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Summer 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 CARES

### MAC channels CARES Act funds to artists and organizations

The Montana Arts Council (MAC) announces the availability of emergency funding to offset economic losses due to COVID-19. MAC will award funds to nonprofit organizations, artists and cultural workers in Montana. The funds come through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) as part of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

“Support from every member of Montana’s Congressional delegation reinforces that the arts are for everyone,” said MAC Chair Cyndy Andrus. “The arts have been our constant to lift our spirits, bind our communities and preserve our histories. Another facet of Montana’s beauty, the arts are a resource that we must protect.”

Another facet of Montana’s beauty, the arts are a resource we must protect.”

– MAC Chair Cyndy Andrus

No area of the state has been untouched by the pandemic, with events cancelled and venues closed. Coupled with the losses of outdoor festivals and related tourism, Montana’s economy will suffer long-term effects. In Montana, the creative industries:

- contribute over \$1.5 billion to Montana’s economy
- represent 3.4% of the Total Gross State Product
- supply 15,666 jobs, generating \$883 million in total compensation

Sixty percent of Montana’s artists and cultural workers are fully unemployed because of COVID-19. While the CARES Act expanded unemployment benefits, this group is reporting only a 36% success rate with Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. For this reason, MAC is dedicating the majority of CARES Act funding to support this sector.

See CARES Act, page 2

## The shows must go on!

### Summer theatre continues with protections in place

By Kristi Niemeyer

For a rural state, Montana is uncommonly rich in performing arts and summer is one of the seasons when that wealth is on full display, with live theatre on stages and in parks from Birney to Bigfork. But with coronavirus loosed upon us, this season looks different than most.

#### Fort Peck: “Come in and put your troubles at the door”

On the other hand, several summer theatre stalwarts are opening this year, albeit a little later in the season. “I’m really happy to see a lot of Montana companies are going ahead,” says Andy Meyers, artistic director of the Fort Peck Summer Theatre. “That’s simply not the case nationally.”

“I first heard rumbles about COVID when I was in Arizona, rehearsing for a six-week run of ‘Chicago,’” he recalls. Four shows into the six-week run, “they closed it down and sent us all home.”

Meyers, who maintains an apartment in the cast quarters year-around, came back to quarantine in Fort Peck, “so I could be here to handle all the planning and loop-de-loops.”

He adds, “I’ve probably made 200 different game plans in the process of coming up with a restructured season.”



Mike Gillpatrick, Louis Jepson and Neal Lewing appeared in the Port Polson Players’ 2019 production of “The Sunshine Boys” and reprise the show as the season opener at Fort Peck Summer Playhouse.

“Planning seems to be an exercise in futility,” he says. “Every single person has been flexible no matter what – but that’s what we do as artists, we really come together and work things out.”

See Summer Theatre, page 5

## Blackfeet artist receives \$30,000 mentor fellowship

Jackie Larson Bread, an accomplished Blackfeet artist, was among 11 artists who received a 2020 Mentor Artist Fellowship award from the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation (NACF).

The regional award is open to accomplished American Indian and Alaska Native artists and culture bearers. Following an open call for applications, a panel of arts professionals who specialize in contemporary visual arts and traditional arts reviewed 60 Native artists and selected 11 to receive \$30,000 fellowship awards.

“This intensive one-to-one mentoring program has proven to propel emerging artists and their careers, revitalize cultural and artistic practices within communities, and strengthen the mentoring skills of established Native artists and culture bearers,” says NACF Director of Programs Francene Blythe.



Beaded Bag by Jackie Larson Bread

Bread has dedicated the past 50 years to practicing and developing her unique style of beadwork. She comes from a long line of artists to whom she carefully listened, absorbing the knowledge passed on to her from her relatives. Now, she is a respected culture bearer in her community and an accomplished artist nationwide.

Bread creates utilitarian objects using a pictorial style of beadwork that features floral and geometric designs and vivid colors. Her work is deeply personal and a form of storytelling, often depicting family members and friends from her Blackfeet community.

See Blackfeet Artist, page 7

## Montana novelist Peter Bowen remembered as a writer’s writer

By David McCumber  
Reprinted with Permission from  
The Montana Standard, April 11

Peter Bowen, a novelist who found acclaim and literary success writing about the Montana he loved, died Wednesday, April 8, after a fall at his home in Livingston. He was 74.

Bowen was best-known for a series of 15 mystery novels set in the fictional Eastern Montana town of Toussaint, and featuring a Métis brand inspector named Gabriel Du Pré.

He also wrote a four-book series of historical novels set in Montana in the 19th and early 20th century that blended history and humor in a way that delighted readers and critics alike. They featured a fictionalized version

of the real-life Western character Luther Sage “Yellowstone” Kelly, a soldier, frontiersman, hunter and scout.

Bowen was a writer’s writer, respected for his word-smithing — and his irreverence and sardonic humor. For a time, he wrote columns for *Forbes FYI* magazine under the name “Coyote Jack.”

The writer Christopher Buckley, a pretty good hand at comic novels himself, was the editor at the magazine who commissioned the columns from Bowen, and said he knew he had a winner when he read the first line of the first column: “Sorry to be late in answering. I sprained my wrist on a pair of Jehovah’s Witnesses.” Indeed, the column became one of the magazine’s most popular features.

See Peter Bowen, page 17



Novelist Peter Bowen (Photo by Michael Gallacher)



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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

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



Photo by Czelsi Gomez

### The arts help maintain community and raise morale

The *State of the Arts* Summer issue generally includes extra pages to highlight the festivals and events that allow the arts to shine in the most hospitable season in Montana. The absence of the summer calendar is just one small indicator of how different our world is now.

Overwhelmingly, artists and organizations continue to create and share as a way to maintain community and raise morale, despite the uncertainty. I have faith in our creative spirit, although I worry about the stability of the support structure.

The arts sector contributes more than \$1.5 billion annually to Montana's economy. It may be years before we can adequately measure how the pandemic has changed the industry financially. The most comprehensive survey that I am following, by Americans for the Arts, has less than 75 arts organizations from Montana contributing data. Even at this point, the reported financial losses exceed \$4 million.

Artists and independent businesses are even harder to track. Those contributing data to date report losses that exceed half of their annual income, and dependency on sales to individuals for most of that income.

I've been reflecting on a distinction I heard years ago on diversity, equity and inclusion, often shorthanded as DEI. Simply stated, inclusion and diversity are listening and engaging. For those holding power, it feels accountable to invite new voices to be at the table, but it often stops there.

Society has flocked to the arts in this time of crisis, and yet culture is a small part of the recovery strategy.

The next big step feels much more dangerous, as it requires responding with a deliberate shift in power almost always through dismantling and rebuilding. MAC, as an agency of state

government, holds power and must be equitable and transparent. Equity becomes a wicked problem, one that needs constant reexamination as, through vigilance, we improve.

#### An opportunity for equity

The health of the economy will be a significant factor as we move into our new reality, which I see as an opportunity for equity. The groundwork is being laid for needing to 'tighten our belts' and 'prioritize necessities,' a slippery slope into reducing investments in

the arts and humanities. I'm frustrated by the ways that inclusion tactics have sabotaged the cultural sector. The arts have demonstrated their worth in job creation, community revitalization, economic development, tourism, education, juvenile interventions, cultural preservation, healthcare, recovery from military service, elder care, mental health ... the list goes on. Society has flocked to the arts in this time of crisis, and yet culture is a small part of the recovery strategy.

The impact of the virus on the arts community is grim. What is happening in the arts is reflective of what is happening across society. Uncertainty and desperation linked to the pandemic have made inequities unbearable on every level. The *Great Falls Tribune* printed a quote by artist Ben Pease, speaking about the anti-racism protests, asking, "How loud do you have to be to be heard?" I hope that Ben believes me when I say it isn't a fault of the messenger; the power structure has proven itself unworthy.

We each hold power in different ways. I am certain, as a subscriber to this paper, that you share an appreciation for the value and necessity of the arts. I hope that you'll join us as we push past inclusion and work for equity.

#### Every action can shift power

Every action has the potential to shift power. It can be as simple as buying your next gift from a local artist. As consistent as attending every city council and school board meeting to understand whether the arts are present or absent. And as deliberate as expanding your understanding by listening to new voices with the purpose of understanding. As we practice this beyond the arts and make it the foundation of our new normal, I am hopeful for the world we can build.

#### 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.

## MAC adds Program Director Brian Moody to roster

The Montana Arts Council's new program director, Brian Moody, looks forward to exploring how art can help build more resilient communities and better connect people to the places they call home.

"In my role with MAC, I hope my experiences as an educator, community organizer and researcher help us, as a staff, think critically about our programs and how they serve the public," he says. "I feel like my formal skills as a social science researcher can help us design and deliver programs that reach unmet needs for Montanans. Finally, I hope I can help the Montana Arts Council tell its story and the story of the people it serves."



Program Director Brian Moody

Born and raised in Wyoming, he earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Linfield College in Oregon and a master's in sustainable communities from Northern Arizona University. He has lived all over the West before moving to Helena in 2018 with his wife and young daughter. Moody has worked in diverse roles in the nonprofit and education world, ranging from school-garden teacher to community organizer to

food-safety trainer.

The arts have been a constant companion. "Drawing has been a lifelong daily practice

for me, even if it just amounts to doodling on notes during meetings to stay focused," he says. "Painting and drawing have taken on new meaning and importance for me now that I share them with my daughter."

He adds that visits to local arts institutions like the Holter Museum, the Myrna Loy, and Grandstreet Theater "were a key part of making the town feel like home. And the COVID-19 pandemic reinforced how much I rely on music, movies and creative writing for comfort and inspiration."

Other pursuits include trail running, hiking, gardening and reading. "I do my best to spend as much time as possible outside," he says.

As program officer, he'll help coordinate several of the Montana Arts Council's grant programs, provide training through classes, workshops and conferences, and offer service and support to the public. He'll also help evaluate programs and implement improvements when needed.

He's available at Brian.Moody2@mt.gov or 406-444-4700.

## CARES Act (from page 1)

Montana CARES Individuals will award up to \$2,500 to those impacted by COVID-19. Professional artists can apply to Montana CARES Recovery to recoup losses from canceled opportunities, up to \$1,000.

"I am proud of MAC's bold response to prioritize those that fuel Montana's creative economy with their talent," said Agency Director Tatiana Gant. "MAC took the time to examine the field-wide resources and determine what would serve those most at risk. These investments ensure that we can weather this epidemic and maintain our culture."

To date, the total financial impact of COVID-19 on cultural organizations in Montana is more than \$4 million. In addition to assisting artists, Montana CARES Recovery provides up to \$1,000 of reimbursement for losses related to postponed and canceled arts programming for nonprofit organizations.

