Itie and land from the heart of the Yellowstone Region The second secon

THE TURNING

I. My sweet darlings, however did you stay afloat for so long and never suspect you were built to breathe under water? Why did you never toss thoughts around in three dimensions, never loose them like dragonflies into the deep sky? How could you fear falling? Didn't you see the spiders stringing safety nets across the earth every day, just in case?

II. Instead, you tore at this world, and I watched. I felt the air's grim thickening, saw the waters rise. You were huddled at the precipice—at the very **brink**, my loves—and still bellowing for more. What crucial inspiration turned you at the last? I'll never know what broke over you, and with what calamity, clamor or grace—but when you knelt, as one, it was a mighty sight. You placed your hunger on the ground and left it to lie among the gadgetry of old logics, beside the corpses of cruelty and greed. You were exquisite to me then, long-legged and bright-eyed, built of gravel and stardust; oh, my sweet, funny loves. My unfurling galaxy, my pebble-scatter of promises.

III. And so we came to the age of the great unbuilding, where everyone's name is stillness. Here, day gathers you into the deep magic of play. Here, night powders you with the ancient magic of rest. It's a time of dragonflies. So be soft in your hearts, dear hearts, for we are all cast shining and short-lived

into the sky-And allow your face to take the shape of wonder when your children ask again to hear the tale of the time you almost broke the world.

-Rowan Mangan



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Mental health

Living in a mountain town that often tops lists titled "Best Places to Live" and "Healthiest Cities in the U.S." can seem like a romantic venture. Hidden beneath the headlines, however, is a perfect storm of factors and staggering mental health statistics.

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Meet your candidates

Four local boards are holding their elections via mail-in ballot on May 5. They are: Big Sky Resort Area District, Big Sky County Water and Sewer District, Big Sky School District and the Big Sky Fire Department board of trustees. EBS will feature candidate bios from two of the four boards in each of the next two editions of the newspaper. Meet your candidates.

Masks for heroes

A small army of seamstresses are lending a hand to frontline healthcare workers by sewing colorfully patterned face masks, the kind that will protect them and other essential employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

21

10

Social distancing ... outdoors A pair of skis; one to two mountain bikes, dependent on the size; a fully extended trekking pole however you measure it—social distancing applies as much in the great outdoors as it does between four walls.

Local eligible for Cards hall of fame

Major League Baseball may have one last gift for hard-throwing righty. Big Sky local Matt Morris retired from the game just over a decade ago, and is now one of seven athletes eligible for election to the 2020 St. Louis Cardinals Hall of Fame.

Opening Shot



CONTRIBUTORS

Dustin Bleizeffer, Scott Brown, Al Bublitz, Bob Hall, Ted Kooser, Scott Mechura, Blair Mohn, Rob Pudim, Dr. Andrea Wick, Todd Wilkinson, **Ennion Williams**

ON THE COVER:

A powerful piece of literature by poet Rowan Mangan reflecting on what happens when the world we're used to comes to a halt and we are challenged to cherish the stillness that remains. Cover design by Marisa Opheim.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROB PUDIM. COURTESY OF WRITERS ON THE RANGE

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LETTERS

'Yes' vote on May 5 advances school district

To the Editor:

As parents of a currently enrolled student in the Big Sky School District, we are writing in support of the district's facilities improvement bond. On May 5, we have the opportunity to vote yes on the bond, yes to building an exemplar-model Innovation Center and upgrading our athletic spaces, and yes to creating more learning spaces, while addressing our parking and navigating woes for the safety of our students.

The Innovation Center will increase the opportunities for students exploring career-readiness skills in woodworking, machinery, culinary skills, photography, ceramics, technology and metal shop. Students and community members are in dire need of this space in order to access the adequate tools to navigate our ever-changing workforce.

The expanse of our athletic facilities will allow students and community members to accommodate our growing population as we move into a Class B school status. With our soccer program growing, various sports tournament needs, and additional space for community needs, this expansion will provide these necessary requirements.

The question is: Is this the right time? Without hesitation, yes! The climate of education is ever dynamic and we can address these changes by preparing our students for the workforce with these projected plans. In light of recent events, the district has remained committed to the well-being of our students and this community as a No. 1 priority.

The only thing we can do right now is move forward. We are Big Sky and supporting each other is what we do. Our values of support in this community are stronger than any we have witnessed.

Please join your fellow community members and move this district forward by voting YES on May 5.

Jeremy Harder and Kristin Gardner Big Sky

Vote 'yes' for the school bond

To the Editor:

We are writing in support of the Big Sky School District bond and want to encourage everyone to vote yes on May 5. We want to see continued success in our fast-growing school district and the way to do that is by funding the expansion of the school's educational offerings including Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM).

Because of our substantial current and projected growth, there are necessary projects that must be addressed. Our school is in great need of additional parking and a new gym with more seating to accommodate the increase in crowds. Vocational opportunities are also imperative for our diverse student body.

And here is yet another reason to vote yes: We need to offer programs such as industrial arts, culinary arts, wood shop, etc. to appeal to the diverse interests and career goals of our growing student body.

Kevin and Karin Germain Big Sky

Covid's silver lining: What should have been all along. I get to stay home without I've gotten Plus I get all my parents annoying friends! more walks kinds of loving. Try being Mother Earth wow, this month while they stay than all of last 6 feet away Mama really Amazing, my year. from their parents are needed a break. friends. helping me with school everyday!"



LETTERS

Op-ed: In the midst of COVID, you got this!

BY BOB HALL

I don't know about you, but this self-quarantining thing has its ups and downs. It's a nice option in the morning to choose which sweatpants to put on and then decide how many episodes of Tiger King to re-watch. The prospect of staying inside for the next few weeks, well ...

Yes, I have a long list of goals for this downtime: read Ulysses; subscribe to one of those Instagram-advertised learn-Italian-in-a-month programs; finally skin to the lake at Beehive Basin. Of course, I have accomplished none of the above. Perhaps I'd better get on Amazon and order the book (is it an essential item?!).

I have observed a couple of things quarantining on the side of a ski hill. First of all, it sucks. The lifts aren't spinning and the skinning looks damned good up on the peak. Doesn't April 1 mean we hear robins singing and see the forsythia blooming? Nope, more snow!

Beyond these frustrations, I have learned a couple things:

Try to limit your news watching to one hour a day and remember the network news services are based in New York at Ground Zero for this pandemic. If I was Lester Holt and walked through an empty city with the constant blare of sirens, I'd be scared too.

If your first priority is email, you are screwed. You can't possibly keep up with the endless stream in your inbox and you'll feel like you are constantly behind.

You might be lucky enough to have some or all of your family at the dinner table. While

it gets a bit rote, relish the moments after the meal is complete and the dishes AREN'T cleared. It's a great time to philosophize, reminisce or emote your frustrations.

It's amazing how good you feel doing something for someone else. Maybe it's leaving a \$20 bill in a tip jar for our intrepid workers at our grocery stores. Perhaps it's helping a small business navigate the thorny process of applying for relief funds or simply talking a friend off the temporary ledge and having them feel better about life. Any small gesture will improve your perspective about your own plight.

What a time to connect with an old friend or merely an acquaintance. Any past barriers have been broken down, and there's no explaining needed for why you haven't been in touch; even a simple text shows you care. It's amazing what you can accomplish by scrolling through the contacts on your phone.

And you know what's going to happen, right? The quarantine will be lifted and we are all going to say, "Where did the time go?" Why don't you work backwards (now I don't know if that is from May 1 or June 15) and make a list of what you would like to accomplish? Make things attainable, maybe setting up a Zoom call with your high school buddies, make scones for the first time, or head to Fawn Pass for a crust cruise.

What a time we are collectively living through. Wow! As Teddy Roosevelt recounted, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong person stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit goes to the one who is actually in the arena."

Folks, we are all in the area. Build on this adversity. You and greater Big Sky will be better for it. Remember: You got this!



"What resources and methods are you using to support your mental health during this trying time? What would you recommend to a friend?"



Shawna Winter *Big Sky, Montana*

"My answers to staying mentally healthy are exercise and focusing on 'gratefuls.' Keep focused on all the good you have immediately around you and if that's just starting with the roof over your head [and] clothes on your back, etc., those will just expand on themselves!" **Christine Baker** Big Sky, Montana

"I'm getting daily exercise and getting outside when possible. I take deep breaths when needed and try to get good sleep. I'm focusing on going to bed early because that is the one controllable thing. I am keeping a bit of routine, checking in on friends and limiting news consumption to one to two times per day. Also, just taking it day by day." **Micah Robin** Big Sky, Montana

"I've been going on social distance [friendly] outdoor excursions with my family and friends. We drive separate cars to nearby trailheads and keep our distance on the trails. I'm truly grateful to be able to get outside and recreate during this crisis. I am. . .also spending a lot of time at home. I've been editing a film project about ballroom dancing I shot this fall and attempting to divert snow melt from flooding into the garage. My recommendation to anyone would be to appreciate the people we have in our lives, maybe get started on that project you never had time for, and in the meantime have some fun in the places we are lucky enough to explore."

Jenn Williams *Big Sky, Montana*

"I've been trying to keep some routine going: doing yoga and some physical activity every day, cooking nourishing foods and making sure to go outside. . .I'm also signing up for a free online class on the science of wellbeing. I would generally recommend trying to keep your mind and body active in whatever way feels good for you. Trying to keep mentally and physically active throughout the day passes the time in a healthy way and it's been helping me to not get weighed down with too much stress or worry over things that are out of my control."

Explore Big Sky



NEWS IN BRIEF



Bullock issues statewide 'stay-athome' order, protects vulnerable Montanans

EBS STAFF

HELENA – On March 26, at a scheduled 4:30 p.m. press conference, Gov. Steve Bullock announced a "stay-at-home" mandate across the state of Montana in an effort to curb the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. The order, which also affects all "nonessential businesses," went into effect at 12:01 a.m. on March 28 through at least April 10. That date was extended to April 24 at an April 7 press conference.

The approach, Bullock said, will reduce the number of COVID-19 infections in Montana and preserve the state's medical resources, which could be taxed by an excess of hospital visits due to symptoms of the virus.

"Montanans can leave their homes for essential activities including health and safety, necessary supplies and services, for certain types of work and to take care of others," the governor said on March 26, adding that the terms "stay at home" and "shelter in place" mean essentially the same thing. "Additionally, Montanans can leave their homes for outdoor activities as long as they comply with social distancing requirements."

Bullock directed businesses and individuals to the Department of Homeland Security website for clarity on what businesses are exempt from the order, however the website directs individual states and locales to make their own requirements.

At a March 31 press conference, Bullock announced new relief measures to Montanans impacted by COVID-19 while under the directive, including a directive that prohibits landlords from evicting their tenants or issuing late fees and residential foreclosures for nonpayment. In addition, suspension of utilities during the emergency is prohibited.

Additionally, under Bullock's relief directive, Montana hospitals, with help from the Montana Finance Authority Act, will receive financing necessary to stay open, pay staff and acquire the supplies they need to properly fight the COVID-19 coronavirus.

While Montana usually encourages visitors and tourism, Bullock asked travelers to stay home, and those Montanans returning from out-of-state travel to self-quarantine for at least 14 days. Travelers in and out of the state's airports and railroad stations are now subject to temperature and symptom checks and also questioned about their exposure history.

HATCH launches COVID-19 facemask initiative

EBS STAFF

"Somewhere at the intersection of a TED Talk, a think tank, a professional networking event and, in many respects, a Ken Kesey party, lays HATCH," EBS once reported in October.

Annual scholarships awarded remotely

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY –Lone Peak High School transitioned to an online format over two weeks ago. Classrooms remain vacant while teachers and students alike adapt to working from home, yet even with all of these changes, the annual Friends of Big Sky Education Community Scholarship Program commenced as planned—albeit with adjustments of its own.

FOBSE has traditionally hosted an awards ceremony in early April at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, recognizing and presenting students with their scholarships in a community setting. Similar to other community events, for the first time in the program's history due to COVID-19, FOBSE notified students, their families and even the sponsors of their scholarship selections remotely.

"Being able to telephone them and talk to them, not only about the scholarship, but how pleased we were to be able to give those particular scholarships to their son or daughter, because of the uniqueness of their son or daughter, was just a real high," said FOBSE board member Jerry Mistretta.

This year, FOBSE compiled a grand total of \$94,000 in scholarship funds—split into 40 total need and merit scholarships—for individuals who applied for the monetary aid in the 2020 LPHS senior class. Of the 25 students in this year's graduating class, 17 applied for and received scholarship money from FOBSE.

Gallatin health department addresses shelter-in-place, Bozeman COVID-19 cases

EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – The Gallatin City-County Health Department and Bozeman Health on March 27 partnered to provide an update on the COVID-19 situation in the Gallatin County following Gov. Steve Bullock's announcement of a statewide shelter-in-place order.

The order requires residents to stay at home except for essential activities such as movement necessary for health and safety, seeking medical care, picking up prescriptions and limiting trips to the grocery store to once a week. "Essential" employees may also report respective jobs.

Health Officer Matt Kelley was joined by Chief Nursing Officer Vickie Groeneweg at Bozeman Health to communicate the importance of following the governor's directive in order to give healthcare workers on the frontline the best possible chance of fighting COVID-19.

