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Winter 2020 ■ Montana - The Land of Creativity

Providing information to all Montanans through funding by the National Endowment for the Arts and the State of Montana

MAC announces 2019 Artist's Innovation Award recipients

The Montana Arts Council approved six Montana artists to receive its Artist's Innovation Award. The \$5,000 award is given every two years to artists who have attained a level of success in their pursuit of discovery.

A panel of experts convened in November to determine the recommendations that were presented for the council's approval at the December meeting in Billings.

"Montana has an incredibly rich creative environment," says Tatiana Gant, executive director of the Montana Arts Council. "The Council understands the necessity for artists to take chances. This award encourages artists to invest in research and continued exploration. The caliber of the artists selected highlights Montana's bright future."

Over the next year, each awardee will make a public presentation on their creative process, and the role innovation has played in their development. MAC will share details over social media as information becomes available.

This year's winners are:

Jane Waggoner Deschner, Billings

Robert Harrison, Helena, with support from the Jessie Wilber and Frances Senska Individual Artist Award in Ceramics

Nan Parsons, Basin

Jennifer Reifsneider, Missoula

Naomi Siegel, Missoula

Melissa Stephenson, Missoula

See pages 6-7 for AIA Profiles



Jane Waggoner Deschner



Robert Harrison



Naomi Siegel (Photo by Rio Chantel)



Jennifer Reifsneider



Melissa Stephenson, with daughter



Nan Parsons

Submission deadline Feb. 3

2020 Governor's Arts Awards nominations open

The Governor's Arts Awards honor outstanding citizens and organizations in Montana whose achievements in the arts, or on behalf of the arts, benefit all Montanans. Since its inception 35 years ago, in 1981, 113 artists, art leaders and educators, and arts organizations across the state have been recognized for their talent and accomplishments.

Awards will be distributed in December 2020 to honorees who demonstrate artistic excellence and achievement, dedication to Montana, ongoing contributions to the cultural community and worthiness of statewide recognition.

The nomination deadline is Feb. 3, 2020. To see a list of past honorees and for more information or a hard copy of the nomination form, visit art.mt.gov/gaa or contact Czelsi Gómez at cgomez@mt.gov.

In Memoriam

Montana's arts community is reeling this fall with the loss of some of its iconic musicians, thespians, artists, teachers and arts advocates. Among them



Arlene Parisot

is one of our own, artist, teacher, arts ambassador and MAC member Arlene Parisot. Read about her many contributions to the council on page 2, and see our many other condolences on pages 5 and 8.

Mural aims to raise awareness of opioid crisis

By Anna Paige
Reprinted with permission from the *Billings Gazette*, Oct. 25

Carlin Bear Don't Walk describes his life as a process of chasing dreams, something his high school art teacher instilled in him. He hopes to do the same for young people, inspiring them to use art as an outlet, especially if they come from a world of addiction.

The 37-year-old abstract artist, who lives in Billings and is a member of both the Crow and Northern Cheyenne tribes, was commissioned by ZooMontana and the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council to paint an expansive outdoor mural, which he titled "Dream Chasers of Montana." Not just another pretty piece of art, the mural is funded by a collaborative effort to prevent and address opioid abuse in Yellowstone County.

Bear Don't Walk grew up on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation and has been painting since he was a kid. He was taught the culture and ways of life of the Northern Cheyenne people, and he said living on the reservation inspired him to pursue his dreams of being a professional artist, despite the hardships, addiction, and loss that also surrounded him.

"I've seen all kinds of great artists who never made it, who succumbed to the stereotypes, who succumbed to the way of reservation life. That is my biggest inspiration right there," said Bear Don't Walk. "I grew up around all that stuff, and that is what pushes me to be great, pushes me to live the dream for those who never made it."

Bear Don't Walk's painting stretches across time, from the migration of indigenous people and the bison herds of the West to a hopeful, urban future. The vivid and action-fueled scenes across the nearly 80-foot long mural



Carlin Bear Don't Walk at work on a mural at ZooMontana in Billings. (Photo by Casey Page/Billings Gazette)

reflect the history, oppression, and triumph of indigenous peoples of the Great Plains.

"In order to fulfill your dreams, you've got to remember where you started at and remember those who came before you and what they've been through," said Bear Don't Walk. The mural was painted in collaboration with children in the community and indigenous activist Goldstein Little Eagle.

The mural is painted atop a concrete retaining wall at the entrance to ZooMontana, measuring five feet tall and 78 feet long. Bear Don't Walk estimates he'll spend a total of 50 hours on the project, which was funded by a Tribal Opioid Response Grant through SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), part of nationwide funding from the Department of Health to curb opioid abuses.

Roy Pack, Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council program director, applied for a grant for Yellowstone County. The council received \$200,000 to be used for opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery for Native Americans across two years ...

Though the artwork represents the smallest allotment of the grant, it's the most dramatic, Pack said. "It's about not just collaboration, but building community."

Bear Don't Walk, whose work in recent years has gained national attention, was asked to participate in the project, in part because his artwork is so visually impactful (it's difficult not to notice his nearly neon color palette and striking imagery), but also because of his connections between the urban Indian community of Billings and the state's reservations.

See Bear Don't Walk Mural, page 8



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Sign up for MAC's eNews

Between the quarterly issues of the *State of the Arts*, our staff publishes four separate e-newsletters with opportunities and information:

- Artists' eNews
- Arts Educators' eNews
- Arts Organizations' eNews
- Public Artists' eNews

If you'd like to sign up for one or more of these, please offer us your contact information and what you'd like to receive at: art.mt.gov/enews or send us an email at: mac@mt.gov.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Tatiana Gant, Executive Director
tatiana.gant@mt.gov



Photo by Czelsi Gomez

MAC member Arlene Parisot

Missing her warmth, brilliance and humor

In the past, I have shared how important the governor appointed-council is in guiding the work of the Montana Arts Council. Each member brings unique perspectives and experiences that are invaluable.

MAC has lost a vibrant member with the death of Arlene Parisot. Arlene was appointed to her first term on the Montana Arts Council by Governor Brian Schweitzer, then reappointed twice by Governor Steve Bullock.

Arlene's service on the council was the perfect marriage of her career in public service, her commitment to community, and her enjoyment in creating art. At her core, Arlene was an educator. She worked in classrooms internationally, from grade school through higher education.

Early on, Arlene saw the potential of using technology as a learning tool and the role it would play in the economy. In the position that she held until her retirement, with the Montana Commissioner of Higher Education,



Arlene Parisot at work in the printmaking studio during a Montana Arts Council gathering in 2011.

Arlene directed workforce planning initiatives.

Arlene found joy and inspiration in nature. The influence of light and space is evident in her paintings. Her patient personality was perfectly suited to the challenging watercol-

or medium she chose. She knew the value of exploration and experimenting with materials.

Arlene was very supportive of MAC's work around developing artists' careers, especially the Montana Artrepreneur Program. I was touched when her son shared that she kept a photograph of the Montana Arts Council in her studio.

"Arlene was one of our champion arts council members," remembers retired MAC director Arni Fishbaugh. "I got to know her initially because of the fabulous work she did at the College of Great Falls as it related to using the arts as a workforce development tool. When appointed to our council, she was especially valuable in strides we made in arts and economic development, not to mention the whole area of arts education, which had also been so much of her life. I called upon her many times to testify before the Legislature and represent us around the country at conferences and on grant panels. Her service was immense and appreciated so much by us all."

At the recent meeting of the full council, we took the time to reflect and share our memories of Arlene. Her quiet, thoughtful leadership style was remembered. She listened carefully, spoke honestly, and the council respected her insight. Members expressed admiration for her active lifestyle; how she spent her retirement doing the things she wanted to do, most notably spending time with her family. We will miss her warmth, brilliance and humor.

One of our champion arts council members ... Her service was immense and appreciated so much by us all.

– Retired MAC director Arni Fishbaugh

Shawna Korth joins MAC staff as Business Specialist

Shawna Korth, a native Montanan who grew up in Cut Bank, joined the Montana Arts Council in November as Business Specialist. She replaces Lauren Pan, who accepted a job in Washington, DC.

Korth attended Montana State University Billings where she majored in Business/Accounting. In 1999, she and her husband relocated to Denver where she spent over a decade working in corporate legal departments for large financial services organizations, conducting corporate board meetings and completing federal SEC filings. After a corporate reorganization she decided to take a foray into real estate and sold homes in Denver and the surrounding area for six years.

In 2017, with their two children grown, Korth and her husband, Jay, purchased a business, Autotrix Signs and Graphics, and moved back to his hometown of Helena.

Korth says she enjoys giving back to the community and has volunteered for organizations such as Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity, Back Country Patrol, Therapeutic Needs Program, and Jr. Achievement.



Shawna Korth

In addition to two adult children, she and her husband have three more of the four-legged variety. She enjoys trail running, paddle boarding, mountain biking, snow shoeing, golf, hiking, camping and traveling as much as life permits.

"I'm excited to be a part of the Montana Arts Council and look forward to meeting and working with all of you," she says.

As a Business Specialist for the MAC team, Korth will be responsible for

managing council data and supporting general grants, accounting, and office administrative functions for the agency. She can be reached at 406-444-6510 or Shawna.Korth@mt.gov.

MPAC Showcase and Conference meets in Fort Benton

Seventeen professional performing artists will showcase samples of their work on Saturday, Jan. 25, at Fort Benton Elementary Theater. Part of the 37th annual Montana Performing Arts Consortium (MPAC) booking conference, the showcases are free and open to the public.

These 12-minute performances offer an opportunity to sample a wide variety of entertainment by some of the finest performing artists from across the U.S., Montana and Canada.

Selected 2020 Showcase artists include: Tim Ryan, Trevor Panczak, Chinook Winds, The Kalvan Family, Mary Kaye, West My Friend, America's Sweethearts, Marina and The Dreamboats, Good Co, Gideon Freudmann CelloBop, Derik Nelson and Family, Dee-Dee Darby-Duffin, Phina Pipia, Molly's Comedy Cabaret, How Sweet It Is! Steve Leslie sings James Taylor, and Max Hatt and Edda Glass.

Alternates are Chilaili Wachiwi, Love is A Rose: Celebrating the Music of Linda Ronstadt, Side by Side: A Vocal Variety Duo, and Bridge and Wolak.

Doors open 15 minutes before the start of each showcase. In addition to the showcases the artists will assemble for a jam session after 9 p.m. Saturday at the Clubhouse. The jam session is also free and open to the public.



Good Co brings sultry swing to the MPAC Showcase on Jan. 25.

Showcase selections were made based on quality of presentation, probability of booking, grant award possibilities and overall showcase diversity.

Additional artists will have booths in a Resource Room located in the Ag Center (open to registered conference participants only).

MPAC is a statewide non-profit arts organization that brings professional artists to Montana communities and promotes education through the arts. The annual Artist Showcase

and Conference is made possible in part through a legislative grant from Montana's Cultural Trust, the Montana Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts and Western States Arts Federation.

Although the showcases at the Fort Benton Elementary Theater are free and open to the public, the conference requires advance registration and will take place in the Agricultural Center, attached to the Montana Agricultural Museum in Fort Benton.

More information is available at www.mtperformingarts.rocks and through MPAC, P.O. Box 6484, Great Falls MT 59406, 916-798-4479 or info@mtperformingarts.rocks.

STATE OF THE ARTS

State of the Arts is published four times a year by the Montana Arts Council and produced by *Lively Times*.

State of the Arts welcomes submissions of photographs, press releases and newsworthy information from individual artists and arts organizations.

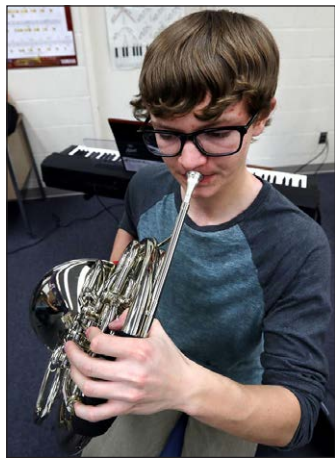
Please check with the Montana Arts Council for reprint permission.

Next Deadline: The deadline for submissions is March 5 for the Spring issue (April-June). Send items to: Montana Arts Council, PO Box 202201, Helena, MT 59620-2201; phone 406-444-6430, fax 406-444-6548 or email mac@mt.gov.

Subscriptions: *State of the Arts* is available free of charge upon request as a public service of the Montana Arts Council. To subscribe, call 406-444-6430, or update or sign-up online at art.mt.gov.

CONGRATS TO ...

MAPS Media Institute, whose student-produced film, “Browning Rising Voices,” won a 2019 National Student Production Award in the Short Form Non-Fiction category. These awards are distributed by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS), better known as the organization behind the Emmy Awards. “Browning Rising Voices” tells the story of a poetry club in Browning, on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, led by school librarian Amy Conrey Andreas. Students write and perform original works of poetry, and through that process explore the power of creative expression. The 2019 competition saw more than 2,000 entries across 24 categories. “Browning Rising Voices” beat out four other films in its category – including another MAPS effort, “Art For Survival,” about an innovative arts program in Helena – to claim the top prize in the country. “Congratulations,” said Montana Film Commissioner Allison Whitmer. “The future filmmakers in Montana are honing their skills by telling stories that speak to diverse voices and interpretations, and programs such as MAPS are invaluable to supporting and developing these students.” The Hamilton-based educational non-profit, which offers free media-arts classes to students in grades 8-12 across Montana, is no stranger to the national stage. In 2017, MAPS was honored with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award.



Derek Bane-Parsons (Photo by Meagan Thompson/Montana Standard)

Butte High student **Derek Bane-Parsons**, who joined around 200 other students from across the U.S. as part of Macy’s Great American Marching Band during the giant Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade through New York City on Nov. 28. Bane-Parsons, a 15-year-old sophomore, plays 14 instruments, including his two main instruments, the French horn and the mellophone, along with the trumpet, several types of saxophones, the guitar and the euphonium. In addition to playing in band, he also plays for Butte High’s jazz band and in the Butte Community Band, among other musical pursuits. Recently, he had an

opportunity to play in the University of Montana’s High School All-Star Band and Orchestra, which consists of select students from across the northwest U.S. and Canada. On Thanksgiving Day, Bane-Parsons played the mellophone before an estimated 20 million television viewers and the throngs of spectators who show up to watch the parade in person. His band teacher, Jean Perusich, who nominated him to be part of Macy’s Great American Marching Band, described her student to the *Montana Standard* as a hard worker, a diligent student, and “fine musician,” who is “serious about his music.”

– From the *Montana Standard*, Nov. 13

Artist **Jaune Quick-to-See Smith**, who is the 2019 recipient of the Murray Reich Distinguished Artist Award from the New York Foundation for the Arts. The \$12,000 award, which was established in 2015, recognizes artistic excellence and provides resources to mature visual artists with a long history of creative practice. Smith, an enrolled Salish member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation of Montana, has been creating complex abstract paintings and prints since the 1970s. She is internationally known as an artist, curator, lecturer, printmaker and independent professor. Smith was also among the 2018 Governor’s Arts Award recipients for Montana. A self-described “cultural arts worker,” Smith uses humor and satire to examine stereotypes of American Indian life in contrast to American consumerism.

Bitterroot Valley artist **Bobbie McKibbin**, who received the Best Body of Work award from juror Ian McKibbin White (no family relationship), artist and director emeritus of Fine Arts Museums of



Bobbie McKibbin with Yellowstone Forever Best Body of Work Award

San Francisco, during Yellowstone Forever’s second annual Plein Air Invitational. “This event is really wonderful – a great celebration of art and Yellowstone,” says McKibbin. “I am so very honored to be included and this park is one of my favorite places in which to work.” Held Sept. 24-29, the five-day invitational celebrates the current and historical presence of art in

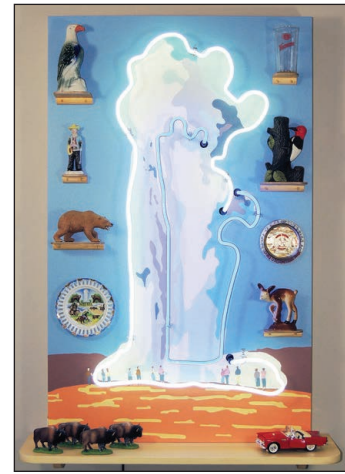
Yellowstone. Sixteen artists from across the nation painted outside on-site for five days in various locations in the park, participating in daily painting demonstrations, a paint-out on Sept. 28, and in a VIP banquet and art auction at Old Faithful Lodge Recreation Hall.

Montana State University professor and graphic designer **Meta Newhouse**, who has received a Fulbright fellowship to Ireland where she’ll teach guerrilla advertising and marketing workshops to students at University College Cork in Ireland beginning in January. Her Fulbright is paired with a yearlong sabbatical, during which she is writing a book about guerrilla design and advertising – a mindset that stretches the boundaries of traditional advertising by using innovation

and, often, unusual context to create a big impact. While in Ireland, Newhouse also hopes to keep abreast of global design and advertising trends to bring back to her students. She has taught guerrilla advertising and design at MSU for about a decade, and is also an award-winning designer, whose work appears in more than 40 professional publications, including books, annuals and exhibition catalogs.

– MSU News Service

Bozeman artist **Willem Volkersz**, whose work is included in “The Western Sublime: Majestic Landscapes of the American West” at the Tucson Museum of Art. His piece, “My Trip to Yellowstone” (2017), is a commentary on the tourist culture surrounding Yellowstone National Park. The exhibition, curated by Christine Brindza, Glasser Curator of Art of the American West, runs from Oct. 19 to Feb. 9, and includes traditional 19th century artists like Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt as well as 20th century photographer Ansel Adams and a group of contemporary artists. A hardbound catalog is available. Volkersz has lived and worked in Bozeman since 1986 and is Professor Emeritus of Art at Montana State University.



“My Trip to Yellowstone” by Willem Volkersz

Helena photographer **Richard S. Buswell**, whose work was included in 2018 in a large group exhibition of contemporary photographers of the American West at Yale University’s Beinecke Library. The exhibition was titled “Eye on the West: Photography and the Contemporary West,” which is also the title of a hardback book published in support of this show. Buswell has been photographing Montana ghost towns and homesteads for nearly 50 years. The Collection of Western Americana at Yale University has purchased a complete collection of Buswell’s photography, consisting of 458 photographs. In addition, 232 other museums, nationally and internationally, have collected Buswell’s work, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Denver Art Museum, Seattle Art Museum and the Library of Congress. In 2018, Washington Public Broadcasting System filmed a documentary about Buswell’s photography titled “What They Left Behind,” which was broadcast in five western states and in western Canada.



“Silo” by Richard Buswell



Ignacio Barrón Viela

Paul, MN (June 10-12). “These 12 professionals are stewards of our field’s future,” said League of American Orchestras’ President and CEO Jesse Rosen. Barrón Viela joined the Billings Symphony Orchestra & Chorale as executive director in December 2018. Since arriving, he has crafted a new strategic plan and is passionate about expanding the orchestra’s musical offerings and community engagement programs; he’s also sought to build relationships with other businesses and non-profits across Montana and Wyoming, and coordinate joint activities with the Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras (MASO). He came to Billings from Germany where he managed orchestra tours in Europe for the Heinrich Heine Orchestra. Originally from Zaragoza, Spain, Barrón Viela earned an MBA from USC Marshall School of Business, with an emphasis in arts leadership; in 2018, he completed the League of American Orchestras’ Essentials of Orchestra Management seminar.

Livingston author **Elise Atchison** for winning an international Eludia Award for her forthcoming book, *Crazy Mountain*. The novel tells the story of a rapidly changing place and community through the diverse and conflicting stories of the people who live, work and play there. Set in a fictional mountain valley over nearly half a century (1970-2015), the story offers 15 clashing perspectives on the shifting realities of contemporary Montana. The Eludia Award is given for a first book of fiction by a woman over 40. It includes a \$1,000 prize and publication by Sowilo Press, an imprint of Hidden River Arts. *Crazy Mountain* was also awarded a Barbara Deming Memorial Fund Award for work in progress. Excerpts from the book have been published in various literary journals and have been finalists for a number of awards.



Elise Atchison

More Congrats on next page



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Send us your good news

Artists, writers, musicians, arts educators and arts administrators: Please let us know about major awards and accomplishments, especially beyond the borders of Montana.

