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Big Sky

May 8 - May 21, 2020
Volume 11 // Issue #10

Big Sky election results

Unemployment pays large dividends

Reopening after COVID

Gallatin Co. Health's Matt Kelley

Stepping into spring



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ON THE COVER:

A staff member at the The Rocks Tasting Room and Liquor Store hoists up a cocktail in celebration of the watering hole's recent reopening. PHOTO BY KIRBY GRUBAUGH

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Big Sky election results

Ballots are in, results are tallied: find out who was elected to the local board seats as well as the fate of the 1 percent resort tax increase and Big Sky School District school bond vote.

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Unemployment pays large dividends

Under normal circumstances, unemployment benefits compensate a percentage of an unemployed individual's former salary or wage in what is called the replacement rate, which varies state to state. But in states like Montana, where unemployment benefits are generous and wages are low, the entire concept of unemployment has been flipped on its head.

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Reopening after COVID

Stay-at-home orders shuttered nonessential businesses across the state and reopening for many will be a dance of caution, not only in following new sanitation guidelines, but also in re-employing their workers and meeting the already narrow margins that come with being a small business operation.

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Gallatin Co. Health's Matt Kelley

As many Gallatin County residents continue awaiting the latest COVID-19 updates and guidelines from the Gallatin City-County Health Department, one name continues to circulate in unison: that of GCCHD health officer, Matt Kelley. Meet the man at the helm of the GCCHD.

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Stepping into spring

As spring gracefully replaces snowfields with green meadows and trees gain their buds, the time of year symbolic of birth and renewal is marked by changes in the landscapes around us. With plenty of space to venture outside and observe the happenings of the active seasonal transition, anyone can be a naturalist.

Opening Shot



After nearly 20 years, residents of Parkview West in the historic Karst area of Big Sky celebrate during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 1 for the completion of a major renovation to the one-lane bridge that accesses the 43-home neighborhood.

"To get to our homes, a fire truck would have to empty its water before reaching the bridge then refill from the river on the other side," said HOA President Dennis Downing.

To commemorate the \$350,000 bridge renovation, funded by Parkview West homeowners and other bridge users through a Rural Improvement District, Big Sky Fire Department drove a 36-ton fire truck across the expanse.

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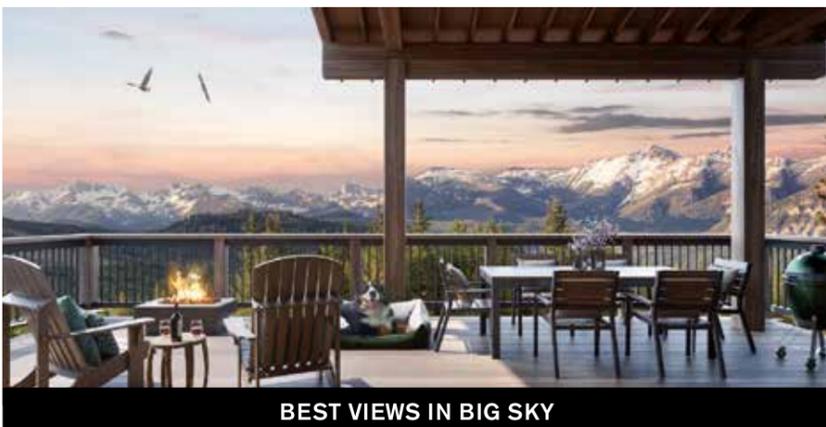
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SPANISH PEAKS MOUNTAIN CLUB
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SKI IN/ SKI OUT PROPERTY

150 Homestead Cabin Fork
SPANISH PEAKS MOUNTAIN CLUB
5 BED + 7 BATH | 3,569 +/- SQ. FT. | \$3,500,000

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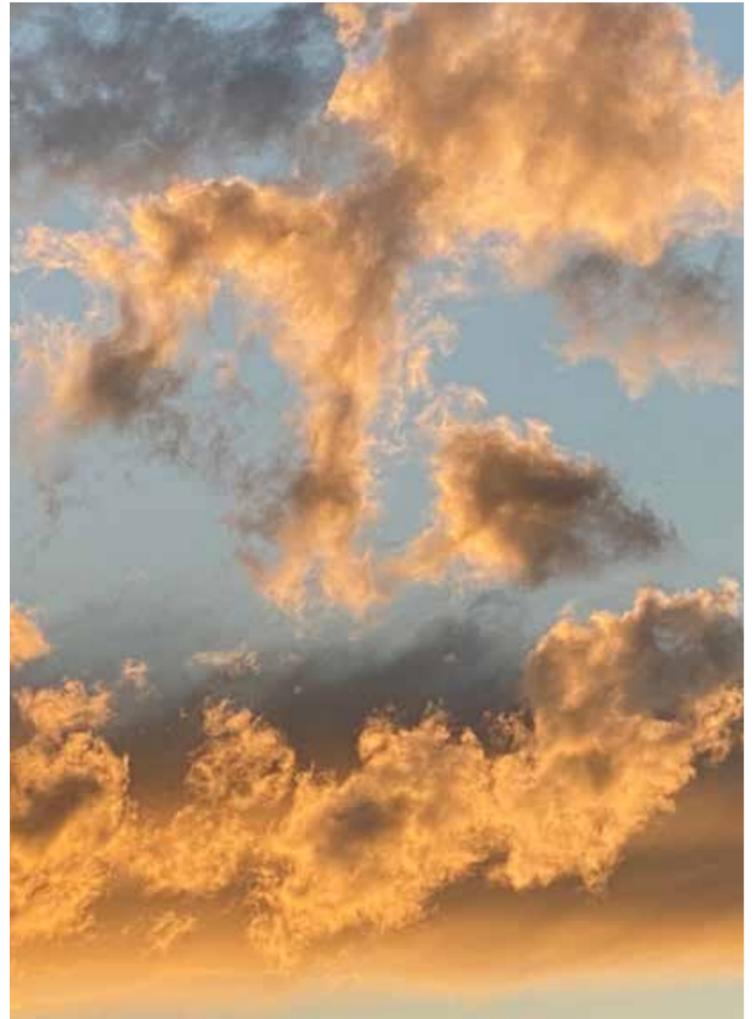


LETTERS

This is where I cry

This is where I cry
 I'm certainly not the first, I'd be blind if I thought I was;
 Nor, will I be the last, unfortunately. It hurts me to see him, so much in pain.
 and out of love, I let him sleep where he's comfortable,
 because my heart tells me that this is what he needs.
 His tired body and frail spirit have already been through so much.
 He is fighting a momentous, powerful battle
 for himself and the love he has for me
 I am restless, in another space, trying to regain an objective view,
 strength to not cry in public, even with so many that truly care.
 Their hugs helped me limp through my days,
 and coming home to a warm smile makes it worth the heartache.
 It is all most difficult, he being the love of my life, for so many years.
 I try to correlate plan of attack, a doable order of the trifling daily functions,
 to find my inner faith, my personal source of strength, my center, my smile.
 Each end of the day, I need these tiny private moments
 so I can stand up to the demons that attack the following day.
 To be his rock is not an easy task placed before me,
 many times, these formidable lessons have come,
 many times I have lost a piece of my heart,
 this is another one I don't want to lose.
 so while I sit in another space, true and quiet unto myself;
 this is where I cry

MDC



Getting outside in the spring





As states across the country begin reopening economies, what is your biggest concern?



Amy Langmaid
Big Sky, Montana

“Right now I feel like Montana has been very lucky in regards to not having too many cases of COVID-19, but I am a bit worried as we have more visitors our number of cases could climb rather drastically. On the other hand, I’m worried there won’t be as many visitors to the Big Sky area this summer and as someone whose business [Rhinestone Cowgirl] directly correlates with tourism my sales could be very negatively affected.”



Scott Mcneill
Big Sky, Montana

“My biggest concern is another surge of coronavirus cases. It’s good that we are reopening and life is starting to feel like it’s returning back to normal, and the economy needs some help, we need to be able to make some money, but I do fear that it’s a little early that we do this and we are going to see another surge and it’s going to set us back even further.”



Jaqueline Lange
Big Sky, Montana

“My biggest concern is the fact that I think the employees are going to be put at so much risk. I was in Bozeman. . .and we were kind of just seeing how things were going, what people were doing and how they were handling the new rules and opening. Most places have their servers wearing masks but as we know, that protects everyone else and not the individual. These servers can’t serve a table from a 6-foot radius, and although they’re protecting the customers as best they can, they’re coming into contact with multiple people. I’m still scared. I don’t want to open up our staff [at Blue Buddha] to this risk, I’d like to wait a little longer.”



Mariah Jimmerson
Big Sky, Montana

“I’m not concerned for myself but I’m glad they’re doing a phased reopening. There’s a way to keep people safe. It’s a wake-up call for people; we should have been washing our hands all along.”



Chapel Grace
Wold

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Health board votes to push emergency rule

EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – At a special board meeting on May 1, the Gallatin County Board of Health voted to extend the emergency local health rule relating to COVID-19 by 90 days to meet the needs of Gov. Steve Bullock's phased reopening of the economy. The rule addresses the enforcement of health and sanitation requirements and the investigation of those believed to be non-compliant so that retail and restaurants can reopen and operate safely.

Gallatin City-County Health Officer Matt Kelley warned that as businesses become operational the risk of a spike in cases increases. The 90-day extension is the maximum a board decision can be extended at a time. The timeframe is flexible, not static, meaning they can vote to make changes to the emergency rule before the extension is over.

Events of 50 or fewer people would fall under Phase 2 of reopening, and larger events of over 50 people, such as concerts and rodeos, will fall under Phase 3. There is not yet a date to move into Phase 2.

Kelley noted that the impacts of Phase 1 must be fully understood before moving forward and that any changes will be guided by epidemiology and science. Other metrics being monitored are the number of active COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths, the county's testing capacity and the viral load in sewage treatment.

BSSD maintaining online format Continuing virtual learning for remainder of school year

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – The Big Sky School District School Board held a special board meeting on April 24 to address the option of returning to a traditional learning format in the coming weeks. The school board voted unanimously to continue utilizing the online learning format they implemented on March 18 for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

The meeting spurred from Governor Steve Bullock's phased reopening plan, which allows individual school districts to determine if they would like to return to a traditional school setting on May 7.

Graduation plans for the graduating class of 2020 was the other topic of discussion at the April 24 meeting. The school board plans to compile different options in which graduation could commence, to address restrictions and scenarios that may arise come the May 23 graduation date.

Currently, BSSD anticipates returning to a traditional learning environment for the 2020-2021 school year.

NPS concessionaires release tentative opening dates

EBS STAFF

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK—In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park concessionaires have announced amended operating schedules for the summer season.

Xanterra Travel Collection, one of the primary concessionaires in Yellowstone National Park, announced April 25, that limited hospitality services within the park will tentatively open June 15, based on regional guidelines. According to a statement on Xanterra's website, there is a possibility that some facilities will open before June 15, but nothing concrete has been released at this time. Xanterra operates lodging, camping, dining and tour facilities within YNP.

Grand Teton National Park facilities have followed precautionary suit. According to Grand Teton Lodge's website, the Jackson Lake and Jenny Lake lodges are not expected to operate for the 2020 summer season. Other limited facilities, such as various campgrounds and cabins, are tentatively expected to open in early June.

Firm dates on the opening of Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park have yet to be announced by the National Park Service.

Bozeman Health talks reopening

EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – At an April 28 press conference, John Hill, Bozeman Health's president and CEO, shared Bozeman Health's readiness and phased reopening plan, which would have the hospital fully operational by June 1.

The phases would occur as follows:

- Phase 1, from May 4-17 will bring the hospital up to 50 percent normal capacity, with 50 percent for COVID-19 response and triage.
- Phase Two, from May 18-31 will bring the hospital to 75 percent normal capacity and 25 percent clinic space for COVID-19 response and triage.
- Phase 3, starting June 1, will bring the hospital to 100 percent normal capacity.

Hill said Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital has so far avoided the projected spike in cases due to the swift and aggressive actions by the state and county health departments but that significant surges of COVID-19 are still possible in coming weeks.

"We are not yet through this community health crisis," said Hill. He said the hospital is still in preparation for widespread and continuing COVID-19 surges and that their phased approach is in alignment with the Gallatin City-County Health Department. Those with upcoming appointments will be contacted by their provider to reschedule. Additionally, telehealth care visits are an option for those who do not wish to visit the hospital in person.

BSCO summer programs preparing to commence

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Big Sky Community Organization sponsored summer programs are anticipated to commence, although some changes and restrictions may be made in order to comply with reopening regulations. BSCO programs include Camp Big Sky, Hike Big Sky, the Historic Crail Ranch, the co-ed softball league, and any park reservations.

Registration for all BSCO programming will not be made available until the state has progressed to Phase 2 of the reopening plan, which accommodates for larger gatherings. All park reservations that are anticipated to draw more than 50 people are being reviewed by BSCO at this time.

"We are planning to start operating whenever the restrictions are lifted that allow us to operate in groups of up to 50 people, which is Phase 2 and according to the mandate restrictions—whatever those may be," said BSCO program manager Mackenzie Johnson. "We're also looking at policies and procedures to put in place for the safety of our community and we're consulting regional parks and recreation organizations as well to see what conversations they're having."

Adjustments may be made to all programs to address the health and safety of the community. Johnson shared possible changes being discussed for the softball league, including limiting dugout occupancy, only holding two contests per night as opposed to the usual four and shortening the length of the season.

BSCO understands the importance of their programming to the community and is working to continue providing for Big Sky. "We will definitely operate Camp Big Sky, whenever we are able to. We know that that is the local care for our workforce here in Big Sky," Johnson said. "...Rest assured, camp will happen this summer in whatever capacity, within whatever restrictions, we can make it happen to provide that care for those families."

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Matt Kelley: beyond the name

BY BRANDON WALKER

BOZEMAN – As many Gallatin County residents continue awaiting the latest COVID-19 updates and guidelines from the Gallatin City-County Health Department, one name continues to circulate in unison: that of GCCHD Health Officer Matt Kelley.



Gallatin City-County Health Department health officer Matt Kelley. PHOTO COURTESY OF CATHY COPP PHOTOGRAPHY

Kelley has been in his current role with GCCHD for a little over a decade, when he and his wife relocated to the Treasure state as he accepted the position. His name has become well known to many as the pandemic has progressed, but there's more to Kelley than simply his name.

He grew up in Wales, Wisconsin. The oldest of three kids, he has a sister and a brother. A self-described 'cheese head', he is an avid Wisconsin sports fan at heart. Kelley enjoys the full scope of outdoor activities that Gallatin County has to offer, from fishing to camping to skiing—although they aren't at the top of his list currently.

"These days my hobby is, every time I have a chance, spending time with my kids and wife," he said. Kelley and his wife, Cathy Copp, reside in Bozeman with their daughter, Laila, and son, Henry.

Upon completing high school in Wisconsin, Kelley ventured to Des Moines, Iowa for his undergraduate studies at Drake University, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in journalism and a minor in political science. After graduating from DU, Kelley accepted a position as a business and city hall reporter for the Omaha World Herald in Omaha, Nebraska. A couple of years into that role, Kelley

was transitioned to the position of Washington D.C. bureau reporter, in which he covered Capitol Hill throughout the majority of the 90s.

While working in D.C., Kelley met Copp—the pair lived on opposite sides of the street from each other. Copp and Kelley were finishing preparations for a two-year Peace Corps stint in Mali, West Africa, all while arranging their own wedding. Barely six months after the couple said "I do", Kelley and Copp began their work with the Peace Corps in January of 2004, Kelley as water and sanitation volunteer and Copp as an agricultural volunteer.

"While we were working on water projects, and irrigation projects and chicken raising projects, all of it was about improving the health of the community and working with the community," Kelley said. He described the two-year experience in Africa as a 'defining moment' in his life.

When he returned to the U.S., Kelley contemplated what was next in life. He worked briefly writing grants, before ultimately attending graduate school at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where he graduated with his master's degree in public health.

Next came a brief stint working back in D.C. This time he served as an analyst who worked in conjunction with the Department of Health and the Department of Mental Health. "It was kind of another graduate crash course in management. Not just public health, but management," he said of the position.

In March of 2010, Kelley's current role as GCCHD health officer became available. He accepted the position and remarked that he has spent the past 10 years compiling the best team of professionals that he possibly could. "We're dealing with this pandemic and that team is what keeps me going," Kelley said. "That team is what gets us through day to day at the health department and overall incident command."

Facing down an unprecedented health crisis, the former journalist and Peace Corps volunteer, along with his staff are navigating unknown waters. "The hardest part of my job right now is that you're really trying to balance the human cost of this pandemic against the economic cost, which also has a human cost," he said. "...It's a huge responsibility and I think it's been really important to me that this is a community effort because no one person in this situation has all the answers and that there's tradeoffs to everything and we need leadership and I'm trying to provide that leadership."

Kelley acknowledged that COVID-19 has been the most demanding challenge that he has faced in his professional career. "There's some decisions that you know, no matter what you decide, there's going to be some people who are disappointed and there's going to be some people who are not. Your decisions also are going to have impact—negative impact—on individuals and families—and that's hard, that's really hard, and I think more than anything I want people to know, we recognize that," Kelley said. "There's no easy decisions in any of this and so we're just trying to make the best decisions and explain them really clearly."

As Gallatin County continues a phased reopening, Kelley and GCCHD will be monitoring the effects and adjusting accordingly. Kelley's greatest fear, spurred by the situation, is becoming a community divided, but this thought is rivaled by that of his greatest hope.

"I think my biggest hope is that we can work together, stay unified and really work through this difficult period together," Kelley said. "Because I think that's the way we're going to get through it with the least amount of harm to the least amount of people."