Through the third grant offered, Montana CARES Partners, recent grantees of the MAC Public Value Partnership can receive up to \$3,000 for their on-going public services that add value to Montana communities.

"Montana has unique challenges with access to technology, aggravated by the closure of public libraries," said Agency Deputy Director Kristin Han Burgoyne. "Staggered deadlines will allow us to meet immediate needs quickly while providing the time to share the opportunity through alternate channels."

MAC began holding information webinars June 12 that will remain available for viewing. Applications are available through the MAC website.

MAC anticipates announcing awards for the first round of grants in mid-July. Eligible and qualified applicants will remain in consideration until available funds are committed.

#### About the CARES Act

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided \$2 trillion in federal economic relief to the nation, of which \$75 million was allocated to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Of that amount, 40% was designated to be divided among the state arts agencies and regional arts organizations for distribution. The NEA has limited the use of funds to salaries, fees for artists and other contracted personnel, or facility costs.

MAC received \$424,400 from the CARES Act through the NEA and intends to subgrant 100%. Resources provided by the State of Montana will cover overhead and operations expenses and will be used toward additional grants. MAC anticipates making approximately 230 awards through the trio of Montana CARES grant programs

#### Additional Resources

• **Americans for the Arts**, www.americansforthearts.org, offers the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource and Response Center, a comprehensive source for arts organizations and individuals.

## 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 Sept. 4 for the Fall issue (October-November). 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 ...

The fledgling filmmakers from **Helena and Harlem** who received regional Emmy Awards from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS). During an online ceremony live-streamed from NATAS NW headquarters in Seattle on Saturday, June 6, officials announced that both “Looking Forward From Yesterday” (Short Form Non-Fiction) and “EAST” (Short Form Fiction) had taken top honors in their respective categories. They now advance to the national competition, where they will vie for the country’s top prize for student production work against high schools from predominantly larger markets. The films were created by students of the Montana-based MAPS Media Institute, and follow last year’s win of three regional production awards, and one highly coveted national award, from NATAS. Both films in the NATAS NW competition originated in MAPS Media Lab workshops. “EAST” was the result of a collaboration between MAPS and the Myrna Loy Center in Helena, where area students got a crash course in filmmaking from MAPS instructors in the spring of 2019. The film follows a day in the life of three East Helena teenagers, and touches on themes of a sense of places, enduring adversity, and the bonds of friendship. “Looking Forward From Yesterday” was the third MAPS project undertaken by the students from north-central Montana, who formed their own production company, Milk River Productions. Harlem High School is located just across the Milk River from the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, which belongs to the people of the A’aninin (Gros Ventre) and Nakoda (Assiniboine) tribes. “Looking Forward From Yesterday” chronicles the challenges facing the tribes as they work to preserve and even resurrect their culture in contemporary times. It’s a powerful and intimate story about a way of life that many feared was lost completely. “Our tribes are doing some incredible work, and to have our own kids be able to document that work means more than you can imagine,” says Craig Todd, the production company’s Harlem High School advisor. Both films now move on to the national NATAS competition, winners of which will be announced in the fall.



Harlem students Mia Wing, Kiahna Cochran, Mitchrena Begay, Nellie King and Amelia Blackcrow with MAPS instructors Micheal Workman and Dan Molloy on the set of “Looking Forward From Yesterday.”

**Judy Ericksen**, award-winning professional potter and dedicated community volunteer, who was named the 2020 Paris Gibson Award Winner. Selected by previous award winners, Ericksen meets the award criteria of providing significant



Judy Ericksen (Photo courtesy of the Great Falls Tribune)

impact and leadership for the community through volunteerism and performing selfless action for the betterment of Great Falls, as exemplified by the city’s founder, Paris Gibson. Ericksen moved to Great Falls with her husband from Minneapolis in the 1960s. She became best known as an artist, crafting pieces that are both beautiful and functional. She often donates her work and teaching sessions for charities to auction or raffle, and shares her craft by teaching and mentoring students who are often working to overcome physical or mental challenges. She has taught classes at Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art, an institution she was instrumental in creating. Her artistry has been recognized with the Governor’s Cultural Foundation Award, the YWCA Salute to Women Award, the Governor’s Arts Award for Service to the Arts and the We Stand Tall Award from the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. Among her many community endeavors: she launched the YWCA’s Empty Bowls event, and single-handedly made 250 bowls a year during the fundraiser’s first eight years; served on the board of Gallery 16, a women’s artist co-op; has volunteered at the Cascade County Detention Center for two decades, where she runs the library program; and was manager of the Cascade Quartet for many years. As one of her nominators said, “Judy would be the last person to seek special recognition or speak highly of her own accomplishments. She simply moves through life listening to others, watching for ways to help others, encouraging others, standing up for others, and celebrating the accomplishments of others.”

**Precious McKenzie**, associate professor of English at Rocky Mountain College, who has received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program Award in the Innovation Research Dissemination Program. Professor McKenzie will research at University College Cork, Ireland, as part of a project to study Irish folktales and legends.



Precious McKenzie (Photo by Amber Jean Reinhardt)

She will also teach at the university. McKenzie joined RMC in fall 2011, after earning a doctorate in English from the University of South Florida-Tampa. She is a member of the college’s Modern Language Association and the Society of Children’s Book Writers & Illustrators.

“It’s a highly competitive process, so winning this award is a tremendous honor,” said McKenzie. “It’s also a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with my colleagues in the humanities overseas so that, when I return to Montana, I can continue to deliver innovative teaching strategies and content to Rocky Mountain College students.” She’s also at work on a novel for middle-school students based on Irish legends, and anticipates that her Fulbright studies in Ireland will help her complete that project.

**Montana The Magazine of Western History**, a publication of the Montana Historical Society, which announced that two articles published in 2019 were recently selected for national recognition. Flannery Burke’s article,

“‘Worry, USA’: Dude Ranch Advertising Looks East, 1915-1945,” won the coveted Spur Award in the Best Western Short Non-fiction category from Western Writers of America, Inc. The article, which appeared in the Summer 2019 issue, looks at how working ranchers in the West shaped their own ideas of people who lived in the East as part of their campaign to woo curious sports hunters and outdoorsmen to what were becoming “dude” ranches. Magazine contributor David Beyreis was a finalist for the Spur Award in the same category for his piece, “If You had Fought Bravely I would have Sung for you,” which looked at the changing roles of Cheyenne women during 19th century Plains warfare. It was published in the magazine’s 2019 Spring edition. His article also won the Wrangler Award for short non-fiction.

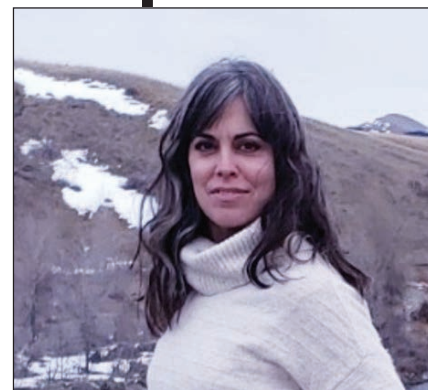
**Missoula**, which finished 10th on the Western States Arts Federation’s (WESTAF) roster of the 30 Most Creative Small Cities in America. WESTAF, a nonprofit arts service organization and leading provider of technology solutions for the arts, recently released its Creative Vitality List, data-driven compilation that profiles and celebrates the arts, culture and creativity of America’s most vital and vibrant places and spaces. Using data from WESTAF’s CVSuite creative economy data tool, the index measured and ranked the creative economies of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with populations under 500,000. The index includes data sources from the nonprofit and for-profit arts sectors with indicators in creative occupations, nonprofit revenues, and creative industry sales. “This is more proof that our artists, arts organizations, galleries and entertainment venues are essential to the economic and social vitality of Missoula,” said Tom Bensen, executive director of Arts Missoula. “Such national recognition will no doubt benefit our community when we emerge from the current crisis.” Check out the whole list at [cvsuite.org/the-30-most-creative-cities/#top](http://cvsuite.org/the-30-most-creative-cities/#top).

**Livingston**, which was named this year’s Film Friendly Community by the Montana Film Office for the community’s support of the filming of “Robert the Bruce.” The community was among the winners of the 2020 Montana Tourism Awards, recognizing the significant contributions Montanans have made to the state’s tourism and recreation industries.

Seven Helena-area artists who recently were awarded \$500 Grants to Artists Awards by The Myrna Loy. Recipients are ceramic artists **Sara Catapano**, **Breana Buettner** and **Susan Mattson**; painter **Steve Gibson**; musician **David Casey**; pianist **Charlotte Dike**; and theatre artist **Errol Koch**. This batch of grants specifically targeted artists who are financially challenged by the COVID-19 shutdown of arts activities. “It’s not much,” says Myrna executive director Krys Holmes. “But supporting local artists is important to us.”

## TRANSITIONS

Welcome to **Sarah Justice**, who took the helm as executive director of Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art in Great Falls on Jan. 1. Justice has served The Square as the education director since 2017, and worked as interim executive director through the last half of 2019. After an extensive nationwide search in November, the board agreed that she “was the best fit to move The Square forward with her vision and vitality.” Justice brings a unique perspective and experience to the position of executive director. She’s a working artist and has been an educator and business owner for many years. Hailing from the southeastern U.S., she earned her BFA from Georgia State University in Atlanta and her MFA from the University of Montana in Missoula. She also holds a degree in interior design from Bauder College in Atlanta. Before returning to academia in 2010 she owned and operated Living with Art Studios, which specialized in decorative wall finishes, cabinet and furniture refinishing, and wall murals for residential and commercial spaces. “The Square is a huge asset to Great Falls, and I will do everything I can in my tenure to grow the museum’s contemporary art exhibitions, presence, educational programming and outreach to the community,” she writes. “Contemporary art has great purpose in today’s time and place, and I want to spread the importance and knowledge of it.”



Sarah Justice

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

More Transitions on next page



### 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](mailto: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.



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## More Congrats to ...