Send your good news to Congrats, c/o Kristi Niemeyer, 207 6th Ave. E, Polson, MT 59860; or better yet, email kristi@livelytimes.com.

If you include a digital photo, please make sure it’s at least 200 lines per inch (lpi or dpi) and a file size of over 500kb.

Congrats, Transitions and Condolences compiled by Kristi Niemeyer for *State of the Arts*



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More Congrats to ...



Moon USA National Parks by Becky Lomax

Columbia Falls author **Becky Lomax**, who won gold in the best guidebook category for her new book, *Moon USA National Parks: The Complete Guide to All 59 Parks*, at the prestigious Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Competition, which drew 1,335 entries. Sponsored by the Society of American Travel Writers Foundation, the winners were announced in El Paso, TX, on Oct. 21. “I had no idea I would win,” Lomax told the *Flathead Beacon*. “That’s the Academy Award of travel writing.” The author and her husband moved to the Flathead Valley in 1993 to work at the local ski area in the winters and guide hiking trips in Glacier National Park in the summers. She published her first Glacier National Park guidebook in 2006 after signing a contract with Moon Travel Guides and has since written several additional guidebooks and updated editions. Lomax is currently working on the second edition of the complete guidebook and a new guidebook called *Moon U.S. and Canadian Rocky Mountains Road Trip*. Set for release in 2021, the book will guide readers on a road trip starting in Jasper National Park in Canada and ending in Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado.

— From the *Flathead Beacon*, Nov. 15

Humanities Montana seeks new board members

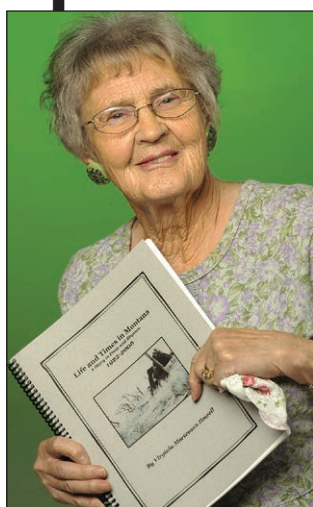
Humanities Montana welcomes applications and nominations for its board of directors. The statewide nonprofit board represents the geographic regions and demographic makeup of today’s Montana and strives to sustain a balance among scholars in the humanities, civic and business leaders, and the general public.

The organization is especially encouraging applications from individuals who are passionate about the humanities and broadly representative of various civic, ethnic, and minority group interests. Those with strong philanthropic interests, humanities scholarship, and connections to rural communities are especially urged to apply.

Nominations should be no more than 600 words and should address why the individual is a good match and how they can contribute to the board of directors. Applicants must submit a letter of interest that includes prior board member experience with emphasis on core competencies, resume, and two letters of recommendation.

Applications should be sent to Humanities Montana, 311 Brantly, Missoula, MT 59812-7848, or emailed to info@humanitiesmontana.org.

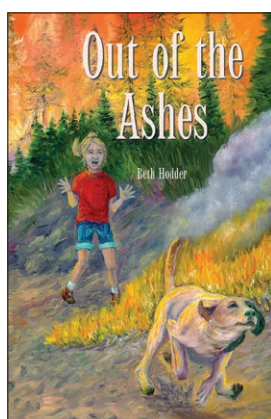
Call 406-243-6022 or visit humanitiesmontana.org.



Virginia Mortensen Howell (Photo by David Grubbs/*Billings Gazette*)

Poet and writer **Virginia Mortensen Howell**, 97, who will be inducted into the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame Feb. 7-8 during the ceremony and Western Heritage Gathering at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls. Howell was born in Declo, ID, on Sept. 12, 1922, and landed in Montana in 1923 when the Mortensen family moved to the Moiese Valley. She graduated from Charlo High School in 1940, married Dean Howell, and so began years of working, motherhood, “and not finding life to be as I had envisioned when I was younger.” While living in Roundup, Howell would awaken at night to “this line drifting into my mind ... and it was so pretty.” With pen and paper at her bedside, she began to capture the words that poured forth, words that helped her survive and “erase the shadows” in her life. Through poetry, Virginia wrote about her life in Montana, and eventually authored a self-published book in 2006, *Life and Times in Montana: A Diary in Prose and Rhymes*. In its pages she recounts the life she led and the people she met along the way: “He’s the last of his kind, this old cowhand, like an old cedar post he’s part of the land.” Now living in Billings, Howell says her purpose for writing the book was to record and preserve her experiences of Montana life and leave a legacy so others would know she had lived. Learn more about the poet and the induction ceremony at montanacowboyfame.org.

Six Montanans, who are among the 13 award winners chosen from a record 228 nominations in the 2019 High Plains Book Awards. The winners were announced at the 13th annual awards banquet on Oct. 12 in Billings. The six Montana authors are **David Quammen** for *Tangled Tree: A Radical New History of Life*; **Thomas McGuane** for *Cloudbursts: Collected and New Stories*; **Danell Jones** for *An African in Imperial London: The Indomitable Life of A.B.C. Merriman-Labor*; **Maxim Loskutoff** for *Come West and See: Stories*; **Chris La Tray** for *One-Sentence Journal: Short Poems and Essays from the World at Large*; and **Rodney Gottula** for his children’s book *Double! Not Half*. The criteria for the awards require that the literary works reflect life on the High Plains or that the author resides in the region. Winners received \$500 and a plaque.



Out of the Ashes by Beth Hodder

Flathead resident **Beth Hodder** who received a 2019 Moonbeam Children’s Book Award for her newest release, *Out of the Ashes*. The book, published by Farcountry Press, recently won the bronze medal for Best Pre-teen Fiction: Mystery. Launched in 2007, the Moonbeam Awards are intended to bring increased recognition to exemplary children’s books and their creators, and to celebrate children’s books and life-long reading. “It’s an honor to win,” says Hodder, “especially after I saw that there were nearly 1,200 entries from the U.S. as well as from around the world.” Hodder’s story is a timely one. *Out of the Ashes*, the third book in her award-winning Jessie and Oriole Mystery Series, finds Jessie Scott and her canine companion, Oriole, back in Montana’s Great Bear Wilderness on the cusp of her 13th birthday. This time they face one of the modern West’s most formidable foes: wildfire. A former U.S. Forest Service employee, Hodder comes by her interest in the care and preservation of the West’s forests honestly. She has spent most of her adult life in and around the Bob Marshall and Great Bear Wildernesses, and her books celebrate the places and lifestyle she loves best. The author and the other winners of the 2019 Moonbeam Children’s Book Awards were honored at a ceremony held Nov. 9 in Traverse City, MI.

TRANSITIONS

So long and best wishes to **Ken Egan**, head of Humanities Montana, who retired in September. “After 11 years as the face of Humanities Montana he will be missed,” said Humanities Montana board chair Tobin Miller Shearer. “So much good programming served so many people statewide during his tenure. We wish him every success.” Humanities Montana has called upon board member and former Montana ACLU Montana director **Scott Crichton** to serve as interim director while the organization conducts a nationwide search for Egan’s successor. Egan told the board he plans to continue writing and pursuing scholarly work.

Welcome to **Alyssa Cordova**, the new executive director of the Hockaday Museum of Art in Kalispell. Cordova, a Great Falls native, has been working in galleries and museums in southern California for 19 years, most recently for six years

at the Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach where she was assistant curator. She studied sculpture at Biola University in California, and earned a master’s degree in exhibition design and museum studies from California State University, Fullerton. She looks forward to continuing the Hockaday’s legacy and exploring ways to broaden its impact and offerings to reach as many people as possible. “I always had this dream in the back of my mind to find a way to bring back what I learned in my education and experience working in other art galleries and museums to help Montana artists, especially emerging artists and younger artists,” Cordova says. Hockaday board president Robin Bailey said Cordova “brings excellent museum experience” to the Hockaday as it begins “its next 50 years.”



Alyssa Cordova (Photo by *Flathead Beacon*)

Welcome to **Laura Hodge**, new executive director of the Bigfork Art and Cultural Center. Her diverse background includes place-based tourism work, community development and passing legislation to protect the natural landscape. Art is her passion, however. “I’ve always been an artist at heart, and am always creating, still.” In her mountain home in Tennessee, Hodge served as a director of tourism and focused on community leadership on various boards and as chairman of the Coker Creek Heritage Group before turning her attention to growing a successful art and fine craft gallery (Coker Creek Gallery) as an accomplished nature and adventure photographer. Hodge and her husband, Bill, recently relocated to the Flathead Valley from Asheville, NC, for his work with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and are thrilled to call the Swan Front and Bigfork home. She thanks retiring executive director **Cheryl Hanes** “for all of her hard work and dedication to the organization, the arts, and to the community.”



Laura Hodge with husband Bill

Welcome to new members of the Montana Ballet Company team: **Kristina Klaas**, development director, and **Leigh Ripley**, business coordinator. In her new role, Klaas will synthesize her expertise in development with her life-long passion for classical ballet and the arts. Originally from Florida, she trained and performed with Central Florida Ballet, and led education fundraising efforts for Palm Beach Opera in South Florida that supported the development of opera performances tailored to elementary and middle school students. As the development coordinator for Scotty’s House, a child advocacy center in Texas, Klaas implemented wide-ranging strategic fundraising plans, resulting in increased funding, and community and corporate partnerships. Most recently, she served as donor relations manager at Central Asia Institute. She holds a bachelor’s degree from the Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University and a certificate in nonprofit management from Duke University. Ripley believes “that the talent and work required to combine athleticism and artistry into visual poetry is to be watched with awe, and respect.” She brings to MBC an extensive background in business operations and event and sports marketing. She has held positions with the National Football League, International Sports Broadcasting/XIX Winter Olympic Games, and the Valley Ice Garden/Bozeman Ice Dogs. In addition to her position with Montana Ballet Company, Ripley is co-owner of *Montana Parent*, a parenting magazine for families living in southwest Montana. She spent her youth and college years as a competitive figure skater, developing an admiration for classical ballet in her training. She is a graduate of Ohio State University with a bachelor in public relations.



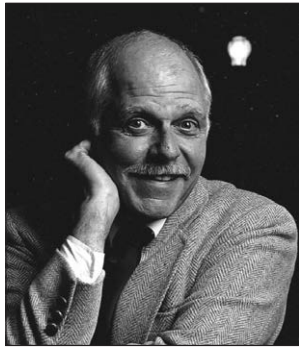
Kristina Klaas



Leigh Ripley (Amelia Ann Photography)

CONDOLENCES TO FAMILY & FRIENDS OF ...

Theatre educator **Firman Hewitt “Bo” Brown**, 93, who died Nov. 1 at his home in Missoula. He was born Sept. 27, 1926, in Bradenton, FL, and spent much of his youth in the American Southwest before earning undergraduate and master’s degrees from the University of Montana in Missoula. During a career spanning nearly half a century he chaired theater departments at UM, Ithaca College, NY, Rollins College, FL, and Ohio State University. He launched his educational theater career in 1950



Bo Brown

as part-time director-designer-costumer and all-around technician at what was then Northern Montana College in Havre, moonlighting as a sports reporter for the *Havre Daily News*. The next year he joined the college faculty, teaching and working in the areas of theater and public relations (1951-1954) and also served as editor of the *Montana Institute of the Arts Quarterly*. He enrolled in doctoral studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and began his dissertation, “A History of Theater in Montana.” Dr. Brown was chairperson of the drama department at UM from 1956 to 1969, where he established the Masquer Summer Theater and in 1967, the Montana Repertory Theatre. With his late wife, UM Professor of Law Margery Hunter Brown, he launched the Bigfork Summer Playhouse in 1960 and oversaw it for eight years. He also established M.A. and M.F.A. degree programs in theater at UM, was a weekly arts columnist for the *Missoulian* and a founding member of the Montana Arts Council. Among his many contributions to theater education, Dr. Brown served as president of the University/Resident Theater Association, and as president of the National Association of Schools of Theater, the national accrediting body for theater programs in higher education. During his long career, he directed more than 150 productions, earned an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from the University of Montana and was an honoree of the UM College of Arts and Media’s Odyssey of the Stars. “The lasting effects Bo’s work had on the theatrical landscape of Montana are still evident today,” wrote the Montana Rep in an online tribute. “It is because of his dedication to theater and to Montana that the remainder of this season will be in memory of Bo Brown.”



Russell Chatham

1958, and had 400 one-man shows across the West, and in major cities throughout the U.S. His work has also been exhibited in Europe and Asia. Chatham began printmaking in 1981 and is regarded as one of the world’s foremost lithographers. He collaborated with the Museum of the Rockies during the design of its new building and donated a set of 12 large paintings for the permanent collection. Eventually he partnered with master printer Geoff Harvey to open a print shop and create original lithographs closer to home. “He lived on the edge – they don’t make them like him anymore,” Harvey told the *Livingston Enterprise*. Chatham’s work was featured in a catalogue called *One Hundred Paintings*, and another about his original lithographs titled *The Missouri Headwaters*. He was also profiled in throngs of newspaper articles and magazines; and was interviewed on National Public Radio’s Morning Edition, and Fresh Air, PBS, and CBS Sunday Morning. He received a Governor’s Arts Award in 1997. Chatham was also an accomplished writer, who crafted hundreds of articles, short stories, essays and reviews about fly-fishing, bird hunting and conservation, as well as a number of pieces on food and wine. His books include *The Angler’s Coast*, *Silent Seasons* and *Dark Waters*. He was founder and publisher of Clark City Press, which published 32 books of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, art, photography and children’s classics. In 1996, he opened Chatham’s Livingston Bar & Grille, considered one of the Rocky Mountain region’s premier dining establishments for the next 10 years. The artist left Montana in 2011 and restarted his career in California, setting up a small studio in West Marin. He painted until he was no longer able to do so. “Russ was kind of a legend around here,” McGuane told the *Billings Gazette*. “He was a free spirit his whole life. But he got a lot done, and lots of friends will miss him. ... He creates an absence.”

Renowned western sculptor **Jay Joseph Contway**, who died Nov. 21 in Great Falls. He painted in watercolor and oil, but his greatest gift was his ability to sculpt in clay and cast in bronze. His attention to detail and action contributed to his fame in the western art world. Contway was born Feb. 13, 1935, in Malta, and grew up there, later obtaining a teaching certificate from Northern Montana College in Havre. He taught in Loring, Lodge Pole, Dupuyer, New Miami Hutterite Colony, Cut Bank and Great Falls. During summers, he competed in rodeos and won the North Central Montana Rodeo Association calf-roping championships from 1964 to 1966. When

his art began to sell, Contway retired from teaching. He bought a piece of property west of Great Falls where he eventually built his own foundry, enabling him to control the entire process of his work from clay to casting. For 31 consecutive years, the Calgary Stampede in Alberta



Jay Contway

gave a Jay Contway bronze as part of its trophy program, commissioning more than 160 pieces of art for the stampede. He displayed his art at the Calgary Stampede Western Art Show and contributed to the Quick Draw Program for 27 years and exhibited his art at the National Finals Rodeo Cowboy Christmas in Las Vegas for more 30 years. He was inducted into the Calgary Stampede Western Art Show Hall of Fame in 2009, the C.M. Russell Museum Skull Society of Artists in 2014 and 2015, the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in 2015, and the Montana Pro-Rodeo Hall and Wall of Fame in 2016. His final salute came in September 2019 when he received the Saddle of Honor Award from the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame and the C.M. Russell Museum.

Montana artist **Merrily Van Austin Dunham**, 77, who died Oct. 30. She was born Dec. 23, 1941, in Salt Lake City, and graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in Commercial Art Technology and Fine/Studio Arts. Following her graduation, she went to work near Yellowstone Park where she met her husband of 55 years, Larry Dunham. She was a member of several community organizations, including the Alpine Artisans, Montana Watercolor Society and recently, the Missoula Garden Club. An accomplished artist, she painted the outdoor scenes that inspired her in Montana and Washington. A video of her and her work may be found at vimeo.com.



Merrily Van Austin Dunham

Jazz drummer and music aficionado **Bradley Leon Edwards**, 60, who died Nov. 2 in Billings. He was born Aug. 23, 1959, and grew up in a household where jazz records were always playing. For more than 30 years, Yellowstone Public Radio listeners could count on his smooth, gentle voice sharing some of the jazz world’s deepest cuts as he presided over the Afternoon Jazz Show. Edwards attended Eastern Montana College (now Montana State University Billings), pursuing a bachelor’s degree in music performance in the late ’70s. He was also active in amateur theater, performing in the music pit for dozens of performances, and was a principle percussionist with the Billings Symphony in the early ’80s. In 1983, after spending time as an adjunct professor and teaching private lessons, as well as playing in jazz and percussion ensembles at Eastern, Edwards hit the road full time. He joined a touring Glenn Miller Revival big band and went from coast to coast and into Canada and Mexico. During those touring days, he met pianist Bob Nell and bassist Kelly Roberty in Bozeman. They formed the Nell, Roberty, Edwards, or “NRE,” Trio, and for the next 12 years the group toured and recorded with the biggest legends of jazz. Edwards backed trumpeters Dizzy Gillespie, Woody Shaw, Freddie Hubbard and Nat Adderly; shared the stage with bassist Ray Brown; drummed with Bobby Hutcherson; rocked with guitarist Herb Ellis; backed singers Kevin Mahogany and Eden Atwood; kept time for saxophone players Amett Cobb, David Murray, Eddie Harris and Sonny Fortune; and was a drummer for pianists Tommy Flanagan, Mose Allison and Phil Aaberg. The list goes on and on. “It was always about music all day long, and we just loved it,” Nell told the *Gazette*. “His enthusiasm was contagious.” Edwards was also supportive of fellow musicians and helped cultivate a local jazz scene, initiating jam sessions at several venues. “It was never about fame or notoriety, which is what I think made him so genuinely good,” said his daughter, Piper Harris. “It was always, exclusively, about the love that he had for music.”



Brad Edwards (Photo by Casey Page/*Billings Gazette*)

– Excerpted from the *Billings Gazette*, Nov. 7

Author and historian **Carol W. Guthrie**, born Aug. 12, 1936, who died Aug. 11 at her home of 25 years in the Nine Mile Valley, near Huson. Guthrie was instrumental in getting the Nine Mile Stark Schoolhouse (later the Nine Mile Community Center) listed in the National Register of Historic Places. She also spearheaded the effort to relocate the historic Nine Mile Church next to the community center, now a hub for events. At the time of her passing, she was working on a book to chronicle the history of the Nine Mile community. After retiring from her civilian position at Edwards Air Force Base in California, with her test pilot husband, Joe, history became her passion and a second career. A chance encounter with a Nine Mile neighbor led Guthrie to write her first book, *First Ranger* (1995) about the adventurous lives of Frank Liebig and Fred Herring in what would become Glacier National Park. From there, her passion for history and writing led her to become one of the more prolific authors of books about Montana, with a focus on Glacier. Her titles include *Glacier National Park: Legends and Lore Along the Going-to-the-Sun Road* (2002), *All Aboard for Glacier* (2004), and *Going-to-the-Sun Road, Glacier National Park’s Highway to the Sky* (2006), which won an Association of Partners for Public Lands Award. Her celebration of Glacier’s centennial, *Glacier National Park: The First 100 Years* (2009), was a *ForeWord Magazine* Book of the Year finalist and received the IBPA Benjamin Franklin Awards Gold Medal and Association of Partners for Public Lands Award.



Carol W. Guthrie

Condolences continue on page 8



ARTIST'S INNOVATION AWARDS PROFILES

Editor's Note: Each profile concludes with selected comments from the panelists who reviewed the Artist's Innovation Awards candidates before making final recommendations to the Montana Arts Council. We've prefaced these insights with: *From the AIA Panel.*



6

MCF offers new grants for artists

The Montana Community Foundation (MCF) offers a new grant program for Montana Indigenous, folk, traditional and media arts, via the William B. Pratt Endowment Fund. This fund is a legacy gift to the people of Montana to help them tell and share stories – especially the untold ones – about Montana's arts, culture and history and to learn about the traditional art forms and cultures of this unique state.

Montana 501(c)(3) organizations, and local, state and tribal governments are eligible to apply. Media artists who are not staff of a nonprofit organization may apply under the fiscal sponsorship of a 501(c)(3) organization. Grants will range in size from \$500 to \$1,500 and must be matched dollar-for-dollar.