BSRAD changes allocations, elects new positions

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – Following results from an area election, the Big Sky Resort Area District board welcomed a new member and appointed board members to officer positions at their May 6 meeting.

Grace Young, 19-year Big Sky resident, replaced former board member Buz Davis, who did not run for reelection. Young was joined in her victory by incumbents Kevin Germain and Ciara Wolfe. During the meeting, the new board voted to reappoint Kevin Germain as board chair, appointed Sarah Blechta as vice chair and Steve Johnson as both secretary and treasurer. Johnson was also appointed to all subcommittees that formerly included Davis.

The board then revisited the scenario planning presentation delivered by a subcommittee the week prior. The subcommittee, comprised of former board member Davis, and Blechta, along with BSRAD Executive Director Daniel Bierschwale and Operations Manager Jenny Muscat, was established to analyze a number of potential COVID-19 impact scenarios and present possible approaches to the board.

The subcommittee consulted with more than 20 sources, including interviews they conducted with various community and regional actors. From these consultations, they drew out a number of themes, including assumed impacts for two to three years, a need for widespread testing, and utilizing travel and tourism data to guide decisions, among others.

Among the propositions presented by Bierschwale, on behalf of the subcommittee, at the April 29 meeting was a biannual allocation cycle, which the board unanimously voted to implement for the next two fiscal years at the May 6 meeting.

This restructuring will add a fall application period to that which already exists in the spring and allocate funds collected within a six month, rather than 12-month period. The aim with this adjustment is to react more regularly to the pandemic and its ripple effects, which have proven to be extremely fluid. This change also ensures that a guaranteed sum of money will be available for allocation in the fall.

After witnessing greater than previously assumed March collections, modest predictions for April and May 2020 collections—and with considerations for the operating budget and bond commitments—collections currently scheduled to be distributed for FY21, which begins July 1, 2020 and ends June 30, 2021, are forecasted to total \$6.3 million, roughly 2 million less than the previous year.

Another recommendation brought forth by the scenario planning subcommittee was to set aside a portion of collections as a reserve. “All of that money is extremely important to the [recipients of resort tax funds], but that money is also what’s going to potentially help us get through in [Fiscal Year 22] in the

event that the worst case scenario were to happen—which would be Fiscal Year 21, the summer and winter season, having no collection,” Bierschwale said at the April 29 meeting.

The subcommittee’s reserve recommendation was paired with the proposed concept of a crisis management policy that would provide guidance as to when and how to use the reserve funds in case of an emergency. The board discussed the reserve fund further at the May 6 meeting but did not take any action in its regard.

Also proposed was the continuance of the Big Sky Relief fund, which has provided critical emergency funds for the Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center as well as other community institutions and organizations like the Big Sky School District and the Big Sky Community Food Bank. The six-month resort tax appropriation cycle will give biannual opportunities to reevaluate Big Sky Relief as well as the BSRAD operations budget.

At both meetings, Wolfe, who is also CEO of the Big Sky Community Organization, expressed concern with regard to the reserve fund, which was proposed to begin with \$2 million and build by \$500,000 for the next two fiscal years. “I just think the board needs to be realistic also about balancing what feels safe and financially secure and worst-case scenarios with the heart of the people,” she said at the April 29 meeting. “Is it worth being safe and secure to not have anything available and people to move out of town?”

Bierschwale said that the amount of the reserve fund, if adopted, can be negotiated at a later meeting with interest in “making the most fiscally responsible decision.”

“We have a responsibility to make sure we have public safety and emergency services ... and make sure those continue so we can support the health and safety of our community,” former BSRAD board member Davis said. “Are we willing—are you willing—to bet the cash we have now, to bet against that this thing is going to reemerge?” Davis warned the board to be conservative.

Other board members cited the Montana Department of Commerce’s recent “Montana is worth the wait” campaign as well as the potential for a fall reemergence of COVID-19 as justification for making conservative choices now.

“This pandemic has taught us all that anything can come out of left field, and I do think it’s our fiduciary responsibility to this community to generate a nice reserve for unanticipated issues such as what we’re facing,” Germain said.

The board also took action at the May 6 meeting to approve the reclassification of funds allocated to BSCO for FY20, which were allocated for community center construction use and will still be used for that purpose.



PHOTO BY OUTLAW PARTNERS

Work? Unemployment pays better

BY BELLA BUTLER



Renata Garrett, Country Market deli chef dons her personal protective gear. Essential employees like those at the local grocery store continue to work for standard pay while some on unemployment are making over 100 percent of their usual wages. PHOTO BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

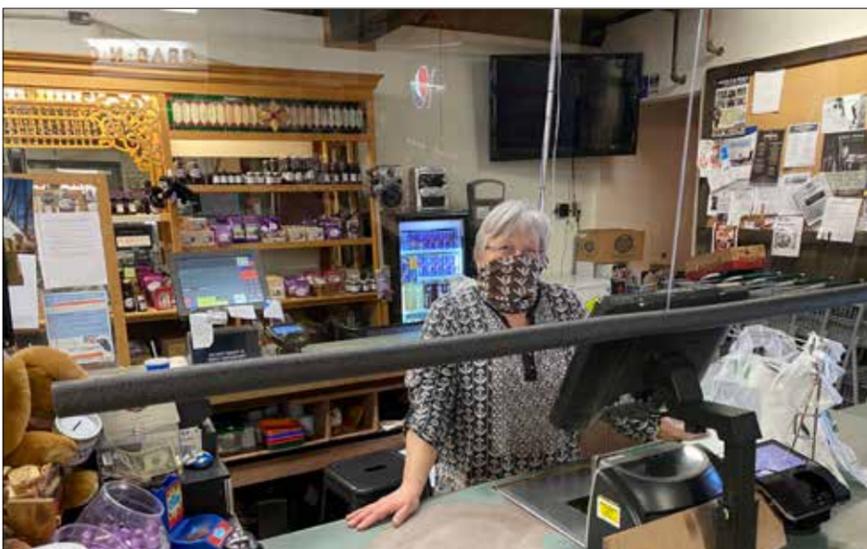
BIG SKY – Megan Rhead rings up a package of tortillas behind the counter at The Country Market. A pane of plexiglass separates her from the customer, and a patterned cloth mask covers her nose and mouth. It's 2 p.m., time to clock out. She arrived for her shift at 6 a.m., just as she does five days a week.

Despite quarantine conditions keeping most of the Big Sky community homebound, Rhead comes into contact with dozens of people each day, oftentimes more. Between 6:30-8 a.m. in the morning when the store offers free coffee, she estimates crowds of up to 50 patrons circulate through the tight aisles and pass through the checkout line.

In the evenings, she returns home to the house she shares with her bosses, Lynne and Steve Anderson, who both qualify as at-risk for Covid-19 by multiple counts; the plexiglass, the gloves and the masks are not enough to create complete security. Rhead is aware of the risk she is exposed to everyday as a front-line worker during the pandemic, but she's committed to her job, her boss and the service to her community.

Meanwhile, Montana saw 107,942 initial unemployment claims filed between March 8 and April 25. As businesses shuttered their doors in a collective attempt to flatten the curve, the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act established the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program to further support furloughed and laid-off laborers: it amounts to \$600 per week on top of unemployment benefits.

Under normal circumstances, unemployment benefits compensate a percentage of an unemployed individual's former salary or wage in what is called the replacement rate,



Lynne Anderson, owner of The Country Market, expressed frustration in the compensation gap between her employees and the unemployed. PHOTO BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

which varies state to state. Funds from the FPUC added a weekly payment of \$600 to eligible people's unemployment payments in an effort to bring the average national replacement rate to 100 percent. But in states like Montana, where unemployment benefits are generous and wages are low, the entire concept of unemployment has been flipped on its head.

"Traditionally, the idea of unemployment insurance was to incentivize people to return to work. But in this contagious pandemic, the philosophy behind unemployment insurance is to incentivize people to stay home,"

said Malin Johnson, a Missoula lawyer and adjunct professor at the Alexander Blewett III School of Law at the University of Montana who has taught employment law since 2013.

Johnson explained that in Montana, where the unemployment replacement rate is in the neighborhood of 50 percent and the median annual income is approximately \$52,000—or \$1,000 week—most Montanans currently receiving standard unemployment benefits as well as the weekly \$600 are earning more on unemployment than they do on the job—sometimes upwards of 110 percent.

"Unfortunately, in the state of Montana," she said, "that makes it not even worth it to go to work unless you have a really high paying job." Johnson deduced that one would need to earn more than \$60,000 annually in order to receive an income comparable to current unemployment payments.

A laid-off Big Sky resident who previously earned \$1,000 a week, the state average, could potentially earn 135 percent more than their wage through combined payments from unemployment, an FPUC bonus and a Big Sky Relief individual grant, which can be up to \$1,500 for a period of 45 days. At The Country Market, an employee's starting wage is \$13.50 an hour, making the weekly wage for a full-time employee, like Rhead, \$520 before taxes. For Lynne Anderson, who has owned The Country Market for nearly 20 years, this disparity in compensation is irritating.

"I resent the fact that they're putting themselves on the line and they're getting the short end of the stick," Anderson said of her 13 employees. Rhead added that an unmonetized benefit of being on unemployment is the safety of staying at home. All it takes, she said, is one person to come in without a mask and everyone in the store could potentially be exposed.

"I don't understand how they are the ones most at risk and the least cared for," Anderson said.

The compelling incentive to stay at home is disparaging businesses deemed nonessential, as well, according to local business owners. Andrew Schreiner, co-owner of Grizzly Outfitters, expressed the moral dilemma he is currently plagued with after reopening his retail store following permission from the state.

"I'm frustrated by the stimulus money because I want to take people and put them back to work but then I'm really taking something from them," he said. According to

Schreiner, he is now he now struggles between choosing to contributing to a necessary economic reboot in his community and protecting the health and financial interests of his employees.

As an act of support, Schreiner said he waved recent rent payments for workers living in Grizzly's employee housing and maintained benefit packages. He and co-owner Ken Lancey want to feel good about handling their staff, but also recognize that employees staying home were making more money while undertaking fewer expenses.

For other business owners like Alex Omania of the Lotus Pad, it's less about caretaking and more about the feasibility of running a business. Until recently, Omania questioned her ability to open her restaurant for dine-in service due to an absent staff. She said that



After uncertainty as to whether she could open for dine-in service due to a staff shortage, Alex Omania was able to bring back enough employees to open her doors on May 6. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

many of her employees work more than one job in order to meet the cost of living in Big Sky, a town-wide trend, which means they're collecting unemployment on behalf of their other jobs.

Legally, when the unemployed are offered a chance to return to work and decline the opportunity, they are no longer eligible to receive unemployment payments associated with that job. Omania said that despite having this leverage, her employees that are still eligible to collect unemployment on behalf of other jobs would only lose a portion of their unemployment and in many cases would still receive the FPUC's additional \$600 each week. Johnson, the UM law professor, echoed that while this condition of unemployment may motivate some to return to work, it's not enough to return the workforce to a satisfactory capacity.

Omania is concerned about how the Big Sky community will operate without international workers and local employees opting to stay home until July 31, when FPUC payments will cease. "We're used to dealing with a lack of employees, but we're not used to dealing with straight out not having any," she said.

Montana is unique in its employment laws and its low wages, and Johnson predicts it will take more time for the workforce to recover here than in other states. "We're likely to have interruptions in a lot of our essential services between now and July 31 because we won't have a supply of low-wage essential workers willing to go back to work and fill those jobs."

Anderson, who recently received funds from her Paycheck Protection Program loan, is struggling to fill the two additional full-time employee positions she needs for her loan to be forgiven. Most people who reject her offer to work say the unemployment payments they receive greatly outcompete what they would earn unloading trucks and scooping deli pasta salad at the market.

“Traditionally, the idea of unemployment insurance was to incentivize people to return to work. But in this contagious pandemic, the philosophy behind unemployment insurance is to incentivize people to stay home.”

Anderson shows up at her store each day out of duty to her business but also to honor her commitment to the community, and she thinks people appreciate it. In many cases, though, this sense of service is overshadowed by a number of other factors, according to Johnson.

“Not many people are going to go back to work out of a sense of civic duty,” she said. “They’re more likely to do it out of a sense of economic necessity, and the government hasn’t given that to them.”

Johnson, who practices employment law at the Missoula-based firm Johnson & Johnson, PLLC, believes that dialogue around employee compensation will open up drastically post-pandemic. Some employers stated an interest in seeing changes at the federal level, and Johnson says the best solution is adding incentives for essential employees to return to work rather than adjusting incentives the unemployed are receiving to stay home. “I think the answer is to pay more money to the people who do the work that society needs done,” she said.

Such action is in the works. On April 3, Michigan Congressman Bill Huizenga introduced the Helping Emergency Responders Overcome Emergency Situations Act. Aply referred to as the HEROES Act, the proposed legislation seeks to offer a tax break for medical professionals and first responders who work in counties where one or more COVID-19 cases have been diagnosed.

On April 7, a few days after Rep. Huizenga proposed the HEROES Act, U.S. Senate Democrats put forth the suggested Pandemic Premium Pay Fund, commonly referred to as the Heroes Fund. The Heroes Fund is designed to achieve two things: provide bonus income for workers currently categorized as essential, and establish a fund to provide employers with recruitment resources to help bring employees to the front lines.

The Heroes Fund would present essential workers with a premium pay of \$13.50 an hour on top of wages already being earned, beginning retroactively on Jan. 27 and lasting until the end of 2020. For essential workers who earn under \$200,000 a year, the aid would cap at \$25,000, and for those that earn more, the cap is proposed at \$5,000. The fund would also grant the premium payment to families of front-line workers that have died as a result of COVID-19.

This is precisely the kind of incentive Johnson suggested would be key in maintaining a crucial essential workforce in the coming months, but Anderson and Rhead aren't holding out hope for it to pass. Hazard pay isn't currently offered to the staff at The Country Market, but Anderson, who calls her staff family, rewards her employees in other ways when she is able.

Rhead graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in wildlife ecology and management, but is considering staying on at The Country Market instead of filling a summer position as a Colorado park ranger because she believes she can do more good at the store working for Anderson. She's struck by selfless gestures her coworkers make, like calling elderly community members after a shift to see what they can bring them.

After living all over the country, Rhead has grown to love the community of Big Sky during her tenure at The Country Market and is inspired to return to work at 6 a.m. in the morning, clad in PPE, to do her job.



Big Sky election and voting results

Board member elections tallied

Candidate votes are in for the Big Sky Resort Area, Water and Sewer, Fire Department and the School Board districts.

The three resort tax vacancies went to Ciara Wolfe, Grace Young and Kevin Germain. Ciara Wolfe is the chief executive officer of the Big Sky Community Organization and has nearly 15 years of nonprofit leadership under her belt. She was elected to the board in 2019. Grace Young has run in the past, but it will be her first elected term and Kevin Germain has served since 2015.

The Water and Sewer board were vying to fill three vacated board of director seats. Four ran for the available spots and winners include Richard “Dick” Fast, the board’s current secretary and Mike DuCuennois, another incumbent and newcomer Mike Wilcynski who will replace Packy Cronin who served for 19 years. At the Water and Sewer board meeting on May 19 they will decide on new officer board roles.

The choice for Fire District board of trustees went to Alan McClain. McClain owns Big Sky Landscaping and has served on the board since 2011, most recently as board chair. He is looking to continue serving as board chair, but officer positions will be voted on and appointed at their May board meeting.

Stacy Ossorio ran uncontested for the school board and will run a three-year term as board trustee.

School bond vote narrowly passes

Registered voters passed the Big Sky School District bond vote by a slim margin—73 votes—as ballots were tallied on the evening of May 5. 539 ballots were cast in favor of the school bond, while 466 were opposed, passing with nearly 54 percent of voters in support.

“We’re feeling above the moon. You know we’re just thrilled for the opportunities this is going to present for the students in the district over the course of the next decade or more,” said BSSD superintendent Dustin Shipman. “...In times of uncertainty we’re just really really pleased—the trustees and I—that the community came out in such support of the school district.”

The bond will fund upgrades and expansions for the school district, providing expanded opportunities for students in subjects such as science, engineering, and

the arts, as well as athletics. Additionally, the \$23.5 million bond will allow for greater community engagement opportunities, such as educational courses and additional facilities use opportunities.

Next steps will include completing a final facility upgrade and expansion design layout, before entering the bidding process, ultimately leading to the commencement of construction.