**Norman Huynh**  
(Photo by Stark Photography)

Welcome and best wishes to internationally recognized conductor **Norman Huynh**, who has been appointed music director of the Bozeman Symphony. Huynh was selected out of six finalists following a year-long search during the 2019-'20 concert season conducted by the Bozeman Symphony Board of Directors, an eight-person search committee, staff and musicians, with community participation. Huynh has established himself as a conductor with an ability to captivate an audience through a multitude

of musical genres. "Norman is an exceptional talent and we are fortunate to have someone of his level of expertise help forge the future of the Bozeman Symphony Society," said board chair Stephen Schachman. Born in 1988, he is a first-generation Asian American and the first in his family to pursue classical music as a career. Along with his role as the Bozeman Symphony's music director, he will continue as the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Associate Conductor of the Oregon Symphony. Recent conducting engagements include the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Orchestra Sinfonica del Vallès, Eugene Symphony, Grant Park Music Festival, and the Princess Galyani Vadhana Youth Orchestra of Bangkok. He has served as a cover conductor for the New York Philharmonic and Los Angeles Philharmonic with John Williams. Huynh has been at the forefront of moving orchestral music out of the traditional concert hall into venues where an orchestra is not conventionally found. In 2011, he co-founded the Occasional Symphony in Baltimore, which celebrated holidays by performing innovative concerts in distinct venues throughout the inner-city. As music director, he has commissioned new works by multiple composers. He received the 2015 Yale Distinguished Music Educator Award for his work with the Portland (Maine) Symphony Orchestra's Musical Explorer's Program. As the assistant conductor of the PSO from 2013-2016, Huynh visited over 60 schools across the state of Maine and co-founded Symphony & Spirits, a series of events for young professionals, to make the orchestra more accessible and engaging for a younger audience. "I look forward to expanding our collaborative efforts and building lasting partnerships with other arts institutions in town," say Huynh of his new post in Bozeman. "In the wake of current world events, I believe that the role of the symphony is to reconnect us with each other, to facilitate healing and forward momentum through the language of music."



**Lauren Korn**

Welcome to **Lauren Korn**, the new director of the Montana Book Festival. Formerly a bookseller at Fact & Fiction, Korn is a native Montanan who graduated from the University of Montana with a bachelor's in English. She is the director of content for *The Adroit Journal*, a reader for *icehouse poetry* and the chapbook designer for *CutBank*. She recently received her master's in English from the University

of New Brunswick and looks forward to calling Missoula home again. She replaces **Tess Fahlgren** and **Samantha Burris**, who helmed the festival in 2018 and 2019. "As we all move through this difficult time, we are delighted to be able to hand the festival off to someone capable, hard working and experienced," write the outgoing directors. "Lauren's vision for the festival and depth of knowledge will be an enormous asset to the future of the statewide arts community." In response to the global health concerns around COVID-19 and the uncertainty about shifting safety regulations, as well as the growing number of cancelled book tours and postponed book releases, the Montana Book Festival is going to pivot into cyberspace this year. "My hope is, that in putting the infrastructure in place for this year's virtual events, the Montana Book Festival can begin its tenure as a year-round entity, operating as an online literary community based in education and collaboration and serving as a vital resource for readers and writers in the region," says Korn.

So long and best wishes for a happy retirement to **John Combs**, who retired from his position as Missoula County Public Schools' fine arts supervisor at the end of the school year. A native of Miles City who listened to classical music as a kid, he eventually spent 28 years as Hellgate High School's band director and another 11 years as the district's fine arts director. "He's an incredible educator, and he's one of the top band directors in the country," said Lewis Nelson, Sentinel High School's band director and a former student of Combs, in the *Missoulian*. He studied music education at the University of Montana and earned his master's degree from the University of Southern California, where he played in the Trojan marching band and even with the likes of Fleetwood Mac. As a teacher, he trained countless musicians and students whom he took to perform in venues across the

nation including the Rose Parade in Pasadena, in addition to working with world-renowned composers. And as fine arts supervisor he advocated for a robust arts and music program within the district and wrote the request for the Kennedy Center that created the Spark! Arts Ignite Learning program, which ensures access to the arts for all of the district's students. "I didn't have very many days where I felt like I had to go to work," Combs told the *Missoulian*. "It was a passion, it was a mission, it was something I felt was called to early in my life."

— Excerpted from the *Missoulian*, June 7 (missoulian.com)



**John Combs** (Photo by Sara Diggins/Missoulian)

**Fond farewell to Gallery 16** in downtown Great Falls, which closed in May after celebrating its 50th anniversary. Since the 1970s, the women-owned gallery has exhibited the work of Montana artists in many mediums, including painting, ceramics, textiles, prints, jewelry and woodworking. Longtime gallery member and ceramic artist Judy Ericksen told the *Great Falls Tribune* that the impact of coronavirus was the "straw that broke the camel's back." She noted that online shopping has changed the art market. "It's a different world now," she said. "A lot of us are getting older, and running the business takes work." Gallery 16, named for the street where the first storefront sat, was launched by nine women who pooled their resources to keep the doors open. It was both a place to sell their work and create in the studio space. "They said it couldn't be done," Ericksen said. But by the end of its fifth decade, the cooperative gallery had grown to represent nearly 100 artists, both men and women, at its home on Central Ave.

## CONDOLENCES TO ...

The family and friends of acclaimed singer **William "Bill" Runsabove** (Oglala Lakota and Northern Cheyenne) of Frazer. He died Jan. 11. He was born June 14, 1956, to Lloyd and Margaret Runsabove, grew up in Lame



**Bill Runsabove (center)**

Deer and began singing when he was 8 years old. He started his own drum group with his childhood buddies; they used a washtub as their drum until Bill's father, Lloyd, made them a drum and took them to a powwow. Runsabove became a lead singer for many drum groups, including Teton Ramblers, Bad Land Singers, Lame Deer Singers, Birney Singers and Rocky Boy Singers, all of Montana; Mandaree Singers and Newtown Singers of North Dakota; Blackfoot Crossing and Bob Tail Singers of Alberta; and Four Sacred Mountains of New Mexico.

In 1977, he and the Bad Land Singers began recording with Indian House of Taos, and made four recordings: *Bad Land Singers at Home*, *Gahomani Songs* and *Live at Bismarck, Volumes 1 and 2*. Indian House Records also recorded Runsabove with other drum groups, such as High Noon Singers of Alberta, Big Bear Singers of Saskatchewan and Mad Dog Singers of Crow Agency. He became lead singer of Eagle Whistles of Mandaree, ND, and they made several recordings. In 1982, Eagle Whistles toured Canada and the U.S., and had a significant impact on the powwow trail with their unique rock 'n roll style. The group also served as host drum at many powwows.

Runsabove eventually started composing songs, which are still performed at powwows. He composed a song for Blackfeet activist Louise Cobell and the theme song for Canada's Idle No More movement. His compositions have been sung and adopted by runners, and performed for family giveaways and Native American causes. In 1990, he performed with the Bad Land Singers at Carnegie Hall in New York City for a concert celebrating Folk Masters and Traditional Music in the Americas. The group also made a presentation in Washington, DC, in 1992, "The Year of the American Indian." He performed with his family on Broadway in New York City at the Symphony Space Theater, with the Bad Land Singers at the National Folk Festival in Lowell, MA, and sang for both of President Bill Clinton's inaugurations and President Barack Obama's first inauguration. He was featured in the film "Running Brave," starring Robbie Benson, and taught Benson to sing a powwow song for the movie. He performed for the opening and finale of the National Folk Festival in Butte, where he gave a presentation on native song.

Runsabove was given his native name, "Buffalo Bear," which also means "Grizzly Bear," and is a direct descendant of Chief Little Wolf, Northern Cheyenne, who brought his people back from Oklahoma to where they now live in Lame Deer. He is also a direct descendant of Cheyenne Chief Wild Hog and Chief Red Cloud, Oglala Lakota. As a composer of original and traditional style songs, he believed it was very important to preserve the way of singing and drumming taught by the elders. He also added a little bit of his own style of up-tempo singing to the powwow circuit to make people want to dance.

# Summer Theatre (from page 1)

Meyers thought of his parents – avid theatre-goers who are part of the aging demographic that's most susceptible to COVID complications – when crafting guidelines for the coming season.

In addition to moving the opening date from late

May to July 3, the theatre is staging the same number of shows as planned, but with smaller casts and shorter runs. The theatre uses an online ticket program that automatically takes care of social distancing in the auditorium. With a theater capacity of 1,000, "if we sell one-third of the tickets, that's still 350 people," says Meyers.

Strict cleaning protocols and distancing guidelines are also in place for the lobby, concession area and staff quarters.

Neal Lewing of the Port Polson Players will help stage and stars in the season opener, **"The Sunshine Boys,"** July 3-12. As an original member of the Fort Peck company, "he has a story about every inch of this campus."

The next show, **"God Help Us"** starring television legend Ed Asner, has a three-day run, July 17-19. Staged last year in Havre and Billings, it also features Montana Actors' Theatre veterans Jay Pyette and Kate Hagen.

The season continues with **"Working,"** a celebration of the extraordinary lives of ordinary people based on the book by Studs Terkel, July 24-Aug. 9; **"Love Letters,"** starring Meyers and Fort Peck favorite Pam Veis, Aug. 14-16; and the ever-terrifying **"Wait Until Dark,"** Aug. 21-Sept. 6.

Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 4 p.m. Sundays; call 406-526-9943 or visit [www.fortpecktheatre.org](http://www.fortpecktheatre.org).

## Bigfork: 170 might be a full house this year

The **Bigfork Summer Playhouse** lights up the stage with a few concessions to the coronavirus. The 61st season opens more than a month later than usual – July 2 instead of May – and includes limited seating and fewer shows. Otherwise, vows associate producer Brach Thomson, the show will go on!

The season opens July 2 with the inspiring Disney musical, **"Newsies,"** and a powerful production of **"The Hunchback of Notre Dame"** July 4. Two comedies follow: **"Sister Act"** joins the repertory line-up July 18, and **"Something Rotten!"** opens Aug. 1. As usual, the season closes Aug. 27-Sept. 5 with **"Hits from the 1950s, '60s and '70s."**

According to Thomson, the playhouse recruited and signed 20 actors at auditions in New York City, St. Louis and Louisville before the pandemic caused a nationwide shutdown in March. The company, which numbers around 55 people, also includes musicians, a tech crew, costumers, directors and choreographers.

Even though it was no longer required, the whole crew quarantined for two weeks upon arrival in Bigfork. "That way, we know the entire company is COVID free and we then can function like a single family home," says Thomson.

"That means that we don't have to social distance from each other – so you get a believable story on stage."

It also protects the cast, who can't realistically stay six feet apart during a performance.

As for theatre-goers, every other row will be blocked off until the state lifts its strict distancing limits, with two empty seats between reservation groups. Extra cleaning and sanitizing procedures are in place, and the playhouse



**"God Help Us" starring Ed Asner with Jay Pyette and Kate Hagen, has a three-day run on the Fort Peck stage and travels to Whitefish July 24-25.**

will urge patrons to wear masks and keep a safe distance in the lobby and theatre.

The playhouse holds 432 people. "Unfortunately, we're thinking 170 might be a full house for us this summer," says Thomson.

To help compensate for the loss in ticket revenue, the theatre applied for a federal Paycheck Protection Program loan to help meet payroll through the end of June, and has also sought grants to help weather the downturn.