The grant process is competitive, and incomplete applications will not be considered. Grant applications will be accepted from January to March 16, 2020.

To learn more about eligibility and to apply, access the online application at mtcf.org/grants. For more information, contact MCF Director of Operations and Grants Jessica Stewart-Kuntz at 406-441-4950 or jessica@mtcf.org.

Jane Waggoner Deschner, Visual Artist

Jane Waggoner Deschner came to art in her 30s when she enrolled at Montana State University Billings to pursue a second bachelor's degree, this time in fine arts. Her preferred medium was photomontage, incorporating images from slick fashion and architecture magazines.

In her early 50s she enrolled in an MFA program at Vermont College of Fine Arts, and was completing her final semester when 9/11 struck. Her thesis exhibition, "Anchor Project," incorporated snapshots of people in her personal and professional life who sent her images "that 'anchored' them during this horrible time."

"The project was a joy to create," she recalls. "I fell in love with the expressiveness of the personal photograph."

Waggoner Deschner has since made the everyday family photograph her medium, buying large lots of seemingly mundane snapshots on eBay. Initially, she scanned these images and processed them in Photoshop. But in 2008, her early predilection for sewing surfaced, and she began to embroider quotes by famous people onto existing photos. "I loved stitching – and the chance to moralize," she says. "I still use this technique."

When her studio was destroyed by a rock slide in 2011, her theme became resilience. And as the nation and world became increasingly polarized, she sought a new narrative, one that might elicit hope while exploring our common stories.

So far, she's created more than 750 pieces in the ongoing project she calls "Remember me: a collective narrative in found words and photographs."

In this series, she hand-embroiders anecdotes from obituaries onto found snapshots and studio portraits in an effort to forge empathetic connections and demonstrate our common humanity.

She works from an archive of more than 70,000 photos and four foot-long boxes of index cards filled with anecdotes from obituaries. She explores themes such as avid pursuits, life mottos, nicknames, creative endeavors, collections and so on.

"Viewers identify emotionally, reacting with laughter, empathy, recognition, tears," she says.

Waggoner Deschner has a prolific exhibition record, including upcoming solo shows in 2020 at the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings and Buckham Gallery in Flint, MI. She regularly participates in national invitational and juried group exhibits, as well as artist and studio residencies, including five fellowships at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in Amherst, VA.

In 2019, she was selected to create Montana's piece for "Her Flag," a nationwide collaborative project celebrating the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, giving women the right to vote.

"The humble family photograph became my conduit to interpreting our common humanness and an easily approachable way to touch many with a message of inclusion," she writes. "The world changes according to how people see it and I'm tweaking that perception."

From the AIA Panel: "The artist shows a clear devotion to exploring her unique art form, and willingness to explore and expand artistically. I see in her the fire to step out, take risks, and also remain rooted in her original intent and aesthetic."



"Remember Me: handwork" by Jane Waggoner Deschner

Robert Harrison, Sculptor

Sculptor Robert Harrison came to his large-scale architectural works through the malleable medium of clay, the use of fire and its alchemy.

He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Manitoba, and his MFA from the University of Denver, both in ceramics. Over four decades, he's built an extensive and global record of exhibitions and installations.

Harrison is a founding member of the World Association of Brick Artists (WABA) and was named a Fellow of the National Council on Education for the Ceramics Arts (NCECA) in 2011. His book, *Sustainable Ceramics: A Practical Guide*, debuted in 2013.

He was elected to the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) based in Geneva, in 2001, and to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA) in 2007. Closer to home, he was a founding member of the Montana Clay Tour, and received the Meloy Stevenson Award of Excellence from the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena (where he was a resident artist, instructor and board member).



"White Gold; Montana Dreams" by Robert Harrison

Harrison notes that his residency at the Archie Bray Foundation was pivotal for his career, giving him the materials and space to create large-scale sculptural work.

Initially, Harrison was drawn to ceramic vessels, focusing on form and Oriental clay traditions. Eventually "the work took a decidedly sculptural bent."

Architecture, land art and other sculptural materials began to influence his work, and he gained an international reputation for large-scale pieces. He has worked with national and international brick, tile, clay-pipe and porcelain factories, utilizing the resources and tools they offer to further his creative pursuits.

Each site is unique, and poses a new set of challenges – ways to integrate human scale and interaction, and juxtapose surfaces and materials.

At the same time, he has continued to create smaller pieces in his Helena studio, often incorporating steel or stone. The studio works, he writes, "are more intimate, have included a variety of materials and allow for intensified exploration. I have intentionally brought my studio work 'full circle' and back to my 'ceramic roots'."

The two endeavors, large-scale and intimate, often play off one another.

Whether large or small, site-specific or a studio creation, Harrison's focus is the same: "My continued effort is to innovate, respond to the environment, utilize the given space and create work that leaves a 'ceramic echo'."

He also continues to look for the next opportunity, "the next pile of material waiting to be utilized or the next creative space waiting to be filled."

From the AIA Panel: "Every one of Harrison's works is a new exploration in materials, relationship to place and purpose, and many of them in approach as well. ... I don't know where his work will be moving next, but brave exploration seems a part of his aesthetic."

Nan Parsons, Visual Artist

Nan Parsons has expressed herself through art – drawing, painting and shaping three-dimensional objects – even before grade school. She copied reproductions of Rembrandt paintings and classical sculpture in high school, and began to refine her skills and aesthetic under the expert guidance of Bob DeWeese at Montana State University.

She spent summers painting scenes for summer stock theatre in Virginia City, and rode a Greyhound to New York City in 1964 to glimpse the actual paintings of masters. "Their presence, their aliveness, was life changing," she writes.

During a stint at the San Francisco Art Institute she explored the city endlessly, sketchbook in hand, before returning to Montana and settling in the small mountain town of Basin. There, she designed and built a cabin and artist's studio, where she has lived and worked as an artist for 45 years.

Often inspired by nature, Parsons created a series of paintings fueled by an intense study of water, its currents and reflections. The work culminated in a one-woman show at the Holter Museum of Art in 2006, and a smaller exhibit at the Drawing Studio in Tucson.

During visits to the Oregon Coast, she painted the ocean in watercolors and oils. Back in Montana, her coastal adventures inspired large paintings and drawings based on beachcombing, including images of wood, stone and flesh.

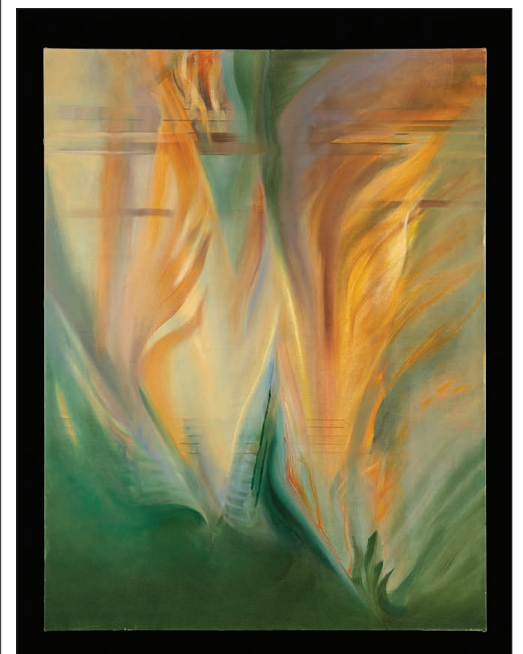
She explored aquifers – the streams and pools that exist beneath the surface of the Earth – in a series of oil and watercolor paintings featured at the Turman Larison Gallery in Helena in 2013.

The natural world has long been her muse. But in recent years, inspiration has come from another source, sound, and particularly the tonal vibration of music.

Parsons found herself especially moved by the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, an artist "who is able to express and touch the deepest, darkest parts of us and to bring us out of the depths to a brilliant joy."

Her journey began while filming the Helena choral group Musikanten Montana, under the direction of Kerry Krebill, as they were preparing to perform Bach's Mass in B Minor. Parsons videotaped rehearsals and the final performances staged in four Montana venues, and then condensed her footage into a 40-minute film, "Bach Under the Big Sky."

As she listened intently to the composer's music and studied the Baroque period, she began to "respond to, and paint what I feel as I am touched by the music."



"Bach (fugue)" by Nan Parsons
(Kurt Keller Photography)

Moved by Bach's mastery, his fusion of improvisation and precision, she seeks "to express in the whole body of my work the broad musical sweep – the depth, mystery, and majesty – the glory of the music that is Bach."

From the AIA Panel: Panelists noted evidence of deep exploration, creative discovery, skill, and passion. "Parsons is constantly innovating and pushing herself forward from her rural studio. This humble, quiet genius deserves an Innovation Award!"

Jennifer Reifsneider, Visual Artist

"Diagrammatic sculptures" – that's how Jennifer Reifsneider describes her recent body of work. "I often begin by thinking of my flesh-and-bone body like a planet in space," she writes. "I map my latitudes, perimeters, rotations and orbits. I translate these measurements through quiet but labor-intensive processes, seeking an elusive moment when what is exact in the mind becomes fluid in the hand."



"Drift" by Jennifer Reifsneider

Her childhood in rural Pennsylvania, "where cycles of nature taught me about repetition, growth and decay," influence her work, as do mathematical processes encoded in human biology, and fiber techniques that evoke domesticity and the persistence of time.

Crochet, especially, "with all of its modest functions and Victorian flourishes, has a unique capacity to model fractal growth and non-Euclidian hyperbolic space, which is at the heart of today's quantum physics."

This thoughtful melding of art and science has landed the artist's work in more than 70 solo and group exhibitions across the United States, including the 2018 Montana Triennial at the Yellowstone Art Museum. Her sculptures are in numerous private and public collections, from New York City to Los Angeles, and from Minneapolis to Missoula.

After earning a BFA from the Rochester Institute of Technology, Reifsneider landed in Missoula in 1997 and based her studio in the Brunswick Building – a vibrant community of artists. In 2008, she relocated to Los Angeles and earned her MFA from California State University, Long Beach in 2011.

After graduating, she participated in High Desert Test Sites with the artist collective, Constellation Lab; received an Investing in Artists grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation; expanded her practice at Keystone Art Space in northeast L.A.; and exhibited new work at several regional venues, including the L.A. Municipal Art Gallery and Craft and Folk Art Museum. She even participated in a collaborative knitting performance about string theory that included a live orchestra, dancers and CalTech physicists.

Reifsneider describes her move to Los Angeles as "challenging but rewarding." For the first time, she used the space and shape of her own body to discover form; new ideas about measurement and certainty inspired her use of ephemeral materials. She dug more deeply into ideas about structure, perception and fiber processes.

She returned to Montana in 2016, after "the grind of the city dulled my creative spirit," and continued to delve into processes while studying art, psychology, math and science. During a fellowship at the Ucross Foundation in Wyoming, she completed a crocheted installation with a metallic finish.

She continues to explore ways to interweave materials and processes, such as the unlikely pairing of knitted cotton and iron, and plans to develop more innovative fiber-metal forms during a fabrication workshop next summer at L.A.'s LilliMax Studio.

From crochet to quantum physics: "These convergences inspire my ongoing work."

From the AIA Panel: "Highest level of professionalism and artistic excellence ... Bold and challenging work, conscientious and sophisticated. Pieces are complex, and then simplified to make an elegant statement."

Melissa Stephenson, Writer

Missoula author Melissa Stephenson started writing poems at age 7, and honed her skills early on with a scholarship to Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan. She earned a bachelor's in English from the University of Montana and an MFA in fiction from Texas State University, while working as an editor and freelance writer.

Stephenson returned to Missoula in 2011 on the edge of divorce and with two kids to raise by herself.

"The past eight years have been the most challenging and productive of my life," she writes. "I knew that I would have to fight for writing time, and I've never since squandered that time, or taken it for granted."

In the intervening years she wrote her first full-length collection

of poems, which was a finalist in 2017 for the Barry Spacks Prize and the Brittingham/Pollak Prize. Her memoir, *DRIVEN*, was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2018 and long-listed for the Chautauqua Book Prize.

The same prolific period saw her essays published in *LitHub*, *Ms. Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *The Rumpus* and *Fourth Genre*, among others. This body of writing is at the core of her current project – a collection tentatively titled *Attachment Therapy*, after one of the essays.

She also wrote a first novel, which she describes as "a slim, dark story, set in Spokane, on Christmas," and recently turned it over to her agent.

Fellowships to writing residencies have helped her find more spacious time to write, but she also carved moments "during gymnastics practice, during nap times, after bed times, and on slow weekend mornings."

"While my early life gave me the literary roots and training I needed to become a writer, my life as a parent in Montana has given me the drive and discipline to get the work done at whatever pace I can, whenever I can."

Recently, Stephenson has sought to craft a hybrid of her poetic and narrative skills. A sample of that new direction is "Debut," a work-in-progress that explores a month she spent in New York City following the publication of her memoir.

"Told in short, numbered sections that bob and weave – picking up one topic, letting it go, and circling back later – it attempts to braid together disparate elements," and at the same time, "to dig deeply and see differently."

While "Debut" forms the backbone of her new collection of essays, all reflect some level of experimentation with traditional narrative. One is a hybrid piece about parenthood and the fires of 2017; another is a lyric, posthumous letter to author Jim Harrison; yet another reads more like a short story.

"All of them together capture an authentic reflection of what it's like to be a female solo parent/artist in the modern West," she writes, and offer "an evolution in the more traditional and well-worn narrative of the masculine West."

From the AIA Panel: "Excellent writing – moving, humorous and timely. A balanced look at pain and sorrow, love and wonder."

Naomi Siegel, Musician/Composer

Trombonist, composer, bandleader, educator and community organizer Naomi Siegel performs music "to ride the edge of the moment, creating in real time with others while listening to my internal state."

Siegel graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and began her professional career in Oakland. "For a while, I let my voice be suppressed," she writes. "As a survival mechanism, I developed a cloak where I could show up and play without being seen."

But a chance encounter with an older jazz musician helped her remember why she loves music: "the vulnerability, risk-taking, and authentic human connection."

Siegel moved to Seattle in 2008 and launched a career in experimental jazz, world music and composition. She collaborated with like-minded ensembles, produced albums and expanded her sound as a trombonist and composer.

She moved to Missoula in 2016, "to be near family and nature – my main muse and setting for composing." Composing outdoors, she notes, "provides a breadth of possibility and deepens my listening practice of environmental sounds and internal music ideas."

Siegel founded Lakebottom Sound in 2017, a non-profit under the umbrella of Arts Missoula that's dedicated to nourishing creative music in Missoula through a concert series, monthly jam sessions and improvisation workshops.

Lakebottom Sound allows the artist to feature "the voices of women and non-binary musicians, knock down genre barriers, foster cultures of listening and collaboration, and support musicians to improvise."

She founded and conducts the Missoula Conduction Orchestra, a multi-generational collaboration of musicians with backgrounds ranging from jazz to country to classical that employs a form of collective improvisation called "Conduction."

In 2016, she released her debut album as a leader, *Shoebox View*,

working with 13 other musicians. Her next album, *Live at Earshot* (2019), "is a step in my evolution towards loosening a tight grasp on my compositions. This concert recording captures the live synergy between musicians in all of its grit and grace."

In the coming year, she plans to record her original three-part suite, "Shattered," with her band. "I aim to create a musical container that facilitates collective expression, including challenging myself to

improvise in new settings."

She's also working on an album of solo, layered trombone pieces with cameo appearances by Missoula musicians. That work is an evolution of her ongoing collaboration with Seattle saxophonist Kate Olson in their duo, *Syrinx Effect*, which she says has been "of huge importance in experimenting with real-time looping and performing as a duo with no rhythm section." Together, they've released three recordings, including *A Sky You Could Strike A Match On* in 2018.

"As I work on my next albums, my aim as a musician, composer, and bandleader is still to be vulnerable, take risks, and value listening," she writes. "As an educator and community organizer, I advocate and create space for others to do the same."

From the AIA Panel: "Definite creative and artistic skill in her field, introducing innovative sounds and rhythms. Mesmerizing ... that first piece is moving, mysterious and enchanting."



7



Trombonist and composer Naomi Siegel (Photo by Rio Chantel)

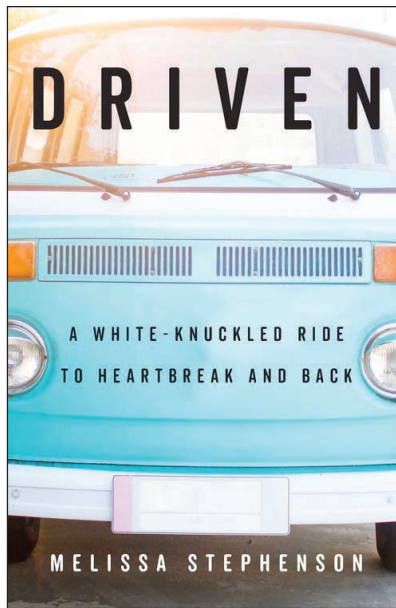
Magpie Springs residency looks for artists

Enjoy the simple life while exploring artistic expressions in the rural setting of Magpie Springs, an artist-run permaculture and art residency located in the sagebrush hills outside of Dillon. Residents are provided a private living/working space in a 24-foot yurt atop an Earth-ship basement with a greenhouse, collectively called the "yurtship."

Studio and kitchen living room space is located in the upstairs yurt, while bedroom and bathroom facilities are in the basement. An additional 24-foot yurt studio may also be available to artists.

This program has been providing residencies since 2010 to scientists, permaculture practitioners and university students. It has recently become available to artists with preference given to those working on environmental and conservation-minded projects.

Visit artresidency.nolansalixart.com for more information and to apply.



DRIVEN by Melissa Stephenson



8

Bear Don't Walk mural (from front page)

Bear Don't Walk doesn't consider himself living between two worlds, but rather that "urban" and tribal connections are the same.

"If you remember your past and you are in tune with your culture, you are good wherever you go. That is what I taught my children," he said.

Though the grant was targeted toward Native Americans in urban settings, participation in the mural was open to the public.

"We invited everybody," Bear Don't Walk said. "I thought it would be better to unify everybody and bring us all together and have us all work together and get along."

Pack said participation represented the community well. "It was like a petri dish of Billings." Throughout the mural, children painted various dragonflies, which Bear Don't Walk calls the keepers of dreams.

"In Native American culture, they represent shedding negativity in your life and focusing on your dreams and goals," he said. Children also added animals, clouds and mountains, and many incorporated their names into the painting. He encouraged freedom of expression among the young painters.

"We let them do what they wanted to do. It builds up character," Bear Don't Walk said.

"When you are doing art, you've got to be fearless."

Art presents a universal language, Pack said, and his hope is that the mural will not only provide a striking visual upon entering ZooMontana, but also create a discussion. The zoo's staff plans to install a plaque on the wall to help explain the project and give context to Bear Don't Walk's work.

"Beauty, emotion – the things the artist tries to bring through, I think everybody feels that message on some level in a positive way," Pack said. "For as long as this is here, even if they don't know the story behind it, they are still going to look at it and get that feeling."

In the past five years, Bear Don't Walk has focused on developing his art professionally. He is represented by Takes Horse Gallery in Polson, has sold his work across the United States, and also participated in creating a public mural at Montana State University with other indigenous artists including Ben Pease, Alisha Fisher, Casey Figueroa and John Pepion.

"Art has been the best outlet that I've ever come across," Bear Don't Walk said. "It saved me. It kept me focused, kept me believing in the dream every day."

Bear Don't Walk, at work on his mural, said the inspiration of artists who came before him "pushes me to be great, pushes me to live the dream for those who never made it."

He credits his high school art teacher Ann King, who still teaches in Busby, for encouraging him and his peers to pursue art. "She is the one that inspired us to be big dreamers. She taught us when we were young, if you pursue art, be good at it and keep dreaming."

Bear Don't Walk's passion for art helped him through hardships and gave him purpose and focus, he said. "I believe not just in art, but in having a career, something to motivate you every day. It's helped out a lot of people I know, coming from where I come from. Keeps them away from doing drugs and keeps them out of trouble."

With his work, Bear Don't Walk hopes to spur additional public art around the Billings community focused on indigenous cultures.