"All over our state, healthcare workers and emergency personnel are sacrificing to serve us all," Kelley said. "My request to you all who are watching are to think about those men and women who are going to work every day, sacrificing for us. Please make the sacrifice for them so we can slow the spread of this disease and buy time for those working so hard."

The organization is at it again now, as practical, forward-thinking solutions are in high demand and a mighty global challenge has brought humanity to its knees.

As COVID-19 batters the globe with effects felt on granular and macro levels, HATCH is poised to tap that immense and international network to combat the crisis at critical focal points.

Cue the HATCH COVID-19 Mask Force Initiative, which seeks to provide masks to those most vulnerable and essential in this uniquely urgent fight: frontline healthcare workers scrambling for personal protective equipment, including facemasks, amid a global shortage and distribution issue.

To drive the need home, a lack of masks doesn't just affect a healthcare worker, but also anyone potentially infected by those workers.

Within eight days of launching the initiative, the HATCH network and cooperating volunteers delivered some 28,000 masks to frontline medical professionals in hopes of rapidly scaling he initiative to new heights.

And you can help: Tap your network. Pound the pavement. Find masks. Make donations. It all plays in this universal fight for the health of humanity.

Visit hatchexperience.org/partners/support-contribute for more information and to make a taxdeductible donation. Groeneweg confirmed that a healthcare worker at Bozeman Health has tested positive for COVID-19 noting that heightened protocols are in place to mitigate risk, including visitor restrictions, temporary suspension of nonessential medical services, temperature and symptoms screening at every hospital entrance and adherence to proper PPE protocol.

While Gallatin County has the highest number of cases in the state, Kelley reminded people to look past the number and instead at the energy and vigor of citizens as characteristics we can use as a resource of fighting this pandemic together.

"Gallatin County is a crossroads and destination," Kelley said. "While some of those factors are probably also contributing to the number of cases we have, I think it's important that we also recognize that those factors provide enormous sources of talent and energy and community assets that help us to respond collectively to this challenge."

Kelley assured that the health department and Bozeman Health are working alongside emergency personnel, including law enforcement, firefighters and elected officials to keep the community informed and safe as cases increase in the county.

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New study addresses mental health in Big Sky, proposes solutions

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – Living in a mountain town that often tops lists titled "Best Places to Live" and "Healthiest Cities in the U.S." can seem like a romantic venture. Hidden beneath the headlines, however, is a perfect storm of factors and staggering mental health statistics to which even Big Sky is not immune.

Like many ski towns our demographics, economic disparities, culture surrounding alcohol consumption, social isolation and high altitude all contribute to high suicide rates—Gallatin County sees an average of 14 suicide deaths a year. In 2017, Montana saw 28.8 suicides per 100,000 residents, the highest age-adjusted rate in the country.

Despite this, Big Sky doesn't have a single licensed, full-time behavioral health provider.

The Big Sky Behavioral Health Initiative has plans to change that. Davis & Associates Founder and CEO Paul "Buz" Davis spearheaded a yearlong behavioral health study over the past year that proposes solutions for the lack of mental health and substance abuse resources. The study involved over 60 anonymous interviews and contributions from local journalists Amanda Eggert and Tyler Allen, along with local businesses and nonprofits including Women in Action, Bozeman Health, the Gallatin City-County Health Department, and Community Health Partners.

The goal is to create a single point of contact for behavioral health that is accessible to all who live and work in Big Sky regardless of their ability to pay. Proposed funding includes monies from the resort tax, citizen employers, foundations and grants as well as a location in the new BASE Community Center slated to open in Big Sky Town Center in 2021.

The first step, however, is getting people to understand the problem.

"I've always been really good at problem solving and getting a group of people to work on something together. That to me is as good as it gets," said Davis, whose professional background also includes healthcare consulting, a stint as a clinical pharmacist and as a current member on the Big Sky Resort Area District Tax Board. "It didn't take too many interviews to realize that there really was a need here."

Of current events, Davis notes the arrival of a virus such as COVID-19, which requires the community to refrain from gathering in its usual comforting haunts, increases feelings of isolation and becomes a multiplier of issues that were already prevalent.

Deaths of despair in resorts towns

Big Sky is home to 3,000 residents. Thirty percent of those fall between the ages of 20 and 34, a demographic that is a target for suicide and drug-related death, also referred to as "deaths of despair."

According to the study, the three greatest contributing factors to those who need help and are not receiving it are: awareness of available resources, access to those resources, and the culture surrounding mental health—Montana is a state where grit is a celebrated personality trait and pressure exists to meet the standards of that high-octane, carefree magazine lifestyle.

Opening the door

Montana is the fourth largest state in the country, but its mental health resources are sparse. When an individual in the Big Sky community is chronically untreated and enters crisis stage, such as when a drug addiction affects their work or they become a danger to themselves or others, the first links in the response chain are the Big Sky Fire Department, Gallatin County Sheriff's Office and Big Sky Medical Center Emergency Department.

The nearest inpatient psychiatric treatment center is in Billings, 180 miles from Big Sky, and the only state-operated acute inpatient substance use treatment facility is in Butte 120 miles away. Locally, Women in Action is ground zero for mental health council. For other services, many Big Sky residents travel to Bozeman for private councilors and social service agencies such as Community Health Partners or the Western Montana Mental Health Center.

"Most of it is just an access issue," Eggert said. "There's an average of 1.3 jobs per residents in Big Sky ... People are working really hard, often beyond 40 hours a week, so accessing services is really difficult for people especially when they have to drive to Bozeman for them."

The Big Sky Behavioral Health Initiative proposes a plan that will provide the community with a door through which to seek these existing assistance programs and expand on them as need grows. Eventually, the goal is to provide the community with that full-time behavioral health specialist it so desperately needs.

For now, Davis and Eggert are encouraging the community to talk. In order to urge people to seek care, the conversation around it needs to be accepting, helpful and continuous, according to Davis.

"I'm excited for this opportunity for us," he said. "Other ski resorts have been faced with this and they've taken action, so we know other places that have been down this road. I'm optimistic and my hope is that this is catalyst."

Visit ebs.com to read the full Big Sky Behavioral Health Initiative report.

Meeting the current need

A number of Big Sky organizations including Women In Action, Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center and the Big Sky Community Organization, among others, recently combined their efforts to provide support for community members during the pandemic and into the future.

"There were things already in motion," said BSCO CEO Ciara Wolfe, "which was amazing because then we were able to mobilize very quickly and put some immediate programs and services together for the short term to address the challenges that the community were having due to COVID-19."

Jean Behr, executive director of Women in Action, confirmed that WIA, who recently welcomed a new counselor to their staff, along with Bozeman Health are able to provide phone counseling services free of charge at this time.

"When you talk to healthcare professionals, they say the stigma aspect of mental health is getting better," said Eggert, one of the researchers and writers of the study and a former EBS editor. "But when you talk to people outside of that field, they really still feel that stigma is a pretty big hurdle."

While seasonal visitors look upon ski towns with admiration, in reality wage gaps force many young residents to work multiple jobs to make rent often in neighborhoods housing multi-million dollar second and third homes. Big Sky consists of a bimodal population—those who have more than enough means to access everything they need, and the other side, what Davis refers to as the "invisibles."

"If you look at our community," Davis said, "we're predominantly white, we are well-off and there's a lot of people in this community, especially service people, that are invisible to the people they're serving. You have this invisible population on top of the existing isolation."

To cope with the long winters and solitary living, many residents turn to alcohol—more than 30 percent of people with a mental health diagnosis also abuse alcohol, according to the study. As an unincorporated community without a fixed number of liquor licenses, Big Sky has alcohol readily available in many businesses and consumption can aggravate existing mood disorders. Behr and Wolfe described a list of other services and programs rolling out in the near future to meet the community's needs. Among them are a calendar featuring virtual programs that include fly tying, cooking lessons, children's programs and Zoom forums to keep community members connected as they practice social distancing.

"The onset of COVID-19 really just increased the urgency of the short-term, but all of us are focused as well as Buz is on the long-term behavioral health needs of the community," Behr said.

Both Behr and Wolfe detailed that the collaborative effort is intended to last long after the pandemic. "...Using the data that Buz has researched and allowing that to drive us and develop some long-term programming and planning to ensure that the network we have started can really expand and we can offer services all spectrums," Wolfe said.

When complete, the BASE community center will provide space for counseling or other programming services from WIA or Big Sky Medical Center. - *Brandon Walker*

Big Sky Relief: Support initiatives stabilize

EBS STAFF

The Big Sky Relief Operational Partners meeting on April 7 revealed that many of the local organizations involved with COVID-19-related support initiatives are finding grounding in their efforts.

Taylor Rose from the Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center reported progress in the facility and equipment expansions that will prepare the center for a possible influx of patients.

"Everything is going about as we expected, we haven't hit any major obstacles," Rose said at the April 7 meeting. "We're hoping the curve will be flattened enough to not be overwhelmed...We are optimistic but are still preparing for a major surge."

Rose shared the most recent data from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, which suggests that medical facilities needs in Montana will not outpace availability. The construction of new shell space that will double in-patient rooms continues, with a projected completion date of May 5.

In regard to mental health, another widely discussed topic during Big Sky Relief meetings, Women in Action reported that their newly acquired counselor, Kasey Anderson, is accepting clients and currently has no limit to the number of clients she can take on. A combined effort between WIA and the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation will cover costs for all insurance co-pays and cash fees through April.

The Big Sky Behavior Health Coalition, a joint initiative spearheaded by WIA, BHBSMC and the Big Sky Community Organization has been working to address increased various mental and behavioral health needs throughout the community. Most recently, the coalition will launch a community calendar, which will highlight local activities.

In another ongoing BSCO effort, CEO Ciara Wolfe reported that as of the April 7 meeting, the organization had registered 50 community volunteers to support the

community in various ways, including BSCO's Senior Buddy program, which pairs young and healthy volunteers with at-risk senior citizens in need of assistance.

BSCO is also working with the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce to launch the Unemployment Insurance and CARES Act hotline, which will be available Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. BSCC continues to act as a conduit for local businesses to access and understand the CARES Act and other federal and state relief opportunities.

A new BSCC business member, Mountain and Canyon Cab Company, is offering to provide transportation and delivery services to those in need. This option bolsters services already offered by the Big Sky Transportation District, which still runs trips between Big Sky and Bozeman as well as demand response trips in Big Sky for no more than three healthy passengers at a time or single rides for at-risk individuals. BSTD reported roughly 14 demand response requests per day.

Superintendent of the Big Sky School District Dustin Shipman said that support from Big Sky Relief has allowed the district to beef up distance learning offerings. The school reportedly distributes 40-50 lunches per day. The last day of school has been scheduled on May 29, a week earlier than the previously scheduled date.

While successes among the partners are abound, needs and support opportunities were still reported. The Gallatin County Sheriff's Office is in need of face masks, and the Big Sky Community Food Bank is in need of a reusable forehead thermometer.

The Big Sky Community Food Bank is also seeking to expand a grocery voucher program, which with funder backing can provide voucher options to Roxy's Market and the Hungry Moose Market and Deli in addition to the vouchers already offered for The Country Market.

Candace Carr Strauss from the BSCC also stressed that occupancy for Big Sky is currently less than 10 percent for open lodging entities. She also reported that tourism industry losses are expected to deliver a \$910 billion blow to the U.S. economy.



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With slim funds, resort tax board discusses 'hard decisions'

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – In an open forum on April 8, the Big Sky Resort Area District board held a virtual meeting to discuss and move forward on a series of action items, many relating to COVID-19 community impacts.

The group heard an update from board chair Kevin Germain, who reported having sent \$500,000 of the initial \$1 million committed by BSRAD to the Big Sky Relief Fund to the Bozeman Health Big Sky Community Medical Center to cover the costs of three ventilators as well as the construction and supplies for four additional in-patient rooms, which are estimated to be completed May 5.

An additional \$500,000 will be distributed for social services addressing needs born of COVID-19-related challenges. Four applicants have sought funds from this pot, including the Big Sky Community Food Bank, the Big Sky School District, the Discover Academy, and Morningstar Learning Center.

In an effort to save relief fund dollars for potentially imperative asks coming down the pike, the board approved an action giving a subcommittee authority to reallocate unused funds from Fiscal Year 2020 to other areas of need. "We don't know what's going to come," said board Secretary Buz Davis, a member of the reallocation subcommittee. "We might get a tidal wave of requests."

Germain added that among the many unknowns associated with the virus, the board can't yet grasp the extent of medical system needs that may arise. Board members emphasized the importance of handling fund requests with careful deliberation and consideration of an uncertain future.

From the Big Sky Relief discussion, the board moved into a financial forecast, delivered by BSRAD Executive Director Daniel Bierschwale. According to a projection shared by Bierschwale, March resort tax collections are predicted to come in at 40 percent of March collections from FY19, while April and May collections are predicted to be negligible. June collections are predicted to total 25 percent of June collections from FY19.

The presumed reduction in collections as well as the \$1 million committed to the relief fund and the absence of a sinking fund comparable to that of FY19, which totaled \$876,000, combines for a projected shortfall of \$2.8 million from the total funds available at the time of appropriations in June 2019.

"There are going to be some really hard decisions," Davis said,

the meeting. "Like everyone, we're just responding to the COVID-19 situation and making sure that anything that can be delayed for a future year is being delayed. We're asking a lot of our applicants so we want to make sure we're putting our best foot forward as well."