1 percent resort tax increase a go

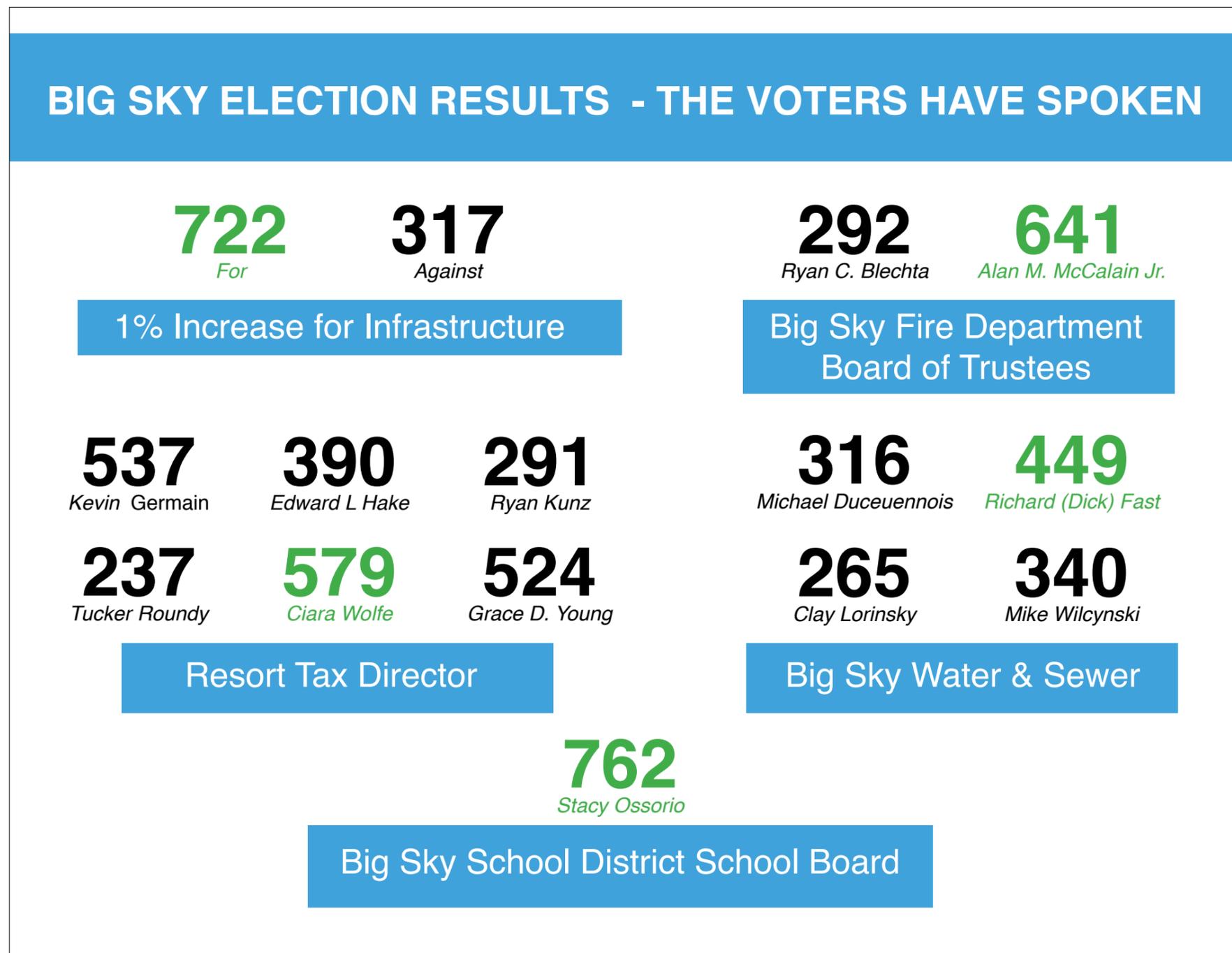
The Big Sky Resort Area District vote for a 1 percent increase in resort tax—increasing the total tax to 4 percent—passed with flying colors as more than two-thirds of voters were in support of the increase, which will help fund water and sewer infrastructure upgrades in Big Sky.

The increase will go into effect beginning July 1 of this year after 722 ballots were cast in favor of the resort tax increase as opposed to the 317 that were against it.

Funds generated from the increase will foot the bill for a portion of the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District’s Water Resource Recovery Facility upgrade and, if a canyon area water and sewer district is formed, will cover all costs of the construction of a lift station, force main and disposal return pipe running from the BSCWSD WRRF to the canyon area.

“I commend both boards and the work of the subcommittee. Their collective creativity found ways to meet the needs of the community,” Daniel Bierschwale, BSRAD executive director said in reference to the Big Sky strategic plan that first addressed the infrastructure needs.

Ron Edwards, BSCWSD executive director, shared in Bierschwale’s appreciation for the outcome of the vote. He said he approached the vote with some uncertainty and didn’t know how a financial lift would be received during the pandemic but was pleased that in the end it received so much support. “It’s a credit to Big Sky and this community to see that kind of approval for the 1 percent,” he said.





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OUTLAW™

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Friday Afternoon Club rallies community, musicians during times of solitude

BY MIRA BRODY

Between layoffs, altered work schedules and the stay-at-home order, it's difficult to remember what day of the week it is, let alone celebrate Fridays the way we used to—with a drink and some live music at the local watering hole. Providing the community with a much-needed end-of-week reprieve the Friday Afternoon Club, produced by Outlaw Partners, publisher of this newspaper, is the cure to this monotony.

The FAC is a weekly, live music event streamed on Explore Big Sky's Facebook page, a virtual gathering place for those who seek entertainment and wish to support their local musicians from the safety of their homes.

"We asked ourselves, 'what do people need right now?' Music and a good time," said Sam Brooks, Outlaw Partners' Lead Business Developer and organizer of the FAC. "We're a musically-inclined company and we wanted to do something to bring people together during a crazy time. People are stuck inside, but you can still hop on your porch and listen to music and be a part of society again for at least an hour."

So far, the FAC has hosted a lineup of talented local artists including Jamie McLean, Luke Flansburg (of Pinky and the Floyd and Dead Sky), Ryan Acker (of The Last Revel), Lena Marie Schiffer (of Laney Lou and the Bird Dogs), and Zander Chovanes and Ben Macht. Paige and the People's Band brought in the weekend on May 1 with cheers sponsor, Bozeman Spirits. Generous sponsors have helped make these shows possible and generate revenue for these musicians in a time when they cannot perform live shows.

"It's really hitting hard for us musicians because we're trying to follow our dream and it's not working right now," said Flansburg. "I think we're all seeking some normalcy and something of our previous lives and way of living before."

Aside from some judgmental looks from his cat and adjusting to the lack of tangible, reciprocal energy you get from performing on a stage, Flansburg said his experience performing "live" virtually was really fun and speaks to the commitment our community has to lifting each other up and creating a new normal.

"When the service and entertainment industry is brought to a screeching halt, it's time to help each other," said Paige Rammsussen of Paige and the People's Band. "We're all in the same business, even if they take slightly different forms, but it's

all for the enjoyment for the people. A project like this is paramount, it brings some sunshine into someone's home especially because they can't leave it."

Rammsussen says the opportunity to perform is just as important to the musicians as it is to the audience, providing them with a much-needed creative outlet an hour of catharsis in times otherwise clouded by struggle and anxiety.

"Music is an amazing connector of people and this is a time where we need to connect the most," said Candice Carr Strauss of Visit Big Sky, another FAC sponsor. "We're better together. This is a terrific way for us to all come together as a community and now more than ever we've seen that we are a community."

In addition to enjoying music and supporting the arts, the FAC is a reflection of how willing we are to come together and solve problems.

"I think its been awesome to see that our local manufacturers could switch gears so quickly at the start of it all," said Mary Pat Harris of Bozeman Spirits. In light of having to shut their doors, Bozeman Spirits has been hard at work producing hand sanitizer for the Big Sky Community Food Bank and other local businesses. "It's been so great to see how because we can't get these supplies from a nationwide standpoint, we can all come together and do it locally."

Brooks says the Outlaw team will continue to adapt the FAC as the world slowly reopens and we are allowed to gather in public again. Live music is a great way to bring the community together and welcome an escape under any circumstance.

Catch the Friday Afternoon Club live on Explore Big Sky's Facebook every Friday at 5 p.m.



Paige and the People's Band performing for the Friday Afternoon Club on April 24 from their keyboardists living room. PHOTO FROM EXPLORE BIG SKY FACEBOOK

OUTLAW™

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Town Hall panelists talk about the power of connection

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – The sixth installment of the weekly EBS virtual Town Hall featured local business leaders, journalists and community pillars who spoke of reopening, changes in their respective industries and the growing importance of community connection.

This week's panel included: Ryan Kunz, general manager of Lone Mountain Ranch; Quin McNamara and Andrew Robin of Hungry Moose Market and Deli; Greg Fey, founder of Fey Ranches; Todd Wilkinson of Mountain Journal; and Ciara Wolfe, CEO of the Big Sky Community Organization.

Wolfe touched on the hardships COVID-19 has brought to the nonprofit sector, but also excitedly announced that BASE, the new Big Sky Community Center, set to open in 2021, has begun construction this week.

"It has taken a lot to get to this point," she said. "You all invested in us and we're going to make sure to bring that project to fruition."

McNamara and Robin, who adapted their grocery operations to curbside pickup and delivery after shelter-in-place began, are readying to reopen their doors May 11. They've been collaborating with Big Sky Food Bank to ensure that the community, including staff members they unfortunately had to lay off, are fed, and with the Lotus Pad and Camp Big Sky to launch the Big Sky Virtual Kitchen. The virtual kitchen offers weekly live cooking shows—the Hungry Moose will pre-package all ingredients and participants can log onto the Big Sky Virtual Kitchen's Facebook page for a cooking class from the comfort of their own home.

Kunz, who manages a 100-year-old ranch that he assured the Town Hall audience "isn't going anywhere," said the best thing we can do is communicate.

"The term 'we're all in this together' has been thrown around the country, but here in Big Sky I think that really is true," he said.

Fey, founder of Fey Ranches, a land broker in Big Sky, is another key player in the ranch industry and said he has seen a lot of downturn in his career, but never thought he'd have to navigate a pandemic. He is noticing a surge in interest in ranch land and emphasized his mission to conserving Montana's "working land."

Wilkinson, long-time journalist and founder of the Bozeman-based Mountain Journal spoke of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, or the "cradle of American Conservation," and encouraged its human inhabitants to remember the fragility of the ecosystem and the risk growing population has on its biodiversity.

"While we howl let's remember what unties us," Wilkinson said. "We all live here for a reason."

COVID-19 is the pause, he said, wherein GYE residents can be stewards of their unique home and consider what they want to do with the land they moved here to enjoy.

Dialogue of the evening echoed the same mutual theme—that Big Sky has shown, now more than ever, that it is a community connected by its love for the land and the wild things that inhabit it.



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SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT, ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



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pg. 31

THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Ronald Charles Marlenee, the former eight-term Congressman from Montana who died in late April, delighted in being a nemesis to environmentalists.

After the 1990 U.S. Census, Montana learned it was losing one of its two seats in Congress, thereby setting up a showdown between two incumbents in 1992: Marlenee and Democrat Pat Williams. Williams, who had once been a schoolteacher, was descended from copper miners in Butte and was the cousin of Evel Knievel. Marlenee, a rancher, farmer and auctioneer, hailed from Scobey only a few miles from Saskatchewan.

The great Washington Post environmental reporter Tom Kenworthy assembled a portrait of Marlenee, writing: «He has the build of a former boxer who's given up on his road work. Barrel chest. Round face. Strong jaw. Big powerful hands, rancher's hands. And a reflexive, half-cocky grin that explodes across his face when he's talking tough. Which for Ron Marlenee these days is most of the time.»

Dan DuBray, who cut his teeth early as a TV and radio journalist in Billings, Montana, and who was hired to be Marlenee's spokesperson for his last two terms, had many long chats with the congressman as they drove to events across the vast district. «Ron would say, 'As members of Congress we have a credit card that we can put into the machine called U.S. Treasury and we can pull out billions and billions at will, but it is future generations who will be paying the bill.'»

The fact that Marlenee earlier had worked as an auctioneer, often an activity that accompanies farm and ranch foreclosures to pay off debt at the bank, gave him heartache. Ironically, and with Marlenee there was always irony, even though he disdained environmentalists who had set up basecamps in Missoula and Bozeman in the western half of the state, he himself understood the allure of the mountains.

He and wife Cindy purchased a home site on the back (eastern face) of the Bridger Mountains near Bridger Bowl northeast of Bozeman and it served as a place of solace and retreat. On a couple of occasions I interviewed him there.

Marlenee was a die-hard advocate of "multiple use" of public lands even though logging clearcuts, intensive oil and gas drilling, hardrock mining and other uses were seldom done in balance with other things. Sometimes, they ended up ruining or eliminating other kinds of uses.

Part of Marlenee's appeal among supporters is that he had proudly amassed one of the lowest ratings among members of Congress in a scorecard kept by the League of Conservation Voters that tracks how members vote on key environmental issues.

In 1988, Marlenee played a key backchannel role in convincing Ronald Reagan, in one of his last acts as President, to pocket veto a Montana wilderness bill, approved by the both the House and Senate, that had been years in the making. My favorite Marlenee utterance came when he described lycra-attired, pro-wilderness, pro-wolf, pro-grizzly, vegetarian-dieted conservationists as "fern feelers and prairie fairies." Of the plan gaining steam in the last years of the Reagan Administration to reintroduce wolves to Yellowstone, Marlenee said, sneering and shouting, "Sonny, let me make this clear to you. The answer isn't just no. It's hell-no. No wolves, no how, no way—not as long as I'm serving in the United States Congress."

Big Personality

Remembering former US Rep. Ron Marlenee

"In all those miles Ron traveled across Montana, he had many cups of coffee with people at the local café," DuBray said. "He knew all of the owners of car dealerships and farm implement stores and bowling alleys by first name. Some politicians have the gift of remembering faces and names along with those of their kids and Ron was one of them. It always amazed me. With what he said publicly, with what he told you and other reporters, he was channeling their concerns and reflecting their sentiments. They didn't like environmentalists because environmentalists represented unwanted change."

In 1992, the battle royale between Williams and Marlenee happened. After serving eight terms in Congress, the most by any Republican in the state, Marlenee lost in a squeaker to Williams.

A year or so after the election ended and as fate would have it, Williams and Marlenee met on an airplane. Marlenee carried a small satchel. He looked at Williams who was toting a familiar gigantic load and he noticed Williams had big bags under his eyes. The two of them didn't have to say a word.

Marlenee understood the weight of the job. He nodded, not holding any resentment or envy, but rather empathy and sympathy for his old foe. Marlenee admired Williams for wanting to serve the good people of Montana, but delighted in being able to stay in Bozeman.

Occasionally, I would run into Marlenee in subsequent years, usually at the Bozeman airport. What he really adored was jousting for the pure sport of it.

In the end, he agreed with Williams' assessment of what was—and still is—at stake in the state. "Montana," Williams, who served nine terms, said, "Montana is the brow of America's last hill. Montana is what America started out to be. Now we face the challenge of figuring out how to manage the economy with the environment in a way that secures jobs."

When the results of the 2020 U.S. Census come in, some demographers say Montana may regain a second House seat. Will it deepen the old east-west, mountains vs. prairie, urban vs. rural dynamic in the state? No doubt Mr. Marlenee would've had a strong opinion.

Ron Marlenee: Aug. 8, 1935 - April 26, 2020.

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.



Former U.S. Rep. Ron Marlenee served eight terms in the House of Representatives. He died on April 26. U.S. CONGRESSIONAL ARCHIVES

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A guide to spring

Becoming a naturalist

BY BELLA BUTLER

“As we work to know the life that surrounds us, we stand in a lineage of naturalists — past, present, and even future. We join the ‘cloud of witnesses’ who refuse to let the more-than-human world pass unnoticed.”

-Lyanda Lynn Haupt, *Crow Planet*

BOZEMAN - Southwest Montana’s tempestuous winter is giving way to a new season. As spring gracefully replaces snowfields with green meadows and trees gain their buds, the time of year symbolic of birth and renewal is marked by changes in the landscapes around us. With plenty of space to venture outside and observe the happenings of the active seasonal transition, anyone can be a naturalist.

According to Montana Outdoor Science School Master Naturalist Instructor Cedar Mathers-Winn, to become a naturalist all one needs to equip themselves with is interest, patience and time. While Mathers-Winn acknowledges that definitions vary, he said that he believes a naturalist is someone who spends time in the outdoors “observing nature, reflecting on those observations and developing questions based on their observations and reflection.” It is helpful, he added, to learn how to use resources like a dichotomous key and a field guide, but those skills come with time and rehearsal. Mathers-Winn suggested starting a nature journal as a good jumping off point.

“Go outside, and when something gets your attention, dig in,” he said. “Write and draw about what you see, hear and experience, and you’ll start to realize how much you don’t know. And therein lies the seed of naturalism.”

As the earth embraces change and a new beginning during this challenging period of pandemic, step into the role of a naturalist and take to the outdoors to interpret what’s going on around you.

Jump start your naturalist experience with these indicators of spring:

Birds

“Spring is an especially exciting time to be watching the birds in our area,” said Mathers-Winn. Birds from as far south as Argentina take to the sky to migrate north to breed. “Bluebirds, osprey, sparrows, sandhill cranes, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks—all are moving northward to our state where they will put on their flashiest plumages, sing their finest songs and perform their elaborate displays, all with the single goal of reproduction,” he said. The same is true for stationary birds, he added, as they also join the mating game while defending their territory for newcomers. Employ your best listening and spotting skills as the new season inspires “intense performance and intense competition” for the feathered and winged sky dwellers.



Wildflowers

What better way to view the growth of a new season than by observing the colorful shoots that decorate the ground? This time of year marks the beginning of a multi-month rotating exhibit of wildflowers. Be sure to get out and see the season’s first round before they make room for summer flowers.

Spring wildflowers mostly take on shades of pinks and purples, but a few exceptions exist. Glacier lilies, a tender yellow flower that is usually one of the first to pop up indicates where snow has recently melted. Others to look for during this time of year are pink sticky geraniums, arrowhead balsamroot, shooting stars and larkspur.



Weather

Spring weather patterns often take on a transitional nature as winter makes its grand exit and summer creeps in. Thunderstorms are common, and the occasional graupel or hail, a pellet-like snow, is also prone to fall.

As snow melts from the surrounding high summits, rivers surge with swift waters and moisture is restored to wetlands. As the wetlands habitats are restored, new life returns to their soggy homes. After a heavy rain, venture outside to a marshy spot and look for frogs, snipes and insects.



Wildlife

As birthing season commences, baby animals are abounding throughout the wildlife-dense Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Look for bison and elk calves, fawns, big horn sheep lambs and other furry youngsters. The warming temperatures of spring also wake up the bears. Beginning with the emergence of grizzlies followed by black bears, remember to be bear aware!