"Everybody sees it, and they start recognizing diversity in the city among different tribes, different cultures. That's the most important thing, and it brings everybody together. It unifies."

Tax resources

The Montana Arts Council cannot legally assist individuals or organizations with their income taxes or provide advice on what income is taxable and what expenses are deductible. However, the Montana Department of Revenue has

resources that might help answer tax-related questions.

Department of Revenue, mtrevenue.gov: Submit questions via the "contact" link; give them a call at 406-444-6900; or find the office that's nearest to your location. The Helena office is located at 125 N. Roberts in the Mitchell Building.

Additional resources
Internal Revenue Service: www.irs.gov
Montana Non-profit Association: www.mtnonprofit.org/business_to_business/#/

MORE CONDOLENCES (FROM PAGE 5)

Not slowing down, Guthrie then penned *The Pony Express: An Illustrated History* (2010). In her last years, she teamed up with Dan and Ann Fagre to co-author *Death & Survival in Glacier National Park: True Tales of Tragedy, Courage, & Misadventure* (2017). Only a short time before her death, her first book was re-released as *First Rangers* with additional information, photographs and a new format. Brimming with photographs and original art, her books combine meticulous research with lively storytelling. Guthrie believed in the power of history and stories, that they should not be lost. She was always a woman on a mission, equally inspired and inspiring.



Jay Laber (Photo by Tom Bauer/Missoulian)

Enter the Blackfeet Reservation from any direction – north, south, east and west – and you'll be greeted by a pair of life-size horse-men, crafted by St. Ignatius artist **Jay Laber**, who died Oct. 24 at his home north of St. Ignatius of cancer. He was 58. A member of the Blackfeet Tribe, Laber was born on Sept. 7, 1961, in Browning and raised on the Blackfeet Nation and in New Hampshire. After working construction in Alaska, Florida and Maine, he returned to Montana more than 20 years ago, enrolled at Salish Kootenai College to study forestry, and began taking art courses on the side, developing his skills under the guidance of his mentor and friend, SKC art professor Corwin "Corky" Clairmont. The pairs of chiefs, planted at Cut Bank, Babb, East Glacier and Badger Creek, were formed from rusted car bodies, hubcaps and barbed wire. Blackfeet artist and Governor's Arts Awards honoree Jackie Parsons said at the time she considered Laber "a master artist who was able to capture the grace of the horse, the very stoic look of the warriors ... They look like guardians of the plains." The life-size sculptures, commissioned by the Blackfeet Tribe, are part of an impressive body of work created by Laber. His sculpture of a horseback rider, titled "Charging Forward," sits outside Washington-Grizzly Stadium at the University of Montana in Missoula. His sculptures at SKC include the dramatic "Buffalo Hunter," evoking a rider astride a horse, driving a spear into a bison. Early in his career, he sculpted a massive, 11-foot-long bison that was shown at the American Indian Higher Education Consortium Conference in Billings. A museum in Münster, Germany, purchased it, and he was featured in the *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*. "For a lack of a better word, he was a genius," Clairmont told the *Missoulian*. "A lot of our communities have been through a lot of hardship, and I think that determination and beauty of our people comes out in his work."

Beloved Helena jazz musician **Walter (Blackie) Nelson**, who passed peacefully Aug. 8 in Billings. He was born in 1926, in the house where he was raised in Helena. He enlisted in the Navy in 1944 and served in the Philippines and New Guinea. He returned to Helena, met Isabel while frequenting the ice-cream parlor where she worked, and charming her by playing her favorite songs on the jukebox. They married in 1950 and remained the best of friends. Nelson attended Carroll College, worked for the VA and later for the highway department as an engineer designing roads, retiring in 1983. Music was a huge part of Nelson's soul, and jazz was the beat of his heart. He started playing at age 15, and in high school led a western band that did live shows on KPFA radio. He played with innumerable musicians but his favorite gigs by far were playing

music with his kids, sitting around the living room before dinner. In a tribute concert in April 2017, Nelson took the stage at the Myrna Loy in Helena with accomplished pianist Bob Packwood. "It's more of a conversation than a concert," said Packwood, who spent a year prior to the performance playing with Nelson in the family living room. "He introduces a song, then I learn it inside and out, and from then on it's just a journey. He listens like no one I've seen." Saxophonist Wilbur Rehmann, a longtime friend who played with Nelson for years, recalls Blackie as "an amazing mentor and one of the warmest individuals in Montana music history. So many of us fellow musicians loved him and his guitar magic."

Musician and music educator **Mora C. Payne**, 87, who passed away Nov. 11 in Missoula. Born Dec. 23, 1931, in Butte, she was fiercely proud of her Scottish heritage and of Butte's multicultural diversity. The love of music threaded its way through her life. At age 18, she entered the University of Montana on a \$75 violin performance scholarship. "That \$75 dollars changed my life," she recalled. She played in the Missoula Symphony Orchestra and graduated with a bachelor's degree from the music school. Her first job sent her to rural Chester, where she taught high school home economics and music (1954-1956) and met her first husband, Carman Skari, a handsome rancher with a passion for history. Together they helped found the Liberty County Arts Council, bringing repertory theatre and Shakespeare to Chester audiences. After her husband's death, she returned to Missoula in 1973 where she taught violin and rejoined the Missoula symphony, playing under numerous conductors until 2003. Her lifelong commitment to music and education led her to establish student scholarships in history and music, and to serve on many educational and music boards. Over four decades she was actively involved in a dozen organizations, including Young Audiences of Western Montana, the String Orchestra of the Rockies, the Montana Arts Council advisory committee, the Montana Chamber Orchestra and the Missoula Symphony Association. She traveled widely with her second husband, Dr. Thomas Payne, and continued those adventures after his death, venturing to Eastern Europe, France, Greece, Mexico and more. She pursued community work, volunteering and fundraising for arts programs and hospitals, while encouraging more women to run for public office and championing social justice. Friends remember her willingness to reach out to others, her youthful spirit and lively intellect, quick humor and political passion.

Irene Elaine Pirnie, who died Sept. 25 in Missoula, with her loving husband of 39 years, famed artist Larry Pirnie, by her side. She was 89. Born in Bismark, she was raised in Lark, ND. She earned her teaching degree and taught elementary school before marrying Larry Larson and moving to Missoula. Her first husband died in a plane crash on June 3, 1976; they had five children together. She was a stay-at-home mom until she met Pirnie in 1978. They married in 1980 and together started Pirnie Art. Larry painted and Irene traveled countless miles delivering art to galleries. She started marketing art with no experience, and went on to become a successful and well-known saleswoman. She was as vibrant and colorful as the art her husband created. Larry told the *Missoula Current*: "We built a life together that is not like any artist I ever talked to, any other story I had ever heard or read about – probably Charlie Russell and Nancy came the closest to it – but we had this wonderful togetherness where I could paint whatever I wanted to paint and I had this person who loved me and she would tell you that's the only reason she became a sales person."



Irene Pirnie with husband Larry



Blackie Nelson on the set of 11th & Grant

ABOUT MUSIC

– By Mariss McTucker

Dammit Lauren and the Well: *Warning Signs*

Big Sky's "alt-psych" rockers Dammit Lauren and the Well recently brought out their first album, and it's chock-full of original material with inventive storytelling. All members contribute their ideas to the songs and get credit for them.

By combining varied backgrounds, they create a heady brew born of country, jazz, bluegrass and rock. And don't forget pop hooks. Compelling singer and bassist Lauren Jackson fronted a country-rock group and performs solo from time to time, singing her own country songs. Guitarist Brian Stumpf has a jazz and contemporary music degree, and also co-founded the band with Jackson.

Mandolinist Ben Macht has played with assorted bands, and he and Stumpf have been a musical duo for almost a decade. Macht fleshes out the band's sound with oodles of effects from his huge pedal board (for example, a Wurlitzer on "Jack Slade" and an organ on "Bad Dream"). Rounding out the group is drummer Casey Folley, who, besides providing kick-ass percussion, multi-tasks as the Beehive Basin Brewery owner.

"Jack Slade" recounts the last days of the Montana rebel who was hanged in 1864 by vigilantes. The well-told story starts with a slow-rockin' beat and chunky guitar chords. Jackson spits out the lyrics in her street-wise voice – "scarin' kids, crashin' bars, he's startin' bloody fights, his days are numbered here ..." I like it!

"The Storm" is equally atmospheric. Quiet finger-pickin' and spooky cymbal taps introduce Jackson's sultry sound and a feeling of dread. She wrote the lyrics while watching coverage of flooding in Houston years ago.

"The Well" features mandolin tremolos, and "Hoping for the Best" has long bass lines and quiet cymbal touches. Jackson overdubs herself harmonizing on "Truck Stop Waltz" and "Heaven," which has an infectious refrain. You'll find much more to like on this effort!



Full Grown Band

This self-titled debut album by one of Missoula's longest-running groups is a knockout. The seven-piece, which grew out of an earlier incarnation as Full Grown Men, has all you'd want in an R&B band – great vocals, horns, kickin' bass and percussion, and inventive songwriting. Not to mention fine guitar chops.

Lost Highway Band alumni Paul Kelley, bass, who replaced the late Rick Waldorf a few years back, and Phil Hamilton, saxophone, join Moonlighters' guitarist Peter Walther, well-known singer Deb Demmons, in-demand drummer Roger Moquin, keys player Bob Athearn, and trumpeter Jordan Demander to create terrific dance music. Everyone sings except Hamilton and Demander.

Two songs are covers: King Floyd's "Groove Me," wherein Demmons grows her way through the lyrics; and Hambridge and Moore's soulful "Move," with its sax/trumpet interplay and hip-shakin' beat.

Kelley duets with Demmons on his "Voodoo Mud." "Just one taste of his poison knocked the Holy Roller out of me," Demmons sings; Walther adds some bluesy licks. Demmons' mature voice oozes soul.

The wacky state of things on Hamilton's rock-steady "Twilight Zone" finds the piano playing the identifiable melody. Rightly, Walther uses all his guitar effects – distortion pedal, digital delay, tremolo pedal and reverb device – to create atmosphere. The sax wails while bass and drums rock the bottom, the trumpet files in, and the tempo decelerates with sax squeaks at the end. Fine!

Walther wrote the rest of the songs, and not one of them sounds the same, quite a feat. He sings with the gang on the jazzy finger-snapper "Mama Sed," with its bluesy Atlanta Rhythm Section nuances, and "Somebody's Cryin'," a gospel song. It's got a bit of a N'Awlins' feel with the horns and harmony.

The album is dedicated to the memory of Rick Waldorf. And it's an apt tribute: you'll get up and dance when you hear these folks!



John Lowell: *This Long Stretch of Gravel*

Livingston's bluegrass icon, John Lowell, has released another gem of well-crafted songs underpinned by brilliant instrumental work. Most have never been recorded.

Lowell has a fine burry baritone and unmatched songwriting ability. There are sagas, love songs and mournful stories cloaked in beautiful balladry.

He originally conceived of a duet project, but wanted more sound so he enlisted 18 friends he's played with over the years. Start with Lowell on guitar and lead vocals, then throw in award-winning bassist Missy Raines, who accompanies him on every cut.

Here's the rest of the all-star cast: fiddlers Becky Buller, Jeremy Garrett (Infamous Stringdusters), Darol Anger (David Grisman Quintet) and Jason Thomas; Dobro player Andy Hall (Infamous Stringdusters); mandolinists John Reischman (John Reischman and the Jaybirds) and Joe K. Walsh; banjo players Ron Block (Alison Krauss and Union Station), Greg Cahill (Special Consensus), Chris Coole and Joe Newberry; pianist Bill Payne (Little Feat and Doobie Brothers); cellist Joy Adams; and Ben Somers, tenor sax.

Monster harmony vocalists include Claire Lynch, Chris Jones and Stephen Mouglin. Several instrumentalists contribute harmony as well.

Twangs and minor fingerpickin' from Newberry's banjo introduce "Fergus County Jail." Lowell's guitar enters, emphasizing the atmospheric "drop D" low note, and he plays silky runs at the end of vocal phrases. A man bemoans his fate in the slammer after he gets into a fracas and kills another.

Payne's piano on "The Daydreamer's Waltz" gives it a music-box feel; and "Western Velvet Sky/Black-Eyed Susie" was written for beloved friend Ben Bullington, a terrific songwriter who passed away. It's followed by "Ben Bullington Radio I.D.," with Bullington voicing the call letters for a radio



station; Lowell recorded it during the songwriter's last days.

"The Last to Know" is a loping bluegrass with rollicking Cahill banjo, chunky Reischman mandolin, and torrents of guitar hammer-ons and pull-offs. "Bodie," a forlorn waltz, tells the tale of a man lured by the promise of gold to a California wasteland. Sons of the Pioneers-style harmony and bowed cello by Adams enhance the lonely feel.

If you're looking for superb musicianship all around, get this CD. It's a masterpiece!

Montana Manouche: *Live*

Perennial Bozeman pickers Montana Manouche, a Gypsy jazz quartet, have their second album out. Formed in 2012, the group continues to perform delicious dance music in the style of famed guitarist Django Reinhardt and his 1930s quintet, Hot Club of France.

Long-time bandmates include Nancy Padilla, violin; her husband Ray Padilla on rhythm guitar; Dave Sullivan, lead guitar; and jazz bassist Mike Carey. With a completely instrumental sound that reflects their live performances, the quartet is a favorite among the local swing-dance crowd.

Recording a live album is hard to do well, and they pull it off. The tracks were recorded at two concerts – four at the Big Sky Gypsy Jazz Festival in Billings in late 2018, the others at the Bozeman Public Library during the Django Reinhardt Birthday Celebration Concert last January.

Most standards are by Reinhardt and a couple were co-written with his Hot Club cohort, violinist Stéphane Grappelli; the rest are by other composers in the genre.

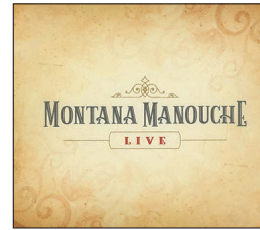
The lone exception is Nancy Padilla's "Swing Cat Strut," named for the MSU swing-dance community. It's got a trace of David Grisman's "Minor Swing," cool harmony lead between violin and guitar, and sweet bent notes. Padilla bows a silky melody, saws a bit, then slides up high.

"Douce Ambiance" starts with unison guitar and violin, then segues into a jumpin' rhythm featuring syncopated stops and long instrumental breaks, first violin, and then fluid guitar. Crisp notes abound!

The mid-tempo "Swing 39" has the two instruments harmonizing in half tones; and "Indifference," a Spanish-inflected waltz, is almost classical in its nuances. Love it!

Even the bass gets a couple solos, in "I'll See You in My Dreams" and "Duke and Dukie."

Cookin' rhythm and terrific musicianship pervade this effort.



Daniel Kosel: *Better Days*

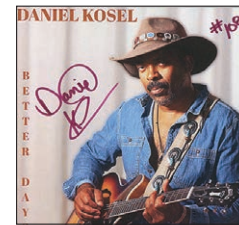
Daniel Kosel of Roberts, he of the burnished baritone and wicked guitar chops, has a fourth album out. This time the solo artist is accompanied by top-notch players Marley Ball, cello, Mike Tranel, drums, and Maclin Wiley, bass. The "cruces" artist (he mixes country, rock, and blues) writes all the songs and does all the acoustic and electric guitar work.

On the bluesy "Serendipity," Kosel encourages us to rid ourselves of fear and worry by seeking solace in Nature rather than technology or modern medicine. He plays some crisp notes and wiggly lines, and a Chuck Berry riff or two. "Consider my sage advice, non-GMO and free ... embrace Mother Earth and serendipity." Ha!

"Dirt Country Town" has a hometown flavor. Kosel lauds the virtues of a small burg where everyone has friends who get together for a good time. It's a minor-key rocker with deep cello lines and some nifty muddy guitar licks. "You're only a stranger for a minute, we've got your six," he croons.

On "Better Days," the title tune, the cello's sustained notes build in intensity, along with Kosel's percussive guitar strokes. A troubled man knows he will be forgiven for his misdeeds, and realizes that the pain has made him a better person. It's got a cool arrangement, too.

The mid-tempo country-rock beat of "Only One" finds a love-struck fellow hoping the woman of his dreams will dance with him; and "Pendleton Whiskey" reflects Kosel's choice of drink, as he entertains revelers with his music. It's a shuffly, bluesy toe-tapper with terrific percussion that will surely get you up and dancin'!



9

State of the Arts welcomes CDs

State of the Arts welcomes CD submissions by Montana musicians for inclusion in the About Music section. The recordings must be professional, commercially available, full-length CDs recorded within the past 12 months, with cover art and liner notes. Reviews also appear at livelytimes.com, Montana's statewide source for arts and entertainment.

Brief biographical information on band members would be helpful to the writer.

Please send submissions to CD reviewer Mariss McTucker, P.O. Box 81, Dixon, MT, 59831.

Songs for the Blackfoot Pathways: *Original Composition by Adele O'Dwyer*

Irish cellist Adele O'Dwyer, soon-to-be composer-in-residence at Lincoln's Sculpture in the Wild, was commissioned to write original music celebrating the community and its surroundings. Her work premiered in 2018 during the five-year anniversary of the park and the 100-year commemoration of the Lincoln Community Hall.

O'Dwyer visited the park in 2017, drawing inspiration from the rich history of Lincoln and the Blackfoot Valley. She also researched the tribal peoples who traveled through this wondrous landscape.

The composition, conceived as "an episodic one-movement work," finds four song-poems flowing seamlessly one into the other. Silence, tempo changes, and instrumental snippets signal the end of one and beginning of another.

Musicians performing with O'Dwyer are violinist Marvin Suson, pianist Cullen Bryant, O'Dwyer's daughter and violist, Aoise, and sister, soprano Pan Morigan. Together they weave a mesmerizing tapestry of sounds from the perspective of native stories. Victor Charlo and Heather Cahoon of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes gave O'Dwyer permission to base her work on their poems.

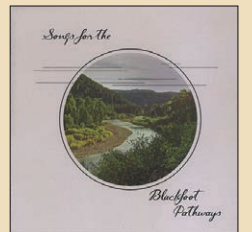
Cahoon's "Wasp" starts the journey. As if from a bee's-eye view, we see the arrival of newcomers. Morigan's piercing spoken-word delivery is sharp and breathy, her voice rising.

"A conversation exists beyond reach. You hear it beneath the sound of paper-crisp wings ... see colonies busy building their homes on your land ..." The violin hovers, wing-like, ominous. The cello adds brusque, sinister notes here and there. Percussive knocks, quiet piano arpeggios, then in comes Morigan, "This entire story played out in the sky ..."

In Charlo's "Buffalo," Morigan vocalizes, "We sing ancient songs ... we dream of a new life full of wonder ..." The instruments build, race up the scale, then tumble down in a cascade of notes, ending with a flourish.

Charlo's "Eagles" finds the raptors high on their perch above the Flathead River, waiting to swoop onto prey. The piano plays intervals of fourths, the two tones creating anxiety, imitating the wait and watch. Sprightly violin and viola join Morigan in unison as she repeats "Eagles waiting for the hunt."

Cahoon's "Elk Thirst" comes last. The ballad-like pace and long sustained notes befit a gorgeous melody. "One elk steps into blurred water and drinks ... his thoughts improbable, he looks and drinks the sky." The audience is so enraptured that one barely notices it's a live recording until the end, when raucous clapping recognizes a terrific accomplishment.



ABOUT BOOKS

Fiction

Sweep Out the Ashes

By Mary Clearman Blew

Young feminist and historian Diana Karnov arrives in Versailles, Montana, to teach college history and unravel a few family secrets. The community is remote, “cut off by distance and weather from anywhere ideas were being discussed and issues argued.” The all-male faculty appears to be more appreciative of her looks than her intellect, and her clothes and car prove inadequate to the brutal winter weather.

But she’s escaped the overbearing great aunts who raised her in Seattle, and diligently begins combing through newspapers at the local library, hoping to discover the identity of the father she never knew.

A few locals befriend her, including a student, Cheryl Le Tellier, and her brother, Jake, both descended from Métis. From them, she begins to see how narrow her sense of history is, especially when it comes to the American West. As her relationship with Jake deepens, she also circles ever closer to her father’s true identity – all the while coming to respect, and even appreciate the frigid, austere landscape that surrounds her. Along the way, the young historian begins to realize that our common history is a tapestry of multiple narratives.