For tickets, call 406-837-4886 or visit [bigforksummerplayhouse.com](http://bigforksummerplayhouse.com).

## Across Montana: Humor, escape and reflection

After a stint in Fort Peck, mounting the season opener, **"The Sunshine Boys,"** the **Port Polson Players** return to their home stage at the Theatre on the Lake. "We've selected the following titles to provide laughter, music and heartfelt sentiment to give much-needed escape and reflection – especially considering the events of the past four months," write producers Karen and Neal Lewing.

In keeping with state and federal guidelines, the theatre will seat no more than 65 patrons per show, with strict social distancing



Last year's production of **"Oklahoma!"** in Bigfork.

for restrooms and concessions. "Reservations are imperative," say the Lewings, who strongly encourage patrons to bring masks or face coverings.

The season kicks off with a musical love letter honoring veterans, **"The Pin-Up Girls,"** July 16-26. Next up is Joe DiPietro's comedy about intergenerational relationships, **"Over The River And Through The Woods,"** July 30-Aug. 9. The season wraps up Aug. 13-30 with another show by DiPietro, **"The Last Romance,"** which the Lewings describe as "a sweet story filled with comedy, poignancy, mystery, opera and yes, romance!"

Show times are 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays; visit [portpolsonplayers.com](http://portpolsonplayers.com) or call 406-883-9212.

**The Illustrious Virginia City Players** once again grace the Opera House stage in historic Virginia City. "This is the 71st continuous season of the Players, so we are grateful we get the chance to open our doors this year, to keep that tradition alive," says company manager Christina Koch.

Instead of three shows this summer, the company is staging two: the fairytale **"Rumpelstiltskin,"** adapted by Bill Koch, June 19-Aug. 2 and a classic mystery, **"Seven Keys to Baldpate,"** Aug. 4-Sept. 6.



**"The Pin-Up Girls,"** with Frances Connery, Courtney Quincy, Katie Kvelde and Joseph Kellogg, opens the Port Polson Players' season, July 16-26.

For safety's sake, they are breaking with tradition in other respects too, by seating groups of patrons six feet apart (since capacity is limited, reservations are encouraged), making hand sanitizer available in the lobby, and disinfecting all of the seats in the auditorium before every performance with a backpack sprayer.

"The players will be wearing patriotic masks while ushering patrons to their seats," adds Koch. "We hope people who feel comfortable will choose to visit us this summer for some family-friendly laughter and fun!"

Show times are 4 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, 7 p.m. Fridays, 2 and 7 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Call 800-829-2969 or visit [www.virginiacityplayers.com](http://www.virginiacityplayers.com).

Another summertime staple of Virginia City is **The Brewery Follies**, returning to the stage at H.S. Gilbert Brewery for another season of belly laughs, hijinks, celebrity impersonations, sketch comedy and plenty of music. The season opened June 19, and continues at 8 p.m. Wednesdays-Saturdays, with matinees at 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, through Sept. 19. Until the state moves to Phase 3 or reopening, seating capacity is cut in half, making reservations a must. Call 800-829-2969, ext. 3 or visit [www.breweryfollies.net](http://www.breweryfollies.net).

**Cutler Bros. Theatre** in Deer Lodge opens June 19-July 12 with **"Mayhem in Montana,"** an original comedy written and directed by Kelly Cutler, and featuring Paul Burlesque and Earl Pennyway – "two of the strangest characters you'll ever meet!" Next up is Shakespeare's **"Romeo and Juliet,"** which the ever-inventive troupe has "adjusted to a modern setting," July 24-Aug. 16. Show times for both productions are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. **Comedy Night** returns at 8 p.m. Aug. 8, bringing SNL-style skits to the stage. Call 406-846-4096 or visit [cutlerbros.com](http://cutlerbros.com) for details.

**Playmill Theatre** in West Yellowstone opens later than usual – June 25 – and has instituted several procedures designed to "ensure the protection of our amazing patrons and hard-working staff." Among these, the theatre will operate at 75% capacity; when patrons first arrive, they'll be given a squirt of hand sanitizer and receive a contactless temperature check; staff will wear masks and don gloves when handling tickets and money; and a new Evaclean system will be used for daily cleaning and infection prevention.

On a lighter note, this year's season of musicals blends comedy, romance and adventure with **"Seven Brides for Seven Brothers,"** opening June 25; **"Footloose,"** opening June 26; and **"Tarzan,"** opening June 27. All shows run in repertory through Sept. 5. Call 406-646-7757 or visit [www.playmill.com](http://www.playmill.com).



The Virginia City Players mix comedy and melodrama.



## Shakespeare in the Parks cancels season

Sadly, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks has cancelled all of its outdoor performances of **"Cymbeline"** and **"A Midsummer Night's Dream."**

"For the first time in 48 seasons, we've had to postpone our 2020 season to 2021," says artistic director Kevin Asselin. "However, in lieu of touring, we, as a team, have been coming up with creative solutions that will allow us to continue to engage our communities in innovative ways, and maintain our mission of reaching underserved communities."

MSIP, headquartered on the campus of Montana State University in Bozeman, is offering an online video series called **"Reverse Tour: Postcards from the Road."** Community members and actor alums create video postcards extolling the virtues of their town – or a town they loved visiting while on tour – and share a piece of Shakespeare. These snippets will air on the company's Facebook, YouTube and Instagram pages beginning June 29 with a postcard from Dr. Waded Cruzado, president of MSU, and will continue through the course of the summer.

MSIP is also offering online Zoom classes in stage combat, monologues and scene study, beginning July 6; visit [shakespeareintheparks.org](http://shakespeareintheparks.org).

# The Pandemic & the Performing Arts

By Kristi Niemeyer

When the coronavirus swept into Montana in March, the resulting closures decimated concerts and theatre productions and crippled the vibrant nonprofit arts community that supports them. As the state begins to reopen, here are some of the ways these groups are charting a path forward toward an uncertain future.

When the COVID-19 curtain descended, **Cohesion Dance Project** in Helena was forced to cancel its school residencies and outreach classes for students with developmental disabilities.

In response, the organization is creating an eight-class video series with an accompanying home kit of props and materials so students can still participate in creative movement classes tailored to their unique needs. At the same time, Cohesion is crafting a video series for adults with physical disabilities who tend to be more restricted to their home, hospital or rehab environment.

"These two programs will allow us to reach new audiences and potentially offer expanded programming in the future," says artistic director Tanya W. Call.

The studio cancelled its in-person technique classes but was able to shift those online via

Zoom and even held an end-of-session pseudo recital. "That was something new and well received for the small group of dancers who continued with online classes," says Call.

With Phase 2 of the state's reopening in place, Cohesion is offering summer camps, with an online option available. The Zoom sessions are apt to continue, since "we had participants join us from out of town and out of state."

Although the company cancelled its spring production of "Resonance," a shorter outdoor performance is in the works. For now, all larger performances are on hold due to the possibility of COVID-19 flare-ups in the fall.

All of these factors took a toll on revenue, "which will likely affect us for several months, if not years to come," says Call. Grants, and a loan from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) have helped retain staff and keep the dance center open. Call hopes additional contributions and grant support "help us stay stable and afloat."

**Montana Ballet Company** in Bozeman created an Online Academy in March to provide classical ballet instruction to more than 200 students, ages 3 to adult.

"My daughter was so engaged, and participated so earnestly throughout class, that I ended up just sitting off on the side and watching her in sheer delight," wrote one parent. "It was so clear that having a bit of expected normalcy in her day was just what she needed."

MBC also continued its Adaptive Dance Program, offering recorded lessons to students with Down syndrome, and made May a month of "Celebration and Gratitude" with additional classes, including a special master class via Zoom with New York City Ballet Principal Dancer Daniel Ulbricht.

"Connecting with our colleagues and dancers across the country in this new livestream format has been a silver lining," writes Artistic Executive Director Elizabeth DeFanti. "Though physically distanced, we have not been socially distanced."

In light of the ongoing pandemic, "and with the utmost concern for the safety of its audiences, artists, volunteers, staff and vendors" the **Alberta Bair Theater** in Billings has delayed its 2020-'21 season indefinitely.

"No one is more disappointed with this difficult decision than the ABT board and staff," said Ron Yates, president of the board of directors. The board has met frequently since mid-March to discuss how the newly renovated theater would operate under federal, state, local and entertainment-industry safety requirements.

"We have a terrific dedicated staff and a

stunning newly-renovated theater in the heart of downtown Billings that will be completed on-time and on-budget later this summer," Yates said. However, the pandemic made reopening in September untenable.

The outbreak of COVID-19 occurred as the ABT was finalizing dates for the upcoming season. When the staff prepared models of socially distanced seating at a much-reduced capacity, with rigorous sanitation, "it became clear that our best laid plans for a Sept. 12 grand reopening were not attainable."

With scheduling opened through December, the ABT is working to get previously booked events rescheduled for 2021. Meanwhile, international artists were struggling to get visas.

"Most of our performances are national or international touring companies traveling from outside the region through states with different protocols in place," says executive director Jan Dietrich.

A recent email to patrons ends with this promise: "It WILL be worth the wait and quite the celebration when we are able to enjoy what it seems we often took for granted: gathering with family and friends for the best of live performance."

For the first time in four decades, **Missoula Children's Theatre** cancelled its two auditioned summer camps.

"For over 40 years, thousands of campers and staff members have spent their summers on the shores of Flathead and Seeley lakes. To cancel camp for the first time ever is heartbreaking for us," wrote MCT Executive Director Michael McGill and Artistic Director Joseph Martinez. They promise all campers will be welcomed at next year's camps, if they choose to attend.

MCT's popular home theatre program, "Playdate," continues to offer a free step-by-step, day-by-day guide to "a low-drama but dramatically fun experience for your whole family cast." MCT is also developing a new program called MCT Playdate Create for presenting organizations, "not to replace the tour, but to engage further the children as we wait for the safe return to the road and in the air to serve communities," says International and Public Relations director Teri Elander.

Local day camps in Missoula resumed June 15 with modifications for group size, distancing, and other considerations. "Flexibility is key, and changes will be made if necessary," adds Elander.

Since March, MCT lost approximately 25% of the year's revenue from cancellation or postponement of live shows. Grants have helped the organization keep staff employed, develop new programming, and purchase cleaning supplies.

Missoula Community Theatre's season remains up in the air as surveys gauge patrons readiness to see live performances.

The good news? During Missoula Gives in May, MCT raised a little over \$33,000, and many patrons have donated back the cost of tickets to cancelled performances or tuition fees to children's programs. "We have an amazing family of supporters and friends," says Elander.