Insects

For more detailed, small-scale observations, tune into the insects that fill the more minute spaces of spring. Fly fishermen and women are familiar with the riverside hatches that make for a feast for fish. Joining these swarms are pollinators, including bees and butterflies. “In the earliest stages of spring, the butterflies we see on the wing are those which spent the winter sheltered in some crevice of bark, loose bale of hay, or perhaps a brush pile in your yard,” Mathers-Winn said. “As the season progresses, butterflies will emerge from overwintering chrysalises. Those that spent the winter as caterpillars will begin their own transformations, and overwintered eggs will hatch to start the process from the beginning.” Keep an eye out for signs of this cycle and perhaps sketch any sightings in a journal.

The Montana Outdoor Science School is a Bozeman-based non-profit whose mission is to inspire curiosity, awareness and understanding of nature and science through quality educational experiences. MOSS offers spring and fall Master Naturalist courses which fill up quickly. To be notified of registration openings, visit [outdoorscience.org/naturalist](https://www.outdoorscience.org/naturalist).

Water Wisdom

BY DAVID TUCKER
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Recently, I stopped along the Gallatin to enjoy a peaceful moment at the river's edge. Pulling into the access site adjacent to the Hwy. 191 stoplight, I expected an idyllic scene of slow-moving, crystal clear water. What I got was the opposite.

Originating from sources unknown was a thick stream of chocolate-milk-colored liquid. Fearing the worst, I assessed the situation to confirm that it wasn't raw sewage fouling the Gallatin.

The turbid water was in fact running off from a nearby parking lot. Plowed snowbanks were melting, and the melt water was mixing with newly exposed dirt. The result was a sediment-filled flow headed to the river.



Stormwater runoff in the Gallatin River. PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID TUCKER

This is "stormwater runoff," and it is a growing problem in Big Sky. The more parking lots, roads, roofs, and sidewalks constructed, the bigger the problem becomes.

These impervious surfaces hasten the flow of water during spring melt and summer rain. Sediment-filled water flows rapidly down streets and into streams, carrying along with it oil, greases, and harmful chemicals. The Middle and South forks of the West Fork, and the West Fork of the Gallatin itself, are currently designated "impaired" by Montana DEQ standards in terms of sediment load. If we don't do something about it, the main stem of the Gallatin could be next.

Pollution is just one part of this problem. When snow melts or rain falls and there is vegetated soil for it

Stormwater Management in Big Sky

to seep through, water can make its way into our groundwater, recharging local aquifers. These aquifers release groundwater throughout the summer and must be fully recharged to provide sufficient flows for late summer and early fall. Without those pervious vegetated surfaces, the stormwater rapidly runs off, leaving the upper watershed too soon. This leaves the river low and hot come August and September. Insufficient flows and high-water temperatures contribute to excess algae growth, such as we saw in August 2018.

So, what's the solution?

Land developers in Big Sky should implement stormwater infrastructure and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for both the construction and post-construction phases, and for both detention and treatment. "Big Sky has no coordinated stormwater runoff management," says Kristin Gardner, executive director of the Gallatin River Task Force, "which I believe is a huge issue."

While some new development of more than one acre is regulated for construction-phase stormwater management by Montana DEQ, "historical infrastructure likely has little to no detention or treatment infrastructure," according to Mace Mangold, senior project engineer with WGM Group. Furthermore, Mace explains, Big Sky is not "within a regulated municipality," meaning the town's unincorporated status leaves the Gallatin more susceptible to pollutants from inadequately regulated stormwater runoff management.

Structures like detention ponds, infiltration basins and vegetative implementations reduce and treat stormwater while delivering social, environmental and economic benefits. Grassed swales (ditches) and filter strips can be strategically placed in residential areas to help reduce stormwater runoff through infiltration and storage, while keeping neighborhoods and commercial districts visually appealing.

BMPs and stormwater infrastructure would be most useful in the Mountain Village and Meadow Village areas because of their dense impervious-surface compositions, but they should also be implemented at large residential properties, hotels, and base-lodge facilities.

On the same day pollutants poured into the Gallatin from the poorly managed parking lot mentioned earlier, sediment-filled runoff was being captured and filtered at the Ophir School's Stormwater Conservation Garden. Just a few miles down the road, a problem was being solved. This is the approach Big Sky must take as a community if we are going to keep the Upper Gallatin healthy, clear, and cold for future generations.

David Tucker is the communications manager for the Gallatin River Task Force.

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Choose less plastic

BY KATHY BOUCHARD
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

One of the greatest hoaxes perpetrated on an unsuspecting public, in my grumpy opinion, is the system of plastic recycling. Billions of plastic containers and other items are blithely stamped with the triangular symbol with its three arrows flowing in a continuous circle, indicating a sustainable loop that doesn't exist. So, I try to avoid the plastic, and let merchants know I'm buying the boxed mangoes instead of the clam shelled apples because of the difference in packaging.

As I write this in the Chicago area, sheltering in place with three granddaughters, April showers have come my way. They will bring the flowers that bloom in May, after I finish plugging them into my son's border garden. Weeding and planting while the baby naps provide me with activity that usually comes later in Montana. To my delight and occasional dread, the six-year-old twins insist on helping with each new planting. We dig, then one separates the roots as the plant comes out of the pot, tamps it in place, and waters it in. Her sister, on "pot duty", transports the empty plastic pot to the stack, then rotates in for her turn. As always, I rue the quantities of plastic involved with this past time so intimately dependent on nature.

Black plastic nursery pots aren't recycled in Chicago's curbside recycling program, as they are not in Montana. Good luck trying to get your garden supplier to take them back, but please try. Recently I read that two large home improvement chains have programs to accept these containers, as well as empty soil and mulch bags. The stores reuse the pots or return them to their plastics supplier which does recycle them, saving about 60 percent of production energy. Once again, I feel that vendors who use plastic ought to take the responsibility of accepting it back to be reused or recycled, and kudos to these merchants for doing so!

Living temporarily among a young family with two working parents, I see their dependence upon fast and simple foods, like precooked rice pilaf in

microwaveable bags, 4 ounce yogurt drink containers with colorful animal shapes, and prepackaged snack boxes of cheese, nuts, and raisins. This means a lot of plastic packaging, offering the convenience of sturdy lightweight structure so the food is not crushed, and transparency so the food may be seen. Making more dishes from scratch would put a dent in the single use plastic consumption, and the family does prepare a number of meals in advance every Sunday. But the time saving convenience is all too tempting.

Even before the recent black swan drop in the price of oil, the petroleum industry was already looking to hugely expand its offerings in plastic packaging, "the only major source of oil demand, whose growth is expected to accelerate". At their expected rate of expansion, the ratio of plastic refuse to fish in our oceans will go from 1:4 (2014) to greater than 1:1 by 2050, (source)

But I found an article from Forbes' Mike Scott, dated Sept 16, '19, claiming that "growing legal and consumer backlash against plastic pollution may threaten the economics of further petrochemical and oil and gas developments". Anti-pollution rules and governmental pressures, like the EU, are limiting the use of single use plastics, which is 40 percent of plastic production. Major companies like Colgate-Palmolive, Diageo, PepsiCo, and Unilever have committed to using 25 percent postconsumer recycled material, up from zero. Finally, 26 financial institutions with 4.2 trillion dollars of assets under management, like CBMO Global, BNP Paribas, and Hermès EOS have endorsed the Ellen MacArthur Foundation New Plastics Economy Initiative, a global effort originating in Europe which promotes a closed circular economy for plastics. This means lenders are feeling public pressure to ensure their loans go towards sustainable enterprise.

So, maybe another culture war is setting up. Choose less plastic in your bathroom, in your refrigerator, in your yard, and your actions will matter to the overall outcome of this critical battle for our planet.

Kathy Bouchard is a member of the Rotary Club of Big Sky's Sustainability Committee. She has been a Montana resident for 20 years and is inspired to work for sustainability on behalf of her grandchildren.

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Grand Canyon takes a break from the crowds

BY MARJORIE

“SLIM” WOODRUFF



Usually, I work as an educator at the bottom of Grand Canyon National Park. These days, because of the corona virus, the park remains closed. It's a good thing, because for some unknown reason, visitors here seemed to feel immune to a disease that thrives in crowds.

In mid-March, at Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the canyon, 40 hikers shared a table, merrily passing dishes

around with their bare hands. A week later one of the hikers reported on social media that she had come down with COVID-19.

Concessionaires were concerned enough to close the hotels and restaurants. There. Done. Except the train and busses dropped off a few hundred visitors at a pop. Parking lots were full. People jostled shoulder-to-shoulder at the lookouts and flocked onto the trails.

Our tiny general store was crowded with tourists until the end of March. Normally, visitors purchase a six-pack and chips. But the virus worried them enough that they loaded carts full of our meager supplies. Finally, the store limited visitation to 10 shoppers at a time, locked all but the front door, and marked six-foot intervals for the line, which went halfway out the parking lot.

Ah, but surely the trails were free and clear. No longer on the job, I hiked into the canyon to see the flowers in bloom, taking an early start to avoid the crowds. Except for that group of 30 kids on spring break. And that extended family of 10, and eventually, 300 other hikers.

The Bright Angel Trail is about six feet wide with a cliff on either side: one going up and one going down. You want to be cautious stepping aside. Alas, no one was stepping. I would see someone coming, cram in next to the cliff and hold my breath.

Except many of them wanted to chat. “How far to the river?” “Mmmm, don't know, keep your distance. “

Six feet is surely not even sufficient when one is exercising hard. Panting, gasping, coughing and spitting send the nasty droplets of virus as far away as 12 feet.

I made it to the camping area where the redbud trees grow and idly watched an illegal camper argue with a park ranger. “Overnight permits had been cancelled, said the astonished camper, yet rangers were still on patrol?”

He contended that a bus driver told him he wouldn't need a permit. The ranger assured him he was grossly misinformed and told him to move along. A half-hour later the camper was still proclaiming that he meant no harm and should stay, while the ranger was insisting, from 10 feet away, that he get out of Dodge. I left before she pulled out the citation book.

By late March the park tried keeping only the main road open and blocking off roads to residential areas. But people just parked along the road and walked in or simply moved the cones. This enraged laid off workers who posted photos on social media of out-of-state license plates -- many from virus epicenters.

On April 1 the Park closed: Nobody here now but us mostly unemployed chickens. The occasional entitled individual still manages to sneak in, only to be ratted out quickly.

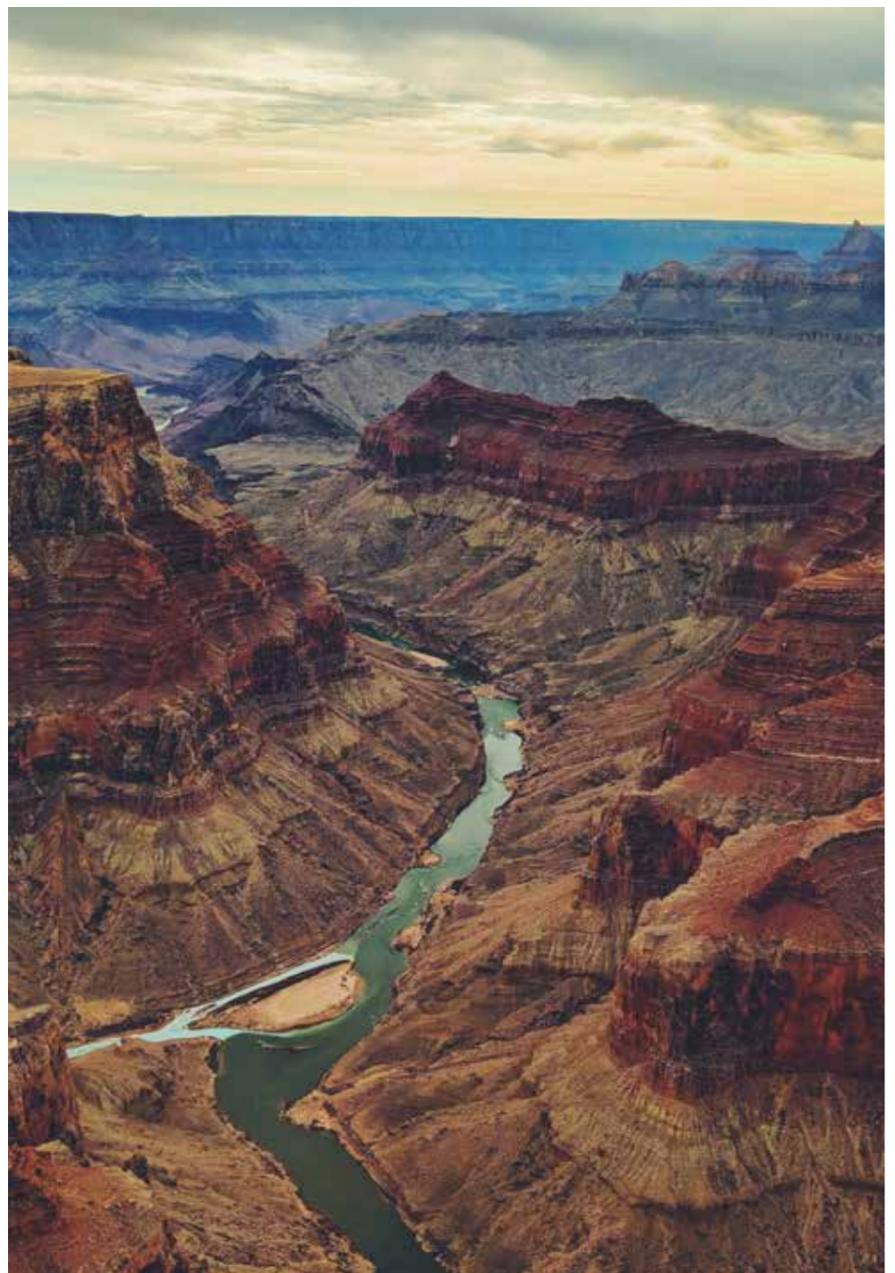
I would like to be working. I have sewn 50 facemasks and sorted through 20 years of photos. I even vacuumed the rug. But I do not want to share cooties with hundreds of visitors from infected areas who laugh at me when I clamber up rocks to get out of their way. Or who sneer at my facemask as they crowd behind me in line until I fix them with my patented basilisk glare.

Our opening date has been moved back twice. Permits and reservations have been negated. My classes were canceled for April, then for May, then for June.

To reach any national park in the West, people have to travel. Travel is risky and helps spread the virus. As for the imagined wide-open spaces at Grand Canyon, you might want to picture a different reality. Just before the closedown, the park was more of a mosh pit with elk and squirrels.

People are understandably antsy and anxious to get outside, and the Grand Canyon is a wondrous place to visit. But the canyon will be here when this epidemic is but an unpleasant memory. If we do not treat this pandemic seriously, many of us may not be.

Marjorie “Slim” Woodruff is a contributor to Writers on the Range.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She works as an educator at the bottom of Grand Canyon National Park, when it's open.



UNSPASH PHOTO/SONAAL BANGERA



MEET THE CANDIDATES:

Montana's gubernatorial candidates The Republicans

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 Tim Fox, Greg Gianforte and Al Olszewski.



WIKIPEDIA PHOTO

Tim Fox

A self-proclaimed Montana family man, Attorney General Tim Fox has been making a name for himself in his home state since running track as a Griz at the University of Montana, where he graduated with a degree in geology and later law. Originally from Hardin, Montana, Fox began practicing law in Billings before dipping his toes into public service in the 90s. An especially unique aspect of Fox and running mate John Knockey's campaign is their Montana United initiative, which sought feedback from hundreds of Montanans on

what they thought was important. The conversations were compiled into 15 strategy papers that Fox welcomes critiques of from the public. He's established a platform based on multiple conservative stances on issues like abortion, securing national borders, defending the second amendment and growing the state economy but said Montana United has expanded his priorities beyond his platform.

"If you want a leader that is someone that's a unifier and has a record of actually doing good work for the state of Montana, rather than being divisive and polarizing. . . you have one choice and that is, I believe, is Jon Knockey and Tim Fox. . ."



PHOTO COURTESY OF AL OLSZEWSKI

Al Olszewski

With homesteading roots on the Hi Line of Montana, Al Olszewski shares the deep Montana lineage that many of his opponents boast but brings a slightly different professional background to the table. After training as a medical doctor and serving 13 years in the United States Air Force, Olszewski opened an independent orthopedic clinic in Kalispell, Montana. Upset by how much time he spent paying attention to what he believed to be burdensome regulations rather than his patients, he became a state legislator, spending the past six years split between the House and Senate. As a doctor, he has prioritized both physical and mental health care in his legislative pursuits, and he has also bolstered his running platform with issues ranging from veterans affairs, gun rights and public lands protection, among others.

"I believe in using the governing lens. I'm not a big campaigner, but I use the governing lens, and that means being honest and straightforward and [putting] out. . . ideas, and [understanding] that many times, your idea would be made better by other people."



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOX FOR GOVERNOR

Greg Gianforte

After initially retiring at age 33, Greg Gianforte moved with his family from New Jersey to Montana, where he ultimately returned back to work when he founded RightNow Technologies. In 2016, Gianforte lost in the gubernatorial race to Gov. Steve Bullock and went on to win one of Montana's two seats in Congress, in a special election in 2017. Gianforte prides himself on working alongside President Donald Trump's initiatives in reducing taxes, securing national borders and removing government regulations. He has identified education, defending the second amendment and keeping taxes low as some of his primary issues of interest.

Gianforte could not be reached for comment by EBS.