Other business included the board's approval of the reallocation of funds initially given to Big Sky Search and Rescue for the purpose of a Wilderness First Responder course that was canceled to be used for equipment costs.

The board also approved the reallocation of funds given to the Big Sky Community Housing Trust. The funds were appropriated for use in future projects, but due to an overage of construction costs on the Meadowview workforce housing project, the trust requested a portion of the funds be used to ensure the success of the in-progress housing development.

The upcoming 1 percent vote, which will determine if an additional 1 percent of resort tax may be collected to fund two Big Sky County Water and Sewer District infrastructure projects, was not discussed in depth. Ballots will be mailed April 17 and Election Day is scheduled for May 5.

1% vote important dates

Thursday, April 16

WWRF upgrade and expansion overview Virtual meeting 5:30pm*

Friday, April 17

Ballots mailed to voters

Thursday, April 30

WWRF upgrade and expansion overview Virtual meeting 1:00pm*

Tuesday, May 5

looking ahead to upcoming appropriations.

In the interest of providing both the board and community organizations a framework for how to adjust to these changes, a subcommittee was developed with Buz Davis and Sara Blechta to explore how to quickly assemble the right stakeholders to engage in scenario planning. The board discussed a shift to biannual or even quarterly appropriations, a concept that will be further reviewed in scenario planning.

The board then approved an operating budget for FY21, which had been significantly trimmed.

"That's the result of us trying to do our part to make sure that we are being as efficient and effective as possible with the use of the tax dollars in our operation," Bierschwale said in an interview following Election day

Wednesday, July 1 1% Resort Tax would become effective (If passed)

* To join the virtual meetings via a computer, tablet, or smarthphone visit: https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/541221685

To dial in: 1 (872) 240-3412 Access Code: 541-221-685 One Touch tel: +18722403412,,541221685#



MEET THE CANDIDATES:

Editor's note: Four local boards are holding their board member elections via mail-in ballot on May 5. They are: Big Sky Resort Area District, Big Sky County Water and Sewer District, Big Sky School District and the Big Sky Fire Department board of trustees. EBS will feature introductions of candidates from two of the four boards in each of the next two editions of the newspaper in an effort to introduce them to community members.

Big Sky Resort Area District Board candidates



Kevin Germain

I am interested in running for my second and final term to continue BSRAD's efforts on COVID 19, both response and recovery. I would also like to follow through on BSRAD's funding collaboration for work force housing. It is imperative the lifeblood of the community lives and raises their families here in Big Sky. I am raising my family in Big Sky, with one child a Lone Peak High graduate, one in

high school, one in middle school and I've worked in Big Sky for more than 17 years. I am a proud graduate of Montana State University and a founding member of Big Sky's Bear Smart committee as well as the Big Sky Mountain Parks District. I am a former board member of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce. I am an avid outdoorsman who loves skiing, fly fishing, trail running and mountain biking.



Ed Hake

My name is Ed Hake. I have lived in the Gallatin Canyon for the past 52 years. I am running for the Big Sky Resort area district for the following reasons. I would like to see the Canyon people represented. There is not a small business owner or collector of the tax on the board, I would like to represent them also. I have seen Big Sky at its best and at it's worst. I could be a big asset in helping to make the difficult decisions that Big Sky is currently being faced with.



Tucker Roundy

Working on the front lines in Big Sky has given me a perspective currently lacking on the Tax Board. Interacting with people from all parts of our community allows me to see the items valued by the people I will be representing. If elected, my priorities will be affordable housing, expanding recreation opportunities and working to support the physical and mental health of residents. My front-line

role will also make me very accessible to community members with concerns for the Tax Board. You can find me at the Moose.



Ciara Wolfe

I along with my husband, two children, and two dogs call Big Sky home. I hold a Master's Degree in Nonprofit Management, Bachelor's Degree in Earth Science, an Organizational Leadership Certification and am a Certified Fundraising Executive. My extensive and diverse non-profit leadership roles include over 15 years in the sector, both as an Executive Leader and Board member. My dedication of service to the community

of Big Sky paired with my successful track record as a local community leader will ensure that the communities' resources are prioritized, and goals accomplished.



Grace Young

I have called Big Sky home since moving to Montana with my husband



Ryan Kunz

My name is Ryan Kunz and I am running for a seat on the Big Sky Resort Tax Board. I have been a part of the Big Sky community for the better half of eight years. During this time, I have had the pleasure in not only raising my children here, but also managing two iconic Big Sky businesses, Rainbow Ranch Lodge and Lone Mountain Ranch. I was lucky enough at both properties to be a part of a period where we

transformed the brands, image, culture, and financial viability. I have seen the growth of Big Sky firsthand both from a business perspective as well as a community member, and deeply understand our challenges ahead, as well as successes we have had. I would be honored in serving this community on the BSRAD board and will do so with honesty, integrity, and humility. in 2001. During my time in Big Sky I've worked in a supporting role for several small businesses. For the past seven years, I've been the Office Manager at Big Sky Landscaping and have helped run my husband and my snow shoveling business, Mt. Everest Snow Removal. I'm also a supporter of many local non-profits including (but not limited to!) Arts Council of Big

Sky, Big Sky PTO, BSCO and Morningstar Learning Center. I was a founding member of Women In Action and served nine years on the board. Throughout the past 19 years, I've developed a well-rounded knowledge base about the community, the non-profit organizations and the people who are fortunate enough to call Big Sky home. This knowledge, experience and love for Big Sky gives me a strong foundation for insightful decision making on the Resort Tax Board. I look forward to serving this community more in the future.

continued on next page

LOCAL

Big Sky County Water & Sewer District Board candidates



Mike DuCuennois

I am a Montana native with over 12 years of community service roles in various nonprofit sectors. I grew up in Billings and graduated from Montana State University in Construction Engineering. I'm a registered professional engineer in Montana since 2003 and have worked as the development leader for the Yellowstone Club since 2005. I've served on the Big Sky Water and Sewer Board for the past four years. I also serve on the Bozeman Health Planning and Finance committee and the Big Sky Community Center Committee. I'm seeking reelection to continue the progress that the Big Sky Water and

Sewer District has made over the past four years and to continue to support the district's work on water reuse and conservation.



Dick Fast

My wife and I have lived in Big Sky since the spring of 2000. Sherrie is a native of Helena whose great grandparents homesteaded along the Missouri River north of Helena and I became an "transplanted Montanan" when we married. Prior to our retiring in Montana, I served 30 some years with the US Air Force, working in policy and strategic planning and intelligence. I've been a member of the BSCWSD Board since 2004. During the time I've been on the board, we've seen many ups and downs in the economy; through these our district has always met the challenge of providing water and sewer capacity. Now that capability is again being challenged

by tremendous growth. I am running for another term on your board confident that I can continue to provide a fuller voice for our customers. We have representatives from the engineering and real estate community. But we must also have board members with a broader public perspective; whose primary focus is on our customers. The next few years will be challenging and I look forward to working to ensure that Big Sky can continue to grow but that it is done in a way that does not destroy the beauty of Big Sky or the surrounding environment.



Clay Lorinsky

I bring independence, experience and a voice for the underrepresented locals on the Water & Sewer Board. Having been self-employed for the past 22 years, I am not beholden to the corporate interests that now dominate Big Sky. I have spent time in the real estate business as attorney, owner and investor which gives me first-hand experience dealing with the issues. Like it or not, Big Sky's growth is inevitable. With that in mind, we must manage its impact on this community's limited resources and not lose sight of the lifestyle that drew us to the community in the first place.

Mike Wilcynski

Myself, my wife Jenny, daughters Josie and Maddie, and Chocolate lab Buck have been residents of the Big Sky community over 17 years. I'm an avid hunter, fisherman, golfer, skier, mountain biker, and virtually any other activity that takes place outside. I'm a graduate of Montana State University, Bozeman where I received a BS in Horticulture. After graduation, I spent four years at Green Meadow Country Club in Helena, Montana prior to accepting a role in Big Sky with Yellowstone Club as part of the golf course development team. Following the grand opening of the Yellowstone Club

golf course, I accepted a position with Moonlight Basin as the Head Superintendent/ General contractor of the RESERVE golf course. For the past 16 years, my role with Moonlight Basin has evolved from directing the golf course development from its initial groundbreaking stage, golf operation, club operations, and Moonlight membership to my current role as General Manager of Moonlight Basin. I currently serve as President of the Big Sky Futbol Club and have served on a variety of other boards. My background in golf, golf course maintenance, and water management coupled with a desire to become more engaged in the greater Big Sky community has led me to pursue a position on the Big Sky County Water and Sewer district board.



MEET THE CANDIDATES: Montana's Gubernatorial Race

Montana's gubernatorial candidates The Democrats

Editor's note: Despite the disruptions to the day to day, democracy continues. Voters in the upcoming Montana primary election will select via mail-in ballot a gubernatorial candidate from the Democratic and Republican parties to oppose one another in the general election in November to claim the Montana governor's seat. EBS is introducing you to all of the candidates. This issue meet Whitney Williams and Mike Cooney.







PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITNEY FOR MONTANA

vv nitney vv illiams is a proud sixth generation Montanan who has done most of her public service in the private sector. Her company, williamsworks, has worked with Fortune 500 companies and private citizens for over a decade to philanthropically tackle solutions on global issues. Most recently, however, her familial roots in Montana politics and deeply entrenched love for the state beckoned her to seek the title of governor. Williams has built her platform as a democratic gubernatorial candidate on the issues of public lands protection, access to early childhood education and pharmaceutical justice. The Helena native and University of Montana graduate

holds a devout belief that Montanans are more alike than different, and she intends to use her professional experience in unifying unexpected allies together to get the ball rolling on improvements she believes the state desperately needs.

"...[I]t's time for a new generation of leadership with fresh ideas and a new approach; a proven executive with problem solving experience." -WW

PHOTO COURTESY OF COONEY FOR MONTANA

steeped in Montana politics through-out the entirety of his professional career. The Butte native first ran for the Montana House of Representatives while still an undergraduate student at the University of Montana, and he won. Since then, he has served as both senator and a representative in the Montana Legislature, was elected as secretary of state and served from 1989-2001, worked in the Montana Department of Labor and Industry and is currently serving as lieutenant governor under Gov. Steve Bullock. Cooney unabashedly advocates in favor of keeping public lands in public hands, affordable and accessible health care and education, all issues that he believes are inherently intertwined

Mike Cooney

with the overarching topic of jobs. The lieutenant governor characterizes Montanans as strong workers who don't ask for much: good jobs, good lives for themselves and their families and a chance to enjoy the natural bounties of the state. These are opportunities he enjoys and believes should be afforded to all Montanans.

"Is this a time to choose somebody who brings a lot of experience and has really a background that lends itself to leadership and proven leadership? I hope that's the one thing Montanans would consider as they're casting their mail-in ballot."-MC

$OUTLAW_{M}$

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Outlaw Partners presents virtual town hall series

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY—As an unincorporated town, Big Sky lacks the formal local government that many other towns are able to look to for support and guidance during this current pandemic and overall strife.

Monday, March 30, Outlaw Partners (the publisher of Explore Big Sky) launched the Big Sky Virtual Town Hall series, a weekly online forum featuring panelists of diverse backgrounds and community involvement. The structure includes panelists fielding questions from both Outlaw Partners CEO Eric Ladd and Explore Big Sky's Editorin-Chief Joseph T. O'Connor as well as online audience members.

"We're trying to create a semblance of a communication channel that spans all the different community leaders," Ladd said.

The virtual town halls will take place every Monday evening at 5 p.m. for the foreseeable future on two platforms: Facebook Live and Zoom. For the time being, the governing theme of the discussions will be COVID-19 and how various pockets of the Big Sky community and surrounding areas are reacting to the global crisis and its local ramifications.

Ladd said that while Outlaw Partners has always adopted the role of facilitating communication within the community, the current pandemic's dynamic nature presented an immediate opportunity to provide more COVID-19 coverage, a need articulated in Outlaw Partner's recent community survey.

The inaugural town hall reached audiences in Big Sky and beyond. Panelists at the March 30 meeting included Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center Director of Clinical Services and Operations Taylor Rose, health care industry venture capitalist Gary Rieschel, CEO of Visit Big Sky and Big Sky Chamber of Commerce Candace Carr Strauss, Big Sky School District Board Chair and Yellowstone Club Community Foundation Vice Chair Loren Bough, gubernatorial candidate and small business owner Whitney Williams and Kevin Germain and Daniel Bierschwale of the Big Sky Resort Area District board. Bough, Germain and Bierschwale shared the initial success of launching Big Sky Relief, an effort fueled by a collection of community funds that gathers community partners for biweekly meetings to discuss community needs as well as ongoing efforts to fulfill those needs.

Carr Strauss encouraged Big Sky to stay strong and utilize the chamber as a "conduit to the experts." The CEO also responded to questions about tourism promotion, to which she responded that Visit Big Sky's tourism campaign has shifted to a "visit Big Sky later" message.

Williams and Rieschel imparted regional and global perspectives, touching on the vast impacts to Montana's economy as well as using China's COVID-19 experience as a projection. "Unfortunately, this is not something where you have a quick solution," he said. Based on his observations in China, Rieschel said it is too early to say that the United States is anywhere near flattening the curve. He advised small businesses to ask themselves and others "What's the right way to plan your way through this?"