Mary Clearman Blew – a native of northern Montana – crafts an engrossing romantic mystery set in a community that’s isolated from the turbulent 1970s. Author Joy Passanante calls it “smart, witty, hard-hitting, tender, and compelling ... a damn good read.”

Blew, the author or editor of numerous fiction and nonfiction books, is professor emerita of English at the University of Idaho.

– Kristi Niemeyer



Leaves On Frozen Ground

By Dave Carty

In Port Landing, Wisconsin, on the south shore of Lake Superior, the Vaillancourts, Gaston and Celine, own a successful construction company and a small farm, where Gaston lovingly tends to an orchard of prized apples. Edmund, 11, is his father’s son, stubborn and willful. His dog and the wild country beyond their orchard claim his heart.

But when the economy goes south, the Vaillancourts are thrust into a painful rearranging of love and loyalty that changes their family in profound and unforeseen ways.

“Insightful throughout, at times profound, *Leaves on Frozen Ground* is the work of a fine writer and keen observer of the human condition,” writes Mike England in *Outside Bozeman*.

Midwest Book Review praises Carty’s debut novel as “a complex, heart wrenching, deftly scripted page turner of a read ...”

Carty is a 34-year resident of the Gallatin Valley and has spent nearly half his life as a professional writer, with over 1,000 published magazine articles in a variety of national publications to his credit.



We Leave the Flowers Where They Are

Edited by Richard Fifield

“We tell ourselves stories in order to live.” The wisdom of author Joan Didion blossomed across Montana this fall, with 41 contemporary Montana women telling their stories in a new collection published Sept. 1.

Longtime memoir instructor and novelist Richard Fifield of Missoula curated the anthology, *We Leave the Flowers Where They Are*, named after a line in the single poem included in the book.

“Storytelling has been part of the human race for centuries,” says Fifield. “Writing a memoir, telling your own story, changes everything.”

The anthology is a diverse collection, with women across Montana, from Powder River to Eureka, sharing stories of joy, pain, humor and hope.

“Working with other writers has made my life richer and wider,” says Missoula author Gladys Considine, 78, who has been in Fifield’s memoir critique group for five years. “Regardless of our ages, whether we grew up in Butte or Broadus, Billings or Troy, or whatever we do at work every day, we all have stories worth telling and sharing. Though we women live in similar times, each story I read broadens my outlook on life and gives me more understanding and a further acceptance of differences.”

A portion of the book’s proceeds benefits Zootown Arts Community Center (ZACC) and Humanities Montana. Learn more at www.mtstories.com.



Cold Country

By Russell Rowland

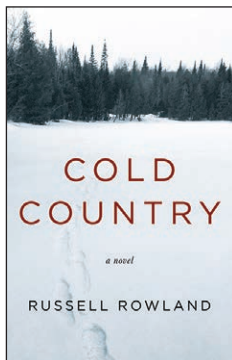
The small town of Paradise Valley is ripped apart when popular rancher and notorious bachelor Tom Butcher is found murdered one morning, beaten to death by a baseball bat. Suspicion among the tight-knit community immediately falls on the outsider, Carl Logan, who recently moved in with his family and his troubled son Roger.

What Carl doesn’t realize is that there are plenty of people in Paradise Valley who have reason to kill Tom Butcher.

Complications arise when the investigating officers discover that Tom Butcher had a secret – one that he kept even from Junior Kirby, a lifelong rancher and Butcher’s best friend. As accusations fly and secrets are revealed, the people of Paradise Valley learn how deeply Tom Butcher was embedded in their lives, and discover that they may not have known him at all.

Kirkus Review calls Russell Rowland’s latest novel “a quick-moving, plainspoken, mostly charming exploration of the hardscrabble life of the livestock rancher of old.”

The Billings author has written five novels, including *In Open Spaces* and *Arbuckle*, as well as the nonfiction collection, *Fifty-Six Counties*, about his travels to every county in Montana (he hosts a public radio show by the same name).



Non-fiction/Memoir

Putting on the Dog: The Animal Origins of What We Wear

By Melissa Kwasny

What’s in a wool sweater, a silk scarf, a pair of lambskin slippers? We slip into warmth unwittingly, especially during a cold Montana winter.

In her new book, Melissa Kwasny takes a more thoughtful and somewhat scientific look at human garb, revealing the history behind the hide, fur and feathers that keep us clothed. She leads readers on a journey that begins with a trip to a Native village in Alaska, where she finds seal-gut parkas, thigh-high fish-skin boots, and a coat of Arctic squirrel.

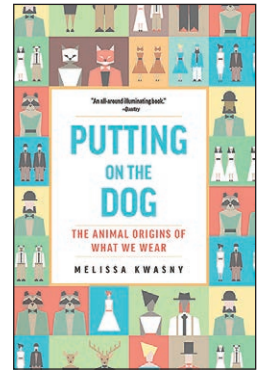
Closer to her home in East Helena, she visits High Plains Sheepskins to learn how wool slippers are made, watches a butcher flay a steer and sheep lose their fleeces, which are in turn spun to fiber. In Japan, she unravels the mesmerizing history of silk – that delicate metamorphose from silkworm egg to cocoons that each yield up to a half-mile of impossibly thin filament.

At Crow Fair in Montana, eagle feathers “bob, cross and criss-cross wildly as the dancers step.” Kwasny explores oyster beds on the Sea of Cortez and a mink farm off the coast of Denmark. Each encounter fuels her curiosity about our relationships with the animals that sustain us.

Reciprocity, she concludes, is the appropriate attitude toward the natural world that gives us so much. “Buy clothes. Not very many. Made mostly from animals and plants. Then cherish and care for them.”

Kwasny, who is one of Montana’s two current Poets Laureate, pursues her quarry across the pages with an anthropologist’s eye, and a wordsmith’s heart.

– Kristi Niemeyer



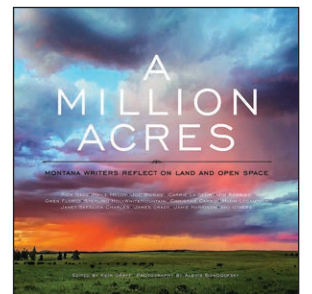
A Million Acres: Montana Writers Reflect on Land and Open Space

Edited by Keir Graff with photography by Alexis Bonogofsky

Montanan writers pay homage to landscapes they love in *A Million Acres: Montana Writers Reflect on Land and Open Space*. This stunning new book, published by the Montana Land Reliance, features 20 powerful pieces of writing about Montana’s land and open spaces by the state’s finest contemporary writers. Contributors include Rick Bass, Maile Meloy, Christine Carbo, Carrie Le Seur, Gwen Florio, Jamie Harrison, Allen Morris Jones and Russell Rowland. *A Million Acres* also includes 28 spectacular color landscape photographs by Alexis Bonogofsky.

In essays, memoirs and short stories, the book’s writers explore the plains, rivers and mountains of Big Sky Country. They show how natural beauty and hardship are two sides of the same coin, and how sometimes the only way to cure heartache is to visit the great outdoors.

From a hardscrabble upbringing to the pain of losing the family land, from death on a river to the awe of landing a big fish, from backcountry encounters with grizzly bears to an out-of-stater’s happiness at making Montana her home, *A Million Acres* offers a wonderfully diverse range of experiences and perspectives.



The Eight Master Lessons of Nature: What Nature Teaches Us About Living Well in the World

By Gary Ferguson

Montana author and ecologist Gary Ferguson offers new insights into the inner workings of nature in this exploration into how many of the most remarkable aspects of nature are hardwired into people’s very DNA. What emerges is a dazzling web of connections that holds powerful clues about how to better navigate daily life.

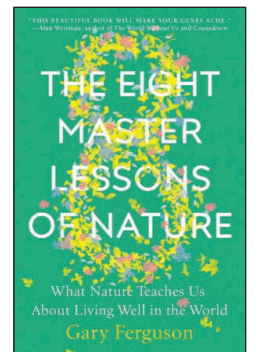
Looking around at the world today – a world of social media, skyscrapers, super highways, melting ice caps and rampant deforestation – it is easy to feel that humanity has actively severed its ties with nature.

Through cutting-edge data and research, drawing on science, psychology, history and philosophy, *The Eight Master Lessons of Nature* offers a path forward. Ferguson balances science and spirit as he explores

mystery, loss, the fine art of rising again, how animals make us smarter, and how the planet’s elders can help us lead more nourishing and sustainable lives.

“Ferguson’s eight assertions each speak to the powerful connections he sees between the natural and human worlds, each beginning with his lushly delivered observations of nature.” (*Publishers Weekly*)

Ferguson has written for a variety of national publications, and is the author of 25 books on nature and science.



A Brief History of Cooke City

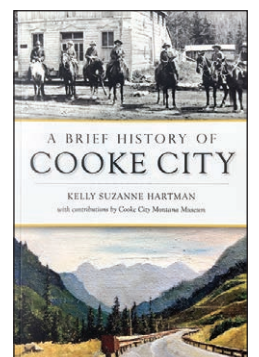
By Kelly Hartman, with contributions by Cooke City Montana Museum

With claims staked, 1870s prospectors at Cooke City patiently waited for adequate transportation to get their ore to market. Eager enough, they named the town in honor of Northern Pacific tycoon Jay Cooke and his son, Jay Cooke Jr. Ironically, Cooke’s influence in creating Yellowstone National Park stunted the growth of the town, as the park blocked any efforts to support a railroad through its borders.

Historian Kelly Hartman recounts the saga that left hundreds battling for a railroad that never came. For more than 60 years, Cooke City residents waited for rail until a new economy took hold – tourism.

The dreams of the miners still live on in tumble-down shacks and rusty old mining equipment. And the successful vision of entrepreneurs offering rustic relaxation at the doorstep of Yellowstone continues to lure visitors.

Hartman was raised in Silver Gate, attending kindergarten through eighth grade at the one-room schoolhouse in Cooke City. She earned her BFA in painting from Western Oregon University and was director of the Cooke City Montana Museum from 2013-’16 – a time that included its grand opening. In the summer of 2016, she began work as the curator of the Gallatin History Museum in Bozeman, but still visits her home valley often.



10

How to submit a book for State of the Arts

To submit a book published in the past 12 months by a Montana author for inclusion in the About Books section of *State of the Arts*, email the following information to kristi@livelytimes.com or mac@mt.gov:

- Title, author, publisher and month/year published;
 - A brief description of the book (no more than 200 words), and a short bio of the author;
 - A cover image: minimum 200 dpi in pdf or jpg format;
 - If other publications or authors have reviewed the book, send a brief sampling of those remarks.
- Books submitted to *State of the Arts* appear in this publication at the Montana Arts Council’s discretion and as space permits, and will not necessarily be reprinted at Lively Times.com.

ABOUT BOOKS

Montana: Mountains & More

By Rosella Mosteller

Photographer Rosella Mosteller shares 75 black and white images in her new book, inspired by Montana. “There is so much of Montana that doesn’t meet the eye until you take the time to put wear on the tread of your soles,” she writes. “The medium of black and white photography transforms the color of the landscape. What remains are images that give a person the emotive quality of Montana at its core.”



Change of Nature from *Montana: Mountains & More*

With camera in hand, she explores cold mountain lakes, meandering rivers, hot springs, and shifting light as it touches the trees and flowers, stone and grit of Montana’s natural world. Stories, facts, lists and haiku poems by the author augment her striking, desaturated images.

Mosteller attended the School of the Art Institute Chicago and earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from the Academy of Art University, San Francisco. Her work has appeared in numerous juried exhibitions across the state.

“Rosella Mosteller’s black and white images of the natural world are stunning in their composition and elegance,” writes Rita Fitzsimmons of Designworks. “With her technical ability and sharp attention to detail, she captures singular moments in time – images that have the power to enrich anyone who views her work.”

Her book is available at mostellerphotos.com.

Montana Entertainers: Famous and Almost Forgotten

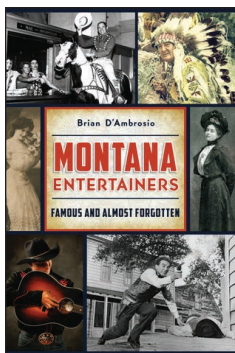
By Brian D’Ambrosio

For more than a century, Montana has supplied a rich vein of entertainment and personality to the nation – from daredevils to dancers, from actors to mimes.

Treasure State stars Gary Cooper and Myrna Loy found unparalleled success during the Golden Age of Hollywood. Born in Miles City in 1895, comedian Gilbert “Pee Wee” Holmes played sidekick to such stars as Tom Mix. One-time Butte resident Julian Eltinge went on to become America’s first famous female impersonator.

There was Taylor Gordon, whose golden voice propelled the son of a slave from White Sulphur Springs to Harlem Renaissance fame. From the little-known Robyn Adair to the ever-popular Michelle Williams, author Brian D’Ambrosio marks Big Sky Country’s long-standing connections with America’s performing arts world. The 210-page book includes 77 black and white images.

D’Ambrosio is the author of more than 10 books, including *Shot in Montana: A History of Big Sky Cinema*, and his articles have been published in local, regional and national publications.



The Best Gift: Montana’s Carnegie Libraries

By Kate Hampton, with photographs by Tom Ferris

Between 1910 and 1922, 17 Montana communities built libraries with money given to them by the era’s richest man, Andrew Carnegie. Fifteen of those libraries still stand today, and their stories are compellingly told in this new book by Kate Hampton, the Montana Historical Society’s community preservation coordinator.

“Andrew Carnegie was no saint,” notes Hampton. “His philanthropic legacy, however, continues to be beneficial to educational and cultural institutions around the world – and in Montana.”

Just as he did in *Hand Raised: The Barns of Montana*, photographer Tom Ferris provides stunning detail of both the classic and unusual architectural elements of these iconic buildings. Hand-drawn architectural renderings and other historical images combine to create a detailed portrait of Carnegie’s rich legacy in Montana.

While some of the remaining 15 library buildings have been repurposed as office space, community centers and a museum, all of them still stand as cultural and architectural anchors of their communities.

Proceeds from the book, sponsored by the Montana History Foundation, benefit Montana historic preservation. An exhibit is currently traveling the state, visiting many of the original 17 communities where Carnegie libraries were built.



Hidden History of Helena, Montana

By Ellen Bauml and Jon Axline

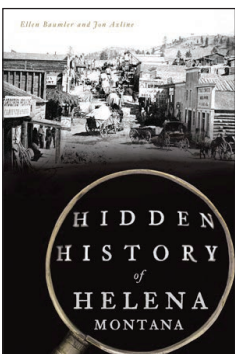
Two of Helena’s premier historians, Ellen Bauml and Jon Axline, have penned a new look at the Queen City’s past.

Distinguished by statesmen and magnates, Helena’s history is colored with many other compelling characters and episodes nearly lost to time. Before achieving eminence in Deadwood, Sheriff Seth Bullock oversaw Montana Territory’s first two legal hangings. The Seven Mile House was an oasis of vice for the parched, weary travelers entering the valley on the Benton Road, despite a tumultuous succession of ownership. The heritage of the Sieben Ranch and the saga of “King Kong” Clayton, “the Joe Louis of the Mat,” faded from public memory.

From unraveling the myths of Chinatown to detailing the lives of red-light businesswomen and the Canyon Ferry flying saucer hoax, Bauml and Axline team up to preserve a compendium of Helena’s yesteryear.

Bauml, who was interpretive historian at the Montana Historical Society from 1992 to 2019, is a longtime member of the Humanities Montana Speakers Bureau, a 2011 recipient of the Governor’s Award for the Humanities and an award-winning author.

Axline, the historian at the Montana Department of Transportation for three decades, has written five books on Montana history.



Young Adult & Children

Moonbound: Apollo 11 and the Dream of Spaceflight

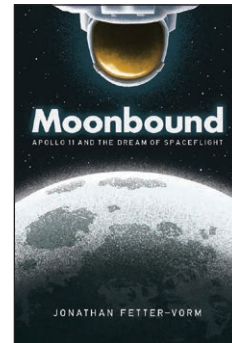
By Jonathan Fetter-Vorm

On a summer night in 1969, two men climbed down a ladder onto a sea of dust at the edge of an ancient dream. When Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin first set foot on lunar soil, the moon ceased to be a place of mystery and myth. It became a destination.

Now, on the 50th anniversary of that journey, *Moonbound* tells the monumental story of the moon and the men who went there first. With vibrant images and meticulous attention to detail, Montana graphic novelist Jonathan Fetter-Vorm conjures the long history of the visionaries, stargazers, builders, and adventurers who sent Apollo 11 on its legendary voyage.

From the wisdom of the Babylonians to the intrigues of the Cold War, from the otherworldly discoveries of Galileo to the dark legacy of Nazi atrocities, from the exhilarating trajectories of astronauts – recounted in their own words – to the unsung brilliance of engineers working behind the scenes, *Moonbound* captures the grand arc of the Space Age in a graphic history of unprecedented scope and profound lyricism.

Publisher’s Weekly described it as “gloriously epic” in a starred review.



11

Forever Neverland

By Susan Adrian

Fergus, 11, who is autistic, and Clover, 12, discover they are the descendants of Wendy Darling, of Peter Pan fame, in Susan Adrian’s latest adventure, released last summer by Random House. On a visit to their estranged grandparents in London, Peter Pan whisks the two away to Neverland, where they have a grand adventure with mermaids, Lost Boys and Girls, pixies, a Greek goddess and a sea monster.

This contemporary sequel to J. M. Barrie’s timeless classic *Peter Pan* is sure to appeal to kids who loved “The Land of Stories” and dream of going to Neverland. “A magical ode to childhood that updates the classic while keeping its flavor,” writes *Kirkus Reviews*.

Adrian is a fourth-generation Californian who has lived in Montana for 16 years. By day she is a scientific editor, and by night she dreams up wild adventures that sometimes turn into books. She is the author of the acclaimed holiday fantasy *Nutcracked* (recently released in paperback) and two books for teens, *Tunnel Vision* and *The Dark at the End*. When she’s not with her family, Adrian keeps busy researching unusual facts, traveling and writing more books.



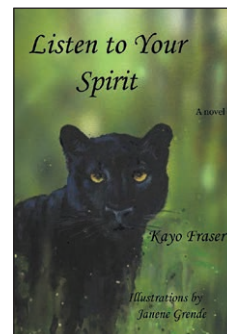
Listen to Your Spirit

By Kayo Fraser

When a small airplane crashes in an African jungle, there are only two survivors, Kelly, 12, and her brother, 10-year-old Jake. Grieving, injured, frightened and lost, the children know they have to find their way out of the jungle and home to their only living relatives, an aunt and uncle in Florida.

Compelled to move, they choose a direction that takes them further into the wilds. A black leopard visits the injured girl in a dream, and admonishes her to listen to her spirit. Two men find the children and carry Kelly, with Jake following, back to the crash site and out of the jungle. One of the men, Simba, prepares healing tea for Kelly. As the children wait for the promised ship to start them on their journey to America, the black leopard visits Kelly again with a warning to listen to her spirit in the coming days – advice she follows through the trials, lessons and adventures that await them.

Fraser, a native of Florida, lives with her husband in Deer Lodge at the Fraser School of Driving Horses. Her debut novel was released by Raven Publishing.



The Fire in the Dark: The Truth Will Always Come Out

By Tessa L. Gatz

Eighteen-year-old Tessa Gatz of Lewistown penned 267 pages for her debut novel, *The Fire in the Dark* – a fiery teen romance built on action and suspense. The book is narrated by Jacy, a 16-year-old high-school student who suddenly finds herself in a tangled mess of deception and unsure who to trust. When her brother John returns home after traveling overseas for several months, nothing is as it seems.

And what about Uncle Larry? For months, he was squatting with Jacy and her family, spending most of his time on the couch. Suddenly — and with no explanation — he gets up, dresses in a three-piece suit and takes off, his slicked-back hair making him look like a gangster.

Jacy’s world is flipped upside down, and it gets even more complicated once love interests get thrown into the mix.

The young author is already nine chapters into the sequel, and has another idea for a novel in the works. Her advice to would-be writers? “If you want to do something, do it,” she said. “Don’t make excuses.”