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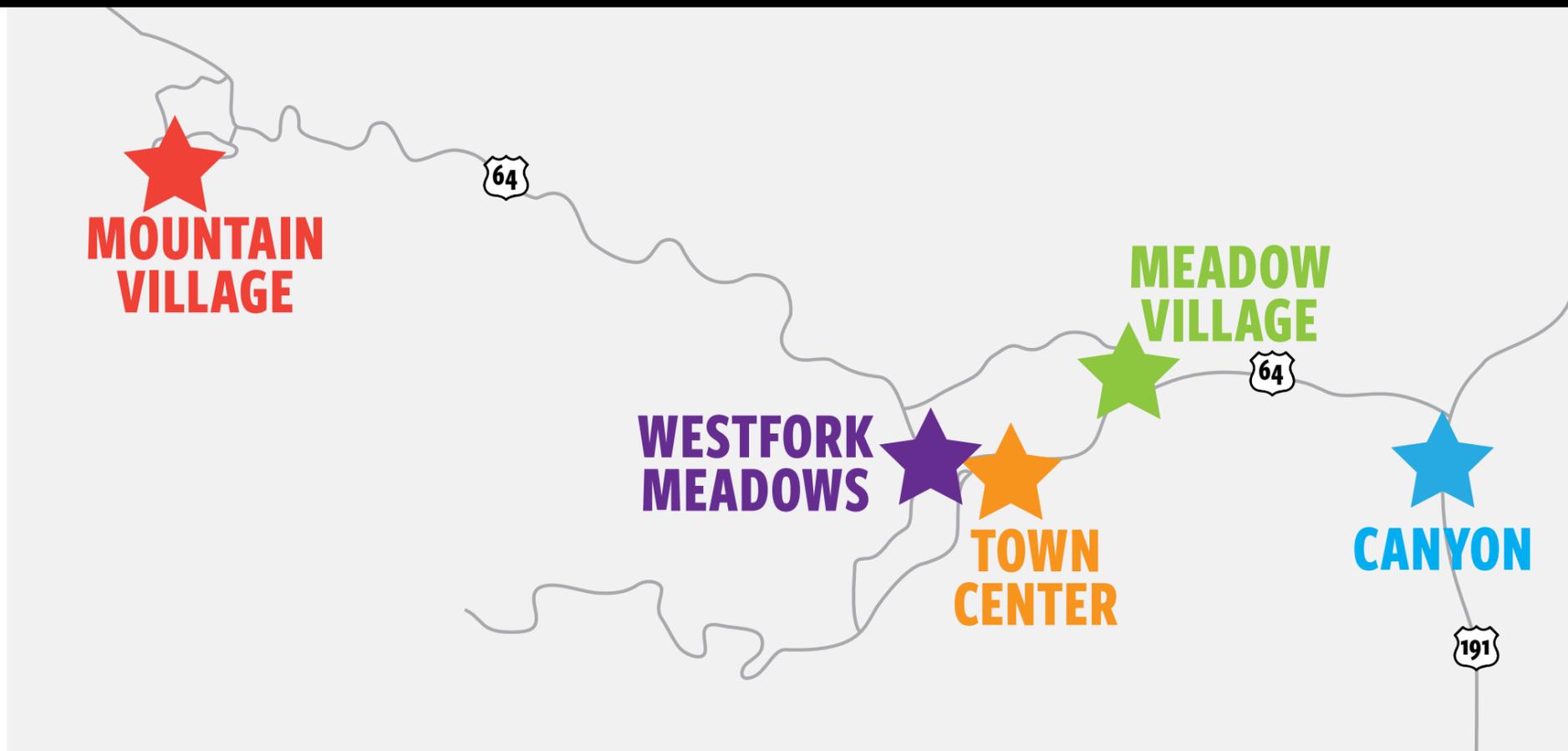
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Montana Shakespeare in the Parks to postpone 2020 season

MSU NEWS SERVICE

BOZEMAN – In consideration of the health and safety of its audiences and artists during the coronavirus pandemic, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks has announced it will postpone its 2020 season to 2021. The two plays scheduled for this season, “Cymbeline” and “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” will be performed instead in 2021. Kevin Asselin, the company’s executive artistic director, said MSIP is preparing plans to fulfill its mission of delivering professional productions of Shakespeare plays to rural and underserved communities in alternate ways.

“Like so many theater companies across the nation, MSIP’s schedule will have to be dramatically altered in order to protect the health and safety of our community,” Asselin said. “However, we are determined to be able to serve our mission. To that end, we are in preparations for a different kind of summer tour.”

Waded Cruzado, president of Montana State University, where the theater company is based, said that while the live summer Montana Shakespeare in the Parks performances will be missed, postponing was the right thing to do during the pandemic.

“We appreciate Montana Shakespeare in the Parks’ efforts to share content with us in other ways, including the streaming of archived performances and lesson plans shared with students and teachers,” Cruzado said. “The show will go on – just in different ways.”

In response to cancellations and postponements, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks began creating content for audiences of all ages under the title “MSIP Live.” This includes streaming archival recordings of some of the troupe’s recent plays on Facebook and YouTube every two weeks. Cast members of Montana Shakes!, the program’s troupe for elementary schools are sheltered in place together and have filmed a play, or Virtual Shakes, that has been distributed, along with lesson plans, to teachers and students online in collaboration with MontanaPBS. Classes that have received the play and workshops also have utilized private web-hosted talkbacks with the actors each school day. MSIP is also currently making content for sixth- to 12th-grade audiences at montana.pbslearningmedia.org.

MSIP recently launched the “Go Forth!” campaign to raise money for its online programming and future summer tour plans, while keeping all programs free for audiences. For more information, email development director Sonja Ervin-Bahr at Sonja.ervinbahr@montana.edu.



Opening night of Henry IV, Part I last summer at the MSU Grove. PHOTO COURTOSEY OF ADRIAN SSANCHEZ GONZALEZ

“Montana Shakespeare in the Parks is the world’s most expansive outreach theater initiative that performs free to the public, integrates with community arts programs and provides schools with a robust educational platform so students may engage with the arts early and often,” said Dean of the College of Arts and Architecture Royce Smith. “We are proud of MSIP’s ongoing commitment to its core mission in the time of COVID-19 and will continue to adapt our programming and initiatives to the changing circumstances impacting the communities we serve.”

For more information on MSIP’s response to the coronavirus health crisis or how to participate in Virtual Shakes or “MSIP Live,” contact director of marketing and outreach Susan Miller at susan@montana.edu.

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Beneath feet, Bozeman's water source carries on

Mountain Times Arts to highlight Bozeman Creek through public art

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – Living in Gallatin Valley means living in the shadow of many notable—and easily visible—mountain ranges; yet, Bozeman has at least one very much overlooked feature, Bozeman Creek, which runs silently beneath our feet and provides the micropolitan with much of its drinking water.

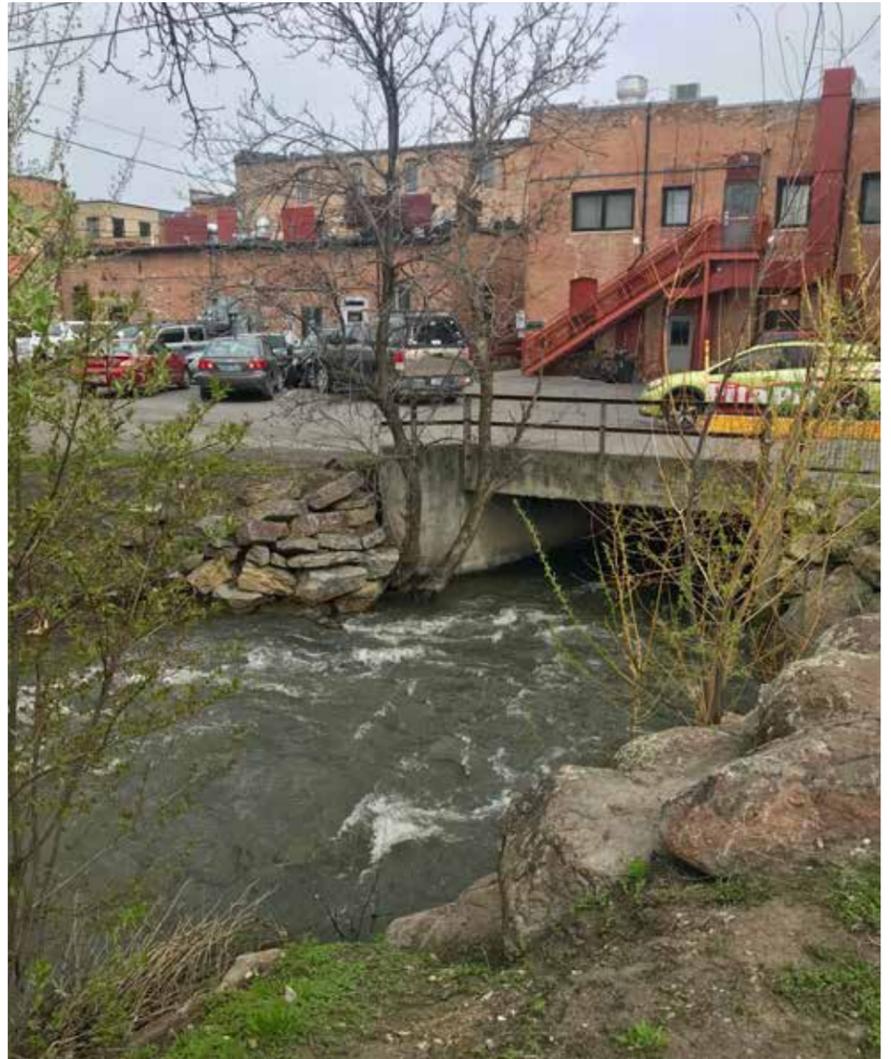
Starting from Sourdough Canyon, a popular cross-country ski, bike and hiking haunt, Bozeman Creek flows under Kagy Blvd., along S. Church Ave., the Galligator Trail and Bogart Park, then ducks under the concrete of Main St., reappearing behind Bar IX before heading north and away from town. Despite its presence in some of Bozeman's highest-trafficked areas, the creek fails to receive the recognition it deserves.

Organized by Mountain Time Arts, See Bozeman Creek is a project that will highlight the critical waterway through a variety of art displays and gatherings this summer. In the wake of COVID-19, the organization has been forced to postpone or adapt many scheduled gatherings, including a virtual fireside chat with storytellers and speakers slotted for May 7.

“We've largely ignored the creek and yet it sustains us,” said Kate Belton, director of development and communications, who is coordinating the See Bozeman Creek project alongside founder Jim Madden. “This is a period of human uncertainty and danger but



The section of Bozeman Creek south of town is oft-enjoyed by cyclists, hikers and wildlife. Mountain Time Arts is working to bring that recognition further into town. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



Bozeman Creek behind the Eagle's Club & Ballroom just before it disappears under a culvert to flow under Main St. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

there's a resiliency that the natural world can demonstrate. There's this sense that the world and nature keeps on going.”

See Bozeman Creek is a fitting and ideal project, considering our current state of affairs; one can enjoy the waterway while social distancing and using nature as a recreational escape to enhance well-being.

“It's truly our lifeline,” said Belton. “Bozeman Creek and Sourdough Creek are literally our water source. Not only our usable city water that we drink, but also what we use for surrounding agriculture.”

Later this summer, Belton will be coordinating a call for public art, and said Mountain Times Arts hope to install a series of pieces along the creek to highlight sections that are hidden by cement culverts, much like the mosaic on the sidewalk near the entrance of Bar IX. The organization is working with the Downtown Bozeman Partnership, city planners, local architect firms and the Extreme History Project to bring their vision to life, starting with the section that flows around city hall and under N. Rouse Ave.

“A huge percentage of people in Bozeman choose to live here because one of the most important things in their life is being able to connect with nature,” said Belton. She said although Bozeman is known for being a “mountain town,” not a “creek town,” Mountain Time Arts hopes to at least bring to light that somewhat invisible, but no less important, waterway.

Share your Bozeman Creek experiences by using the #seebozemancreek hashtag and stay tuned for more popup fireside chats and art installations through the summer.

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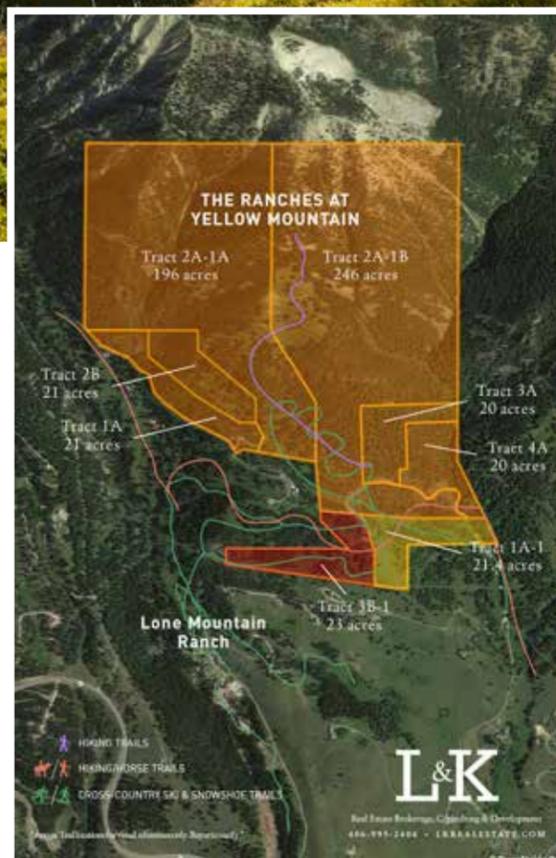


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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, May 8 – Thursday, May 21

If your event falls between May 22 and June 4, please submit it by May 13 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

Friday, May 8

Moving Mountains Workout
Join on Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/156227497>, 9 a.m.

Dance Party with Camp Big Sky
Email camp@bscomt.org, 4 p.m.

Friday Afternoon Club
EBS Facebook, 5 p.m.

Saturday, May 9

Sidewalk Day of Gratitude
Town Center & Meadow Village, 10 a.m.

Monday, May 11

Great Big Sky Baking Show
Big Sky Virtual Kitchen Facebook, 4:30 p.m.

Big Sky Virtual Town Hall
EBS Facebook, 5 p.m.

Tuesday, May 12

Middle & High School Tutoring for Spanish Speaking Students
[meet.google.com](https://meet.google.com/tutoriaELL), code: tutoriaELL, 3 p.m.

Big Sky Virtual Kitchen
Big Sky Virtual Kitchen Facebook, 5 p.m.

Wednesday, May 13

Lone Peak Performance Workout
Lone Peak Physical Therapy Facebook, 8 a.m.

Arts Council of Big Sky's Art-to-go
Available with school lunch pick up, 11 a.m.

Youth ELL tutoring with Discovery Academy
Join: [meet.google.com](https://meet.google.com/youthELL) meeting code: youthELL, 2 p.m.

Middle & High School Tutoring for Spanish Speaking Students
[meet.google.com](https://meet.google.com/tutoriaELL), code: tutoriaELL, 3 p.m.

Arts & Crafts with Camp Big Sky
Email to sign up: camp@bscomt.org, 4 p.m.

Friday, May 15

Moving Mountains Workout
Join on Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/156227497>, 9 a.m.

Dance Party with Camp Big Sky
Email camp@bscomt.org, 4 p.m.

Friday Afternoon Club
EBS Facebook, 5 p.m.

Sunday, May 17



Participants from a 2015 Harbor's Hero Run on their marks at the start line of the annual 5K. The race raises money for local nonprofits in honor of the late Harbor deWaard.
PHOTO BY TYLER ALLEN

Harbor's Hero Run
5 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Harbor's Hero Run is a 5K color run in memory of Harbor deWaard and each year the run will benefit a local organization in Harbor's name. This year, the run benefits Big Sky Women in Action and the Harbor deWaard Scholarship Fund! Due to restrictions due to COVID-19, we cannot have an organized group color run this year, but we can still celebrate within our community. While maintaining Social Distancing practices, we are encouraging your family to dress up in your superhero gear, get out and run or walk one of our 5K routes.

After your run, email us your pictures to michaelromney@bssd72.org to have your pictures posted on the website and please share on Instagram using: #harborsherorun

Monday, May 18

Great Big Sky Baking Show
Big Sky Virtual Kitchen Facebook, 4:30 p.m.

Big Sky Virtual Town Hall
EBS Facebook, 5 p.m.

Tuesday, May 19

Middle & High School Tutoring for Spanish Speaking Students
[meet.google.com](https://meet.google.com/tutoriaELL), code: tutoriaELL, 3 p.m.

Cooking with Big Sky Virtual Kitchen
Big Sky Virtual Kitchen Facebook, 5 p.m.

Wednesday, May 20

Lone Peak Performance Workout
Lone Peak Physical Therapy Facebook, 8 a.m.

Arts Council of Big Sky's Art-to-go
Available with school lunch pick up, 11 a.m.

Middle & High School Tutoring for Spanish Speaking Students
[meet.google.com](https://meet.google.com/tutoriaELL), code: tutoriaELL, 3 p.m.

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SECTION 3: BUSINESS, HEALTH, SPORTS & FUN



pg. 37 The 1918 Influenza



pg. 39 PBR Returns



pg. 42 Lotus Pad Spring Rolls

As retailers, restaurants reopen, uncertainty abounds

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY/BOZEMAN – At full capacity, Montana Ale Works in Bozeman employs 140 staff members, 40 of which are kitchen staff. Ale Works, like many Gallatin County restaurants and retailers along with thousands nationwide, is reopening after more than a month-long hiatus. What that means for eateries and brick-and-mortar retail stores is a mystery yet to be solved.

“I kind of want to wait and see how Bozeman is going to react and see how other restaurants are doing it,” said Roth Jordan, managing partner and corporate chef at Ale Works. “Part of it is making sure our employees are comfortable coming back to work.”