**Alpine Theatre Project** in Whitefish, which typically offers lavish summer theatrical productions, has postponed this year's production of "Jersey Boys" until January 2021. But Broadway talent is still converging on the Flathead Valley, this time for a series of pop-up community concerts held at various outdoor locations. Guest artists will also work with, and perform alongside, Broadway Summer Training Camp students.

"Obviously, the performing arts are hit especially hard right now," says cofounder Luke Walrath. "However, we have always told our students that creativity will help you find solutions to tough challenges – and who better to find creative solutions than the creative arts community?"



**MCT props designer Lesley Washburn found a way to make temperature safety checks kid-friendly!**

ATP Kids are at work on a re-vamped outdoor production of "Moana Jr," with limited audiences and opportunities for in-vehicle tailgating and distanced lawn seating.

Groups of 10 students are rehearsing outdoors and wearing masks. "It's difficult, to be sure, but our priority has to be keeping our students safe," says Walrath.

The community has supported ATP with donations large and small. "We are grateful to serve in a community that supports the arts and other nonprofits," adds Walrath. "It's been heartening."

**Whitefish Theatre Company** was forced to cancel five shows – one-third of its season, which amounts to an \$80,000 loss. Executive Director Jennifer Asebrook says the company has applied for several grants from both state and national sources, but to date had received no word from funders, "which is very stressful."

So far, savings, investments and endowments have helped the company survive. "However, if this continues too far into the future, we will have to look at staff layoffs or cutting salaries," Asebrook says. "Selling our seats at 50% capacity will not keep us in business over the long term."

Two shows are on the horizon at the O'Shaughnessy Center: a Black Curtain theatre production of "Seminar," June 27-28, with both in-person and online viewing options available, and "God Help Us!" starring Ed Asner, July 24-25. Three summer theatre camps are scheduled for July with smaller groups and additional guidelines in place for distancing and sanitation.

WTC is currently testing new technology for filming and live streaming shows. Post COVID-19, the technology could be used year around to bring productions to more underserved communities, including rural schools, assisted living centers and nursing homes and prisons, that do not have access to the arts.

It could also help the other arts organizations, nonprofits and businesses who use the O'Shaughnessy Center and "are also looking for creative ways to stay afloat during these unsettled times."

**The Myrna Loy in Helena** cautiously reopened for movies in May, and in June allowed audiences of up to 100 people (about 40% of capacity). "We are going back to our roots as a movie theater for the summer," says executive director Krys Holmes.

The summer series of live performances was cancelled due to uncertainty about the artists' ability to travel and audiences' willingness to gather indoors. However, an outdoor street party is in the works for August, and The Myrna is co-producing Stackfest in East Helena, tentatively scheduled for Aug. 8.

The center is also exploring technologies that might allow hybrid events focused on small audiences, with the capacity for viewers to participate online too. A potential collaboration is afoot with the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center in Big Sky, which might allow artists to perform on each stage to small audiences, with interaction between the two theaters.

"The idea is to use the limitations as a creative challenge, and to see how we can use all this as an opportunity to overcome our other biggest challenge – geographic remoteness and travel costs – to bring people together," says Holmes.

She points out that The Myrna's versatility is a plus. By offering movies, concerts, workshops, arts education, community events and an art gallery, "we can shift emphasis and move things around some to survive."

"However, like every other arts nonprofit, we are balancing out the pressures of financial survival, and still serving and engaging our audiences."



6

## Symphonies cancel outdoor concerts

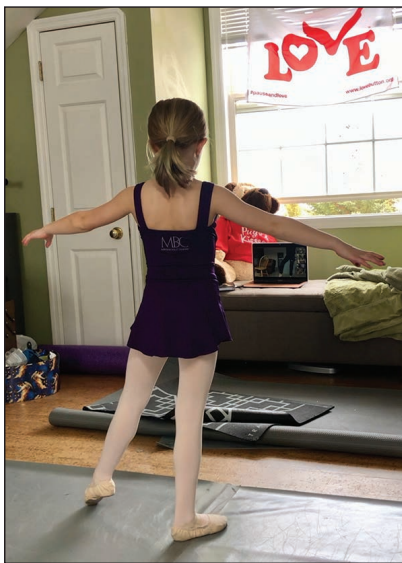
The **Glacier Symphony, Orchestra and Chorale** has postponed this summer's popular Symphony Night at Rebecca Farm and the weeklong Festival Amadeus until 2021.

Limitations in crowd size and social distancing during rehearsals and performances would "make it difficult to reach the quality of performance and listening experience that the Glacier Symphony is known for," says Maestro John Zoltek. The postponement translates into a revenue loss in excess of \$50,000.

In response, the organization has launched its "Passing the baton to YOU" campaign, inviting fans "to consider a donation equal to, or greater than, what you would have spent on attending our summer pops concert and Festival Amadeus."

Also on the chopping block: the **Helena Symphony and Carroll College's joint Symphony Under the Stars**. Since its inception 16 years ago, the event has drawn more than 18,000 people from across Montana and two-dozen states to enjoy an evening of symphonic music on the campus lawn.

In addition to all the health, safety and fundraising considerations, "we must be mindful of the tens of thousands of Americans who have lost their lives because of this crisis," noted Music Director Allan R. Scott, "this would not be an appropriate time to celebrate."



**A young Montana Ballet Company student attends class online.**

# NATIVE NEWS

## Blackfeet artist (from page 1)

“My work is very narrative and personal, telling of family members and friends and the beauty that they emitted to the world,” she says. “This is the basis of my art, my storytelling.”

Many of the beaded portraits she creates are derived from vintage photos of people who her mother and father knew personally. Bread draws from stories her parents told her about these individuals and is interested in the physical characteristics of the person in the photograph – their hair, their clothing, the beadwork, the quillwork, the sewing, the cultural meaning, and the way the individual sat for the photographer all convey components of a story. In essence, she says she is painting with beads.



**Jackie Larson Bread**  
(Photo courtesy of the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation)

Bread has served as a consultant for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian on Blackfeet traditional art. She has provided dozens of training classes for adults and children focusing on Blackfeet beadwork, lectured in many venues about her art and Blackfeet material culture, and collaborated with artists throughout her career. During the past half century, she has

remained fascinated by the beauty, the construction, the meaning, the color, the tactile property, and the familial connection of these beaded pieces.

For the 2020 Mentor Artist Fellowship,

Bread and her apprentice, Dugan A. Coburn (enrolled member of the Blackfeet Tribe and a descendant of Klamath, Pit River), will create a traditional Blackfeet men’s beaded outfit. These outfits are highly regarded in the Blackfeet community and will include a buckskin shirt, leggings, breechcloth, belt, moccasins, gauntlets and bags.

The Mentor Artist Fellowship is a structured 15-month program designed to empower artists and build capacity in Native communities for future generations. As part of the program, mentors and their apprentices will complete art projects by the end of the fellowship period to broaden Indigenous worldviews in both Native and non-Native communities. In addition to the monetary award, the fellows and their apprentices participated in a two-day virtual mentorship and professional development training March 26-27.

Learn more at [nativeartsandcultures.org](http://nativeartsandcultures.org).



## The Cheyenne Story wins Western Heritage Award

Gerry Robinson’s powerful work of historical fiction, *The Cheyenne Story: An Interpretation of Courage*, was awarded the National Cowboy Museum’s 2020 Western Heritage Award for Best Western Novel. The Western Heritage Awards honor individuals who have made significant contributions to western heritage through creative works in literature, music, television, and film that share the great stories of the American West.

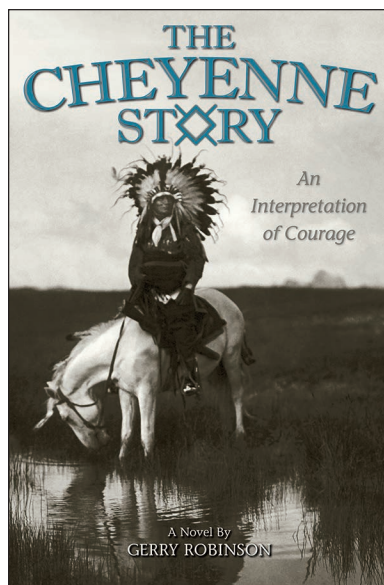
Robinson is a Helena resident and enrolled Northern Cheyenne tribal member who was raised on the reservation in Lame Deer. His debut novel is a compelling and balanced narrative that presents a fresh look at the origins and devastating results of the U.S. Army’s late November 1876 attack on the Cheyenne – the penultimate event that led to their temporary exile to Oklahoma.

The story begins five months to the day after Custer’s defeat by the Northern Cheyenne and seamlessly alternates between two narrators: Little Wolf, the Cheyenne Sweet Medicine Chief, and Bill Rowland, Little Wolf’s brother-in-law and an interpreter in the employ of the U.S. Army.

To date, the full story of the Cheyenne people, post-Little Bighorn to the establish-



**Gerry Robinson, Northern Cheyenne, releases the first book in his trilogy about a devastating tribal saga.**



ment of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, has not been told in its entirety and has never been written about by a member of the tribe. “This is an important contribution to our tribal history,” said Mina Seminole, cultural director at Chief Dull Knife College in Lame Deer, in *Native Sun News Today*. “It is so important to tell our own stories ... Maybe this will encourage others of us to write more. This is a real accomplishment for a Cheyenne to do this. There are other books, but they were told to white authors.”

Robinson – the great-great grandson of

Bill Rowland and Little Wolf’s great-great nephew – believes “being able to tell our own story helps begin a long-overdue healing process.” He spent 16 years researching and writing to deliver a historically, culturally, and emotionally accurate retelling of how the Cheyenne were extricated from their Northwest corner of the Great Plains.

He also worked closely with tribal elders and cultural leaders to accurately and seamlessly incorporate the Cheyenne language into his text. Robinson’s characters use the Cheyenne language in their dialogue, and the reader comes to know and understand its meanings contextually with help from the glossary of Cheyenne words and phrases found at the back of the book.

Raised at the heart of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, Robinson grew up hearing fragmented stories about his ancestors. He devoted nearly 20 years of his life to researching, traveling the country, and reaching back through time to reclaim his heritage.

A published historical writer and member of Western Writers of America, the author is currently working on the next book in the trilogy, which will encompass the second leg of the Northern Cheyenne’s fraught journey.

## Grants support Montana Indian Language Program

The Montana Department of Commerce has awarded a total of \$712,500 through the Montana Indian Language Program to the eight tribal governments in Montana to support language revitalization efforts.

The Montana Indian Language Program works to protect American Indian cultural integrity by recognizing that languages spoken, written, or in the form of sign language are vital to the identities of tribal nations and the state.

“Encouraging efforts to protect tribal languages is an important part of respecting the cultures of tribes in Montana,” said Department of Commerce Director Tara Rice.