Rose, who provided a BHBSMC update at both the first and second town hall, expressed uncertainty as to Big Sky's location on the virus' trajectory, but for now, he said that BHBSMC is confident in their ability to address the current situation.

In the second town hall, Taylor Middleton, Big Sky Resort's president and chief operating officer shared the story of the meticulous and difficult decision to suspend operations. "We didn't [close down Boyne operations] because it was a mandate; there was no governmental order, we did it because we were looking at the facts, and we wanted to be on the front end...of flattening the curve..."

Ania Bulis represented the Moonlight Community Foundation in reporting on mental health initiatives, a rising community concern. Vice President of Operations at Simms discussed the fly fishing company's pivot from producing waders to quality hospital gowns, followed by Martha Johnson from Big Sky Real Estate, who believes Big Sky's natural amenities as well as current sale statistics are reason enough to be confident in the local real estate market.

The next virtual town hall will begin at 5 p.m. on Monday, April 13 on both Explore Big Sky's Facebook Live as well as Zoom.





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Nonprofit puts needles to work for healthcare workers

BY MIRA BRODY



of Bozeman Health's OB/GYN department enjoying

COURTESY OF MONTANA MASKS FOR HEROES

masks donated by Montana Masks for Heroes. PHOTO

BOZEMAN – In the midst of a newsfeed of what feels like increasingly bad news, a small army of exuberant seamstresses are lending a hand to front-line healthcare workers by sewing colorfully patterned face masks, the kind that will protect them and other essential employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bozeman-based nonprofit Montana Masks for Heroes is organizing volunteers to manufacture facemasks for local medical staff and first responders in Gallatin and Park counties. These masks will be available to the local medical community if and when current medical supplies are exhausted due to the nationwide shortage of PPE gear.

The group formed one night last month when Kari Aberly, whose husband is chief of surgery at Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital, reached out to her friend JoAnne Nordhagen to help develop an idea to sew homemade masks for her husband's team. Aberly was concerned that her husband and all Gallatin County medical providers and first responders could be left unprotected if there was a mask shortage.

Two weeks later, the Montana Masks for Heroes Facebook group has grown to nearly 2,000 followers, and its website receives daily mask requests from across the community. Nordhagen and Aberly estimate the group delivers 200 masks daily.

"There are many healthcare and frontline workers who do not have PPE," Aberly said, "[including] hospice care, home health workers, EMS and police department,

physical therapists and many independent clinics who are not affiliated with a large healthcare system."

Bozeman Health Incident Command helped create a prototype for the mask design that ensures the protective face guards delivered to the hospital will be accepted. They are made from 15-inch by 7.5-inch squares of fabric, pleated, with a pocket for disposable filters and either ties along the back of the head and neck or elastic that fits around the ears.

"Montana has always had a spirit of helping," said Nordhagen, a Montana native. "We're a small community in a big state. People know their neighbors and want to take care of each other. It's something left over from the days of homesteading and ranching."

In addition to local seamstresses donating their time, businesses have stepped forward to help as well. Joann Fabric and Crafts as well as Walmart in Bozeman are donating precut fabric; ACE Hardware has provided wire ties used for nose pieces; Brian Ortega at Silverman Law set up their nonprofit; and Carolyn Murray of Prospera Business Network launched the Masks for Heroes website.

Transporting the masks to recipients involves donation bins, which were gifted by Dry Hills Distillery, Northwest Pipe, Bozeman Montessori and Silverman Law as well as mask "runners," Dayna Heidi and Deborah Shelley. Aberly and Nordhagen also praised moderators for their ever-growing Facebook page, Saundra Strasser, Kara Kasmer, Chris Marie, Amy Benjamin and Christy Hertenstein.

Individuals and workplaces in need of masks can complete a request form at the organization's website. Once they receive a request, volunteers pick up donated masks, inspect them for quality and deliver them.

While the state shelters in place to flatten the curve and provide much-needed time and resources to healthcare workers, Montana Masks for Heroes is giving southwest Montana communities a way to keep their hands busy and help those along the frontlines of COVID-19.

Prospective volunteers can learn about donating materials, sewing and prepping fabric, or running materials by joining the Facebook group Montana Masks for Heroes. The nonprofit is also accepting monetary donations, which are tax-deductible and go toward fuel for deliveries and materials.

No vacancy: Big Sky tourism hits wall

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – The tourism industry is the metaphorical thread that holds the community of Big Sky together. With the onset of COVID-19, that essential industry has received a near total knockout blow. It came down all at once: no spring breakers and no Big Sky Resort. Effectively, no tourism.

"The pipeline, so to speak, has been shut off after March 15 really," said Tim Drain, general manager of Natural Retreats Big Sky."...We have canceled 97 reservations just in the month of March ... Those were virtually all weeklong stays that we had in place."

Drain, as well as Big Sky Vacation Rentals Owner Kirsten King and Wilson Hotel General Manager Mandy Hotovy, were conclusive in acknowledging March 15, the date that Big Sky Resort announced it would suspend operations, as the day that the flow of people in and out of Big Sky began to plummet.

Candace Carr Strauss, CEO of Visit Big Sky, reported that of the lodging and property

regardless of where it is, than for them to get on a plane and travel right now," he said.

On April 1, BSVR sat at a lowly 7 percent occupancy throughout their 128 properties, King said, a meager drop in the bucket when compared to the greater than 96 percent occupancy rate they witnessed the day prior to Big Sky Resort's closing announcement on March 14. She added that a majority of the remaining occupants are homeowners.

In a similar fashion to the vacation rental companies, Hotovy said The Wilson Hotel is seeing a common theme with the majority of their guests as well: workers. "It's more of the special corporate-like individuals that are here to still work or are coming in for the hospital," Hotovy said. As an added precautionary measure, she noted common areas such as the pool and game room are no longer open to guests at The Wilson.

Drain estimated that Natural Retreats has lost nearly \$500,000 in bookings from all of the cancelations they have received. "Nobody knows exactly what the status of travel and various destinations will be two weeks, a month, [even] three months from now," Drain said.

management companies that are not completely closed at this time, not one had reported an occupancy level greater than 10 percent.

"Currently we're not encouraging people to travel to Big Sky," Carr Strauss said. "In following the CDC's guidance and social distancing as well as the directives coming from Gov. Bullock ... for public health and safety we're not encouraging it."

"We had a handful of booking requests that were starting to come in, none of them ever came to fruition...we would have ended up canceling them anyway," Drain said, referring to when the outbreak began to rapidly spread.

King echoed Drain's testament: "We have not had a booking request for a paid reservation between March 23 and June 1," she said.

Shoulder seasons, periods of time when tourist visitation in the area drops off, are normal in Big Sky as visitors ebb and flow with the changing seasons. However, the current national pandemic forced Big Sky into an early state reminiscent of shoulder season, only with far less warning.

Of the 70 properties Natural Retreats oversees, Drain said, only four are occupied by guests who were in those properties before March 15. The occupants range from homeowners to individuals who cannot travel due to restrictions or believe it's more dangerous to leave. "It's safer for them to shelter in place currently where they are, With so many unknown factors and decisions surrounding the virus and what could lie ahead for the nation, the tourism industry isn't expecting any changes soon. "What we're currently seeing is [bookings] actually for the month of say August, September and October," Hotovy said.

"We're really looking for people to look further into the future for booking their travel plans, so that we can be assured that the experience that they're expecting can be met," King said. "...I don't think anything prior to June, that we could provide a guest experience comparable to what we've been able to do in the past."

Visit Big Sky has shifted its messaging to one that is future oriented as well. "We are still putting messages out there to inspire people to travel tomorrow ... so a lot of our messaging is [to] keep the dream alive and plan now for a visit tomorrow," Carr Strauss said.

Drain and King both said their respective companies are relaying all of Gov. Bullock's orders to individuals who are in their properties and limiting interactions with them as much as possible, outside of emergency needs. Hotovy added that her staff has taken numerous precautionary measures to limit guest interactions as well, and they're also keeping visitors up to date with any announcements from the governor.

"The safety of our team members, the safety of our guests, the safety of our homeowners—our responsibility for not spreading this anymore in the community—is our number one priority, right now, above anything else," Drain said.

Distilleries converting booze to hand sanitizer Bozeman Spirits leans on ingenuity, flexibility to fill critical need

BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

BOZEMAN – When John Haas got the call in late March, he knew it was an important one. It was from friend and business associate Jim Harris who was offering a delivery. Under normal circumstances, the gift might have been a bottle of bourbon from Harris's distillery, Bozeman Spirits. But these are not normal times.

Instead, Harris wanted to know if Big Sky needed hand sanitizer, a product in high demand during this COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Haas, owner of Haas Builders in Big Sky and founder of the Spanish Peaks Community Foundation, jumped at the offer.

"I said 'Great. I'll take everything you have," said Haas, noting that the Big Sky Community Food Bank, Morningstar Learning Center, and a number of construction sites as well were in dire need of sanitizer.

At a time when businesses are closing doors, restaurants are limited to pick up or delivery options, and personal protective equipment is in short supply across much of the country, one unlikely sector is using ingenuity to lend a hand to an overloaded supply chain.

Distilleries around the U.S., including in Montana, are turning lemons into lemonade—or, rather, booze into hand sanitizer.

When Gallatin County forced the closing of the tasting room at Jim and Mary Pat Harris's 6-year-old Bozeman Spirits distillery, the couple decided they wanted to help. Now, Bozeman Spirits along with Wildrye Distillery and numerous others across the state are providing homemade hand sanitizer to front-line workers including first responders, grocery stores and construction workers, and even UPS.

"We've been fielding calls nonstop these last few days," Mary Pat said in a March 27 phone interview. "Every phone call opens up a whole new realm of what people are going through ... It's been great to just talk to people and hear their needs, what their story is, what they're doing; helping those people on the front lines who are staying open

that need to, for food, our healthcare workers."

The conversation began at the national level with the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, known as DISCUS, and the American Craft Spirit Association, and then spread to statewide groups and distilleries, including Montana through the Montana Distillers Guild. government's formula with set ratios of hydrogen peroxide and glycol then letting it sit for 72 hours before bottling.

Bozeman Distillery as of March 27 was making approximately 35 gallons of hand sanitizer per week and with additional supplies and bottling options the Harrises expected to be producing about 100 gallons per week going forward.

Bozeman Spirits bought half-gallon containers from Montana Container Corporation in Bozeman to bottle the solution, and Berry Global donated 10,000 bottles to the state through an extension of Montana State University called Montana Manufacturing Extension Center. Currently, Bozeman Spirits is bottling hand sanitizer in 375 milliliter, half-gallon and 4-ounce containers.

For the Harrises, remaining nimble in a time when not everyone can find such flexibility is a key to their company's success.

"We're not thinking about being shut down," he said. "We've got a purpose and the feedback has been great. For an industry that makes alcohol typically, turns it around and makes something everyone can use is pretty unique."

"It gives us a huge sense of purpose right now and since Jim and I are right in downtown Bozeman, community is our core," Mary Pat said. "It always has been."

Rising to the top during these difficult and uncertain times are ingenuity and community, two crucial areas that don't appear to be in short supply in southwest Montana.

"Everybody is reaching into their bag of tricks, what they're good at, and it seems to be endless the number of people who are coming out and helping in ways that they can help," Haas said. "It's so great to have everybody reaching in and saying, 'We've got this. We're going to do our part.""



"We were allowed to get this fast-tracked through with the government and the FDA so we could start making it and bottling it," Mary Pat said. "Once that started, the phones started ringing."

The Harrises have converted some of the distillery's production into a handsanitizer assembly line of sorts, though it still requires a fundamental understanding of chemistry. They're use the distillery's high-proof alcohol and following the

Jim Harris of Bozeman Spirits hands off his distillery's latest product, hand sanitizer, to Big Sky local John Haas for distribution to the Big Sky Community Food Bank. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

The EBS staff is taking to the streets to document the shift in Big Sky as the COVID-19 coronavirus situation develops. Many frontline workers are adhering to CDC recommendations and state guidelines to wear PPE on duty. Here are some examples of local heroes on the frontlines. -- *The Editors*















OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTOS

Explore Big Sky

SECTION 2:

ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS



THE NEW WEST

Neighborhoods are alive ... with the sound of howling



BY TODD WILKINSON

The other day, an announcement circulated via social media—it went viral—inviting people to light a candle or luminaria on April 1 to show appreciation for first responders and public healthcare workers on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One alert person responded that people ought to be careful with how they deploy the flame,

for fear of burning down a house or starting a wildfire.

But here in Montana, Wyoming and now as part of a "national movement" spreading to towns large and small, especially in the West, people have started to howl at dusk. There's a catharsis in it.

The first "howl in solidarity" was held in late March in Mill Valley, California, north of San Francisco.

As an American answer to the stir-crazy Italians singing to each other from their balconies, shuttered-in citizens are engaging in group howls to honor doctors, nurses and EMTs in their community, and to make sonic contact with others in their pack—albeit from at least six feet away.

The mimicking of Canis lupus by Homo sapiens has spread and what's cool is that in some of the rural communities around the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem there's a chance it could be answered by real wild wolves.

To get a sense of how the new COVID-19 ritual started playing out in our neck of the woods, Amy Crider told me she created a Facebook page called Howl for Missoula, saying she was inspired by other grassroots howling occurring in places ranging from Sun Valley/Ketchum, Idaho to outside hospitals in New York City.