– From the *Fergus Electric Cooperative* newsletter



Morning Worms

By Marilyn Ann Mortenson-Cron with illustrations by LaVern E.H. Mortenson

Margie needs a friend and the entire family is too busy to play with her. Margie uncovers some new friends that help her feel better, until the family moves. Fortunately, a surprise makes everything work out.

Author Marilyn Cron is a writer and a retired teacher who lives in Montana. She loves writing and illustrating, and recently completed her second children’s book. She has won the national Evelyn Cole Peters Award, Silver Quill Award, and has a story published in *Charity* by Red Rock Press.



Gather Round sparks national attention

Gather Round – a new Do It Yourself humanities toolkit – is a hit. According to a recent newsletter, Humanities Montana sent out all 50 of the first batch, including a few that left Montana for California, Idaho and Kansas, and shared the model with other organizations at the National Humanities Conference, Nov. 7-10 in Hawaii.

Gather Round is inspired by an anthology of essays titled *Hearth, A Global Conversation on Community, Identity and Place*, edited by Annick Smith and Susan O’Connor. The limited-edition DIY toolkit is designed to inspire discussions about home, migration, technology and nature. The kit comes with a copy of *Hearth*, a deck of Cards for Humanities, and a bag of Montana Gold tea. Groups are encouraged to “gather around a campfire, dinner table, or drinks to spark a conversation.” For more information, visit www.humanitiesmontana.org.

AUCTION ACTION

Museums host flurry of winter art auctions and events



12

Regents approve Montana Heritage Pavilion

The Montana Museum of Art and Culture at the University of Montana is moving forward with plans to build a Montana Heritage Pavilion on campus, with help from a \$5 million gift from the Terry and Patt Payne Family. The Montana Board of Regents approved construction of the new privately funded \$6 million building in December.

The Payne gift will allow the museum to transfer thousands of compelling works of art from campus storage to display, and launches efforts to inspire other philanthropic gifts to support construction of the building.

"This addition to our campus will become an exciting destination in our community, state and region," UM President Seth Bodnar said. "It will be a place of gathering, but more importantly, a manifestation of our enduring commitment to the arts and history."

Among the works that will benefit from a new facility are the nine masterpieces that MMAC received in 2018 from the estate of Sen. William A. Clark.

Learn more about the building project at www.campaignmontana.org.



Landscape by Jim Dick is part of the Emerson Center's annual auction.

Scotland is theme for Emerson Celebration of the Arts

The Emerson's annual Celebration of the Arts, 6 p.m. Jan. 24, is the Bozeman art center's largest annual fundraiser, supporting art education programs, community events and building projects throughout the year.

This year's celebration will explore the rich culture and rugged landscape of Scotland. The event features a four-course seated dinner, live music, fine art, live and silent auctions and entertainment. Local quick-draw artists create unique works to auction off at the end of the night.

The Celebration of the Arts Exhibit and Silent Auction is on display through Jan. 24 in the Jessie Wilber Gallery. The juried show features mixed-media works by local artists who generously donated to the fundraiser, and offers the community an opportunity to preview the work available for live and silent auctions. Silent bidding opened in December and continues through the Celebration of the Arts event.

For details, call 406-587-9797 or visit www.theemerson.org/celebration-of-the-arts/.

YAM Art Auction: Three events from Jan. 24-March 7

The Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings again hosts the longest-running and most diverse art auction in the region with Art Auction 52. According to museum director Bryan Knicely, the annual event "opens the doors between artists and collectors and helps make Billings an art-rich environment."

For the second year in a row, the YAM offers three distinct events, beginning Friday, Jan. 24, with Cocktails and Quick Finish and a special one-night-only silent auction. The evening will feature quick-draw artists, a silent auction of approximately 50 pieces of art, entertainment and hors d'oeuvres.

This gathering offers a rare opportunity to take home works by both well-known and up-and-coming regional artists. The opening night also provides collectors with a chance to "buy it now" in the silent auction and to preview the work in this year's live auction. Tickets may be purchased individually or bundled with the events on March 6-7.

Once again, the YAM will host a Meet-the-Artists Reception on Friday, March 6, giving ticket-holding patrons the opportunity to visit with participating artists and providing one last chance to buy silent-auction work before Saturday's big night.

The exhibition culminates in the annual Yellowstone Art Auction, which consists of a silent auction, a live auction, a quick finish, cocktails, and gourmet heavy hors d'oeuvres,

all within the museum's spacious galleries. The auction begins at 5 p.m. March 7 (4:30 for members) and features an array of hors d'oeuvres catered by Thomas Nelson Catering, with live auction bidding at 7 p.m.

Highlights for this year's live auction include a color lithograph by Pierre Auguste Renoir, titled "Children Playing Ball (Enfants jouant a la balle)"; "Antelope Canyon 1," a photograph by Clyde Butcher; a diptych from Jane Waggoner Deschner's silhouette series; "Parallel Lives I" by Neltje; and "Get Lucky," by Robert Mars.

Learn more at artmuseum.org or call 406-256-6804.

MAM Art Auction set for Feb. 1

The 2020 Benefit Art Auction for the Missoula Art Museum will be held 5-9:30 p.m. Feb. 1 at the University Center Ballroom at the University of Montana.

MAM invites the public to celebrate 45 years of exhibitions, programming and arts education at this marquee event, which features two silent auction rounds and a dynamic live auction.

The auction showcases more than 80 works of art including sculpture, prints, paintings, glasswork and more. Artists from across the United States have donated at least 50% of the sale price of these pieces, which will support the next year of contemporary art programming at MAM.

All artworks will be on view at MAM in January, with an exhibition reception 5-8 p.m. Jan. 3. Other highlights include a special game night, Hack the MAM!, 5:30-7 p.m. Jan. 23.

This year, MAM partners with Givergy, an online registration, ticketing and bidding platform, which will allow for remote silent auction bidding both before and during the event on Feb. 1. Bidding on an exclusive lot of artwork begins Jan. 3 and closes Jan. 23. Register to participate in this first round of bidding (no ticket sale required) at www.givergy.us/mamauction.

Smartphones or WiFi-enabled tablets are requested for guests attending on Feb. 1.

Tickets and tables are available now. Visit www.missoulaartmuseum.org, call 406-728-0447, or stop by the museum for more information.

— Carey Powers,
MAM Membership &
Marketing Coordinator

Chefs, Champagne and Art mingle at Paris Gibson Square's event

The Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art

in Great Falls hosts its fifth annual Chefs, Champagne and Art fundraiser at 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 1. Six local chefs are competing in a gastronomic competition for the title of "Champion Chef," based on presentation, taste and best use of champagne.

The Square recognizes that the culinary arts not only nurture the belly, but also nurture the soul. Chefs, Champagne and Art is a way to showcase the artful food and talented chefs in Great Falls and its surrounding area.

Celebrity judges include D.J. and Bee Jay, radio hosts from Cherry Creek Media, along with Rhonda Adkins and Veronica Ronnau from Pizazz.

Tickets are \$75 for members and \$85 for non-members and must be purchased in advance. The event includes appetizers, food, dessert, wine, beer and live music. Attendees vote for the people's choice award for best chef.

For more details call 406-727-8255 or visit www.the-square.org.



"Call of the War Chief" by Joseph Henry Sharp is among the auction offerings at The Russell in Great Falls.

The Russell: Famous painting consigned to auction

The acclaimed painting by Joseph Henry Sharp, "Call of the War Chief," has been consigned to the live auction on March 21, for The Russell: An Exhibition and Sale to Benefit the C.M. Russell Museum.

Other important watercolors, drawings, paintings and sculptures by the museum namesake, C.M. Russell, and others are part of an impressive list of works by both historic and contemporary western artists to be featured in the auction. These works are on display Feb. 20-March 22 at the Russell Museum in Great Falls, culminating in The Russell: An Exhibition and Sale to Benefit the C.M. Russell Museum, March 19-21.

The signature fundraising event for the nonprofit museum includes the Art Preview Party on Thursday at the museum; Art in Action 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday at Meadowlark Country Club, followed by the First Strike Auction, 6 p.m. at the Mansfield Convention Center.

Saturday brings a free Russell Educational Symposium at the Mansfield Center, The Russell Runway Show at Meadowlark Country Club, and The Russell Live Auction Saturday evening at the Mansfield Center.

For details, call 406-727-8787 or visit www.cmussell.org.

Western Art Week

The Russell is the centerpiece for Western Art Week, a cornucopia of art shows, auctions and special events that coincides with the birthday of famed western artist Charlie Russell. From March 18-22, Great Falls is home to more than 15 shows and 800 artists, who showcase art ranging from traditional paintings and sculpture to more contemporary works. Events include live music, quick draws, auctions, social get-togethers, and educational symposiums.

Check visitgreatfallsmontana.org/event/western-art-week for an updated schedule.

Arts Council of Big Sky hosts eighth auction

The Arts Council of Big Sky hosts its eighth annual fundraising art auction event from 6-10 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 29, at the Wilson Hotel in the Big Sky Town Center.

The evening includes a quick finish, live and silent auctions, music, food and drinks. This event is the only dedicated fundraiser for the Arts Council of Big Sky.

The live auction will feature artwork by Kevin Red Star, Carol Hagan, Julie Chapman, Terry Cooke Hall, Rachel Rusti Warner, Cyrus Walker, Ben Pease, Amber Blazina, Barb Swartz-Karst, Miles Glynn, Carol Spielman, Harry Koyama, Tabby Ivy, Tom Gilleon, Carrie Wild and many more.

Artists interested in submitting artwork to be considered for the live or silent auction can find the application online; deadline for submissions is Jan. 3.

Call 406-995-2742 for more information or visit bigskyarts.org/events/.



"Children Playing Ball (Enfants jouant a la balle)" by Pierre Auguste Renoir is among the offerings at this year's Yellowstone Art Museum auction.

ABOUT VISUAL ARTISTS

Dana Berardinis: Forgotten Lands

Through Jan. 16 at Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art, Great Falls
Artist's website: www.danaberardinis.com

While growing up in a rural mid-western town, Dana Berardinis spent hours roaming the fields and woods. Captured by the tones and textures that surrounded her, "I would draw the trees and cornfields of my home. I would bring back collections of bark, corn husk and bones to reference and apply to my creations."



"Vibrant Slough" by Dana Berardinis

After graduating from the Cleveland Institute of Art in

2004, she headed West, looking for a place "where I could paint freely without interruptions." She landed in Montana, where paths again lead to "the ever-present tones and textures of the natural palette. I memorize what I see and make drawings and paintings as I explore the vast wilderness."

Her exhibit at Paris Gibson Square, "Forgotten Lands," explores sloughs and swamps and the abundant life they sustain. Her paintings focus on the different types of wetlands in Northwest Montana and their significance to the landscape.

She points out that wetlands are among the largest and most diverse ecosystems in the world and act as the Earth's filter. "They can often be overlooked and disregarded, perceived as ugly or as wasted acreage." In addition, many are threatened by invasive species and human development.

Berardinis celebrates the quiet beauty of these hidden gems. Of her approach to art-making, she writes, "I experience painting the way I do the landscape. It holds the same quietness, the same search. Through the layering of paint and materials, I begin to find continuity with what I've discovered in nature."

This marks her second solo exhibit at Paris Gibson Square. Her first, "True Remains," was displayed in 2010. Her exhibit, "Passage of Renewal," toured the Holter Museum in Helena, Rare Bird Studio Gallery in Whitefish and the Dana Gallery in Missoula. Her work has also been displayed at the Hockaday Museum of Art in Kalispell and the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings.

Craig W. Hergert: From the Front to the Plains

Through Jan. 31 at the Emerson Center for Arts & Culture, Bozeman
Artist's website: www.montanapanoramic.com

Craig Hergert is a freelance artist whose work is currently on display in several galleries and businesses throughout Montana, including his studio and gallery showroom in Bozeman, and in private collections all over the world. Montana Panoramic is an ongoing collection of his images that explores the vast landscapes, mountain ranges, wilderness, rivers, parks, towns, and wildlife of his home stage.



Limber Pine Study by Craig W. Hergert

Hergert was raised in New Mexico, but grew up mesmerized by family stories of the Montana landscape – the badlands near Glendive, Flathead Lake, Glacier Park and the Rocky Mountain Front. He studied fine art and graphic design at Eastern New Mexico University, then transferred to Montana State University. While wandering through the campus library, "I happened upon a book of old, scratchy, sepia-toned black and white panoramic images of mines, cities, groups and landscapes from the turn of the century, and was just simply captivated."

An earlier interest in photography was reignited, and he began to experiment with "my own versions of those wide open views." But instead of taping single prints together, or using conventional panoramic cameras and film, he began to shoot and scan series of slides and prints and slowly piece them together by hand using Photoshop.

Eventually, in 2003, Hergert quit his day job and built a studio in the garage. Since then, his work has been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Cowboys and Indians*, and a slew of Montana publications. He has won numerous international panoramic photography awards, was named "Montana's Treasured Artist" by the Secretary of State, and has published two acclaimed hardcover books: *MONTANA: Skiing the Last Best Place*, with a foreword by Warren Miller, and *Montana Panoramic Volume I: 1997-2007*, now in its third printing.

The Parks Family: "It Runs in the Family"

Through Jan. 31 at the Artists' Shop in Missoula
Artist's website: www.amityparks.com

The Parks family of Missoula has heard idioms like "it runs in the family" for years. Amity and Glenn and their adult children, Briar and Wren, prove that the adage is true in an exhibit on display through January.

The existence of artistry within a family may point toward a natural disposition to create, but it can also be cultivated by exposure and encouragement. Both Glenn and Amity come from parents who had creative streaks – their fathers were wood carvers and their mothers were, and are, seamstresses and crafters.

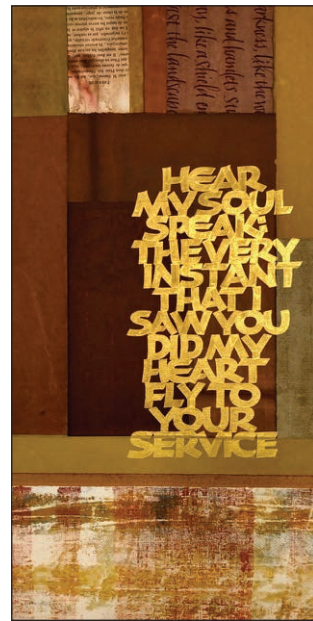
"It makes sense then that we were influenced by them and that our kids felt that inspiration from us starting at a young age," says Amity. Briar and Wren grew up on the craft-fair circuit and at Green Portfolio Clay Studio, a public art studio and school that Amity and Glenn operated in Missoula where they were immersed in making.

"You can see in their art that there is an easy appreciation for reaching inside themselves and drawing out a vision to share with the world," says Amity.

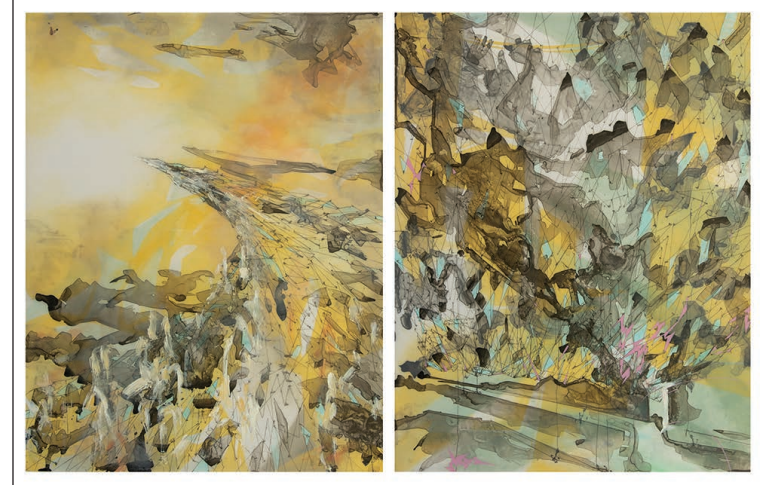
Amity is an accomplished artist and calligrapher whose work has been featured in national and regional exhibits and publications. She participates and shares her expertise with local and state calligraphy guilds, teaches workshops within the U.S. and abroad, and has served on the faculty for multiple International Lettering Arts Conferences.

Glenn is a long-term member of the Artists' Shop and actively participates in classes and firings of the anagama kiln with the Clay Studio of Missoula. Both hold degrees from the University of Tulsa and the University of Montana.

Their son, Briar, is an artist and animator living in Portland, OR, and a recent graduate of Pacific Northwest College of Art. He has been creating and showing his intricate drawings and paintings since he was 4 years old. His sister, Wren, lives in Bellingham, WA, where she's a student at Western Washington University. She was named Hellgate High School's Outstanding Art Student as a senior, and works primarily in watercolor with a focus on portraiture.



Calligraphy by Amity Parks



"Straight There and Back, Diptych" by Jodi Lightner

Straight There and Back: Drawings by Jodi Lightner

January-May at the Holter Museum of Art, Helena
Artist's website: www.jodilightner.com

Jodi Lightner, an associate professor of art at Montana State University Billings, examines how architecture coexists with what we are thinking and imagining. Within any space, she notes, whether a palace, barn, high-rise or shopping mall, it is possible for minds to wander and imagination to deliver the viewer to a completely different location or experience.

"More than just a daydream, the mind has the power to transport us to another time or place, making it possible to be in two places at the same time," she says.

Her interest in navigating space and triumphing over maps has significantly influenced the ideas in this collection of work, created over the past 10 years. The exhibit focuses on the themes of moving through space and translating directions. Her drawings explore the elements of built structures as metaphors for humans' relationship with architecture and interactions with interiors.

At MSU Billings, Lightner teaches courses that involve "pencils, paint and presses" and oversees the foundation courses. She received her MFA in painting from Wichita State University, Kansas, and continues her studio practice in Billings while exploring the northern Rocky Mountains.

The artist has attended artist residencies focused on studio practice, including the International School of Painting, Drawing, and Sculpture in Montecastello di Vibio, Italy; Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, VT; and the Ucross Foundation in Wyoming. She was also an emerging artist-in-residence at Penn State Altoona. Lightner has shown her work nationally and internationally, with solo or two-person exhibits in Germany, China, Kansas, California, Pennsylvania and several Montana venues.

"I see my work as journal entries depicting the metaphors of relationship through the use of structures, architecture and space," she writes.



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Send your submissions for About Visual Arts

With About Visual Arts, *State of the Arts* continues to profile living Montana artists (no students, please), whose work is the focus of a current exhibit in Montana (on display during some portion of the three months covered by the current issue of *State of the Arts*).

Submissions must include:

- A digital image of the artist's work, with title of the piece (at least 200 dpi and 500kb);
- A brief bio and description of the artist's work;
- Date range and title of exhibit; and
- The gallery or museum name, town and phone number.

MAC will select submissions that reflect a cross-section of gender, geography, styles and ethnicity, and are from a mix of public and private galleries and museums.

Submissions for the Spring issue (April-June, 2020) are due March 5; send ingredients to Kristi@livelytimes.com with About Visual Arts in the subject line.

About Visual Artists is compiled by Kristi Niemeyer

ARTS EDUCATION

National Arts Education Managers gather in Montana

By **Monica Grable**
Arts Education Director

Each year, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) gathers its arts education managers for a Professional Development Institute (PDI). This year, arts education leaders from 34 states plus D.C. traveled to Missoula to participate in the convening Oct. 1-4.

The Montana Arts Council submitted a proposal to host the PDI, highlighting the abundant arts and education offerings present in Missoula, a relatively rural city, and the potential for learning about our nearby tribal communities. Missoula was chosen, and we were delighted for the opportunity to highlight arts education in Montana.

Attendees were welcomed to Montana on the evening of Oct. 1 with a MAC-hosted reception at the Missoula Art Museum, where our guests were wowed by Hellgate High School's jazz ensembles, under the direction of Leon Slater, and the works on view, including a preview of the retrospective exhibit of works by contemporary Native artist Rick Bartow.

Bookending the PDI on Friday, Oct. 4, groups of participants visited Blackfoot Pathways: Sculpture in the Wild in Lincoln.