Each tribal government will receive \$89,062.50 for the 2019-2020 biennium.

“On the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, the Montana Indian Language Program has brought together language and culture specialists from five Reservation districts,” said Dr. Richard Littlebear, president of Chief Dull Knife College. “The MILP has provided opportunities for camaraderie for specialists who are passionate in their pursuit of teaching their own language and culture.”

Learn more at [indiancountry.mt.gov](http://indiancountry.mt.gov).

## Jay Laber’s Reborn Rez Wrecks on display at Missoula Art Park

Experience the large-scale sculptures of Blackfeet artist Jay Laber (1961-2019) in “Reborn Rez Wrecks,” on display through October at the Missoula Art Park.

Laber (Amskapi Pikuni/Blackfeet) passed away last year at his home on Post Creek, north of St. Ignatius. He leaves behind a potent legacy of public artwork.

When he was 3 years old, Laber’s family left Montana after the flood of 1964 took a devastating toll on the Blackfeet Nation. When Laber returned to Montana in the late 1990s, he enrolled at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo to study forestry. While taking art classes on the side, he began making sculptures of warriors, dancers and wildlife out of discarded car parts.

In 1999, the Blackfeet Nation and the Montana Arts Council commissioned him to create a set of four sentries to oversee the North, West, South, and East entrances of the Blackfeet Reservation. Laber made these large-scale sculptures from rusted-out cars that were damaged in the flood that had



Bison is part of Jay Laber’s “Reborn Rez Wrecks” at the Art Park.

displaced his family more than three decades earlier.

“It’s a new twist on an old tradition ... to make things out of whatever was handy, and that was handy,” Laber said.

The artist settled on Post Creek and launched his studio, which he named Reborn Rez Wrecks. He was a precise craftsman

and built large-scale sculpture that weighed hundreds of pounds with tight tolerances. He would meticulously sift through hundreds of parts before selecting and inserting exactly the right piece to suggest or describe an essential detail.

“For a lack of a better word, he was a genius,” friend and mentor Corky 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.”

Laber combined both expertise and vision to consider all angles of each sculpture, making his works appear active, kinetic and full of energy.

“This exhibition is an important acknowledgement of an internationally recognized artist whose iconic public commissions are located across the state,” says Missoula Art Museum senior curator Brandon Reintjes. “The Art Park is the ideal environment in which to host Laber’s large-scale sculpture, and this is the first exhibition in the Art Park that exemplifies MAM’s strong commitment to contemporary Native artists.”

# Montana musicians adapt to age of COVID-19

By Brian D'Ambrosio  
For *State of the Arts*

Dropped cold-turkey into the middle of the traumatic and dynamic COVID-19 pandemic, Montana musicians are adjusting to life in an age of social limitations. The *State of the Arts* newspaper caught up with a sampling of musicians to learn more about how they are navigating the turbulent waters of the time.

**John Floridis:** “Like everyone else I have had to adapt,” says the longtime Missoula guitarist and songwriter. “I had about five performances in the six days leading up to the Monday where everything hit the fan. During the last few performances, things were getting super cautious, and as the week went on, there were questions about the gigs, and each succeeding day a little more concern about close contact, and it started having an effect on people going out. ... Businesses started adhering to policies to get ahead of the curve, and work disappeared. It was a strange sensation to see that happen.”

Professional working musicians such as Floridis can't stand removing performance dates off of their calendars, but in a time of national emergency he has made peace with the precautionary timeline.

“There is no sense in getting upset about it because it's happening to everyone. Being

self-employed, there is the basic financial need that we are dealing with, and needing to meet ...”

In the midst of this, Floridis is familiarizing himself with the modified role of music as a response to a critical moment.

“There is live streaming, and I'll be going with that, sticking a virtual tip jar out there through Venmo and PayPal, and relying on that. For someone who plays music consistently, it's so much a part of your identity. To me, it's grounding to play music. So, even if it's live streaming, at least I'm playing music at the end of the day.”

In addition to his regular Montana Public Radio show, “Musician's Spotlight,” Floridis hosted a Montana PBS special, “Live From Home,” that first aired May 20 and features a host of musicians playing from their homes, including Jack Gladstone, Tim Fain, Naomi Moon Siegel, John Dunnigan, Melissa Forette, Philip Aaberg, Chris Cunningham and Erica von Kleist. Check it out at [www.montanapbs.org/programs/live-from-home/](http://www.montanapbs.org/programs/live-from-home/).

**Christy Hayes:** Lately, this Butte singer/songwriter admits she's in a funny, in-between place, addressing and confronting the ups and downs of existence.

“Now it has more of a feeling of going home,” Hays says of Butte. “I can regroup and not be out on the bar scene or worrying about how successful I could be or won't be. The writing is conducive here. It's an exciting new phase.”

Reevaluating her own notion of self during the COVID-19 crisis, she has been pouring more time into the non-profit songwriter and writer-in-residence program she recently formed called Dear Butte, an artistic retreat for like-minded people who need to get away from the cityscape to create.

“I am at the point where I am not completely sacrificing or pursuing or obsessing over carving out my own career,” she says. “That's where Dear Butte came from, the need to live a whole and happy and fulfilled life. Music and notoriety are inherently not fulfilling. To provide the wherewithal and the support and to open up a lot of artistic doors for others – to me, that is exciting.”

The shaky time of COVID-19 has provided Hays with the solid opportu-

nity to focus on to the good things in life that she adores besides music.

“I'm catching up on some much needed rest from the road,” says Hays. “I've been cooking, renovating my house. I find this time to be a welcome break from performing.”

**Mercedes Carroll:** If you wanted to boil down this Livingston singer-songwriter's recent debut CD, *She's Pretty*, to just three words, you couldn't do better than “coming out party.” Clearly, Carroll intends to straddle multiple worlds to put in the effort to securing her reputation.

As the deadly coronavirus spread across the country and disarmed the economy, Carroll sought to find the reassurance of normalcy through artistic immersion.

“Right now, I want to keep encouraging people to be kind and supportive, and live streams of music have given people something to look forward to, and to get their minds off of things for awhile,” she says.

“When we get through this, everyone is going to realize that we need to cherish everything that we have. There will be gratefulness in music and friendships and even the ability to go in to work ... Personally, I want to get back to the fundamentals, and keep creating. That's something that will get a lot of people through.”

**Wylie Gustafson:** For the past 30 years, this Conrad native has reared and nurtured his own version of country-folk, writing, singing and celebrating songs primarily about the ranching and western lifestyles.

In the time of COVID-19, Gustafson has been working like crazy, but practically none of the labor involves music.

“It has been catching up on fencing,



Wylie Gustafson rides the range.

farming, and renovating some pastures on my ranch,” says Gustafson. “The pandemic has been extremely hard on us, musically speaking, as we (Wylie & The Wild West) are primarily a festival band that relies heavily on our live performances. There has been little we can do to transition to a nine-month future of cancelled festivals and performances.”

With some cancelled shows rescheduled to next year, “there is a little bit of hope for us. There are a few private performances that have not cancelled, so it is not a complete wash out.”

Gustafson did one virtual performance for the Kerrville Folk Festival – a video of him with his guitar singing “Big Sky Lullaby.” This summer, he plans to film videos to a couple of his latest songs in order to fill the big void in his music. In this era of ambiguity, the waiting is indeed the hardest part.

“It will be interesting to see how the festivals and performances look when we start working again,” he says. “The world of musicians may never be the same but the music will continue somehow because we all need it like we need air.”

**Almeda Bradshaw:** Call the Huntley artist a traditionalist. You could even describe her as quaint or folksy. But just don't label her “country.” Indeed, she is quick to note that there are a number of distinctions between the average mainstream country artist and the western performer she considers herself to be.

Four full-length albums and almost a dozen years into her career, Bradshaw has



Almeda Bradshaw

conscientiously worked within what she considers “a pretty small niche” of music, performing statewide mostly at community centers and fairs along with a sprinkling of regional festivals. Her inspiration has been the clean, value-laden Gene Autry Western songs, the ones touting values, respect, hard work, and reverence for livestock.

While Bradshaw says that her sound and style won't ever completely split from the western roots she holds close, she is unshakable in her belief that the future of her music in the time of COVID-19 must and will develop. It won't be drastic – she won't be donning and shedding musical guises. She will, however, be adding a couple of different darts to her quiver.

“For the past 12 years, I've been working my music as a business,” says Bradshaw. “I've been doing online Facebook shows since 2017, so even though COVID-19 cut my live shows down to nothing, I had no trouble making good use of my online streaming experience playing for tips and merch sales. And because I kept records and reported my income, I was able to tap into Montana's pandemic unemployment assistance and can make ends meet.”

For Bradshaw, the pandemic has been an avowed learning experience, another opportunity life presented to dig down deep and detect the positive silver linings in even the darkest of clouds.

“And now I'm getting back out doing live shows, so I am digging that,” she says. “I think the main difference for my performance future is to stream more consistently from my live shows and work both live and online audiences at the same time.”

**Jessica Eve's** first big tour furnished her a sense of well-rounded and hard-earned experience. With a mind chock-full of vivid memories, the Billings

musician is prepared to embark on a new excursion.

At 32, Eve has no purist attitudes about her style of artistic expression or about the state of today's commercial music. Won over by the popular country hits of the 1990s, she's too been heavily influenced by a number of her parents' favorite recordings, including the works of Kris Kristofferson, Willie Nelson, and Montana's Mission Mountain Wood Band.

With the momentum of her career coming to a screeching halt and now a restart, she is finding new ways to rebound, and embracing fresh inspiration in a difficult time.

“I have done a few online shows and played on my front porch for my neighbors to keep myself performing for an audience,” says Eve.

“Now that venues are starting to open up, I am so ready to play to a live audience again. They may not be able to dance or stand around and visit but the crowds have been incredible. ... They are being patient with the staff and following the rules set in place for us.”

Eve says she has felt and witnessed abundant kindness and patience from most of the listeners and supporters of the local music community.

“It seems that they have been missing us as much as we missed them. This life as a singer-songwriter and performer is a very special one, and I am so lucky to live in a community that appreciates and supports me.”

**Helena resident Brian D'Ambrosio is the author of *Montana Entertainers: Famous and Almost Forgotten*.**



8



John Floridis

## Cowboy Poetry Gathering postponed

The board of directors of the Montana Cowboy Poetry and Western Music Gathering, held annually in August in Lewistown, has postponed this year's gathering until Aug. 12-15, 2021.

According to a press release, “The volatile uncertainties created by the coronavirus threat have made planning for this August's Gathering impossible.” In order to avoid putting performers or fans “in harm's way,” the board opted to reschedule the festival for next summer.