"Oh gosh, it's growing," she said. "It started out here on a Tuesday with a couple hundred people spread across town. I heard from a few folks who said they howled in their neighborhood the first night and they felt like an idiot doing it all alone. Then the second night arrived and everyone started to howl, and by Thursday there were over 6,000 people signed up on the Missoula howl Facebook page."

"I hate to say this is fun because these times aren't fun; they're stressful," she said. "But it's become something everyone looks forward to, and kids are saying they can't wait until they can do it tomorrow. We're all going crazy, bunkered down [and] I figured howling would take off because we've got a great community. It is for the healthcare workers but it is also for neighbors who are really struggling. Howling reminds them they aren't alone."

Releasing pent-up feelings is good for our mental health, Crider adds. Best of all, there's nothing dangerous about it and early reports are that even family pets seem to enjoy it. Catharsis, by the way, comes from the Greek Katharsis meaning «purification» and «cleansing» of emotions. While in old horror movies the sound of a wolf howl meant trouble, it now signals belonging.

In the still-wild West, it's also an opportunity to express your gratitude for nature, our civil servants working for federal and state government agencies, and our unparalleled collection of public lands that will be there waiting for us when this all ends. If a spontaneous eruption of howling happens in your community, please share any short cell phone video you have at Greater Yellowstone Forum FB page. We all would especially be interested in hearing the vocalizations of young howlers.

Howl for those on the front lines trying to help us stay healthy. Howl to the animals that give our public lands added character. Howl to your heart's content because soon enough we'll be out there again, roaming this great place we get to call home.

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.



That number today: 13,000. It's a joyous primordial expression outpacing the rise of novel coronavirus positives and it shows that not only do our local villes have spirit, but that we're pretty excited to be living in a place where, unlike the very pleasant confines of Mill Valley, wild nature is just beyond our doorstep.

It exists because we as a society have learned how to better coexist with nature and we've managed to move our culture beyond having modern attitudes shaped by Old World fables that sought to distance ourselves from creatures we did not understand.

By new tradition, the howling commences at around 8 p.m. every night and if you listen, whether in Big Sky, Bozeman, Livingston, Gardiner or Jackson Hole, the vocalizations have become more audible. (How great would it be if they continued to become a pre-dusk nightly routine—and certainly much to the delight of our visitors?)

Crider, who has lived in Missoula for 20 years, is a stay-at-home mom and retired hairdresser with two kids. She is immunocompromised with diabetes and needs to be isolated. Her husband is still working.

'van Gogh Never Howled At The Moon" by painter Aja



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COVID-19 impact on spring hunting and fishing unknown

BY BRANDON WALKER

MONTANA – While many anglers have taken to the Montana waters and spring hunters are busy preparing for the approaching seasons, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks is still unsure if the COVID-19 pandemic will affect hunter and angler participation this spring.

"We have seen visitation increase at some of our fishing access sites since the COVID-19 outbreak, but it's unknown whether the pandemic will lead to an increase in hunter participation this spring," said Morgan Jacobsen, MTFWP Region 3 information and education program manager. "Since our license year begins March 1, we typically see many customers this time of year purchasing licenses for the new year. It's still unclear how the outbreak has affected license sales, if at all."

Currently, there are two spring hunting seasons on the horizon: turkey season, which begins April 11 and will run until May 17, and the spring black bear season that is set to commence on April 15, according to Jacobsen. The conclusion date for the spring black bear season is dependent on which unit you are hunting within the state. Some units close for the season on May 31, while others are open until June 15.

"If hunting on private land, landowner permission is required, but should be sought by email or phone, not in person. Social distancing guidelines should be followed at all FWP sites. Keep your distance from fellow recreators. If a parking lot at a fishing access site or state park is full, consider another place to recreate," Jacobsen said. "Also, in keeping with the governor's directive, FWP asks that all people stay close to home and recreate in their local community."

MTFWP has taken precautionary measures in response to COVID-19, including closing MTFWP offices to the general public, asking that people purchase licenses online and through license retailers as opposed to MTFWP offices. Additionally, all MTFWP managed recreation areas, including fishing accesses and state parks, are open only for day use. Wildlife management areas, which are not open to the public until May 15, are also restricted to day use only at this time among other closures and restrictions from MTFWP to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

"Our closures...are to provide for outdoor recreation while still providing for the social distancing directives from Gov. Bullock," Jacobsen said. "They weren't implemented because people weren't following social distancing guidelines."



An angler tests the waters on a spring day. It is not yet determined what impact COVID-19 will have on hunter and angler participation this spring. FWP PHOTO

A moderate winter has Jacobsen optimistic that wildlife populations may experience an increase this spring as opposed to the test that the conditions of last winter presented populations. He said that counts are still being compiled in a majority of the state, but in southwest Montana the early signs are promising.

Jacobsen and MTFWP remind those taking to the field this spring that the virus and social distancing aren't the only things to keep in mind. "Remember that bears are active in Montana as they are emerging from hibernation, so be bear aware, carry bear spray and follow all food storage regulations," Jacobsen said. "Consult local land management agency offices for information on road closures and restrictions. When recreating on a boat, follow state laws that require the availability and use of personal floatation devices."

Additionally, Jacobsen encouraged individuals to review the 2020 hunting and fishing regulations, which are available online or at license retailers throughout the state, before fishing or pursuing game this spring.

For more information on MTFWP closures as well as hunting season dates and regulations, visit fwp.mt.gov.



HOME:

If you are sick and have mild symptoms, stay home and self-isolate as much as possible.

CALL IN:

COVID-19 symptoms include: cough, difficulty breathing, and a fever over 100.4°F



If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.



BY ENNION WILLIAMS EBS CONTRIBUTOR



A big spring rainbow returns to Burns Lake north of Big Timber. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

Spring is taking its time this year. With recent snow and cool March temperatures, we're sitting above average annual snowpack for the year. As we roll into April, get ready for drastic daytime weather variations, keeping the rivers and fishing conditions changing from day to day. Cool temperatures will result in low and clear water, but as nighttime temperatures rise above freezing, the snowpack will slowly begin to melt, leading to more turbid waters.

The Yellowstone and Gallatin

rivers are more affected by the changing temperatures, while the Madison, which is dam-controlled, maintains a more consistent flow. Water conditions and especially water temperature will dictate fishing success in April and May.

As water temps rise into the mid to upper 40s, we start to see the emergence of mayflies on local rivers. As they approach the low to mid 50s, we encounter the hatches of caddis and stoneflies. Mayfly emergence is key to a trout's diet in early spring. Although still a small meal, they're much larger than the midge that has kept feeding trout occupied all winter long. The blue winged olive or

The ins and outs of spring fly fishing

baetis mayfly is the most prolific mayfly on our area trout rivers, and is best imitated with one of the various pheasant-tail nymphs or Parachute Adamsstyle dry flies.

On some of the rivers around southwest Montana we'll see the Skwala stonefly hatch. This is a small olive stonefly found on the Bitterroot, Big Hole, Madison and Missouri rivers during the month of April. Few of them exist and they only come off in certain areas so they're often overlooked.

Toward the end of April when overnight temperatures are in the 40s and daytime approaches the 60s, the famous mothers-day caddis hatch will begin on the Madison and Yellowstone rivers. This is a significant hatch of size 14-16 olive caddisflies on these two rivers. You can fish the Yellowstone until the river becomes muddy from snowmelt. The Madison, however, will maintain this hatch for a couple weeks until spring runoff really gets going.

Fishing on the clear and cold rivers of Montana in the springtime is intriguing due to the variety of hatches and mix of weather events you'll encounter. The longer it stays cold and snowy the better the conditions will be later in the summer. That can be frustrating but it's just one of the dilemmas of living in trout country, but one I'm willing to handle.

Now, more than ever, it's important to do our part to preserve these blue-ribbon trout streams for the generations to come and for the health of the ecosystem. Development of our public lands needs to be measured against clear science and responsible growth. As we emerge out of this unprecedented time of global change, let's come together to protect our home rivers and their clean, cold water.

Happy fishing!

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Keep your distance Adding social distancing to outdoor precautions

BY BELLA BUTLER

A pair of skis; one to two mountain bikes, dependent on the size; a fully extended trekking pole-however you measure it-social distancing applies as much in the great outdoors as it does between four walls.

During Montana's period of social distancing and under Gov. Bullock's stay at home directive, people have flocked to trailheads for reprieve and much needed exercise. At the Big Sky Relief Fund Operational Partners Coordination meeting on March 27, CEO of the Big Sky Community Organization Ciara Wolfe reported an uptick in public use of BSCO trails. Rachel Schmidt, director of the Montana Office for Outdoor Recreation said colloquial reports of this trend have reached her from across the state.

"Getting outside is imperative, especially in times like these, and we're lucky that we can," said Dr. Maren Dunn, a physician with Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center. However, hikers, trail runners, skiers and the like are not absolved from the responsibility and priority of preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, according to Dr. Dunn. "Social distancing needs to happen outdoors as well as indoors," she said.

She added that while the 6-foot buffer gets a lot of attention, there are two other aspects of social distancing that ought not be ignored: avoiding non-essential gatherings or crowds and limiting contact with people at higher risk.

"The outdoors is not a reason to think it's okay to meet in larger groups," she said.

Tania Lown-Hecht, communications director for the outdoor recreation and conservation organization Outdoor Alliance, echoed Dr. Dunn's instruction, asking that those fleeing to the outdoors avoid meeting up with groups outside of individuals not within their household.

Dr. Dunn offered the suggestion that even when abiding by the social distancing tenant of not meeting with an organized group, arriving at a busy trailhead may involuntarily place someone in a non-essential gathering, and it may be time to seek a less popular trail.

A graphic and blog post released by the Outdoor Alliance suggesting how to get outside during a pandemic emphasized the employment of social distancing as the utmost consideration for others when spending time outside, especially for those that may face more severe consequences if they were to contract the virus, complimenting the third component to social distancing mentioned by Dr. Dunn.

Society and a host of others have released their own recommendations for specific recreation during the pandemic. A throng of themes have emerged from the collection of guides, chief among them being the avoidance of unnecessary risk.

"If you get hurt, if you need a rescue, you're putting unnecessary pressure on an already overburdened medical system," said Lown-Hecht. The Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation echoed her comments.

In addition to adopting lower-risk activities, a resounding national plea for people to limit recreation to areas only near to home aims to contain further viral spread, especially to vulnerable communities that double as recreational hot spots.

According to an article published around the dawn of COVID-19 concerns in the United States, Moab, UT, a popular spring destination for bikers, climbers and hikers, has only 17 hospital beds, many of which fill up with broken boned spring breakers. While Jackson, WY, another well-known recreation paradise, recently acquired 10 additional ventilators, the total is still only 22 for the town of nearly 10,000 people. Smaller destination and gateway towns have even less medical infrastructure and will be heavily taxed if continued visitation instigates a major spike in cases.

A blog post on the Access Fund website suggests taking this time to explore backyard public lands, parks and trails to grow a deeper appreciation for your immediate surroundings.

"Recreation and what we do outside in Montana is core to our identities as Montanans, so we are trying at every level to keep as much access as we can," said Schmidt. "... before any of that, it's important for us to watch out for the health and wellbeing in relation to the virus."

How to Get Outside (during a pandemic)

Make the health of others your number 01 one priority.

> The COVID-19 pandemic is life and death for many people. Please conduct yourself in every respect with that in mind

O2 You can go outside. Cautiously.

Along with the imposing health threats, increased traffic on trails can also strain the nature people are hoping to enjoy while getting outside. Schmidt, who said that the state is working hard to maintain public recreation areas to the best of its ability, stressed Leave No Trace principles and making an extra effort in the upkeep of these public spaces. "Just try to help maintain places that we love so much and make sure that we're not adding undo traffic or harm or garbage, all of those things."

Lown-Hecht added that visiting areas outside of peak hours can help distribute traffic, alleviating pressure on the environment as well as minimizing unwarranted disturbance, such as widening a trail to avoid spring mud.

A number of Outdoor Alliances' organizational partners, such as the Access Fund, the American Alpine Club, the American Hiking

Don't go out if you're sick or have been in contact with those who have. Keep a safe distance from others. That includes in the car. Groups are out. Consider avoiding busy areas and times of day. Wash your hands. Follow CDC guidelines carefully

03 Stay close to home.

Like, as close as possible. Far away places or that recreation town an hour down the road are wonderful, but the further you travel, the more potential you have to spread illness. Shop and recreate in your neighborhood.

04 Keep it chill.

It's not a good time to get hurt. Healthcare systems are overwhelmed, or soon will be. Please do not add to the burden

Respect closures and be a 05 good steward.

If parks are closed, don't go. If parks are open, be mindful that areas might have limited maintenance. Pack out your trash, use the restroom before you leave the house. Check state guidelines

OUTDOOR CALLIANCE

COURTESY OF OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

REFLECTIONS Thoughts for sustainable living

Composting in Big Sky

BY BLAIR MOHN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Editor's note: Kathy Bouchard, who regularly writes "Reflections," is taking a short leave from writing this column. Her fellow Big Sky Rotarian Blair Mohn is temporarily stepping in.

Like most everybody in Big Sky, my wife Megan and I moved here from elsewhere. But given we moved just two years ago, we haven't lost our surprise at the absence of convenient recycling and composting in Big Sky. So, through the Rotary Club and the broader community Sustainability Network Organization, we are collaborating for improvement.