As Phase 1 of Gov. Steve Bullock’s economic reopening plan unfurls in Big Sky and Gallatin County, many businesses are deciding when and how to reopen and adapting their practices to meet country health department and CDC guidelines. On Monday, April 27, nonessential businesses such as retail stores were given the green light to reopen, and on Monday May 4, restaurants and bars will join them.

Stay-at-home orders shuttered nonessential businesses across the state and reopening for many will be a dance of caution, not only in following new sanitation guidelines, but also in re-employing their workers and meeting the already narrow margins that come with being a small business operation.

Ale Works has been a beer and culinary staple of downtown Bozeman since 2000 and is credited to being the busiest dinner-only restaurant in the state. The restaurant had to lay off 120 employees in March when dine-in restrictions were first enacted, according to Jordan.

Saffron Table, another popular dinner haunt in Bozeman, made the difficult decision to not reopen at all, and after six years in business have shut their doors permanently.

Gallatin County City-County Health Department requirements include stores and restaurants operating at half capacity, placing tables at least six feet apart, eliminating waiting rooms and other gathering areas, limiting tables to family-only and under six people, and encouraging heightened sanitation for both employees and patrons. Additionally, the only seating can be at tables, which means bar areas must remain closed and all establishments must close no later than 11:30 p.m.

“We definitely are [taking precautions],” said Serena Calder, the assistant buyer at Grizzly Outfitters in Big Sky Town Center. The outdoor gear shop has been open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. all week. “We have a couple signs up as you walk in encouraging people to wash their hands and use masks if they have them. We are following all recommendations and CDC guidelines and are encouraging all of our customers to do the same.”

Both Calder and Daniel Roberts, manager at East Slope Outdoors in Big Sky, have found that capacity restrictions have not yet been an issue: It’s shoulder season in many mountain towns and with Big Sky Resort being closed, now is a slow time of year for tourism regardless of a nationwide pandemic.

Many business owners spoke of the uncertainty surrounding operations moving forward.

“We don’t really know what to expect yet,” said Angell Zamora, store manager of Montana Supply, a lifestyle clothier in Big Sky Town Center. Zamora opened May 1 and in addition to providing optional gloves to patrons, is also requiring staff to wear masks and sanitize dressing rooms after each use.

For many, adhering to the ever-changing regulations has been a trial by fire. When dine-in restrictions were first enacted, Ale Works was enthusiastically offering takeout. As the situation progressed, however, management felt it was in the best interest and health of their staff to close entirely.

Now Ale Works is working on a phased rehiring plan. They will bring back some hourly workers this week for takeout, and more servers and bartenders once they open for dine-in. Although it will be dictated by customer volume, the goal is to rehire all 120 employees that were laid off in March.

Jordan said it was already in the works to reopen on May 4 for takeout and delivery, and now that Phase 1 is officially in place, they have their eyes set on a reopening dine-in options on May 18. In addition to ramping up sanitation practices, the restaurant will have attendants on staff to monitor and clean shared areas such as the restroom, and are working on a reservation system that allows patrons to reserve a table then receive a text when their table is ready so that they can wait for a table from the safety of their home. Although they cannot open the bar area, Ale Works will allow seating on their coveted summertime patio.

Twist Thompson, owner of Blue Buddha Sushi in Big Sky, plans to reopen with a limited menu on May 13. He has been working with his food service distributor



An employee at Montana Supply adheres to CDC guidelines by wearing a face covering. Stores have been adapting for the safety of their staff and customers as they reopen across the county and state. PHOTO BY KIRBY GRUBAUGH

to get a strong but safe sanitizing solution his staff can use to frequently clean the restaurant and is putting additional filtration on their air-conditioning vents. He hopes to be able to rehire his full staff as well when Blue Buddha reopens its patio.

But reopening at half capacity and adhering to other social distancing measures is a difficult practice and one that no restaurant has dealt with before.

“What it really just comes down to is our operations being a little more tedious,” said Alex Omania, owner of the Lotus Pad in Big Sky. When the Lotus Pad reopens on May 6, in addition to heightened sanitation and half capacity, they will be monitoring employee symptoms, eliminating high-touch areas such as condiment caddies and chopstick holders, and will have those waiting for a table or takeout food do so in their car instead of in the lobby.

Omania said shoulder season has helped give businesses an extra buffer of time to adapt. “My main concern is the energy and how it makes people feel,” she said. “I opened my restaurant because I wanted a fun environment.”

Like Omania, Greg Lisk, owner of Gallatin Riverhouse Grill on Highway 191 south of Big Sky, is having employees watch the webinars produced by the Gallatin City-County Health Department aimed at informing service industry workers of new sanitization standards expected of food and beverage establishments.

At a board meeting on May 1, Health Department Health Officer Matt Kelley said the department has released 10 different webinars for critical industries such as restaurants, places of worship, childcare center and hotels, which have all garnered high participation. He said there will also be community sanitarians conducting walk-throughs to train employees and answer questions.

“The really exciting part is that since we announced we were reopening every single employee showed up,” said Lisk, who intends to rehire his full staff. The Riverhouse has been open for takeout, and will reopen for dine-in with their full menu on May 5.

“It’ll show the locals that we’re there for them,” Lisk said. “We could not do this without them. We just want to see people coming in, sitting down and having drinks again.”

Among the uncertainty, most business owners voiced the same resounding message—that at the end of the day, their primary concern is always making sure staff and customers feel comfortable.

Chamber launches Save Small Business Relief Fund

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – When stay-at-home orders forced small businesses in Big Sky to close their doors, many scrambled to find a relief program that might help them stay afloat. Federal programs such as the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and the Paycheck Protection Program Loan (PPPL), left many people behind, including sole proprietors and businesses with fewer than 5 employees and those without a relationship with a qualifying bank lender. The nature of Big Sky’s seasonality also made it difficult for many businesses to qualify.

“83 percent of Big Sky Chamber member businesses are sole proprietors and small businesses,” said Scott Johnson, Chair of the Big Sky Chamber Board of Directors in a May 1 press release. “We are committed to ensuring that they remain in business and are able to continue to operate through the phased re-opening of Montana.”

The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky, in partnership with the Big Sky Resort Area District (BSRAD) quickly joined forces to launch the Big Sky Save Small Business Relief Fund, providing a lifeline to many failing small businesses.

With the BSRAD’s approval, they reallocated \$210,000 from their FY20 allocations to provide for micro grants of \$2,500 for businesses with up to five employees and \$5,000 to businesses with up to 20 employees, physically located within the BSRAD boundary, or operating as a tax collecting business within the boundary.

The BSSSBRF is modeled after the U.S. Chamber Foundation’s Save Small Business Fund that launched in April, providing \$5,000 in supplemental grants to small employers in economically vulnerable communities. Unfortunately, Big Sky businesses with a 59716-zip code were ineligible to apply for that grant, but their model was attractive to the chamber due to its simplicity—it only requires a W9 to apply and can be used for any legitimate business expense.

“We want to keep it simple,” said Candace Carr Strauss, CEO of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky. “We didn’t want to add to the stress and anxiety of our small businesses that are struggling to survive.”

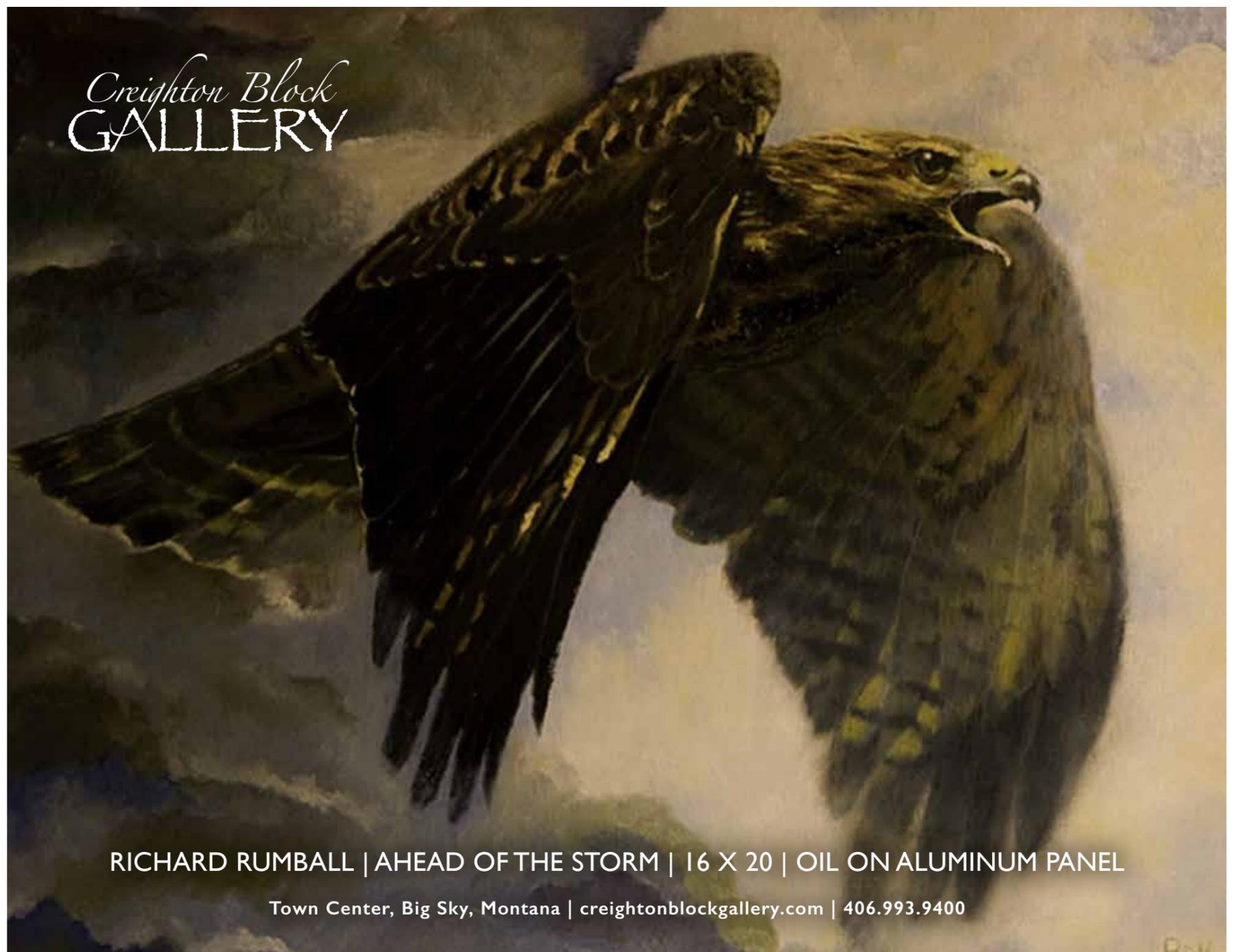
The U.S. Travel Association projects that COVID-19 will have nine-times the impact on the tourism and travel industry that 9/11 did. Carr Strauss says she is communicating with Gov. Steve Bullock to see what businesses in Big Sky can do to best prepare for both lower numbers in visitation and international employees as we move toward summer tourism months.

Eligibility

The is available for all for-profit businesses including sole proprietors with up to 20 employees that are registered with the BSRAD and operating within its district boundary. Businesses who apply will be selected through a lottery process in the need that exceeds allocated funds.

For more information

visit bigskychamber.com/savesmallbusinessfund



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Making it in Big Sky: Women in Action & Big Sky Natural Health

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – COVID-19 has disrupted the daily routines of almost everyone in some form or fashion. Possibly one of the greatest impacts the virus has placed on our population is the strain on mental and physical health. The unknown, coupled with orders to stay at home have left mental and physical health even larger tasks to address. Two local businesses, Women in Action and Big Sky Natural Health, are working to help alleviate health-related challenges both throughout the pandemic and beyond.

WIA began 15 years ago in Big Sky with the help of nine original founding members. Today, executive director, Jean Behr is the only employee of WIA—most WIA counselors work on a contract basis. Behr said there is no timeline as to when WIA will begin to host in-person counseling services again, but they will continue to serve everyone via telehealth options.

BSNH joined the Big Sky community just six months ago when Dr. Kaley Burns relocated from Billings, MT. Currently, the Minnesota native focuses her efforts on ensuring her business remain open and serving the community remotely and in-person, but only when essential as COVID-19 has progressed.

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

Kaley Burns (BSNH): We are continuing to space patients out 30 minutes between visits for sanitizing/wiping surfaces and to reduce contact among patients; I am the only one going into the office to interact with patients (office staff is working remotely); additionally the telemedicine, donning PPE for the essential in-office or house call visits; encouraging patients to call prior to coming in for screening purposes; doing supplement drop off or curb pick up.

Jean Behr (WIA): All of the counselors have shifted the patients that are comfortable from in-person counseling to telehealth or on a virtual platform like Zoom or Facetime, and then some of our counselors are taking on new clients as well, as we're all sort of adjusting to this new reality. Some people are really comfortable with the online platform, others haven't been as eager



Dr. Kaley Burns in front of her business, Big Sky Natural Health. PHOTO COURTESY OF KALEY BURNS



Women in Action board members (L to R): Marne Hayes, Betsy McFadden, Sue Arneson, Stacey Chapman. PHOTO COURTESY OF JEAN BEHR

to take it on, but we are seeing a gradual uptick in the number of folks who are reaching out for services, which is really great because we've been offering free counseling through the month of April, which may extend into May, depending on the availability of funding.

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

JB (WIA): My work had been pretty solo, you know I'm the only staff of [WIA], and a lot of our work is just me administering our programs and working with our partners and a lot of just administrative work. Because of the needs of the community to come together we've been working a lot in coalition with Big Sky Community Organization, Big Sky Arts Council, Big Sky Relief [Fund], the [Big Sky] food bank. The community has come together so quickly to address these short-term needs and then we also have a long-term vision for addressing the continued gaps in behavioral healthcare and really forming a stronger social safety net. Ironically, I've been working a lot more with folks in the community, all virtual of course.

KB (BSNH): I have essentially been on-call 24/7 for the "shelter" time period while also working more flexible hours, due to a reduced patient load. Prior to this we had been increasing steadily each month. Happily, also with enjoying more time outdoors. I have also used this time to hone-in on my personal health and daily habits, which has helped me to endure this time.

EBS: *What do you believe has been the biggest impact of COVID-19 on physical and mental health?*

KB (BSNH): The emotional strain from this pandemic is significant. I don't know that there is one impact but rather the combination of multiple factors: fear from the virus itself, in addition to prolonged physical distancing coupled with social isolation. These heighten the influence on our mental health, which in turn, affects our physical health. This can manifest differently for each person whether that be depression, anxiety, insomnia, trauma, fatigue, etc. As humans we thrive by being connected and can struggle with uncertainty. We have to work hard for connection now and face daily uncertainty—it's a double-edged sword.

JB (WIA): I really think the biggest impact has been, for folks who aren't mentally healthy and physically healthy, this has been a shock to the system and so, what one of my main focuses has been on is lifting up the fact that everyone is struggling right now and that this feeling in your chest is real, like it's anxiety. We're all feeling so much pressure, we're all being pulled in a million directions and really stressing that it's okay to feel this way.

EBS: *How can individuals continue to address physical and mental health needs as society slowly gets back on track?*

JB (WIA): I think the most important thing—again I'm not a mental health professional, I'm not a health expert, but just as somebody who is paying pretty close attention—I think we all need to follow the guidelines and maintain social distancing and take precautions to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy because I don't think we're out of the woods yet... To just keep in mind that this is a marathon and in order to not stress our healthcare services we have to find ways to get outdoors, stay

active, stay connected to our loved ones but not for a moment think that we're out of the woods.

KB (BSNH): One step at a time. For many of us, we have a lot in our environment that can empower us to take care of our health. Go back to the foundations: how you are eating, are you consuming enough fluids, getting moving, spending time in nature, are you sleeping well at night, how is your digestion. Additionally, find your support; whether that involves talking to someone, journaling, movement, musical expression, meditation or other, there are profound healthful outlets. It is also best to be honest with ourselves about how we are doing. I know firsthand that it can be hard for someone to admit that they are having a hard time, but it is okay to feel how you do and even to feel conflicting emotions. It is the grandness of being alive.

EBS: *What advice do you have for individuals who may be considering seeking physical or mental health assistance?*

KB (BSNH): It is okay, and I encourage people to ask for help. Make the appointment—that is the first step. Once you do that, you have someone on your team whether that be a therapist, nutritionist, holistic practitioner or primary care, just get yourself to the starting point.

JB (WIA): Do it. You know we all have a best friend, a partner, you

know, maybe a faith leader that we turn to and in times of struggle. Mental health practitioners are there for you but they're a step removed. They're going to listen to you without judgement. They will offer maybe a different perspective and they'll help you build the skills that you need to better manage your mental health and it's important for all of us to recognize right now that we are feeling stressed.

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

JB (WIA): I think the best business advice I've ever received or maybe something that I've mirrored from a former colleague is to really care about the work and to care about everyone you come into contact with. Non-profit work is challenging, it's emotionally taxing, it doesn't always pay the best but when you do love your work and you are truly interested in the people who support your organization financially, or they show up to volunteer, like get to know them. Get to know why they care about the work and they will keep coming back.

KB (BSNH): It's a combo from two individuals close to me: "You can't always wait for someone to give you permission. You just have to do it. Approach it with humility and a willingness to do whatever it takes, even if that means you have to work really hard for a long time."

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Wear a nonmedical face covering when in public



Wash your mask frequently in the washing machine



Practice social distancing even with your mask on



Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before touching or removing your mask

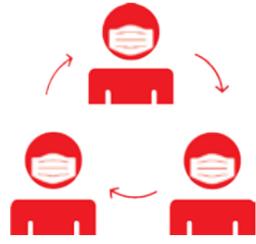
DON'T



Use medical grade masks intended for essential workers



Touch or adjust your mask without washing your hands first



Share your mask without washing it in the washing machine

These are suggested practices from the CDC.