Since 1986, the Montana Cowboy Poetry Gathering and Western Music Rendezvous has celebrated the American Cowboy of the Upper Rocky Mountain West. Tickets already purchased for this year's event will be honored next year.

Visit Montana CowboyPoetryGathering.com.



Christy Hayes



# ABOUT MUSIC

– By Mariss McTucker

## 20 Grand: Not My Work

This dynamic group from Whitefish, calling themselves “your friendly neighborhood funk band,” has poured 10 years of powder-keg stylings into the stew of hip-hop, R&B and jazz that fuels their new album.

Starting as a five-piece instrumental outfit, the group has since expanded their membership along with their songwriting ability. They infuse nifty melodies with torrential lyrics and killer vocals, courtesy of lead singer/saxophonist Kendra Timm.

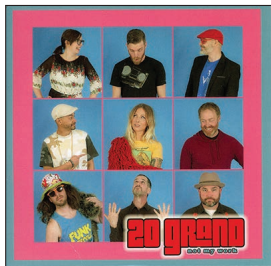
The monster line-up also includes founding members Jamie Simpson, guitar; Vincent Rannazzisi, drums; and Rebecca Nelson, tenor sax, flute and keys. Others are Eric Gates, baritone sax and keys; Zac Fawcett, trumpet, flugelhorn, sitar and keys; Toby Ferguson, percussion; Eric Kanter, rap-style vocals; and Matt Seymour, bass. Everyone but Seymour adds vocals too.

Timm, Kanter, and Fawcett composed many of the pieces, and Seymour wrote “Gingerwulf.” The whole band gets in on the action with ideas, but they say listing everyone’s influences would take too long. “We only got time for the funk.” Ha!

“Gingerwulf” is about a crime-fighting pack of wolves. It has an orchestral, film-like sound, with lots of cymbals and cool chords. Kanter’s howls top it off. I like it!

The title song, “Not My Work,” is jazzy and light, with whimsical flute setting up the feel. Timm politely disses another woman who spreads gossip about her, and refuses to be dragged into the dirt. Her supple voice bends nonchalantly around the lyrics. Kanter adds some rap, and the ensemble lays down a relaxing vibe.

Bass thunks and sizzlin’ horns rock “Funk Penitentiary.” The Warden (drummer Rannazzisi) doesn’t let Timm party after the show because he makes her help tear down the PA, so she’s in jail. She and Kanter have conversational back-and-forth vocals while drums moon-walk around them. There’s loads of talent here. Check them out!



## Arterial Drive: Isn’t Everything Amazing?

This Billings band’s first full-length album exhibits tight musicianship and infectious melodies. They’re a full-blown ball of energy and talent, laying down 12 originals guaranteed to rock you.

Arterial Drive is: founding members Drew McDowell, vocals/ guitars; Meg Gildehaus, vocals/violin; Josh Reedy, drums; Juanillo Chavis, bass/vocals; and new member Alex Campbell, bass (on two songs). The first three also play auxiliary percussion.

This is Chavis’s swan song. He left due to the rising demands of parenthood, and sings on most tracks here. Former member Ryan Supola adds piano and trumpet.

Their “indie alternative” moniker includes rock, rap, Latin, country, even a little disco. They toy with rhythm and syncopation facilitated by superb drum work in tandem with the funky thump of bass. Songwriters McDowell, Gildehaus, and Chavis are terrific singers, too.

The slow-rockin’ title song has breathy, hopeful lyrics underpinned by 10,000 Maniacs-like drum beats. The bluesy, rap-style “That’s What’s Up” starts with live bar sounds and some nifty vocal percussion, then the verses introduce each member with their own rockin’ breaks. Inventive!

On “Young Lover’s Games,” Gildehaus channels Adele-like stylings as her controlled “oh-ohs” slip into falsetto range. Whew! The tempo picks up, crackerjack instrumentals ensue, and the marvelous hook, “we dance,” takes over. Yow!

The ’60s-sounding “Sunburn” opens “Crocodile Rock”-like, with a gorgeous sax interlude, light and sweeping, and languid lyrics. Abruptly, a Latin-hued rhythm takes over. Fun!

The “Black Devil Brigade,” about the first U.S. Special Service Force, is complemented by the military cadence of a snare drum. Made up of American and Canadian soldiers during World War II, it trained at Fort Harrison and beguiled the Germans during the Italian Campaign. McDowell’s great-grandfather, who fought in the unit, survived injury and capture by the Nazis, escaped, and provided valuable intel. It’s a bit of a love story as well. What a chilling, moving piece! There’s so much more. Check it out!



## Billy Conway: Outside Inside

When Wilsall musician and rancher Billy Conway discovered he had Stage IV liver cancer, his friends encouraged him to make a recording. The drummer for the successful ’90s alt-rock band Morphine agreed that it’d be good medicine, and dusted off 13 songs he’s written over the years.

The album was produced by his long-time partner, musician Laurie Sargent, who put out her own album at the same time (*Smiley Face*). They’re hoping to raise funds for medical bills. No less than 12 musicians lent a hand, including Conway’s 10-year touring partner, Jeffrey Foucault.

Conway sings lead and plays guitars, drums and percussion, plus bass, vibraphone and harmonica. Sargent provides guitar, bass and keys, and sings harmony. Morphine band-mate Dana Colley supplies saxophone and clarinets, and oodles of others add percussion, pedal steel, vocals, and exotic African instruments, to name a few.

The result is a pleasing massage of the eardrums. Conway’s expressive, seasoned voice exudes a world-weary quality that commands attention, and his drum work is, as always, impeccable. He’s tight, tasteful and understated on swampy blues, rock, folk and country styles.



“Get Well” is sweetly rockin’ and hopeful, for good reason. “Let’s call the angels, let’s hope we all get well,” Conway sings.

“Blow My Top,” with its supple, serpentine clarinet licks, bucks the explosive nature of the song’s title. I like it! The title song, “Outside Inside,” wherein Conway and Sargent sing unison lead, has a dreamy quality. And Conway’s whispery crackle on the waltzy “I Just Realized (I Was Drunk)” brings the late John Prine to mind. Our protagonist regrets calling his ex while fairly inebriated.

This is a graceful and melodic effort from a man in pain, who’s still managing to roll with life’s punches. Definitely worth a listen!

## Jackson Holte and the Highway Patrol: Last Rain of the Summer

This rockin’ Missoula four-piece, made up of a few of the Garden City’s “greasiest bar-band veterans” got together back in 2017. *Last Rain of the Summer* is their first full-length album.

Led by vocalist/songwriter Jackson Holte, who also plays guitar, harmonica, saxophone and keys, the fellas put out toe-tappin’ rock ’n roll, blues and folk-inspired story songs and ballads. Holte credits David Olney and Levon Helms, among others, as influences, and his earthy, melodic pieces reflect that.

He’s joined by Tyson Gerhardt, guitar, vocals, and accordion; Marko Capoferri, bass, vocals, banjo, and Dobro; and Brian Tremper, drums and keys. Tremper has since left the band to pursue other opportunities.

Holte wrote all but two of the pieces, and co-wrote “Something Had a Hold on Me” with Capoferri. The traditional “John Henry’s Hammer” is reprised as a squirrely up-tempo rocker; Holte’s baritone voice, which can hit the high notes too, is in fine form as he wails and growls his way through the song. Shades of Jerry Reed!

His love song to the Big Easy, “New Orleans,” is a bouncy fingersnapper with a sprightly snare drum leading the way. It’s got an infectious horn refrain and a light touch. Holte sings of leaving cold Montana for a warmer climate and the carefree party life. Accordion and spirited bass keep this hit hoppin’!

The talking blues barnburner, “Fast Lane West,” starts with trucker chatter on the CB, courtesy of Raina Wallace. Sung lickety-split by Holte with an emotive, sandpapery delivery, it’s about a newbie trucker warned to hug the center line so two racing rigs can zoom by. Yow!



## Marcedes Carroll: She’s Pretty, Vol. 1

Livingston vocalist/guitarist Marcedes Carroll has a debut EP out, with seven original songs, five by Carroll and two co-written with Jennifer Schmitt (“Downriver” and “Old Man”). A legion of regional players provides a knockout complement to Carroll’s powerful voice.

On guitars are husband Isaac Carroll, Rick Winking, David Dyas and Levi Main (he also plays harmonica). Dyas and Main share harmony vocals, as do Alaina Gordon and Hannah Clemonson. Ethan Decker adds drums and percussion; pianists are Chris Cundy, Tyler Schultz, and Luke Simonson. Chelsea Hunt is on fiddle, Tony Polecastro plays Dobro, and Grammy-winning producer Doc Wiley adds bass.

Carroll has blues influences, like Ella and Etta, and artists like The Trio (Dolly, Emmylou, Linda). But I hear others holding sway as well. In “Downriver,” a slowly rockin’ and bluesy ’60s belt-buckle shiner, Carroll elongates her syllables with smooth transitions à la k.d. lang, and emits warbly, growly inflections like Janis. She goes all out; it’s a wailer with fine syrupy Dobro. This one’s a hit!

In the pop-rock “Kisses,” Carroll expands her elastic alto with a squealy quality, dropping deep for notes, then going high to sing a breathy “whisper.”

She’s terrific on The Band’s “Cripple Creek,” giving it an up-tempo meter and swampy feel; there’s a wah-wah guitar break that really talks, too. “Sagebrush” has nifty drum work, cool fiddle and Bonanza-sounding guitar.

“Old Man” is spooky and ominous. With an excellent arrangement and wicked instrumentals, it turns a nursery rhyme on its head as a downtrodden spouse exacts revenge on her abusive husband. “Knick-knack paddy-whack, old man.” Ha!

Carroll recently released Vol. 2 of *She’s Pretty* – a second seven-song effort that includes the title song, a bittersweet ballad.



## Red Glow Buffalo: Sooner or Later

Bozeman rock outfit Red Glow Buffalo has their first recording out, a seven-song EP inspired by life experiences, its highs and lows, and what goes wrong in relationships. They balance that by having fun and not getting too serious.

The band began in 2014 when Leif Masella, lead vocals/guitar, and Matt Thacker, lead guitar and back-up vocals, started writing songs and performing. They later hooked up with drummer Rob Lehrkind and bassist Greg Sullivan, who sing, too.

Their Facebook page calls their music a mix of pop, fusion and rock, but there are other influential styles, too – outlaw folk and country, hip-hop, jam, funk and punk, and progressive rock. It all makes for straight-ahead rock songs with alternative nuances.

The bluesy title song, “Sooner or Later,” finds drinking on the schedule, but with the awareness that it could lead to trouble. The toe-tapping hook is staccato and syncopated: “If they don’t get, if they don’t get me now, gonna catch you sooner or later.” Catchy!