Most people are familiar with recycling, however composting is a newer industry and equally important to create an environmentally sustainable community. Composting is a process that diverts food waste plus compostable food and beverage containers from trash dumps to a commercial composter, which turns these materials into rich topsoil.

Did you know both business and home composting services exist in Big Sky? They do!

Many restaurants are sending their food waste to compost and offering takeout meals in compostable containers. Please ask if your restaurant of

choice is doing this, thank them if they do, and encourage them to switch if they do not. Trash-hauling fees are reduced when a restaurant adds composting since their garbage volume is reduced.

In Big Sky, we've seen much progress this past year. Last season Big Sky Farmers Market vendors switched to compostable containers and the Town Center added collection bins with service. The Big Sky PBR and Peak to Sky concert were nearly zero-waste events sending almost nothing to the dump by coordinating recycling and composting. And Big Sky Resort added composting to their waste control options with the opening of the refurbished Vista Hall.

Our home service in the area costs \$15 per month. We receive a green bucket that we fill over the course of two weeks then place the full bucket outside on the pickup date when it's swapped for a clean bucket. Combined with recycling, it takes us about a month to fill the regular bear proof residential garbage container.

While home composting to use in your garden is possible in many parts of the country, given the bears and other wildlife in the Big Sky area, it should be avoided. Luckily we now have a service provider.

For local service, contact Karl Johnson at Yes Compost by visiting yescompost. com or calling (406) 219-7011.



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Gardening at home Indoor potting and seedling recommendations

BY BRANDON WALKER



The author's jade plant that began as a 'cutting'. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY - As Americans shift to working and schooling remotely in response to the COVID-19 virus, activities to occupy time indoors that adhere to social distancing suggestions are in high demand. While warming temperatures interspersed with the occasional snow flurry suggest spring's approach to southwest Montana, gardening season is nearly upon us. In preparation for the transition to the yard or even simply starting a plant to admire in the kitchen window, there are numerous ways to flex your green thumb inside for the time being.

"Right now, the best thing, really, for people is house plants," said landscape designer and horticulturist Nick Turner of Big Sky Landscaping. "... If you plan on having a summer

garden, right now would be a great time to start propagating and growing your seeds for food production this summer."

Turner, who oversees roughly over 7,000 plants, trees and shrubs at the BSL garden center, shared three different methods of indoor gardening that people can try their hand at while social distancing.

If you already have any indoor house plant such as, spider, bamboo or jade plants, Turner suggests cuttings as a simple way to start a new plant. A cutting is obtained by literally cutting a shoot or stock off of your existing plant and attempting to grow it in a new pot or container.

"An easy way to propagate cuttings is by simply cutting them [off] and putting them into soil and keeping it moist enough and seeing if they take root,"Turner said. He recommends supplementing your potting soil with a rooting hormone to help mitigate the risk of the new plant rotting.

Turner, who started with BSL in 2009, said about 50 percent of cuttings successfully take root. He advises the use of a 4-inch pot filled three quarters full of potting soil. "Make sure to water everything well when you do first transplant,"Turner added. After the initial planting, keep the plants moist but do not overwater, while also ensuring they get sunlight for roughly two thirds of the day.

Now is a prime time to start seedlings, as well, Turner mentioned. He recommends cucumbers as a worthy selection due to their quicker maturity period. "You want to try to find seeds that are going to have a shorter growing time," he said in recognition of the brief growing season in Montana."... If you do start it inside right now, you're going to give yourself a better chance. Just get ahead of it so they're mature."

Turner suggests filling your seedling container two thirds of the way with potting soil and abiding by the instructions on your seed packet regarding the depth at which to plant the seeds. Constant sun and artificial light are key to a seedlings' success and even accelerate their growth rate to ensure they're ready for the growing season.

"I usually don't tell people to put seedlings or plants that they're growing inside outside until mid-June in Big Sky,"Turner said. Late season frosts can be devastating to both the garden and the gardener.

Lastly, bromeliads are an eye-catching flower that succeed indoors, requiring about 50 percent sunlight each day. "They typically put off an orange or a pink spike flower right out of the middle of them and they only do that once in their life typically,"Turner said.

Water bromeliads adequately, allowing the soil to nearly dry before repeating the process in a half-gallon pot, as they could grow to be as tall as two feet, Turner advised. "You can actually fill the center of it with water and it will kind of self-feed for a little while," he added.

According to Turner, one other creative indoor gardening project is Bonsai, a technique in which any plant can be utilized. "[Bonsai is] the art of dwarfing plants," he said. "... You can get so creative with Bonsai. You can make these little terrariums, get moss and stuff from the woods and put little rocks in there."





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Each employee's individual commitment to our mission, to each other, and to our community speaks to their selflessness and the level of expert, quality care that we diligently work to provide to each patient.

We hope you, our community, will join us in thanking the healthcare worker in your life, whether they are on the front lines of direct patient care or those in supporting roles. Each one is your family member, friend, professional colleague, or acquaintance.

It is our honor to care for each other and to care for our community.





It's time for Wyoming to face the truth

BY DUSTIN BLEIZEFFER *writers on the range*

You can't overestimate how more than 40 years of coal-fueled prosperity has shaped Wyoming's culture and politics. One result is the bitterness that many in the state express when they talk about coal's demise.

Gov. Mark Gordon, in his State of the State address, summoned both the swagger and the fury that characterizes the coal narrative today: "We produce better energy more safely and with more attention to the environment than anywhere else on the planet. And yet our industries are still discriminated against, maligned, and decried as dead. Well, not on my watch!"

What some in Wyoming might consider discrimination, others might cite fighting for their lives in the face of sea level rise and deadly wildfires. Still, Wyoming is mourning a real loss, and you can hear it expressed in a coffee shop in Gillette or the state capitol in Cheyenne.

The mourning is for an industry that paid the state's bills. Coal mining built excellent K-12 schools and community colleges, while modernizing Wyoming's four-year university. Coal helped Wyoming amass a wealth fund with an estimated value of \$20 billion.

Coal is responsible for helping to create the term "Gillette Syndrome" — the boomtown phenomenon of acute social disruption due to rapid industrial growth — and then enabled the same town to demolish that reputation by building a thriving community with world-class amenities.

Coal gave Wyoming what few rural communities have—economic security.

The pitfalls of a fossil-fueled economy, however, are no mystery. No other state in the nation had a more narrow economy than Wyoming, focusing on coal, oil and natural gas. Those industries were already stumbling toward new lows before the COVID-19 pandemic tightened the screws. What faces the state's leaders now is finding a new economic base -- shifting from supporting an industry to supporting its towns and counties.

So far, that doesn't appear to be happening. New Mexico has launched an ambitious strategy to divest from coal-fired power while providing financial aid to communities to prepare for the transition away from coal. In Wyoming, lawmakers pitched legislation to penalize utilities for using renewable energy. Wyoming lawmakers passed a bill requiring utilities to install financially risky carbon-capture systems, allowing each utility to recover up to \$1 billion in carbon capture



Dustin Bleizeffer, a former coal miner, examines the state of Wyoming's reaction to an upheaval of its traditional coal-based economy. CC PHOTO

energy-dependent communities in the West that are finding success in building a new local economy.

"There were not a ton of places," Alexander said. "But there were some in Wyoming."

They include Sheridan County and Wyoming's coal capital, Campbell County. Alexander said he found dozens of local leaders in those counties carefully working to expand the local tax base, invest in training, and paving the way for new businesses.

capital from ratepayers.

Colorado recently established a "Just Transition" collaboration and a fund to help coal communities reorient toward a sustainable future without coal. In Wyoming, lawmakers floated a raft of bills this winter that come to the aid of the coal industry itself, offering up an estimated \$48 million in benefits and expenditures while offering little in direct aid to coal workers.

"I keep wondering if all our politicians are behind the curve when it comes to public opinion," said Larry Wolfe, a longtime energyindustry attorney and lobbyist in the state. "I think the people who live in these communities know their future is in serious doubt if they're mining coal or operating a coal-fired power plant, or their livelihood is dependent on all the ancillary industries."

Ben Alexander is senior program advisor at the Resources Legacy Fund, a nonprofit conservation group with bases in California and Montana. A few years ago, he set out to find modern day examples of Alexander said that some local governments started planning because they didn't have the tremendous savings that the state had accumulated. "The finality of [coal], I think, has led to better decision making and more focus on what other options are available,"

It's cathartic for a state and for a community to collectively mourn a loss. But it can also slip into a kind of indulgence that doesn't lead to good policy. If Wyoming is going to survive this historic economic transition, state leadership is going to have to realize it cannot succeed in saving the coal industry.

What the state can do is face reality and help to save local communities.

Dustin Bleizeffer is a contributor to Writers on the Range.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. He has worked as a coal miner, an oilfield mechanic, and for 20 years as a statewide reporter and editor. He lives in Casper, WY.



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New pottery studio building community through ceramics

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – Heather Hodapp noticed the father-daughter duo at an evening clay class right away; the daughter was excessively apologetic, a trait Hodapp recognized as a common symptom of autism, a habit her son struggles with as well. She explained to them that a pottery studio is a place where mistakes are expected and celebrated—a place for learning.

By the end of the night, the apologizing had ceased as the pair was immersed in their collaborative art project.

The Bozeman Community Kiln is the first studio space of its kind in the Gallatin Valley and has drawn budding artists from all over the region—including Big Sky. It offers open studio time, classes for all ages and levels of experience, private and semi-private studio space for professional artists and a gathering place for group pottery-centric events. The studio opened in December and is owned and operated by Hodapp and her business partner Ashleah Elias.

Hodapp and Elias met on the Twentynine Palms Military Base in Southern California in 2009 when Elias, a registered LPN, was assigned as a home help nurse to Hodapp while she cared for her son who struggled with respiratory issues. Both are military spouses whose husbands were discharged due to traumatic head injuries in 2011. The duo quickly formed a bond over the shared struggles of supporting a veteran in recovery. After Elias and her family landed in Bozeman while her husband participated in Warriors and Quiet Waters, they fell in love with the area and Hodapp followed suit shortly after.

"I learned the hard way that you have to have a community. It's a support structure that you don't realize you need until you don't have it," said Hodapp. "It's amazingly important to just have people you can surround yourself with, that you can be comfortable around."

Elias is pursuing a bachelor's degree in fine arts with the goal of becoming an art therapist. Hodapp has a background in business management and retail, which she has put to work managing the studio's administrative duties and has enjoyed learning ceramics along the way. Both are driven by their inspiration to build a space



At the Bozeman Community Kiln, visitors will find a creative, serene space to seek help on a project, collaborate with friends or work quietly on their own. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



Ashleah Elias and Heather Hodapp opened the Bozeman Community Kiln as a space for members of the community to gather and create art. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

where people can use art as a part of their healing process—whatever they may be going through.

"Ceramics is absolutely amazing in helping people retrain their brain and hand-eye coordination after they've had a traumatic brain injury," Elias said. "A lot of times when someone has been through trauma, just getting their hands into clay helps their mind process what has happened to them. Then, when you're done, you've created something functional."

Like many art projects, the early days of Bozeman Community Kiln were ones of trial and error. They acquired their studio space off of Jackrabbit Lane from the previous occupant: a vehicle repair shop. An accident involving a semi colliding into the side of their building stripped it of electricity, the water pump was out of service and there was motor oil splattered about the walls.

The women, in their dark garage one evening, decided that it was going to work. Elias would come in early between finals to clean the walls and make the space habitable. Local ceramist Keith Gilyard helped them build a functional sink and Garage Clay, a local pottery supply store, partnered with them to ensure their tool inventory was fully stocked in time for their December opening.

Elias contrasts her studio space to that of the healthcare system she's worked in for so long, where patients are often scared, sick or frustrated. In an art studio, you are allowed to let those stresses fall away and work through whatever is on your mind while at the same time creating something of use.

"We want a space for people to continue, whatever that may mean to them," said Elias. "The world is chaos. Everybody's going through something, nobody ever has time. But you come in, sit down, and maybe you'll make a pinch pot. It makes you feel like you've controlled something."

Although their grand opening, originally slated for May 22 and 23, has been postponed due to concerns surrounding COVID-19, Elias and Hodapp are hard at work building on what they've started at the Bozeman Community Kiln, fostering an art-driven, positive environment for people to come back to when we can once again gather as a community.



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Local innovation: RadioBigSky connects community through airwaves

BY MIRA BRODY

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, radio was an inexpensive way to keep up with news and provided a means for escape through sports broadcasts and entertainment programs. It was the platform on which President Franklin D. Roosevelt rallied the country with his famous Fireside Chats, new talent emerged, and household names adapted music, theater, comedy and skits to radio waves.

Today in Big Sky, under a similar economic climate, one such emerging radio emcee is Jeremy Harder, founder of RadioBigSky, and technology teacher for the Big Sky School District.

"Okay, guitar is tuned, let me pour just a little bit of whiskey—it'll get me real talkative," Stumpf said before playing an acoustic set on an episode of "Tuned Up in Big Sky," the station's live music program.

Captured via Zoom, the contents of Stumpf's home can be seen behind him—an upright bass, a poster of a Philadelphia Eagles helmet and a stack of musical instrument cases queued against the wall. Harder's backdrop is a digital rendition of the Northern Lights, churning around the neon text of his trucker hat, which reads "F—n'Weather!", a tip of the cap to the local theater troupe's November performance of "Howl: A Montana Love Story."