'I sure didn't think I was getting the flu'

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic in Big Sky

BY AL LOCKWOOD

FORMER CHAIR, HISTORIC CRAIL RANCH CONSERVATORS, APRIL 2020

Many researchers believe the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 started in Haskell County, Kansas, when a livestock virus transmuted to people. A few Haskell County farm boys, home on leave from their posts in the U.S. Army, served as transport for the flu when returning to Camp Funston in eastern Kansas.

Within weeks, hundreds of soldiers at Funston were sick, and some died.

During the spring and summer of 1918, the virus spread to military camps around the country and jumped to nearby civilian populations. As troops shipped out to Europe, the virus went with them. When Spain's King Alphonse contracted the disease, newspapers dubbed it "The Spanish Flu."

By late August, the virus, clearly, was no longer some simple seasonal flu. It was highly contagious, virulent and deadly, and it preferred young strong people as its carriers, rendering military camps perfect breeding grounds.

It won't happen here in Montana

By September, concern in Montana was tempered by the sentiment that influenza was a problem reserved for people back east, living in crowded, damp and dreary cities. Montanans would be protected, many believed, by bright blue skies, biting cold, deep white snows and wide-open spaces. A young man entering the Student Army Training Corps at Montana State College in Bozeman noted in his diary for October 12, 1918: "There's lots of excitement about Spanish influenza. They say it is coming west. I don't believe it will hurt us. We get so much fresh air in drill, and it is cold enough to freeze any germ at nights here." Sadly, he was mistaken.

The area now called "Big Sky" had about 40 permanent residents in 1918, most engaged in farming and ranching. Perhaps the best-established of these was Frank Crail, along with his sons Eugene and Emmett, and daughter Lilian. By 1918, their property had grown to a 960-acre working ranch where Crail raised livestock and horses.

In the fall of 1918, Crail's son, Eugene, 31, was a private in the U.S. Army. Eugene and Emmett had registered for the draft together on June 5, 1917. The draft board allowed one son to remain and work the ranch. Crail picked Eugene for the Army because he had completed several kinds of schooling and might be assigned to more specialized work than infantry. As it turned out, he was assigned to a U.S. Army construction company and shipped out for England in April 1918 aboard the "RMS Aquitania," a Cunard luxury liner turned troopship. Once in England, Eugene built airfields and hospitals. British hospitals, planned for treating war wounds, were modified to isolate influenza patients.

Crail's daughter Lilian, age 22, who had taught school in Ringling and Logan, had just entered the Illinois Training School for Nurses in Chicago as the influenza struck that area with full force. The school was closed, and the student nurses were called into service in area hospitals as reported in a 1930 school history:

"But the year 1918 is known above all else for the great epidemic of Spanish influenza, [when] the Training School and Hospital passed through the greatest crisis of their history. Between September 24 and October 31 there were 2,041 influenza patients admitted to the Hospital, of which six hundred and eighty-one died. All sorts of shifts and temporary arrangements had to be made to care for this vast number of contagious cases, placing unprecedented burdens on the entire Hospital force. All class work was suspended. Forty nurses became ill with the disease, of whom six died."

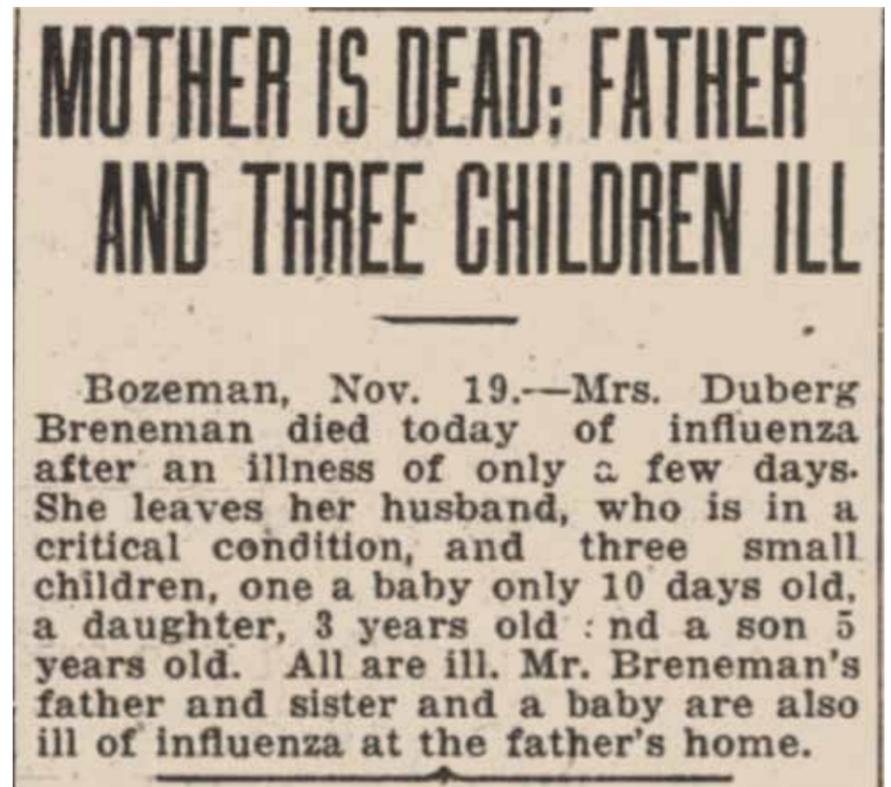


Soldiers ill with Spanish influenza at a hospital ward at Camp Funston, Kansas, when the epidemic began in 1918.

The flu hits close to home

By early October 1918, newspapers in Bozeman, Butte and Anaconda noted a growing number of cases of influenza in the area. The young man in the Student Army Training Corps noted in his diary: "October 17 - The flu struck at last... Some of the boys have it... They say we may all have to wear 'flu' masks. October 25 - I sure didn't think I was getting the flu last time I wrote, but here I am in bed."

Bozemanite Annie Breneman was a good friend of Emmett Crail's since they were classmates at Irving Elementary School in the 1890s. Annie, age 32 in 1918, was an accomplished woman, a teacher with a degree from Montana State College who had also studied in Missouri and at UC Berkeley.



The Anaconda Standard, Anaconda, Montana, Wednesday, 20 Nov 1918, Page 10

Annie's younger brother, Duburg, a well-established printer in Bozeman, was married to a woman named Rilla Wooten, from Arkansas. They had two young children: David, 5, and Glen Louise, 3. On November 10, 1918, Rilla gave birth to their third child named Duburg Wooten Breneman. Sadly, within days of the boy's birth, Rilla Breneman contracted the flu and quickly succumbed. Within another few days, her husband, Duburg, also fell ill and died.

Duburg and Rilla Breneman were laid to rest in Sunset Hills cemetery. Their infant son was adopted by an Anaconda family who changed his name to Robert Ernest Frey. The task of raising the two older children fell to the brilliant young teacher, Annie Breneman.

While the tragedy of the Breneman family played out on the small stage in Bozeman, the Great War ended in Europe on November 11, 1918. Main Street saw cheering, fireworks and parades. Paradoxically, for the young diarist in the Student Army Training Corp, the end of the war came nine days before he was finally free of the flu: "Was sent down to the barracks today. This influenza is almost over now, but they have decided to keep college closed. The flu sure did its work. Almost every one of the boys had it. Five of the fellows and one of the nurses died with it..."

When school resumed at Montana State College in early 1919, the virus was still around but was less threatening. The authorities had effective controls in place, and large numbers of the population were immune. John C. Russell, in an article in the 2009 Pioneer Museum Quarterly, counted 92 flu-related deaths in Gallatin County in 1918 and 46 in 1919.

Pandemics Don't End with Parades

In the spring of 1919, Frank Crail planted his wheat. His daughter Lilian resumed her nursing studies and then went on to a successful career as a nurse and Floor Supervisor at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. Eugene Crail completed his Army tour of duty and returned home, where he became a successful carpenter and builder.

Emmett Crail, who never had the disease as far as we know, found his life permanently changed by it. He and Annie Breneman set aside whatever plans they had while Annie was tasked with raising her brother's children. Their "courtship" stretched from the 1920s to the 1940s, until the children were raised. Annie and Emmett Crail finally got married in June of 1949.

Pandemics don't end like wars, with cheering and celebrations. Pandemics end gradually like long Montana winters. There were no parades to mark the end of the Great Influenza of 1918; people simply picked up the pieces of their lives and returned to their regular pursuits as best they could. For some of them, even for some who were not

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HIGHWAY 191

NORTH OF WEST YELLOWSTONE

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- Repaving U.S. Highway 191.
- Creating a northbound left-turn lane at Rainbow Point Road.
- Repairing bridge crossings over the Gallatin River & Specimen Crk.
- Replacing old guardrail with new rail.
- Adding rumble strips.

WHEN May – August, 2020.

WHERE U.S. Hwy 191 between Tepee Creek Trailhead & U.S. Forest Service Road 986, and at the intersection with Rainbow Point Road.

WHY Extending the life of the road by repaving and increasing safety for drivers by creating a dedicated turn lane.

HOW Expect single-lane closures, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Delays of up to 15 minutes per construction area.

PROJECT KEY

- Project Area
- - - MT/WY Border
- Yellowstone National Park

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PBR returns to the chute

BY BRANDON WALKER

OKLAHOMA – Sports fans have been left clamoring for almost any form of competition that they can indulge in due to COVID-19 cancelations. The Professional Bull Riding tour provided a welcomed sight for athletics junkies on April 25-26 as they returned to action. While no spectators were in attendance, viewers were provided the opportunity to tune in and watch a live sporting event from their homes for the first time in five weeks.

Prior to the April 25-26 competition in Oklahoma, bulls and riders hadn't taken to the arena since March 14 in Georgia, just as COVID-19 was beginning to cause event cancelations nationwide. Returning to action was no small task as PBR officials strategized for nearly six weeks creating a plan that would responsibly allow them to resume competition. The plan was given the nod of approval from various Okla. government entities before commencing.

"We won't do anything until we can assure that we can do it in the safest possible manner that we can carry out," said PBR chief marketing officer Kosha Irby of the safety plan PBR compiled. "We worked obviously to bring together a safety plan that we felt comfortable with, that we could rely on, and when we were in doubt we could ultimately lean on and lean into to make sure we were doing the right thing and carrying out the process in the proper manner."

The list of safety-related precautions was extensive, including: medical screenings of all parties involved in events from riders to staff prior to setting foot in the arena, all individuals involved provided their own means of transportation and recreational vehicles for housing, and scaling back the amount of production members, even deploying robotic cameras to limit the number of people involved. On top of the aforementioned precautions, many more were taken by the sport, all in the name of returning the arena.

"We've kind of tackled a lot of the gargantuan issues," Irby said. "It's allowing for us to fine-tune this plan in such a way that we become even more comfortable with it as we develop it as time progresses." PBR will share their strategies with other major sports as they begin their return to play.

When it came time for riders to mount their bulls, Fabiano Vieira prevailed as he was the only rider to successfully complete all three of his rides, finishing with an aggregate score of 262.75. Vieira was followed by Colten Jesse and Jose Vitor Leme, who finished second and third respectively with aggregate scores of 177.50 and 176.50. Vieira raked in \$11 thousand for his efforts.

Even without spectators in attendance emotions ran high. PBR's return marked a monumental step in a slow return to pre-pandemic life. "Tears and emotions are not



A PBR rider dons a facemask in Guthrie, Oklahoma on April 25-26. PBR took a number of precautions to safely allow the sport to resume operations. PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDY WATSON, BULL STOCK MEDIA

something that kind of go synonymous with the cowboy, but when we bucked that first bull after, you know 41 days of not being able to do it because of this pandemic, you saw a lot of emotional people in that arena and I will never forget that feeling," Irby said.

He also described that the absence of crowd noise allowed viewers to appreciate the fine details of PBR riders performances, such as the fashion in which they mount a bull and left-handed riders tactics vs. that of right-handed ones, to name a few, even calling it 'educational'. "For the first time, you can take novices like me and I can learn more about the sport because you can see the intricacies of what these guys do day in and day out," he said.

There is no timetable for when spectators will return to arenas, but Irby said PBR will bring back their fans as soon as they believe it is safe. "We're working to make sure that we can bring the PBR experience to as many people as we can because right now, I think a distraction and a return to normalcy is what America needs," he said.

Competitors will remain in Okla. for the PBR Cooper Tires Invitational, slated to take place on May 9-10, followed by the PBR Lucas Oil Invitational, May 16-17.



A PBR rider competes in Guthrie, Oklahoma in an empty arena. Spectators were not permitted to attend the competition as PBR resumes events following COVID-19 cancelations. PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDY WATSON, BULL STOCK MEDIA

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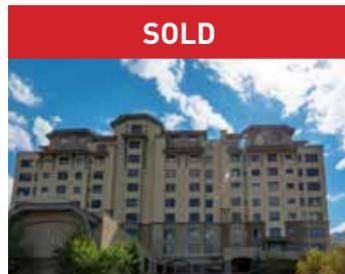


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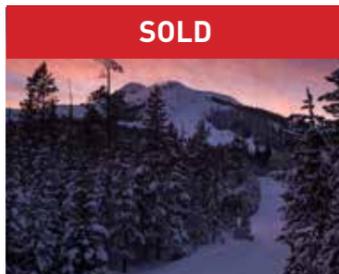
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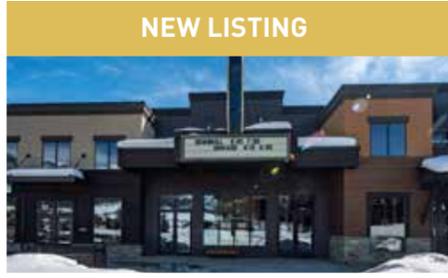
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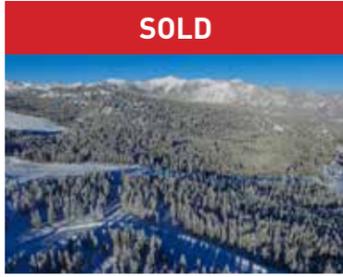
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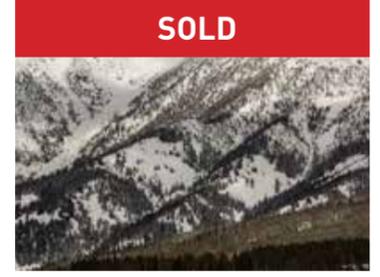
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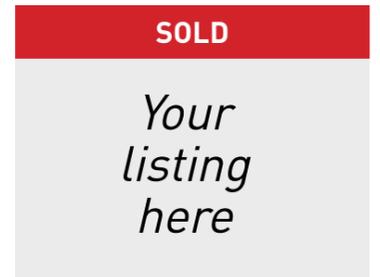
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Lotus Pad Asian Cuisine

Lotus Pad Spring Rolls

- 4 rice roll wrappers (rice paper)
- 4 shrimp, cooked, cut in half
- 1 cup rice vermicelli noodles
- 4 tablespoons shredded cucumber
- 4 tablespoons shredded carrot
- 8 pieces red leaf lettuce
- 8 sprigs cilantro
- 8 mint leaves, torn

Boil vermicelli noodles 3-5 minutes or until al dente then strain. Blanch shrimp in boiling water 3-5 minutes. Peel and shred cucumber on large blade of mandolin, then peel and shred carrot on small blade of mandolin.

Fill a large bowl with warm water, dip one wrapper for one second to soften. Lay wrapper flat. In a row across the center, place two shrimp halves, handful of vermicelli, carrot, cucumber, mint, cilantro and lettuce, leaving about 2 inches uncovered on each side. Fold uncovered sides inward then tightly roll the wrapper, beginning at the end with the lettuce.

This recipe originally appeared in the summer 2019 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine. Lotus Pad is located at 47 Town Center Avenue D1, Big Sky, Montana 59716.



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AMUSE-BOUCHE

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

Americas salad bowl is rotting



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

It’s no revelation that the world is a complex place. And this current stoppage due to the Covid-19 pandemic is really a combination of two things: how much is closed or suspended, and for how long.

If every man, woman and child on the planet stopped everything they were doing for, say, eight hours, the results would be catastrophic. We haven’t done that but we have halted a massive portion of human action for weeks, and that means something.

Since the closure of restaurants as we know them, even as some begin to reopen under stringent guidelines, there are in infinite amount of supply chains, processes and industries that have been equally decimated.

Commercial fishing

Fishing boats all around the world are either stuck in harbor and unable to fish, or returned and no longer have a market for their catch. According to North Carolina commercial fisherman Glenn Skinner, 80 percent of commercial fish goes to restaurants. So now they must either freeze it, which few have the space for; give it away, which really isn’t a viable avenue; or waste it, which is tragic.

Cattle and hogs

Some producers, such as David Mensink, a hog farmer from Preston, Minnesota, are altering their hog feeds to slow their growth in order to, ironically, keep pace with the restaurant market. As Mensink says, “It’s probably the first time in my life I have ever changed a ration to make a pig grow slower.”

The cattle futures market is also down 28 percent since January. Cattle prices “have been very low; they’re as low as I’ve seen them” according to Arthur Uhl, manager of Powell Ranches near San Angelo, Texas.

Produce and dairy

Farms everywhere are tilling up millions of pounds of perfect produce and dumping millions of gallons of milk because restaurants and institutions aren’t taking it. Also, there isn’t anyone to harvest or package it.

