyme
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Instructions:

1. Combine the tomatoes, brown sugar, onion, white vinegar, allspice, salt, pepper, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce and lemon juice in a pot and bring to boil
2. Reduce to a simmer and cook uncovered for an hour, or until a desired consistency is reached (purée for smoother ketchup)
3. Preheat the oven to 425 F
4. Cut the chicken breasts into strips
5. Stir together the crumbs, cheese and dried herbs
6. Coat the chicken strips with flour, dip them in in the egg, and finally coat with the bread, cheese and herb mix
7. Oil a baking pan, and bake, flipping halfway, for 8 to 10 minutes or until desired crispiness is reached
8. Pull from oven, and serve hot with spoons of ketchup
9. Enjoy



Aye: Drink a Scotch ale, Big Sky laddies and lassies

EBS STAFF

Scotch ales are a relic of days of old when the people of the U.K., particularly those in the coldest regions of the isles, drafted potent and heavy ales meant to be warming and hearty. It only makes sense that tradition carried to Montana, practically arctic in the winter months and teeming with descendants of Irish, Scots and Brits.

Perhaps the most famous of Montana's scotch ale's is KettleHouse Brewing's Cold Smoke. Named after the hallmark light snow that covers Montana's mountains—making for a skier's paradise—Cold Smoke Scotch Ale, brewed in Missoula, records a modest 6.5 percent ABV and only an 11 IBU rating.

Award winning and KettleHouse's flagship brew, this dark and smooth ale with a slightly sweet coffee finish is one of the most popular in the Treasure State for a reason. Big Sky offers many restaurants and watering holes to sample this delightful beer—try it, for instance, at Gallatin Riverhouse Grill, and pair it with their delicious three-piece fried chicken dinner for a Big Sky dinner sure to hit the spot and beat the cold.

Dark and foamy, KettleHouse's Cold Smoke is a perfect beer to put on some winter weight with. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

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.

Sometimes it's the last thing a restaurant wants



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

If some business is good, then it would stand to reason that more business is better. At least that's what we all believe. But is it? Many of us in the industry would say otherwise.

Much like how we cringe when Big Sky is named one of the premier ski destinations or when Bozeman is routinely named as one of the best cities in America to move to, the

best, but sometimes worst thing that can happen to a successful bar or restaurant, big or small, is to be named "the best."

Take the case of Stanich's. Opened in 1949 by Steve Stanich's parents, Stanich's is what was once an unassuming sports bar in north Portland, Oregon. It is openly documented by other food critics, perhaps out of comradery, that Stanich's owner Steve Stanich has had a multitude of personal issues. But those are far from the bigger issue as to why Stanich's closed its doors.

The question becomes: Can a critic actually kill a restaurant? It appears they can.

Sometime around mid-2017, a food critic by the name of Kevin Alexander decided to go on a quest to find the nation's best burger. After a small snapshot of what would only be some 330 stops across America, he landed on what he personally believed to be "the best burger in America." It was Stanich's.

When Alexander made his decision, he thought it only best that he travel to Portland and tell Stanich in person. Steve was thrilled to the point of tears. He spoke of how his parents had built the restaurant all those years ago simply to help earn money to pay some medical bills. And that it had been a daily grind, yet a labor of love for decades. And that he was carrying on the family business out of love and respect for them.

Alexander flew home, fulfilled, believing he had made a real difference in a small business owner's life. He did indeed make a difference, just not the way he thought it would play out.

Some months later, Alexander decided he would pay Steve Stanich another visit and see how things were going. He expected to see a happy, successful neighborhood business full of happy locals enjoying delicious burgers. But that isn't what he found.

Instead, he arrived at a restaurant bursting at the seams. A line out the door, around the block, and longer than the queue outside of Franklin Barbeque in Austin, Texas. Inside, staff ran around with all the fervor of someone possessed. There was a look in their eye that wasn't there on his previous visit.

He eventually found Steve Stanich and greeted him, cautiously. Steve told him it had been like this ever since the article. It was taking its toll on him and the entire staff. He spoke of one day when Tim McGraw was in town and wanted to patronize Stanich's, but left due to a five hour wait.

It wasn't long after that that the weight belt just got too heavy. If the term for a failing business is that it's sinking, then what was happening to Stanich's was drowning. They closed their doors soon after.

Stanich's has since re-opened, but under limited hours and menu—and they are a shadow of their former selves. Sadly, this is a much more common occurrence than the public realizes.

In our current social media world, where things seemingly innocuous suddenly become "viral," we have the ability to almost overnight, descend upon a business, be it good or bad, and change the course of that business's life forever.

In a follow up in the next issue, we'll look at how much higher caliber restaurants are affected by success and popularity.

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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