Between songs, Harder and Stumpf chat about how emotion and boredom are the perfect ingredients for creativity—both were necessary in the conception of RadioBigSky.

"I think right now people need to hear stories, whether those stories are of successes or failures," Harder said in an April 3 phone interview. "There's a lot of really deep honesty opening up in those little 30-minute shows."

After closing his classroom doors months earlier than anticipated due to the state's stay-athome order Harder—who is looking to update his official title to BSSD's Lead Facilitator of Creativity and Innovation—thought up the idea for a small, local radio show to keep people connected as well as himself busy.

The station currently broadcasts two shows: "Tuned Up" and "Pivot," an interview-style chat with various locals about their journey to Big Sky. Harder also features short skits and puppet shows inspired by content from the Big Sky Community Theater, which Harder founded with Warren Miller Performing Arts Center's John Zirkle six years ago.



Photojournalist and Big Sky resident Rich Addicks talks vulnerability, family and life changes with Jeremy Harder on an episode of RadioBigSky's "Pivot." PHOTO COURESY OF RADIOBIGSKY organic, from how Harder chooses his subjects ("Right now I'm picking out of a hat."), to when he broadcasts episodes ("At first it was really organized, then I just wanted to post them right away.") and postproduction editing, which is nonexistent ("I just let it roll organically.")

The production of RadioBigSky is

One thing viewers can be sure of is the deliberate expulsion of what he refers to as the "c-word"—coronavirus.

Featured guests include Peter Bedell and Rich Addicks on "Pivot" and Kevin Fabozzi and Stumpf on "Tuned Up," with more on the horizon. Harder is driven by his goal to support local musicians during a time when their usual venues are closed, to recognize ity connected

influential folks in his town, and to keep the community connected.

Addicks, a photojournalist who has called Big Sky his home for nearly 20 years, talked with Harder about authenticity and vulnerability during his work capturing subjects throughout his career.

"My technique is I wear people out," said Addicks during an April 3 episode of "Pivot." "I'll keep taking pictures until that person kind of gets sick of me...and it's usually that one moment where they relax their body language, they get comfortable they find that place that is them. That's what I strive for. A real, honest moment."

The radio shows themselves have a gift for capturing honest moments, a refreshing reprieve in a world where we remain physically disconnected and our plans less predictable than they once were.

The next time you need to unwind, avoid the "c-word," and enjoy some raw, unmapped conversation with a friendly face, tune into RadioBigSky on YouTube and you'll be greeted by Harder's familiar mantra: "I want to thank the listeners and the viewers and the homebodies."









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Accepting the role How to support the arts during a pandemic

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – Overnight, as social gatherings were cancelled for the health and safety of the community, arts and entertainment venues were forced to shutter public galleries and cancel performances. It remains unclear when opportunities for art sales and concerts will arise again, but in the meantime the community still has options to support local artists directly.

"The arts are more important now than ever," said Megan Buecking, education and outreach director for the Arts Council of Big Sky. "They offer us a critical source of communication, connection, catharsis and comfort during a difficult and isolating time."

Whether we're using this time to create a masterpiece or support someone else in creating theirs, we continue reaping the benefits of the creative arts. While we social distance at home and look for ways to stay busy, entertain ourselves and our families, ACBS is helping us stay connected with some tips on how we can help support the arts while we hunker down.

Shop and watch online

Since you're stuck indoors, now is the perfect time to redecorate your walls and at the same time support artists and artisans from home. Since we can no longer visit galleries in person, and canceled travel plans have slowed the usual tourism traffic, many artists are relying solely on online sales. Grab something for yourself, an upcoming birthday, Mother's Day or Father's Day, or get ahead of Christmas shopping by supporting local business owners. Here are a few Big Sky artists that offer products online:

- Jill Zeidler Ceramics
- Heather Rapp Art (also contact Heather to learn about her online Paint Parties!)
- Carly Jo Hougen
- Lorri Lagerbloom
- Ari O Jewelry
- Dave Pecunies Media
- Ryan Turner Photography

In addition, keep your eye out for the Arts Council's public art virtual tour on their website the week of April 6. It will feature a virtual tour of Big Sky's public art installations, including a lesson plan for each, perfect for parents looking for an at-home art education resource.



Waldazo, by Kirsten Kainz is the large bison statue made from reclaimed materials and one of many public art pieces that will be a part of the Art Council of Big Sky's virtual tour lesson plan in the coming weeks. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

every other Friday at 7 p.m. and the next is George Bernard Shaw's "You Never Can Tell" on April 17.

Bring the arts to your home

Looking for inspiration? Here are a few ways to occupy your hands and mind while creating something of your own.

ACBS is offering weekly art-to-go packets, available for pick up with the school lunch program and including art supplies and instructions for simple, elementary-level art projects that kids can do at home with family. While limited, instructions for each project will be posted on the Arts Council's Facebook page and often require materials most will have at home.

Enter a contest and be featured locally

Put your creativity to the test with these upcoming calls for art with ACBS. Art can be submitted on their website: http://bigskyarts.org/ call-for-art/.

Music in the Mountains poster and T-shirt design contest! Artists of all ages can submit designs for a chance at cash prizes and their art will be featured during this summer's free concert series.
The Environmental Sustainability Drawing Challenge is a unique opportunity to have your art featured on a local utility box. This contest is for third-, fourth- and fifth-graders throughout the state and also provides the opportunity to win a free week at Big Sky Community Organization's art camp.

Watch a live performance

While we can't visit our favorite bar, music venue or enjoy live theater right now, musicians and performers are getting creative, streaming online shows and sometimes including a virtual tip jar. Order your favorite takeout and growler to go and check out these upcoming local favorites from the comfort of your own couch:

- Start your day off with beautiful morning mandolin sessions with Kevin Fabozzi.
- Jeremy Harder interviews local musicians and personalities on RadioBigSky's YouTube page, and will drop in occasional short skits with actors from the Big Sky Community Theater.
- Tune in weekly for Brian Stumpf's Stumpy Sundays.
- End your week on a high note with the Friday Afternoon Club featuring a different weekly artist on Explore Big Sky's Facebook page.
- If you're craving some theater, Shakespeare in the Parks is streaming recordings of recent plays on Facebook. Shows are

"If you look back in history you'll find that some of the most impactful artwork, music, film, writing, and so on, have come from times of challenge and struggle," Buecking reminds us. "The creative works that we make now will help future generations understand the perspective of someone living through this pandemic."

While we may be confined to our homes for now, supporting the local arts has the power to keep us connected as a community and is a reminder that no matter how long our venues and galleries remain closed, we still possess the power to create.



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BUSINESS

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SECTION 3:

SPORTS & FUN

BUSINESS, HEALTH,

Making it in Big Sky: Big Sky Community Food Bank

BY BRANDON WALKER

Editor's note: As local businesses adjust to the ongoing restrictions and guidelines relating to COVID-19, EBS will feature businesses and organizations that are doing everything in their power to continue responsibly serving Big Sky.

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



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

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

"All three of us are really dedicated to confidentiality and we all know what it's like to be in an emergency and have to use the food bank, so there's no judgment," Gaither Bivins said. "You might have

seen us around Big Sky for years, [you've] been our friends and neighbors and we're going to keep your information confidential and you should feel welcome coming to the food bank."

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

and give it to you in your car...We also went to being open four days a week, rather than just two. Again to kind of spread people out [and] give them more opportunities to come and so hopefully not everybody's crowding in at the same day...The three of us who are working take our temperature before we get there, we wear our gloves, we're sanitizing probably every 20 minutes...My mom just sent us some face masks this week, so we'll start to use those.

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

S.G.B.: This used to be a part-time job. I was only working 20 hours a week. I now have a full-time job. I now work 40 hours and have two employees, so that's kind of how my life has been impacted...For years I lived in Big Sky and now I live in Bozeman, but I've been driving to Big Sky every single day to either deliver food or work at the food bank or whatever.

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

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

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

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

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

Explore Big Sky: What adjustments have you made to address COVID-19 guidelines? Sarah Gaither Bivins: We have now moved to a drive-up model to keep [with] social distancing. So, we have moved to pre-packed boxes and we take it out

EBS: Anything else?

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

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Explore Big Sky

Enjoying the Ride COVID, cash and 'DCA'

BY SCOTT BROWN EBS CONTRIBUTOR



I began my career as a financial advisor more than 25 years ago. My objective was simple: help clients reach their financial goals.

Throughout my career, I've learned that financial goals aren't based on arbitrary numbers like having \$1 million before you retire. Instead, personal financial goals are driven by what's most important in life to those investors, including the health and financial well-being of spouses, children, grandchildren and employees.

In most cases, these goals also include philanthropy, spirituality and the pursuit of other interests like fitness, travel and hobbies; in other words, the pursuit of happiness. So, I partner with people to assist them in making prudent financial decisions so they can enjoy life and make life more enjoyable for those they love. This is the focus of my column, "Enjoying the Ride."

As everyone is acutely aware, COVID-19 has created a global shock to our way of life, the capital markets and the global economy. People around the world are suffering from the disease itself, its economic repercussions and its long-term societal impacts. Nonetheless, I have five reasons to be optimistic about the economy and capital markets.

First, our economy was extremely strong when the market selloff and economic slowdown began. Second, the Federal Reserve reacted with a swift and robust response. Third, Congress passed the CARES Act on March 27. Fourth, I believe we're beginning to win the battle against this invisible enemy. And finally, after witnessing the emergency response failures at the federal, state and

local levels, we'll be better positioned to respond to the next crisis. As such, I expect a strong V-shaped recovery for both the U.S. economy and capital markets within 12-24 months.

Now, let's shift gears and quickly review two strategies of a sound financial plan.

The first strategy is having an appropriate cash reserve, which can provide you with liquidity in the event of an emergency or when faced with an opportunity. It's similar to backstops behind batters in baseball. The amount you hold in reserves depends on your relationship status, employment status and whether you own a business or have dependents.

A rule of thumb is having a cash reserve between three and 12 months of net expenses. In volatile and uncertain times, having a cash reserve allows you to cover months of lost employment income, "buy the dip" in the market, lend money to friends in need or make contributions to philanthropic organizations.

The second strategy is dollar-cost averaging, or DCA. A DCA is a systematic savings plan that over time can help offset market volatility and allow for a lower averageper-share cost of a stock or mutual fund. A perfect example of a DCA is investing in a 401(k) plan. DCA plans remind me of climbing a mountain: each step you take or hold you grab ultimately gets you closer to the summit.

If you're already using these strategies, congrats! If not, plan to implement them soon. I hope you find this information helpful and I trust you and your loved ones stay well and prosper during these challenging times. As always, before you embark on your next life adventure, set your sites on your goals and keep enjoying the ride!

Scott L. Brown is the cofounder and managing principal of Shore to Summit Wealth Management. His wealth management career spans more than 25 years and he currently works and lives in Bozeman with his wife and two sons.





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Local AA recovery groups offer virtual support

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS - DISTRICT 72

BOZEMAN – In light of the recent COVID-19 outbreak, local Alcoholics Anonymous members and groups are letting community members know they are still available, ready and willing to help anyone who is struggling with a drinking problem.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other in order to solve their common problem and help others recover from alcoholism.

In response to the global outbreak, many Alcoholics Anonymous groups are following social distancing guidelines established by local, state and federal officials by facilitating virtual AA meetings, while at the same time maintaining a focus on recovery.

Through phone calls, emails, literature and these online meetings, AA groups continue to fulfill their primary purpose: to carry the message of recovery from alcoholism to alcoholics who are still suffering.

Despite current restrictions on meeting in person, AA wants both potential and current members to know that AA is more than just a place to go, and that our program is still accessible for anyone who needs help.

Those interested in connecting with Alcoholics Anonymous and its local membership can find information about AA, contacts and links to locally hosted and virtual AA meetings in Gallatin County, including Big Sky, at aa-montana.org.

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Chakra series: Five, six and seven

BY DR. ANDREA WICK EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Here we are diving into the final part of the chakra series. Amid the crisis happening in our world, I'm hoping that everyone is staying well during this time and staying as uplifted as possible.

The fifth chakra, the throat chakra or (Visuddha), is considered the epicenter of our communication. It's connected to the lungs, respiratory system, throat and thyroid and gives us the ability to clearly and creatively express ourselves. It's also how we communicate what we're feeling in our heart and our head. When we suppress ourselves and don't speak up it can impact this energy center by causing constriction.

As children, most of us were told to "be quiet" or "stop singing" and asked to shut down our creative outlets. We may have been told that certain emotions were not OK to express, such as anger or sadness. This may roll over into adulthood and we may not properly voice how we truly feel.

The lungs and respiratory system allow our bodies to exchange air for oxygen and provide life to our tissues. The thyroid is the organizer of the endocrine system and helps to regulate our metabolism. Can you see how the throat chakra helps with communication within our bodies?

We can heal this chakra by clearly expressing ourselves, singing, writing and creatively speaking. Aromatherapy oils such as eucalyptus, spearmint and frankincense can be applied to the throat and neck. You can wear crystals such as lapis, turquoise and aquamarine to the throat. The sixth chakra, or the third eye, is known as the Ajna and is related to the pituitary gland, hypothalamus, sinuses, eyes and ears. It relates to our inner intuition, inner seeing and knowing. When we close off our third eye we may have more headaches, feelings of pressure inside the head and chronic sinus inflammation. The pituitary is the master gland of our endocrine system and regulates hormones in our body. One way to open this chakra is through daily meditation, especially visual mediation.