“Why don’t they just donate it to food banks?” is a common criticism. Because it is far from that simple. If they aren’t generating revenue for product they can’t sell, they don’t have the additional funding to pick, package, pasteurize, box or bottle up this same product only to give it away.

Beer and wine.

We’re talking about alcohol and something that ages. These should be fine, right? Not exactly.

Beer has a shelf life like anything else and, as I write this, kegs and fermenters full of beer are spoiling all over the world. The great curve we have been told about isn’t the only thing flattening. Kegs and cans of beer are dying a slow, fermented death to the tune of millions of gallons.

Between 90 and 95 percent of the wine produced in the world is not meant to be aged, but rather consumed when purchased. Wine is also sitting idle in vats across the old and new world, with no place to go.

I had an accounting teacher in high school who was a surly old Christian brother. One of his trademarks was to ask you in his intimidating, gruff tone, “What does that have to do with the price of tea in China?”

His point being your point had nothing to do with anything we were talking about. I think of those words because it seems to me that, figuratively speaking, everything now has something to do with the price of tea in China. That is to say, if you remove one link in the chain, it will not function. Worse yet, what if we remove virtually every one of those links?

At that stage, you have what we have now.

Bottom line? I’ve tackled the food waste across the globe in numerous articles over the years. And this is almost incomprehensible.

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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American Life in Poetry:

Column 789

BY TED KOOSER
U.S. POET LAUREATE

Deirdre O'Connor is the Director of The Writing Center at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania and the following poem is from her new collection from Able Muse Press, The Cupped Field. I'm sticking my neck out here, but I suspect this is the first poem in human history to picture a group of children making a practice visit to a dentist. And such a touching picture it is!

At the Dentist's
"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," reads the needlepoint above the dentist's door, beyond which "Little Learners" are doing time in the chair. One at a time, up and down, they practice how to be not afraid, to tip their chins, spit. And then to brush in circles gently for two minutes. No blood today, no needles, drills, just a plastic sack of gifts: a magnet of a happy tooth, a purple toothbrush, paste. In the waiting room, their winter coats are stacked: smooth, inflatable animals, an occasional Pittsburgh Steelers in the mix. The youngest ones need help getting their arms in, getting zipped, and when they're all lined up and holding hands in pairs, they lift their faces as if toward God to the camera. Having been happily trained for pain, they flash their unharmed smiles, and in my mind, I exit with them, all my ex-selves, mittens attached to their jackets, bright and unbreakable.

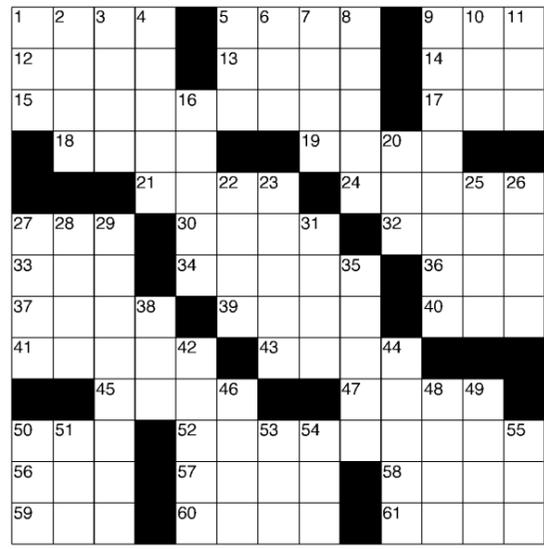
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1 Berne's river
5 Pigment test crystalline
9 Interstate Commerce Commission (abbr.)
12 94 (Rom. numeral)
13 Aid
14 Monkey
15 Otary (2 words)
17 Abdominal (abbr.)
18 Mound of sand
19 Animal's leg on coat of arms
21 Polynesian amulet
24 Prolonged assault
27 Hebrew letter
30 Strong-arm man
32 Dingle
33 Presidential nickname
34 Son of Aaron
36 Resin
37 Cramp
39 Hindu stringed instrument
40 Atlantic (abbr.)
41 Stair part
43 Average
45 Organ pipe
47 Ethiopic
50 Expanse
52 Aboma (2 words)
56 Statute
57 Mineral tar
58 Princess in Gr. myth
59 Actor's hint
60 Time period
61 Anatomy (abbr.)

DOWN
1 Cutting tool
2 Academy (abbr.)
3 Laugh (Fr.)
4 Occurrence
5 The (Ger.)
6 Laconian clan group
7 Wampum
8 Map collection
9 Keats poem
10 Public vehicle
11 Sp. hero
16 Condescend
20 Russ. plane
22 Antelope
23 Antiseptic
25 Scand. people
26 Enclosed (abbr.)
27 Musical beat
28 Indian red powder
29 Hail
31 Billionth (pref.)
35 River boat
38 Scot. jackdaw
42 Bowler
44 Channels
46 Dreadful
48 Black
49 Fr. author
50 Skin vesicle
51 Medieval shield
53 Nat'l Endowment for the Arts (abbr.)
54 Alligator fish
55 At the age of (Lat.)

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE
T A O A R N N C O
W I M P S A I M A P O
A K E E O B T A I N E D
C I T I N I O N A C E
H S I A N B S
D R Y W I N E A T O L E
E A S E T E C O P A L
A T T A R C H I M E R A
R A S A D A R
B E T S A I G A A H A
I S A B E L L A O T E A
S P O R A L L R O A M
N S A T E L A R P



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Corner Quote

“After everything that’s happened, how can the world still be so beautiful? Because it is.”

- Margaret Atwood,
“Oryx and Crake”

BIG SKY BEATS

 **“(You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (To Party!)”**
- *Beastie Boys*

“(You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (To Party)” was released by the Beastie Boys in 1987 and has since been one of their most-recognized songs, reaching No. 7 on the “Billboard Hot 100” and named one of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame’s “500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll.” The jam was written by the band’s vocalist and bassplayer Adam Yauch and a friend Tom “Tommy Triphammer” Cushman in an ironic tribute to songs that glorified party culture. The tongue in cheek, however, was lost on most listeners and Mike D, the band’s founder, lamented that they had ended up reinforcing the very values they had been trying to mock.

“There were tons of guys singing along to ‘Fight for Your Right’ who were oblivious to the fact it was a total goof on them,” he said.

The music video features two brothers who, after their parents leave town, host a party that spirals out of control with increasingly rowdy guests. The function ends with the returning mother getting a pie thrown in her face, a moment punctuated by the final line of the song’s chorus: “party!” The Beastie Boys, still an emerging name and on a budget, had purchased expired whipped cream for the pies, resulting in a rancid smell by the end of the shoot.

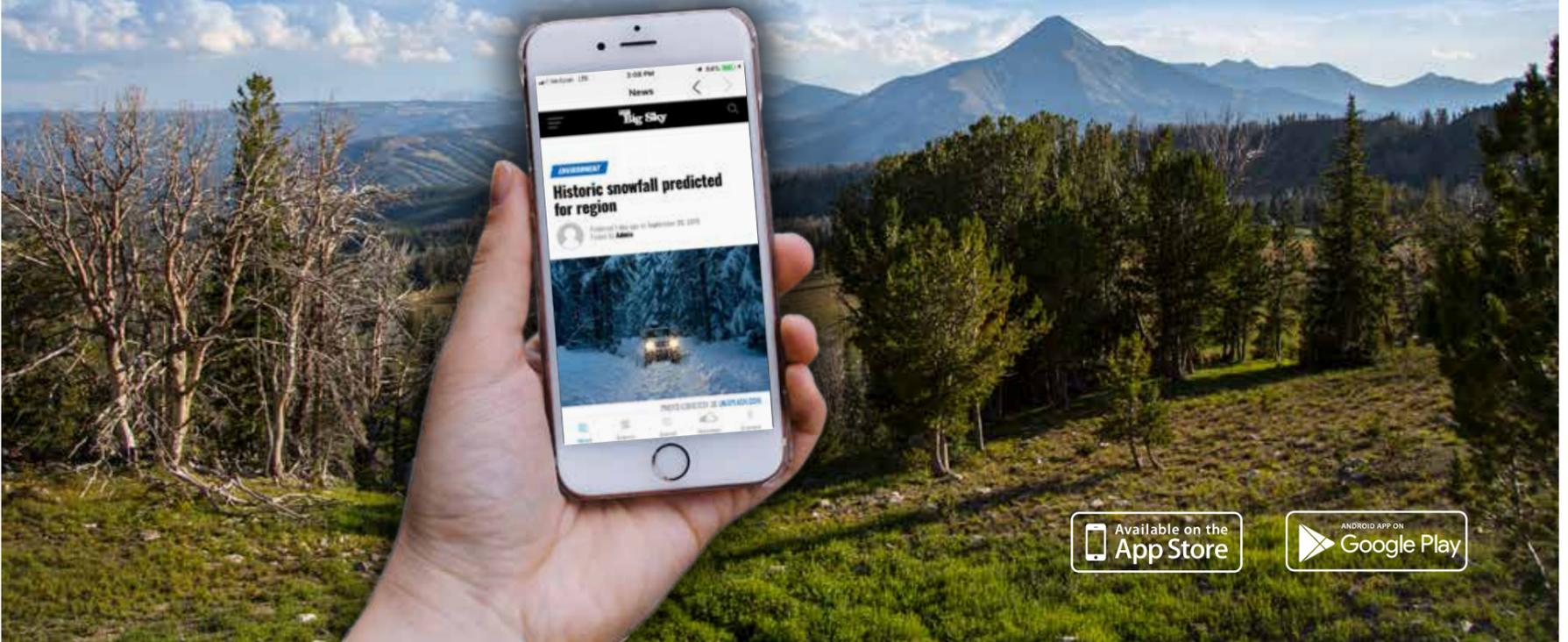
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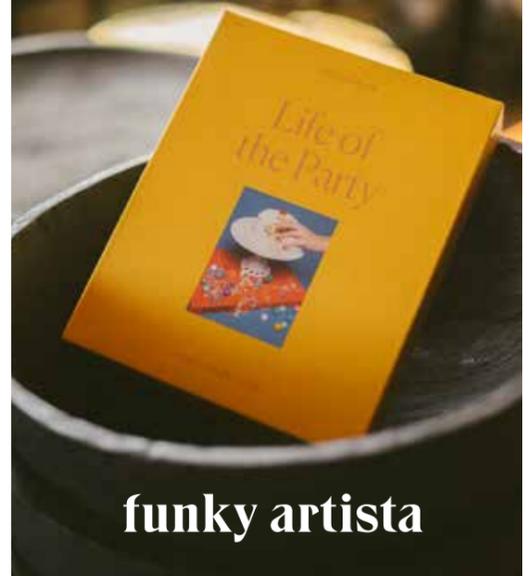
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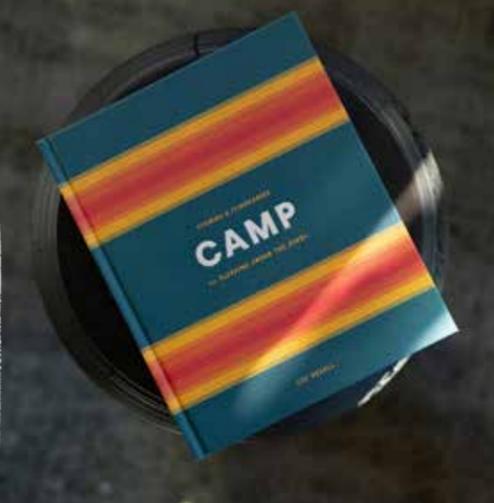
daydreamer



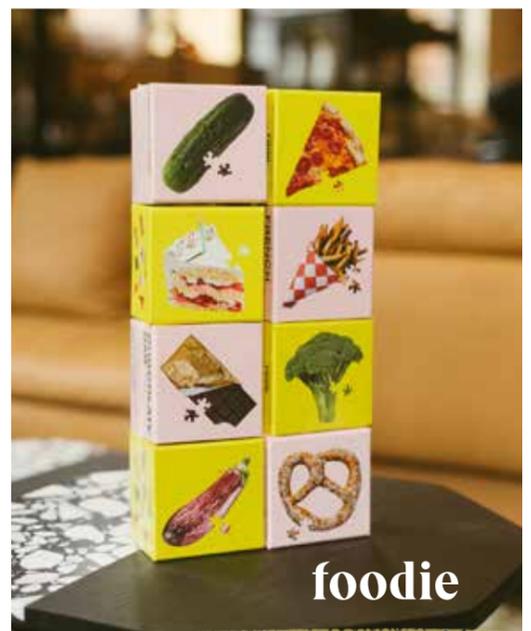
funky artista



mountain mama



foodie



BACK40

For Explore Big Sky, the Back 40 is a resource: a place where we can delve into subjects and ask experts to share their knowledge. Here, we highlight stories from our flagship sister publication Mountain Outlaw magazine.

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

Svalinn Dogs: The best of man’s best friend

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

A version of this story first appeared in the winter 2019-20 edition of Mountain Outlaw Magazine.

In the amber hills tucked between the Bridger, Crazy and Absaroka mountain ranges, five dogs sit on benches around a fire. They stare into the blaze with inquisitiveness more simian than canine.

It’s an image that harkens back to ancient days, long before “man’s best friend” had been coined, when but a few key wolves born more curious, more social, crawled toward fires lit on cold nights in hopes of a handout. As with any great risk, it came with great reward.

Early human societies saw utility in those ancestral dogs, hailing them for their companionship, usefulness and protective qualities. The period kindled a roughly 15,000-year relationship that has flourished over time yielding a partnership unparalleled in the animal kingdom.

That partnership has reached an apex at Svalinn’s 167-acre facility in Livingston, Montana. There is no question: These canines constitute the very best among man’s best friends.

As for the immediate history of the Svalinn dog, one need only travel back to 2005, when Kim Greene and her husband Jeff, security and protection specialists working in Kabul, Afghanistan, moved to Nairobi, Kenya—an equally dangerous capital city in an unstable pocket of the globe.

“We like to say that these dogs were actually bred out of necessity,” says Greene, Svalinn’s co-founder and owner. “When my husband and I started the company about 14 years ago in East Africa, we were expecting twins. The notion of our safety and wellbeing for our family was very much at the forefront of our minds.”

Ironically, she had placed a condition upon the marriage: Dogs would never be a part of the family nor the Greene household dynamic. Yet it’s a position that softened immediately once her husband insisted she meet the well-trained, family protection assets that served as precursors to the Svalinn venture.

“I was actually not a dog person but once I saw some of these dogs in action I saw their stability, their agility, their highly lovable, capable selves and I understood right then that this would be a no brainer for us,” Greene says.

For a new mother in a city rife with violence, Svalinn dogs provided a sense of unmatched security, allowing her to enhance the quality of time spent with her family—particularly when her husband was not immediately present.



While rigorously trained, Svalinn dogs remain familiarly lovable, curious and eager to receive attention from their owners. PHOTO COURTESY OF SVALINN

The couple soon saw opportunity in cultivating this particular form of security asset on their own, with a mission to share the ease their dogs provided with individuals and families the world over. And Svalinn was born.

“What these dogs really provide is peace of mind,” Greene says. “They’re a true deterrent that possesses some real capability if, God forbid, you ever need it. [They] truly are your best friend, your best protection, your best option for your family’s safety.”

It would be another eight years before the company went transatlantic in 2013, seeking an ample American market and a stable environment to grow their business and nurture their family. The Greenses and their world-class company first formed roots in Jackson Hole, and eventually found a permanent home in southwest Montana in 2016. There the operation has truly matured into the “overnight, 14-year success story,” as Kim Greene calls it due to the crucial, steadfast ingredients of their secret sauce.

Once one digests the Svalinn method, the reasons behind the poise and curiosity of the five dogs around the fire are easy to understand. Those traits aren’t an accident; they’re a direct consequence of carefully tended bloodlines dating back to World War II.

Couple that lineage with the Svalinn curriculum, an Ivy-League-for-dogs regimen that boasts more than 2,000 hours of training in a puppy’s first year of life and years of additional training, and the end product is an animal that gives weight to the phrase “seeing is believing.”

Svalinn dogs, a thoughtful fusion of German, Dutch and Belgian shepherds with only the best qualities and attributes of each breed represented, are much like any other—playful and friendly, eager to join in the throng of littermates and humans working their way through the gorgeous Montana landscape surrounding the Svalinn grounds.

But they aren’t like other dogs, from the fundamentals of their psychology to the minutiae of their top-notch physiology.

On the latter, that rigorous Svalinn curriculum includes a physical training regimen so demanding that muscle groups down to the paws are visibly more developed than those of their counterparts. In this sense, it’s fair to liken them to the highest caliber of professional athletes.

The true sticking point of the Svalinn program, however, is the curriculum’s unique and proprietary emphasis on honing a dog’s ability to discern a human’s intent. In a sense, they’re mind-reading dogs.

By tapping their natural talents to sense our biological rhythms, a Svalinn dog can alert an owner to danger well in advance of potential conflict with a stranger, or in some instances an acquaintance, by detecting spikes in vitals and hormones associated with anger, aggression and violence. If necessary, the dog will then put its physical advantages to use in providing time and space to evade a threat.

Even with that ability, the Svalinn team emphasizes their dogs are stable and obedient, first and foremost. “A lap dog that’s ready to protect you at need be, but will just as fast lie down and lick a newborn,” says Svalinn President Holt Price.

“The investment in a Svalinn dogs is obviously significant for families, but the great thing about investing in a protection asset from Svalinn is you’re not only buying the three years of training and care, but also 15 years of a breeding program, 15 years of a training methodology that has been developed in real-world circumstances,” Price said.

It’s somewhat a mantra at the Svalinn facility: stable, social, obedient and agile. Pair those with a superhuman sense of detection of intent, a world-class training program and a highly capable staff and you have a protection asset—a best friend—that is priceless.

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