Mike Jetty, Indian Education Specialist with the Montana Office of Public Instruction, participates in a tableau activity with 2019 PDI attendees. (Photo by Monica Grable)

The primary days of the convening, Oct. 2-3, were split between Missoula and Pablo. The guiding question was "How can arts education managers adapt their agencies' policies and practices to respond more effectively to diverse communities?" Attendees participated in sessions focused on asset-based approaches toward engagement with – and serving the needs of – rural, remote and tribal communities.

First-day sessions in Missoula were held in various spaces within the MCT Center for

Eagle Circle Veterans Wall of Remembrance, a panel discussion with several Montana Teacher Leaders in the Arts, and a collaborative artmaking experience.

The uniqueness and authentic nature of hosting the PDI in Missoula made this year's convening one to remember for many attendees. The focus on rural, remote and tribal topics was relevant to our arts education work at MAC and offered an opportunity to see and discuss what our work holds in common with other states.



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Montana Poetry Out Loud Finals set for March 7

Students from across Montana will converge in Helena on Saturday, March 7, to compete in the 2020 Montana Poetry Out Loud State Finals. The competition will be held at Grandstreet Theatre, 325 N. Park Avenue.

The event begins at 10 a.m. and will continue through three rounds into the afternoon. Free and open to the public, the community is invited to attend.

For more information contact Monica Grable, 406-444-6522 or Monica.Grable@mt.gov.

Artists in Schools and Communities grants

FY2021 deadlines coming in March and May

Artists in Schools and Communities (AISC) grants, one of the Montana Arts Council's longest-running funding programs, seeks to support hands-on arts experiences in which learners of all ages and abilities are offered the opportunity to engage with, and learn from, professional teaching artists.

Through one-time master classes and workshops, or through ongoing long-term residencies, a primary tenet of the AISC grant program is that students gain new skills in an art form or further extend their knowledge and experience. A 1:1 match is required, with a 2:1 match offered for first-time applicants or Class C or smaller schools.

Community-based nonprofits, art centers, museum education departments, arts presenting organizations, civic organizations, cities or municipalities, schools and other nonprofit entities are all eligible to apply. College and university programs may apply if extending educational outreach opportunities into the surrounding community and – although individual artists are not eligible to receive funding directly – teaching artists may partner with a school or nonprofit entity to deliver arts learning experiences.

FY2021 dates

March 11, 2020: AISC Grants \$1,500-\$5K and ALP applications DUE

May 4, 2020: AISC Grants Under \$1,500 (Round 1) DUE

July 1, 2020: Earliest project date for FY2021

Nov. 4, 2020: AISC Grants Under \$1,500 (Round 2) DUE

June 30, 2021: Project end date for FY2021

To discuss a potential project, or to learn more about the Artists in Schools and Communities grant program, contact Arts Education Director Monica Grable at Monica.Grable@mt.gov or 406-444-6522.



A VOICE students at Two Eagle River School in Pablo created the photo above during their "camera-mirror" assignment.

AISC grants under \$1,500 awarded to 13 organizations

May 2019 Deadline

Cottonwood ALC, Helena: Focus on Local Artists, \$1,470

Electric Peak Arts Council, Gardiner: Ingrid Nixon's Performance, Workshop & Storytelling, \$1,499

Good Grief Group, Kalispell: Good Grief Camp, \$1,000

Greater Gallatin United Way, Bozeman: The Song Catchers Workshop, \$1,500

North-Missoula CDC, Missoula: Movie Making Magic and ZACC Art Experience, \$850

Sunburst Foundation, Eureka: World Fiddle Music, \$1,000

Special Friends Advocacy, Kalispell: People First and the Joy of Painting, \$1,200

Turning the Wheel Missoula, Missoula:

Dancing Our Way Home – Arts After School, \$780

November 2019 Deadline

Alpine Theatre Project, Whitefish: ATP Academy 2020 Winter Session Master Classes, \$1,500

Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery, Red Lodge: Mountain View Elementary Artist in Residence, \$1,500

Flathead Community Foundation, Kalispell: Dot Studio at KALICO Contemporary Art Center, \$1,205

Rau School, Sidney: Win Win with Art, \$1,000

School District 8, White Sulphur Springs: Native American Figure Making for 5th-6th Grade Classes at White Sulphur Springs Elementary School, \$1,400

ARTS EDUCATION

Hellgate High students create ornaments for Montana tree

Launched each year with the lighting of the National Christmas Tree, the America Celebrates Display – an event presented by the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation – features 56 additional trees, each representing one of 50 states and six U.S. territories. Adorning the trees are works of art created by students of that state or territory.

This year's Montana tree displays works created by student artists at Hellgate High School in Missoula. In collaboration with teacher Kasey Arceniega, the newest faculty member in the school's art department, students worked to arrive at a theme that would be representative of our state. Following conversations about summer memories and the uniqueness of living in a place with a river running through it, they became focused on that very thematic element: rivers and streams.

The ornaments themselves are a design problem to solve. Identical clear plastic spheres, which come apart in halves to house and protect the artwork inside, are shipped to each participating group.

Through phases of experimentation and idea development, a decision was made to work with strips of paper that, like rivers and



Hellgate High School art students show river-themed ornaments that adorn Montana's national tree in Washington, DC. (Photos by Kasey Arceniega)

streams, would wind their way around the inside of the plastic spheres. A combination of pen, ink and watercolor (further representing the essence of rivers and streams) were the students' choice of media, and the trout was chosen as subject matter for its inspiring color palette. In all, students in Arceniega's Intro to Art class created 30 ornaments for the Montana tree.

Located on the Ellipse in President's Park in Washington D.C, the National Christmas Tree and the America Celebrates Display sees more than 250,000 visitors yearly through the month of December. This marks the 97th year of this national holiday tradition.



The Buffalo Unity Project

Engaging Poplar students with their culture through filmmaking

Near the beginning of the new documentary short film, "In This Together, We Are One: The Buffalo Unity Project," seventh-grade teacher Jacob Turcotte asks his students a critical question: "How did the buffalo create unity amongst our people?"

Turcotte teaches at Poplar Middle School, located in the heart of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, in the remote, northeastern corner of Montana. The 3,200-square mile reservation is home to two separate American Indian nations, the Assiniboine and the Sioux. Both were tribes of the American plains, and both built their cultures around bison.

The challenges facing modern American Indians are well documented, but perhaps none are more devastating to the identity

of Plains Indians than the lost connection to buffalo, their cultural keystone.

"We would ask students, 'What kind of Indian are you? Who is your relation?' And the students couldn't answer those questions," says Turcotte. "We're right here in the middle of Fort Peck Reservation and we have children who don't even know where they come from. And we thought, 'What can we do to change that?' We had to do something different to reach them, to engage our students. And the Buffalo Unity Project came about."

In 2017, Turcotte led a group of Fort Peck elementary students on a buffalo harvest at the tribal buffalo ranch, where a herd of several hundred bison was reintroduced in 1999. Student engagement was so high during the harvest and processing of the animal that Turcotte saw the opportunity to expand the experience into a more formal curriculum with older students.

Poplar Middle School principal Morgan Norgaard immediately embraced the idea, and the Buffalo Unity Project was born. A buffalo harvest was planned for the spring of 2019, with the participation of the entire seventh-grade class.

"The Buffalo Unity Project turned out to be much more successful than we had initially dreamed it could be," says Norgaard. "All the teachers were on board with the idea of creating a thematic unit that stretched across

audio and film-set etiquette. They also learned the art of the interview with teachers, tribal elders, and other students as subjects.

"I can honestly say that it was life-changing for those individuals," says principal

Norgaard. "One student has completely changed his college outlook and intends on majoring in Media Arts because this project was so influential to him."

The significance of the buffalo harvest was clearly felt among the entire class of Poplar seventh graders, who were asked to compose thoughts about the project. A selection of those thoughts, read by the students themselves, is used throughout the film to great effect.

Over stunning aerial footage of the buffalo herd, students express moving descriptions of bison: "The buffalo

remind me of friends. If one is down, they protect each other, feeling free as can be. They stay together when one is hurt." "As I am writing this, I can feel the cries and lost souls of the ancestors before me."

And this quote, the inspiration for the film's title: "They try to make us feel ashamed about who we are. Seeing my people prove them wrong, we are still here. In this together, we are one."

That's a message echoed by Turcotte, who regards buffalo as the great unifier of his people. An interview sequence near the end of the film drives that point home: "You know, our people have been through a lot. Our children have been through a lot. And those buffalo have been through a lot. People tried to wipe us off the face of this Earth. And we're still here. And a lot of it has to do with that buffalo. Bringing it all together in unity will create that healing. It's powerful," Turcotte says, rocking forward with clasped hands. "Powerful."

"In This Together, We Are One: The Buffalo Unity Project" may be viewed on YouTube.com.



MAPS Instructor Dan Molloy assists Poplar seventh-grade students Patricia Charboneau and Xander Steele with camera operation as part of The Buffalo Unity Project. (Photo and story courtesy of MAPS Media Institute)

all subject areas, including English Language Arts, social studies, science, math, gym, wood shop, art, and music/band. Throughout the week we didn't hear of a single moan or gripe coming from any of the 72 students or adults."

And when Tahj Kjelland, a music instructor for MAPS Media Institute who has worked with the Poplar community for several years, showed Turcotte a student-made MAPS film from the Blackfeet Reservation, the idea for a student-involved documentary film about the program took hold.

MAPS Media Institute, a free-of-charge media arts program based out of Hamilton, has been serving Montana students in grades 8-12 since 2004 with instruction in filmmaking, graphic design and music production.

In April, Poplar Middle School welcomed the MAPS Media Lab, directed by award-winning filmmaker Dru Carr, to assist with documenting the Buffalo Unity Project.

The school held an essay contest to determine the seventh graders who would work with the MAPS crew on the film. Over five intensive days, students learned the technical skills of operating a camera, capturing



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Submissions open for Signatures from Big Sky

Montana's Association for Gifted and Talented Education (MT AGATE) is seeking submissions for the 2020 edition of *Signatures from Big Sky* – the only publication that features the writing and artwork of Montana's K-12 students. The 2020 edition will mark the magazine's 30th anniversary.

Every year, the publication receives hundreds of submissions and enjoys a robust selection from talented young people across the state. "The perspectives are as unique as the art and writing itself and we are proud to share them," says coordinator Mandy Maass.

Signatures relies on funding from MT AGATE as well as grants to continue publishing and has recently received financial support from the Montana Cultural Trust, the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, NorthWestern Energy, Humanities Montana, Town Pump Foundation and the Sweet Pea Festival of the Arts.

The deadline for the 2020 issue is March 27. Find submission guidelines, as well as art and writing from the 2019 edition, at signaturesfrombigsky.weebly.com. For more information, contact Mandy Maass at signaturesfrombigsky@gmail.com.

FILM CLIPS NEWS ABOUT FILM IN MONTANA



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Planes, Trains and Automobiles, on location in Montana!

By Allison Whitmer
Montana Film Commissioner

It's not just the skiers who rejoice when snow starts to fall across Montana's mountains; film crews are gearing up for winter car commercials that air during the holidays.

You've probably seen them: Impossibly clean cars swooshing along deserted mountain roads, gleaming chrome in the sharp sunlight, tire treads gripping the snow in slow motion. The trees are perfectly blanketed in snow, the towns are immaculate, and the cars sweep through the snow with ease.

Ford, Toyota, Kia, Jaguar, Hyundai, GM, BMW, Audi and Subaru are just a few of the cars and trucks seen pulling trailers, pushing snowplows and breaking trail in fresh snow over the years. The commercials shown over "Year End Events" or "Holiday Sales" are called running footage, a specialty sub-set of car commercials.

Other commercials focus on special features that perform in extreme temperatures, from tires to transmissions. This fall, pre-snow old-west Montana scenes were featured in Kia spots.

These producers look for the snowiest snow, the sweeping turns, and made-for-snow-globe towns. We have so many places in Montana that fit this bill that we have an entire section of our database dedicated to "Performance Roads." Viewers might recognize Big Sky, Whitefish Mountain, West Yellowstone and other forest roads in the Bozeman area, and every so often, we'll sneak in rugged badlands and epic landmarks around Glacier National Park.

Riding the rails

Now that we've got you going to grandma's house in style, it's time to ride the rails! "Danger Lights" was filmed in Miles City and Lombard during the 1930s steam era. The

rail lines were hopping, and this film about competitive railroad men competing for the love of the character played by Jean Arthur has incredible footage for the railroad buff! A real tug-of-war between two steam locomotives is one of the tension-filled sequences. Originally filmed in 63mm Naturalvision, the highlight is a 100-mph race to get one of the characters to a brain surgeon in Chicago. Actual scenes of railroading in the yards is a highlight of this pre-code film which can be viewed on YouTube.

Lewistown became the finale for a nuclear missile stand-off in the film "Broken Arrow." Code for a missing nuclear weapon, this tense drama between former friends and military comrades played by John Travolta and Christian Slater culminates in a massive train sequence with helicopters, explosions and dramatic twists, all on a moving train.

Finding operational train tracks can be difficult, and the Central Montana Rail proved to be the ideal railroad. Their tracks in the prairie were smooth and had matching landscapes on each side, so the train could run to one end filming scenes, run back and keep filming. This rail line features the popular tourist attraction "Charlie Russell Chew Choo," complete with train robbers.

Or how about airplanes?

Getting across the state by either train or automobile along the Hi-Line can take over 12 hours, and an airplane might be just the trick...or maybe not.

"Always" director Steven Spielberg



Film-worthy: The historic Belton Bridge was the western entrance to Glacier National Park from 1920 to 1938. (Photo courtesy of Glacier National Park)

recruited top pilots Steve Hinton and Dennis Lynch to fly the Douglas A-26 Invader fire bombers (#57 and #59) in the supernatural fantasy film.

Fighting fires in the forests is a tough, dangerous job, both on the ground and in the air. Richard Dreyfus and John Goodman take perilous risks with their airplanes with tragic results for one of them. Holly Hunter shines as the grieving girlfriend, and Audrey Hepburn appears in her last screen role.

Footage from the remarkable 1988 fires in Yellowstone National Park was used to great effect, and the crew filmed in the Kootenai National Forest, at Bull Lake, and were based out of Libby. More than 500 residents worked as extras portraying the wildland firefighters. This love story was a remake of the 1943 film "A Guy Named Joe," a classic war film.

However you travel across Montana this winter, stay safe and check the road reports!

Learn more about films made in Montana, incentives, crew and locations at montanafilm.com and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Big Sky Documentary Film Festival: Feb. 14-23



Governor Steve Bullock welcomed fans and filmmakers to the 15th annual Big Sky Documentary Film Festival.

The 17th annual Big Sky Documentary Film Festival (BSDFF), the largest documentary film festival in the American West, is slated for Feb. 14-23 in Missoula. Guest programming director Joanne Feinberg, a

20-year veteran and award-winning filmmaker, has selected more than 150 films for the 2020 program from nearly 2,000 entries.

The festival will screen films in The Wilma, The Roxy, the Hellgate Elks Lodge and the all new Zootown Arts Community Center (ZACC) in downtown Missoula.

Big Sky DocShop

In addition to screenings, BSDFF hosts the Big Sky DocShop, a five-day filmmakers' fo-

rum that includes panels, workshops, and the popular Big Sky Pitch for works in progress. The 2020 DocShop conference will focus on "Sustainability and Integrity," exploring paths for building a sustainable career as a documentary filmmaker while maintaining integrity as an independent storyteller.

The Tribeca Film Institute will return to DocShop for a fourth year with the IF/Then Shorts Pitch for the American West, awarding one project \$25,000 in production funding as well as distribution support through TFI and new 2020 partner ESPN.

Ross Brothers Retrospective

The festival will also welcome award-winning filmmaking duo Bill Ross and Turner Ross as retrospective artists, featuring their full body of feature documentary work Feb. 15-17. Their newest film, "Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets," will screen at Big Sky following its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival. The brothers also present a master class at DocShop on Feb. 17.

In addition, BSDFF presents a retrospective of veteran Oscar-nominated filmmakers Julia Reichert and Steve Bogner. Reichert is a

co-founder of New Day Films and a three-time Academy Award nominee for "The Last Truck," "Seeing Red" and "Union Maids."

Bogner's solo films have premiered at Sundance, SXSW and the Telluride Film Festival. Most recently, Reichert and Bogner received the 2019 Best Director honors from the International Documentary Association for their newest feature, "American Factory."

Native Filmmaker Initiative

Big Sky's Native Filmmaker Initiative continues in 2020, featuring a strand of Native-directed documentary films and welcoming eight emerging Indigenous artists as fellows in the 4th World Indigenous Media Lab. The year-long fellowship supports emerging and mid-career Indigenous filmmakers with opportunities to develop filmmaking skills and networks, hands-on training, master classes, work-in-progress development, pitching, and meetings with funders and other industry decision-makers.

For tickets, official selections, and the festival screening schedule head to www.bigskyfilmfest.org.



Montana-made film "The Last Beyond."

Flathead Lake International Cinemafest: Jan. 24-26

The Flathead Lake International Cinemafest (FLIC) hosts its eighth annual winter film festival Jan. 24-26 at the Showboat Cinema on Main Street in Polson.

FLIC screens full-length features, shorts, animation, student films and documentaries, including a broad selection of international films from over a dozen countries. In addition, there are 13 films produced in Montana.

About 30 filmmakers plan to travel to Montana from across the nation and globe, including casts and crews from Germany and South Korea.

"FLIC has become a destination film festival for all the right reasons, chief among them being that the area's attendees are so supportive of independent cinema," says FLIC producer David King. He notes that spirited discussions between audience and filmmakers cap most screening blocks.

Among this year's gems: "The Last Beyond," a 1930s period piece shot in Montana and featuring Stephen Small Salmon, a Pend d'Oreille tribal member from the Flathead Reservation (screens at 6 p.m. Jan. 24); "Wuthering Heights," Emily Bronte's classic

tale of undying love and tormented passion, produced and directed by Montana native Bryan Ferriter (1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26); and from Germany, "Effigy - Poison and the City," directed, written and produced by Udo Flohr.

Films show on two screens beginning at 6 p.m. Friday at the Showboat Cinema, and continue through the awards ceremony at 5:30 p.m. Sunday. Informal gatherings, and a free children's film are part of festivities.

Encore screenings are available Jan. 26-30; visit FLICPolson.com for details.

Kostas inducted into Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame

By Shaylee Ragar
Reprinted with permission from the *Bozeman Chronicle*, Oct. 11

Kostas Lazarides has at least 50 guitars scattered around the historic three-story building he owns in downtown Belgrade.

It's not surprising the prolific songwriter has an abundance of instruments, but it's a bit abnormal that he lives a quiet life in a sleepy town.

Lazarides, known professionally as Kostas, has written chart-topping songs for several artists, including Patty Loveless, Travis Tritt and George Strait.

On Oct. 14, the 70-year-old joined the likes of Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton and Chuck Berry when he was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. He stood alongside other inductees Dwight Yoakam, Larry Gatlin, Rivers Rutherford, Marcus Hummon and Sharon Vaughn for a formal ceremony in Nashville's Music City Hall.

But in an interview before the ceremony, Lazarides said what he was looking forward to most was getting the fuss over with and returning home to his 10-year-old pug, Bella.

"I don't need the limelight to find happiness. I'd just as soon take what I need from each day and move on," he said.

Lazarides spoke in lyrical prose throughout an interview in his apartment overlooking Main Street in Belgrade. Nearly every inch of the space was filled with antiques, knick-knacks, and of course, his guitars. A grandfather clock engraved with the year 1913 sat in the corner.



Songwriter Kostas Lazarides at his home in Belgrade: "I don't need the limelight."
(Photo by Shaylee Ragar/Bozeman Chronicle)

A stuffed lion head rested on the coffee table. Native American paintings and beadwork covered the walls. His eclectic living quarters mirror the eclectic life he's led.

Born in Thessaloniki, Greece, Lazarides moved with his family to Savage in eastern Montana when he was 7. Post-World War II Greece had little economic opportunity and his parents were looking for more. A ranching family in Savage offered the family sponsorship to immigrate, so that's where they landed.

A few years later, his family moved to Billings, where Lazarides got his first guitar, went to high school and played his first show at the YMCA in 1964 as a teenager. He never graduated and instead took to the road playing with bands all over the country as a full-time musician.

"Before I found success, or before it found

me, there were 20 years of just living that reality of being a musician," Lazarides said.