Children are great at using their third eye chakra: they're creative, imaginative and have an inner knowledge. As we age and go through puberty, we begin to shut this part of ourselves off. Essential oils such as clary sage, angelica and helichrysum can be placed on the third eye and temples, and crystals known to have healing properties are amtheyst, labordorite and apophyllite.

The seventh chakra is the crown chakra (Sahasrara), and represents the energetic center for the brain and pineal gland, which secretes melatonin and hormones that aid with normal sleep rhythms. The seventh chakra is believed to be connected to our spirituality and something greater than ourselves. Meditation and spiritual learning help to open the crown. Aromatherapy, including jasmine, rose and frankincense can be massaged into the scalp, and crystals for aided healing are angel aura, angelite and celestite.

I hope that this chakra series information was helpful! It's important to remember this is not meant to replace seeing a medical professional, rather it's a helpful guideline in self-improvement and empowerment. Stay well Big Sky!

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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Morris eligible for Cardinals hall of fame

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Many young baseball players dream of playing in the major leagues. For Big Sky local Matt Morris it became a reality. Having retired from the game over 10 years ago, baseball may have one last gift for the hard-throwing righty, as Morris is one of seven eligible athletes to be elected to the 2020 St. Louis Cardinals hall of fame.

Voting for the organization's 2020 hall of fame class began back on March 1 and will conclude on April 17. Individuals may choose up to two players when casting their vote, as fans will elect two of the seven players on the ballot into this year's hall of fame class.

Other on the ballot include Keith Hernandez, Edgar Renteria and Lee Smith among others. "It's an honor to be on [the ballot] with some of these guys. I'm looking at Keith Hernandez...a lot of them that I watched," Morris said. "I remember Keith from the [New York] Met days growing up in New York. It was my favorite team back then."

This is the third time on the ballot for Morris. His fist bid came in 2014, the year that the Cardinals franchise created their hall of fame, and again in 2019. "Just to be part of that and mentioned to be enshrined at some point and hopefully never forgotten for what I did on the field will be an absolute, amazing honor," he said.

Word of Morris' hall of fame eligibility has spread throughout Big Sky as neighbors and friends show their support. "Last year there was a big push for me and I love it," Morris said. "It's humbling for sure...I'm just trying to be a dad now and coach baseball and help out anyway I can. To be supported by so many people in this community, I mean it says a lot for the community."

Growing up in New York, Morris switched sports with the changing of the seasons, never becoming a one-sport athlete. An avid skier, he also played soccer and basketball as well as baseball.

Starting out in the tee-ball ranks, Morris progressed through little league to senior league to Babe Ruth, before he found himself as the shortstop for Valley Central High School. After a large group of pitchers graduated the previous year, Morris—having not pitched since little league—as well as some of his teammates were thrust into the role their senior season.

"I was left with a couple other guys to see if we could pitch," Morris said. "I jumped on the mound as a senior and just really had a good arm basically." Good enough to be drafted by the Milwaukee Brewers' organization straight out of high school.

Morris then had to make the decision between becoming a major league baseball player or attending college. He chose the latter, becoming a Pirate of Seton Hall University. "One, I get my education, two, I get to really hone my craft. I'm just beginning it basically and this will let me know if I'm good enough to take the next step, so I went to Seton Hall," Morris said reflecting on the thoughts that went into his choice.



Morris and his family gather for a picture in the St. Louis Cardinals dugout at Busch Stadium. PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT MORRIS

"It's not a game, it's not a pitch, it's not a situation," he said. "It always comes back to doing something. [It] could be fun with the guys and being part of a team like that. What clicks in my mind are not the amazing games or the going to the World Series or anything like that. It's always just having the camaraderie of the rest of your teammates and being part of a team and having those tight relationships."

To cast your vote and view the candidates for the 2020 St. Louis Cardinals hall of fame class, visit https://www.mlb.com/cardinals/fans/hof-vote



After three years at Seton Hall, Morris was once again offered the chance to join the major leagues when he was selected with the 12th overall pick by the St. Louis Cardinals in the 1995 Major League Baseball draft, according to mlb.com. This time he elected to become a professional baseball player.

Over the course of his professional career, Morris racked up a multitude of accolades, becoming a two-time all-star and even appearing in the 2004 World Series. Yet, his most memorable experience has nothing to do with personal accomplishments.

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

A tale of two lives



BY SCOTT MECHURA EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

From hoteliers to chefs, from food inventions to innovative methods, the hospitality world has many pioneers. And I love to write about them all.

There's another type of pioneer, one who bridges cultural, racial or geographical gaps. In the spirit of the cliché "it's lonely at the top," the French have worked hard for centuries to fend off the Italians and Spanish

pertaining to cuisine and global dominance.

But throughout history, they have had another foe that they could never seem to shake: the British.

This may not be the case in terms of culinary prowess, but certainly in everything else. The Brits will never pass up an opportunity to create humor at the others expense, and some of the most memorable scenes in British comedy were when Monty Python skits poked fun of the French.

But one French chef, Michel Roux, along with his brother Albert, broke stride from the traditional French way when in 1967 they opened Le Gavroche, a blatantly French restaurant, in the heart of London. Because the way Michel saw it, up until then British cooking was "horrific."

Born on April 19, 1941 in Charolles, France, about 80 kilometers northwest of Lyon in western France, Michel was drawn to the kitchen through his grandmothers cooking, as is often the case with chefs.

The Roux brothers' father, opting not to take over their grandfather's charcuterie shop, opened his own charcuterie joint only to squander it away due to gambling debt.

Having no real fatherly guidance, Michel leapt into the culinary world if for no other reason than to follow his older brother who had already begun work and training as a pastry chef.

After chasing Albert around working in restaurants throughout France, Michel held some challenging and interesting positions, such as his junior chef role in the household of Cecile De Rothschild, of the legendary banking family.

Soon the two set their sights on an unlikely setting for a French chef in the 1960s: London, England. Le Gavroche was highly anticipated then well received and the opening saw such notables as Charlie Chaplin, Eva Gardner and Douglas Fairbank's Jr, among others.

Just five short years later and capitalizing on their success, the Roux brothers opened a second restaurant, called the Waterside Inn, in Bray, Berkshire in 1972.

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Both Michel and Albert believed pure, quality ingredients were essential to wonderful food. And it wasn't that they believed the ingredients in England were not worthy, but rather their cooking methods were inferior. Well, except for peas. But Michel loathed peas.

In 1982, Le Gavroche received its third Michelin star, the first restaurant in England to do so. The Rouxs now had real chops in the food world and Le Gavroche soon became a training ground for dozens of aspiring British chefs, including Pierre Koffmann, Marco Pierre White and Gordon Ramsay.

With the multitude of Michelin stars, Michel and Albert likened the success of their French restaurants in England to landing on both the moon and mars. If not already, history will soon forget what courage, conviction and arrogance it took for a French chef and his brother to begin their entrepreneurial career in the heart of the enemy.

It would be like opening a Red Sox memorabilia shop across the street from Yankee stadium, and have it busy.

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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Big Sky Bites: Crock Pot Apple Butter

BY MIRA BRODY



Apple Butter is an easy method to preserving apples and a delicious condiment on toast, sandwiches and even pork chops and chicken. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY The uses of apple butter are endless. The fruit spread is a flavorful addition to English muffins, toast, crackers or a peanut butter sandwich, even adding a sweet kick to pork chops and chicken. With roots in Belgium and Germany dating back as far as the Middle Ages, apple butter isn't actually a butter at all, but rather a preserved fruit spread in the same family as jam. However, unlike jam, it does not need pectin, acquiring its butter-like consistency from the caramelization of the natural sugars in the primary ingredient—apples.

Another benefit to apple butter is its ability to be canned for an extended shelf life. Canning has long been a way to preserve foods, and while we limit our grocery store visits and discover family-friendly activities to pass the extra time at home, canning could become your new jam.

This recipe utilizes a crock pot, but if you

don't have one a large pot on a stove works just as well. For this recipe, prep four 8-oz. jars. Gala, Fuji and Honeycrisp apples have great flavor and I added a few Granny Smith apples for tartness.

Ingredients

6 pounds apples (about 20) peeled and sliced (an apple corer works great, if you have one) 3 cups white sugar 2 teaspoons cinnamon ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Crock pot temp: High Prep time: 15 minutes Cooking time: 4-6 hours

- 1. Place your peeled, cored and sliced apples in the crockpot and top with the sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Give it a stir, cover with a lid and set to high.
- 2. After about four hours (if your apple slices are thicker, you may need to cook longer)

it's time to blend! You can use an immersion blender directly in the crock pot, or transfer in batches to a blender.

3. Once all your apples are blended smooth into an applesauce consistency, return to the crock pot and simmer on low with the lid off. This will help some of the moisture evaporate and thicken your apple butter.

Stir occasionally to prevent sticking and give it a taste! Now is the time to add your desired spices, if you wish. Some suggestions: clove, ginger or lemon juice.

Now, you are ready to can.

Canning and Preserving

To properly can at home, you'll need mason jars, bands and new lids. While your jars and bands can be sterilized and reused, lids cannot, as the rubber only properly seals once. You'll also need a large pot and it is helpful, but not necessary, to have a canning rack, wide-mouth canning funnel, magnetic lid lifter and jar tongs. Keeping all of these tools and your canning area sterile is crucial—any bacteria in your cans will spoil your product!

- 1. Wash the jars, lids, and bands in hot, soapy water.
- 2. Fill your pot with water and bring to a steady boil. All of your jars should fit comfortably inside your pot and be covered by at least an inch of water. Using your canning rack, lower your jars and lids into the water and keep them in the boiling water until your apple butter is ready.
- 3. Once your apple butter is ready, remove the cans from the water and line them up on a clean towel. Use a funnel or ladle to carefully fill each jar with apple butter, leaving about a half-inch of space. Before placing the lids, ensure the lip of your jars are clean.
- 4. Place your lids and screw the bands on-do not over-tighten.
- 5. Once all your jars are sealed, return the filled jars into the boiling water and lower until they are submerged.
- 6. Bring the water to a boil and after an 8-10 minute bath, turn off the heat and let the jars stand in the water for 5 minutes.
- 7. Remove the jars from the water and set on a towel to cool.

Do not disturb your product while your jars are cooling—this is crucial to the sealing process. You will hear a "pop!" as each jar seals. This can take up to 24 hours and your success will be measured by testing whether or not your lid buttons pop back up when you press down on the top. Unsealed jars need to be refrigerated and used first or kept in the freezer and re-thawed for use. Store in a cool, dry place and remember to label your jars with a date. If sealed properly, many preservatives can keep for up to five years.

The best part about canning is that your product is sterile, so in a time where direct contact is forbidden, fresh preserves are the perfect salutation to drop at your neighbor's, friend's or family's doorstep to stay connected.





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American Life in Poetry: Column 785

BY TED KOOSER *u.s. poet laureate*

I'm writing this column on a summer day when a hungry crowd of Monarch butterfly caterpillars are eating the upper leaves of the milkweed just outside my door in Nebraska, and my wife and I are joyful that they're getting a good start at life. The following poem is from Stuart Kestenbaum's new book, How to Start Over, from Deerbrook Editions. He lives in Maine and is the state's Poet Laureate.

Joy

The asters shake from stem to flower waiting for the monarchs to alight.

Every butterfly knows that the end is different from the beginning

and that it is always a part of a longer story, in which we are always

transformed. When it's time to fly, you know how, just the way you knew

how to breathe, just the way the air knew to find its way into your lungs,

the way the geese know when to depart, the way their wings know how to

speak to the wind, a partnership of feather and glide, lifting into the blue dream.

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"That Wasn't Me," Brandi Carlile

Hang on, just hang on for a minute, I've got something to say

I'm not asking you to move on or forget it But these are better days...

When your lost you will toss every lucky coin you'll ever trust And you'll hide from your God like he never turns his back on us And you'll fall all the way to the bottom and land on your own knife But you'll learn who you are even if it doesn't take your life.







"Ain't No Sunshine" – Bill Withers

According to the legendary Bill Withers, who passed away at the age of 81 on April 3, the song "Ain't No Sunshine" is about missing something that isn't particularly good for you. Withers was inspired to write the hit after watching the 1962 movie "Days of Wine

and Roses." in which both main characters struggled with alcoholism.

But I want you to know that you'll never be alone. I want to believe:

Do I make myself a blessing to everyone I meet? When you fall I will get you on your feet. Do I spend time with my family? Does it show that I am weak? When that's what you see, that will be me. and House, in which both main characters struggied with alcoholism.

When he wrote the song, Withers was 31 years old and working at a factory that made bathrooms for Boeing 747s. When the song went Gold, the record company presented Withers with a golden toilet seat to mark the start of his new career.

In the song's famous bridge, "I know" is repeated 26 times and was originally intended to be a third verse, but Withers followed the advice of his fellow musicians to leave it saying, "I was this factory worker puttering around, so when they said to leave it like that, I left it."

"Ain't No Sunshine" has since been covered by Michael Jackson and Ladysmith Black Mambazo, among many others, and remixed countless times.

RIP, Bill Withers.



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