He remembers playing shows at the Mangy Moose in Jackson Hole, Top Hat in Missoula and the Big Horn Saloon in Hardin during those early years.

In 1989, Patty Loveless recorded and released the song, "Timber, I'm Falling in Love," written by Lazarides. It hit number one on Billboard's Hot Country Singles chart and was both of the artists' first chart-topping song.

"There's something magical about seeing something you create come to life," Lazarides said.

Lazarides wrote a number of other hits for Loveless and then Dwight Yoakam, Marty Stuart, Martina McBride, and the list goes on.

He's still making music and writing lyrics today. He used to write all of his notes down on paper and has boxes full of his ideas. In recent years, he's started recording voice memos and using the notes app on his phone when inspiration hits.

Lazarides said he thinks of songwriting as a science.

"It's a form of alchemy. So the ingredients that go into something that works are melody, rhythm, words and thought," he said.

Even after major success and critical acclaim, Lazarides is humble and says he's still learning about playing music. He stayed in Montana because it's always been home.

Lazarides said he's got more projects coming, but that he prefers to tackle one day at a time instead of planning for the future.

He said he lives by a simple philosophy: "Live until you die and make people happy when you can."



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Revitalizing Montana's Rural Heritage grants available

The Montana Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is announcing \$350,000 in Revitalizing Montana's Rural Heritage (RMRH) grant program funding to support the preservation of historic buildings in rural communities across the state.

The state agency will award grants between \$10,000 and \$100,000 for physical repairs and improvements to rural properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places.

For details, email RMRHSHPO@mt.gov.

Ballet Beyond Borders returns to Missoula Jan. 8-11

The Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre brings Ballet Beyond Borders back to Montana with the Grand Prix Dance Challenge and Global Diplomacy Conference slated for Jan. 8-11 in Missoula.

This marks the fifth global dance festival hosted by Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre and follows on the heels of a highly successful premiere of Ballet Beyond Borders in Los Angeles and Westchester, CA, this past August.

"Ballet Beyond Borders has been such a success in Missoula that we were invited to bring the festival to Los Angeles and Westchester earlier this year," says Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre artistic director and Ballet Beyond Borders president Charlene Campbell Carey.

"We're thrilled to be back home, bringing the world to Missoula for four days of world-class dance competition and diplomatic exchanges that are at the heart of our mission."

The four-day event kicks off Jan. 8 with international and Montana dancers joining the Missoula Writing Collaborative in visiting schools in Missoula and on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The festival wraps up with a Gala Finale on Jan. 11 at the University of Montana's Dennison Theatre.

In addition to the dance challenge, Ballet Beyond Borders will feature substantive discussions on the role of dance in global diplomacy. All events are free and open to the public with the exception of the Gala Finale (tickets for the gala are available at www.griztix.com).

Featured Guest Artists

Ballet Beyond Borders 2020 will feature four inspiring individuals who have overcome incredible challenges while pursuing excellence in the performing arts.

Roman Baca: A U.S. Marine who cofounded Exit 12 Dance Company.

Lizt Alfonso: This Cuban dancer has earned multiple awards and recognition, and was included on the BBC's list of the 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world in 2018.

Sophie Rebecca: This British ballet dancer is an articulate representative of the transgender community and will share her journey to womanhood and how dance has played an important role.

Ahmad Joudeh: Currently a dancer with the Netherlands Dance Theater, Joudeh grew up in Yarmouk, a Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus.

Learn more about the festival at www.rmbt.org/bbb-about or call Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre at 406-549-5155.

MONTANA POETS LAUREATE

We are the ones for Dezmond

Waiting.

A syllable: forming, generating energy in small, dark masses: marrow, stem cell, neuron.

Waiting to come alive again in this tiny body.

Guwa – you should learn this is the word between you and I, my son, *hokshina*.

Come here. Come home. To this place. Between you and I no separation. But always room. And silence – until we can find meaning and the words together.

I repeat it, again and again, gesturing for you to come over. Hoping the vibrations will come alive, you will listen inside yourself. And you will sense just who you are, who you belong to and among.

As if you were under water and could feel your pulse, the whirl and swish of your blood traveling miles and miles.

Across the wind-blown graves of your great grandparents and their grandparents – *Mikushi, Mitugash* – yours. And they are out there, belonging to you before you were even born. Waiting.

– M.L. Smoker (published 2018 in *Big Sky Journal*)



Melissa Kwasny and M.L. Smoker (Photo by Barbara Weissberger)

As co-poets laureate and women from marginalized communities, Montana Poets Laureate – Melissa Kwasny and M.L. Smoker – aim to celebrate poetry as an art that fosters connection, relationships and bridge building. Kwasny and Smoker believe in creative collaboration and wish to use their shared title to demonstrate the value of working together. As life-long educators, they are also committed to working with teachers and at-risk youth to demonstrate how poetry can provide a source of understanding and hope. *State of the Arts* will feature their poems on an alternating basis during their two-year term, beginning in this issue with M.L. Smoker.

PUBLIC VALUE PARTNERSHIPS

The 3 Rs at work in Montana



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Public Value Partnership grants between Montana nonprofit arts organizations and the Montana Arts Council champion the fact that the arts are of benefit to all the citizens of Montana and are worthy of state and federal investment.

Public Value Partnerships utilize three tools we call “The Three Rs” to expand the public value of the work being done by Montana’s non-profit arts organizations:

- Building relationships;
- Creating greater relevance and meaning; and
- Establishing return on investment (measured both as economic vitality and impact on people’s lives).

MAC believes that using “The Three Rs” strengthens participation, understanding and support from audiences, donors and funders. We’d like to share some of the best examples of these stories:

portions were aired during a week-long celebration of Bernstein’s 100th birthday at MTPR in August, and are also available to be streamed online.

Also airing were clips from Maestro Allan R. Scott’s interview with Jamie Bernstein, eldest daughter of Leonard Bernstein. Using social media before, during and after the performance in May helped the HSO to reach and expand their audience and keep followers apprised to the MTPR week-long programming, which highlights the Helena Symphony.

Following the boomerang announcement on Facebook and in the news that the Helena Community Credit Union (HCCU) had signed a multi-year commitment for the naming rights of Symphony Under the Stars, the HSO worked closely with HCCU to create new

marketing strategies, such as a billboard ad and geo-fencing services, and they aided in a partnership with the Blackfoot River Brewing Co., who crafted “Galaxy Pale Ale” in honor of the upcoming show.

The beer-making day and launch party were shared on social media, and beginning the day before the show, other partnerships with Carroll College, the BSA Scouts, AARP, Helena Foodshare, and 406 Recycling worked together to put on the entire event. A proprietary photo-sharing campaign launched at Symphony Under the Stars,

which was attended by more than 18,000 people, and allowed concert-goers to share their own pictures and comments with all others in attendance in real time. The result of all efforts was a true community event.

Creating Relevance

Sunburst Foundation, Eureka:

Community Soup Night is an event that takes place every Tuesday at the Tobacco Valley Senior Center. Local businesses and groups take turns providing a free meal to anyone in the community, or by donation. Donations help to maintain the building.

Sunburst’s arts director and board members volunteer to operate Community Soup Night four times throughout the year. This involves providing all ingredients, preparing and serving soup, rolls, salad and a dessert for up to 140 people, and cleaning up after. There is a commercial kitchen completely open to the dining room at the center for this activity so it is a good way to engage with the diners while working.



Sunburst Foundation: Finding ways to engage the community.

Sunburst also provides a variety of local musicians to play during these soup nights. Diners are families and individuals of all ages, as well as senior citizens who regularly frequent the center. This is a very social occasion and is also a very effective way to network with people and to promote upcoming Sunburst events by placing information at the tables and making announcements, and simply talking with people.

Sunburst has noticed an increase of older folks at its concerts, especially after one of the soup nights. The organization has a number of older volunteers, who have implemented a policy that all individuals 90 and over are free of charge to all of organization-sponsored events, which is a great way to cater to the group of active people over 90 in the Eureka area.

In a small town, Community Soup Night offers a perfect way to give back to the community, connect with existing audiences, and interest others who don’t normally attend. It is also a great way to connect with new people moving in to the area.

Return on Investment

Missoula Children’s Theatre (MCT, Inc.): This is an inspiring story from a parent of a student at Ulm School about an MCT residency:

“I don’t have to explain why I believe the MCT residency experience would benefit our youth. I can explain why I know it will from my own personal experience.

“I have had the honor of watching a performance every other year for the last 14 years and it never ceases to amaze me the time and effort the children put into this program. My own experience regards my son, who has numerous learning disabilities, including dyslexia and issues reading and memorizing, even simple spelling words.

“When my son was in seventh grade, the MCT tour actor/directors chose him to be one of the news broadcasters in ‘The Tortoise and the Hare.’ I was very nervous because there are a lot of lines for that part. My son came home and worked on his lines every evening, even after being at rehearsal for five hours. He memorized his lines, though he

struggled with the words and the reading.

“My son thought he was useless in school because he couldn’t ‘get’ anything. MCT gave him the opportunity to see that he could succeed at something and that it would just take him a little more time and effort than the other kids but he was just as good. During the play, he helped the other kids with their lines.

“MCT is a wonderful opportunity to teach children to overcome fears of being in front of people, or to just try something new, to dress up in a costume and use their imaginations. I have seen other children who are labeled at our school as ‘problems’ make it through the entire residency and they shine without having a single issue.”



Helena Symphony: Maestro Allan R. Scott conducts the orchestra in a celebration of the late Leonard Bernstein’s 100th birthday. (Photo by Wandering Albatross Photography)

Building Relationships

Helena Symphony: The 2017-18 season presented numerous opportunities to the Helena Symphony to collaborate with businesses and individuals at local, regional, national, and international levels.

In a non-series concert featuring Philip Aaberg and several members of the Helena Symphony Orchestra, the HSO worked with Aaberg’s Sweetgrass Music and EDGE Marketing+Design to film Facebook live videos and digital ads to help promote the concert, which also was the official launch of Aaberg’s latest recording, *Versatile*.

These efforts brought together existing symphony-goers with Aaberg’s fans and provided a platform to grow the HSO audience, both online and in the concert hall.

In January, the Helena Symphony welcomed Montana resident and acclaimed violinist Tim Fain to the Helena Civic Center stage. Through online marketing and collaboration with public radio, the HSO attracted first-time ticket buyers from Helena but also from Missoula and Hamilton, which Fain calls home, and saw one of the symphony’s largest audiences for a January concert ever, as a result.

Joining thousands of arts organizations, Masterworks VI: Bernstein 100! (May 2018) celebrated the late Leonard Bernstein’s upcoming 100th birthday anniversary, which fell in August. The concert, which was listed as an official centennial performance by the Leonard Bernstein Foundation online, was hosted by Michael Marsolek of Montana Public Radio (Missoula). In addition to a Facebook live broadcast prior to the concert, the entire performance was recorded, and

Statewide arts service organizations

Montana has many arts-discipline-specific statewide service organizations. You can find a complete list here: art.mt.gov/arts_service_orgs

Montana Arts Council grants, awards & commissions

Visit the Montana Arts Council’s website for a complete listing of grants, awards and commissions:

Individuals: art.mt.gov/gac#ind

Organizations: art.mt.gov/gac#orgs

Schools: art.mt.gov/gac#schools

Programs and Services: art.mt.gov/ps

Call for Cultural & Aesthetics Project Advisory Committee

Applications for membership on the Cultural and Aesthetic Project Advisory Committee will be accepted through May 6, 2020. The Montana Arts Council makes half of the appointments to this committee, and the Montana Historical Society makes the other half.

The arts council looks for a broad range of professional arts expertise, and also geographic, racial and gender balance for the committee. Obligations of

the four-year terms include attending a two-day panel meeting every other year and reviewing up to 100 grant applications online in preparation for the review.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 2020 in Helena. If you are interested in being considered, please send a letter of interest and a resume or bio electronically to Kristin Han Burgoyne at kburgoyne@mt.gov by May 6, 2020.

MONTANA ARTREPRENEURS

MAP Update: Insights on the business of art

By Rickie van Berkum

The Montana Artrepreneur Program (MAP) starts a new year of training visual artists to develop a sustainable business of art. In 2020, three cohorts will meet in Great Falls, Missoula and Three Forks with coaches Annie Allen, Rickie van Berkum and Liz Chappie-Zoller, respectively. We have a diverse and dynamic group of artists looking forward to their MAP journey – an intense, information-packed and potentially transformative experience.

One of the most rewarding and challenging parts of MAP is working with artists to articulate their story, the “why” of their art. The story becomes the foundation of many of the marketing tools that the artists create, such as their promotional materials, social media presence, booth, and other strategies for reaching new customers. Achieving a well-articulated story often directly impacts the artist’s artwork, resulting in growth in their artform.

The 500 Montana artists who have completed MAP are busy creating their art and developing markets for their work. November and December are busy show seasons, and I caught up with a couple of MAP artists who brought me up to date on their business of art.

Sheryl Silberman (threadsofpoetry.com), MAP 2014: While my art has evolved since I first participated in MAP, the basic principles learned then have kept me on track towards building the business side of my art. When I show my work or interact with the public, I have the confidence that I am presenting myself and my art at a professional level.

Dre Castillo (www.acastillocreations.com), MAP 2019: What a journey! I am truly



MAP artist Amanda Bielby used her construction background to develop a stunning booth for her first fine arts show.

(Photo by Rickie van Berkum)

grateful for MAP. It gave me an opportunity to grow my business and has guided me in ways that help me converse and interact with other artists and community members as I promote myself and the work I do ... I was superintendent of the very first Native American Arts show at the Western Montana Fair in 2019. Due to the artwork I do, I currently am a board member of the Jeannette Rankin Peace Center. Other opportunities include making t-shirt logos for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women awareness and the Indigenous Film Festival, and presenting my art work at Diverse U.

More opportunities are in the works ... many more opportunities that I did not think would ever happen. For now? Rest.

Amanda Bielby (www.amandapaintsllc), MAP 2019: After developing a successful paint contracting business, I decided to change my focus to art. But I felt lost because the art world was too unknown. What is my art worth, where do I start to sell it, what is available? When I searched online, there was a ton of contradicting advice, “do this, don’t

do that.” Art school ads poured into my inbox, some costing a year’s worth of my wages.

MAP was not only affordable, but I met my coach and classmates face to face, I received one-on-one coaching. Before I knew it, I found myself in a community of people just like me, helping and cheering each other on ...

In my first year of promoting myself as a professional artist, I quadrupled my sales in art while still working in my contracting business. I learned how to move forward within my means while accomplishing a top-notch presentation. I just did my first fine arts show, and because of the skills I learned, all the other artists were coming over to my display and commenting on how professional it

was. I built my booth to save money and stick to my roots, but because of MAP, I knew how far to take it.

What is MAP?

Montana Artrepreneur Program (MAP) is an art-centered business development program taught by working artists and open to all visual artists. MAP provides over 40 hours of college-level instruction, reviews 35 practical business tools, demystifies the world of business, and affirms the title of “Artist” as a credible profession.

Instruction is focused on advancing proficiency in your chosen medium, articulating your story and purpose as an artist, strategically seeking patrons for your art, and engaging in the arts community. MAP instruction is centered on four weekend-long workshops held roughly eight weeks apart.

Applications to the next MAP instructional year will be accepted through May 15, 2020. To learn more about MAP, visit art.mt.gov/map or contact Monica Grable, Arts Education Director, at 406-444-6522.



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Strategic Investment Grant funds available

Strategic Investment Grant (SIG) funds are still available for upcoming projects and professional development.

These grants provide up to \$1,000 in matching funds for professional artists, nonprofit 501(c)(3) arts organizations and Preschool-Grade 12 teachers in Montana, and are available in four categories:

- **Professional development grants** help build individual art skills and knowledge, arts careers and/or arts businesses.

- **Market expansion grants** help increase exposure and improve marketing or promotion, opportunities for exhibition, performance and/or sales to a wider or new audience.

- **Grants for public outreach arts activities** fund ongoing or one-time activities that are designed to reach a new or expanded audience.

- **Challenges and emergencies grants** provide resources for artists or arts organizations experiencing challenges or emergencies that impede the ability to continue work.

The application deadline is the 15th of the month.

For guidelines and more information visit art.mt.gov/sig; contact Kristin Han Burgoyne (kburgoyne@mt.gov or 406-444-6449) for more information.

KALICO founder named Creative Community Fellow

Alisha Shilling of KALICO (kalicoartcenter.com), a new community art space in Kalispell, is among the 25 change makers selected for the Creative Community Fellows’ fifth cohort. Over the next six months, this international group will work with National Art Strategies (NAS), faculty partners, mentors and each other to test, adapt and build on their work. “The community of practice a cohort builds in

Creative Community Fellows is one of the program’s lasting strengths,” said program director Sunny Widmann. “Each Fellow’s unique perspectives will contribute to transformational learning experiences throughout the program, shaping and elevating their capacities to drive change.”

State of the Arts asked Shilling to elaborate on the new art center and her experience as a Creative Community Fellow:

Can you tell us more about KALICO?

Opening a community space for the arts was a dream my husband, Adam, and I had 20 years ago. The condensed story goes like this: We were on our honeymoon in Calgary sitting at a coffee shop, dreaming of what we wanted to do with our lives. We got out a napkin and drew the plans out for creative space which back then included a coffee shop ... We filed the drawing away and headed to college.

Adam has been an art teacher for the past 15 years at Summit Prep School and I studied photography and psychology. I have spent



Alisha Shilling

the past 15 years raising our four kids, being a photographer, volunteer art teacher at my kids’ school and a bookkeeper.

The dream we had began to resurface two years ago during a time of growth in the Flathead Valley. In September 2018, I found a donor to help get us started and Flathead Community Foundation became our fiscal sponsor. I spent the past year networking with local community leaders and business owners.

We formed our board of directors in May 2019 and just secured our first

location at 149 Main Street. We are set for a soft opening in January and a grand opening in February.

Our mission: KALICO Art Center is a flexible space for all ages and abilities to create, connect and experience contemporary art by offering dynamic classes, events, exhibitions and studio space.

What inspired you to apply for the fellowship, and how do you feel it can benefit your organization?

One of our board members emailed me the information about NAS (National Art Strategies) Creative Community Fellows. I was inspired to apply because honestly, starting a nonprofit is super hard and I was hitting a wall of what the next step was.

This program is specifically geared towards creative change-makers who have started a project but need help moving their ideas from concept to reality.

We started our work in September with monthly modules that are each focused on

various topics, for example, field research, equity, design, budgeting and crafting a pitch.

This course work was critical to keeping the idea of KALICO moving forward. I have felt supported with knowledge and resources that – especially coming from a small community – have been a lifeline. It has challenged me to think about our project in ways I may not have without this opportunity.

What have you learned so far at cohort meetings?

Our first of two in-person trainings happened from Oct. 28-Nov. 5 in Vermont. I gathered with 24 other cohorts along with the NAS team, University of Pennsylvania faculty, and mentors and individuals in various art fields.

This experience was so thoughtfully crafted by NAS. Learning in an intensely focused and designed setting allowed me to dive deep into the information being presented. The highlights were:

- Having one-on-one mentor meetings with individuals at the top of their fields. The advice and information that they shared with me was priceless. For example, mentor Hannah Fox of the Museum of Making from Derby, England, gave me resources to take back to our board and walked me through the idea of co-creating a space with your community. The Museum of Making has done an outstanding job at modeling this concept of human-centered design thinking.

- Second, I now have 24 new friends and peers who are right where I am – building art movements for change in their own communities. I was so inspired by all the brave change-makers I met. We shared stories, found more in common than not, cried, laughed, looked at each other’s projects, brainstormed, and challenged each other to reach further.

I am so honored to have been selected to represent Montana and our project.

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STATE OF THE

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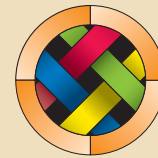


Julianne Gadoury, arts education coordinator for the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, paid a visit to Blackfoot Pathways Sculpture in the Wild during the October Professional Development Institute for State Agency Arts Education Managers, held in Missoula.

(Photo by Monica Grable)

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Montanans Receive Artist's Innovation Awards

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9,750 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$1.29 per copy, for a total cost of \$12,594, which includes \$9,166 for printing/production and \$3,428 for distribution



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Winter 2020
January/February/March