“Couch Potatoes,” a fast-paced dancer with revved up drums, is about the wandering younger generation, going from one job to another trying to make it. “Well, I packed my bags and headed for the city, but I couldn’t find work and it wasn’t lookin’ pretty,” go the lyrics.

The blues-infused rocker “Sweetest Girl” has X-rated lyrics and some dexterous whistling, and “Nothing Left to Give” is just as it sounds – a man is worn out by loving someone who doesn’t give back. It’s got a boomy tom drum and Yardbird-like the background vocals.



## 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](http://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.

# ABOUT BOOKS

## Fiction

### *Blood Fire Vapor Smoke*

By Shann Ray

Retribution and grace coexist in this often dark, yet mesmerizing collection of stories by Montana-born author Shann Ray. The slim volume is packed with so much tender, lyrical language, then a punch of violence, a fierce, bloody descent: “In the hearts of men a fervor gestated, born of that which conceals and hides and makes its way as of the owl or the snake, in silence, unwanted, deadly.” That fervor collides again and again with a more benevolent force: “love is stronger than death . . . love does not let go.”

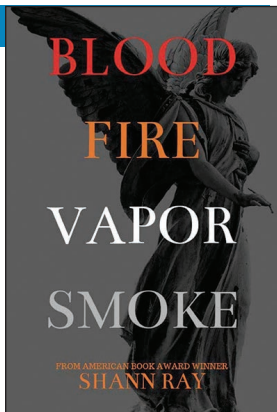
Ray, who spent his middle school years on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, revisits Cheyenne history in “Black Kettle,” his telling of the terrible massacre at Sand Creek, and “Black Wound,” about the 32 Cheyenne men, women and children killed near Hat Creek. In “Spirit of the Animal,” a white man kills a wolverine, and is wed to Bird in Ground, who restores him to life. In “The World Clean and Bright,” a cycle of violence and loss is met at last with grace and forgiveness.

The triumphant “Fourteen Types of Belief” follows a young man who heals from the loss of his father – “a man who loved basketball like he loved family” – by excelling at the sport.

The book’s one long poem, “City on the Threshold of Stars,” merges personal history and world history, as the Nazis destroy Prague and lay waste to an entire village. The author is of German and Czech descent, his grandparents married during World War II, and his beloved daughters: “How like your mother you are. So ready to defend humankind.”

*Kirkus*, in a starred review, praises the book’s “incisive and riveting tales with a diverse cast courtesy of a skillful, expressive author.”

Ray, who grew up in Montana, teaches leadership and forgiveness studies at Gonzaga University. This is his second collection of stories. He’s also written a novel and four books of poetry.



– Kristi Niemeyer

### *Eden Mine*

By S.M. Hulse

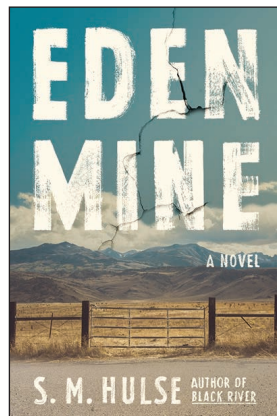
In *Eden Mine*, the award-winning Montana author of *Black River* examines the aftershocks of an act of domestic terrorism rooted in a small Montana town on the brink of abandonment. The crisis tears apart a family, tests the faith of a pastor and the loyalty of a sister, and mines the deep rifts that come when the reach of the government clashes with individual freedom.

For generations, the Fabers have lived near Eden Mine, scraping by to keep hold of their family’s piece of Montana. Jo and her brother, Samuel, will be the last. Despite a long battle, their property has been seized by the state through eminent domain – something Samuel deems a government theft.

As Jo packs, she hears news of a bombing. Samuel went off to find work in Wyoming that morning, but soon enough, it’s clear that he’s not gone but missing. And the 9-year-old daughter of a pastor at a nearby church lies in critical condition. Can the person Jo loves and trusts most have done this terrible thing?

“Hulse . . . perfectly captures not only the landscape of the American West, but also what it feels like to survive in a town that is dying,” writes Alex Zenter in *The New York Times Book Review*. Author Molly Gloss called it “luminous, deeply moving, and insightful.”

The author’s first novel, *Black River*, was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Fiction, an ABA Indies Introduce title, an Indie Next pick, and the winner of the Reading the West Book Award.



### *Gone Alaska*

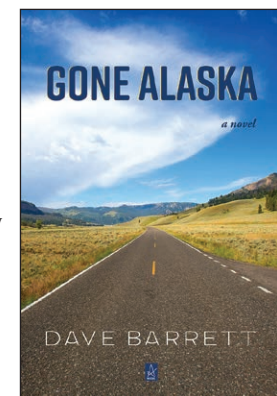
By Dave Barrett

In the debut novel by a Missoula author, Adam Porter leaves his North Idaho home for adventure on a fishing boat called the Western World and trolls the waters of southeast Alaska with an enigmatic skipper named Philip Swanson.

Adam is thrown into a world that is completely foreign to him. In this coming-of-age story, he learns about the complex relationships between men and women, his place in the natural world, and the damage humankind is doing to the natural environment.

“This sharply written story offers first-hand insights into a young man’s hard-earned lessons in a hostile yet appealing voyage of discovery,” writes Phil Fandozzi, Professor Emeritus at the University of Montana. And Gabriel Tan, in *Prism Review*, says the novel “has a certain charm that I haven’t seen in a while. The message encourages us to think more about the effects of overfishing on both the environment as well as on humans.”

Dave Barrett teaches writing at Missoula College. His work has appeared most recently in *New Reader*, *Raconteur*, *fresh.ink* and *The Bark*.

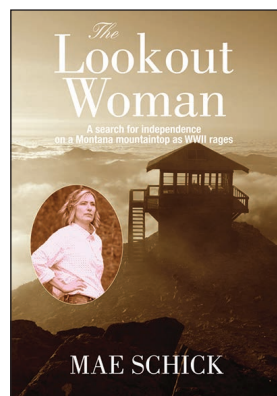


### *The Lookout Woman*

By Mae Schick

Bigfork novelist Mae Schick’s newest book, *The Lookout Woman*, is set on a fictional peak overlooking Glacier National Park during World War II. Florence has fled a stalled marriage in Missoula to become a fire spotter. Martin is a Nazi saboteur assigned to blow up a Canadian Nickel operation.

The story pairs an exhilarating backwoods adventure with a fight for survival and the raw violence of a hunted man, all against the powerful backdrop of the natural world.



## Non-fiction

### *American Zion: Cliven Bundy, God and Public Lands in the West*

By Betsy Gaines Quammen

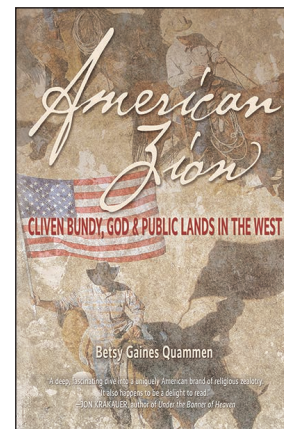
What happens when members of an American religion – one built in the 19th century on personal prophecy and land proprietorship – assert possession over western federal lands, armed with guns and a certainty that God wants them to go to war?

*American Zion* is the story of the Bundy family, famous for their armed conflicts over public lands in the West. With an antagonism that goes back to the very first Mormons who fled the Midwest for the Great Basin, they hold a sense of entitlement that confronts both law and democracy.

Bozeman historian Betsy Gaines Quammen examines the roots of the Bundys’ confrontations, and how history has shaped an often-dangerous mindset that today feeds the militia movement and threatens public lands, wild species and American heritage.

“Brilliant and electrifying . . . Gaines Quammen’s voice is bright, engaging and smart,” writes Terry Tempest Williams. “Her vision calls for an ecological wisdom that can govern our communities, both human and wild, with reverence and respect.”

The author received a doctorate in environmental history from Montana State University in 2017, and has studied various religious traditions over the years, with particular attention to how cultures view landscape and wildlife. She lives in Bozeman with her husband, writer David Quammen.



### *Cheatgrass Dreams*

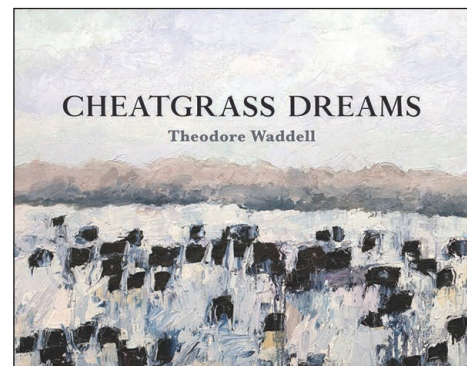
By Theodore Waddell

The West has a storytelling history, and everyone has a story. This is artist Theodore Waddell’s – an illustrated mosey through the landscape, livestock and colorful characters that made up his life as a cattleman in a remote part of central Montana. The essays that compose this memoir have much in common with his art. They are frank, evocative sketches (each accompanied by a painting or line drawing) that deftly combine the abstract and the literal to communicate the persistent struggle and beauty of ranch life.

The illustrations share DNA with the super-sized abstract impressionist paintings for which Waddell is known, but are more narrative in nature.

“Theodore Waddell writes of his wild reverence for the land and the fellow beings with whom he shares Her as if he’s slapping oils onto colossal canvases – unafraid to lay it on thick and gritty, and you bet, poetically musical and sentimental,” writes author and poet Paul Zarzyski.

Waddell is a recipient of Montana’s Governor’s Arts Award and the subject of a major retrospective celebrating his career, *Theodore Waddell: My Montana*, published in 2017. He and his wife, Lynn Campion, divide their time between homes in Sheridan, MT and Hailey, ID, where he continues to paint almost every day.



### *Forty Years a Forester*

By Elers Koch

Elers Koch (1880–1954), a key figure in the early days of the U.S. Forest Service, was among the first American-trained silviculturists, a pioneering forest manager and a master firefighter. By horse and on foot, he helped establish the boundaries of most national forests in the West, designed new fire-control strategies and equipment, and served during the formative years of the agency.

*Forty Years a Forester*, Koch’s entertaining and illuminating memoir, reveals his contributions to the incipient science of forest management and his role in building the human relationships and policies that helped make the U.S. Forest Service, prior to World War II, the most respected bureau in the federal government.

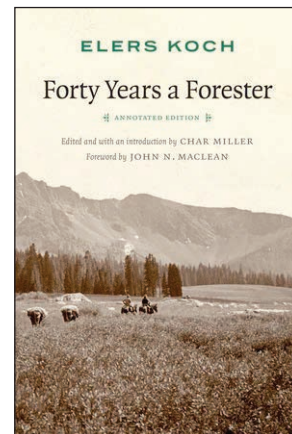
Koch grew up on the Montana frontier in the late 1800s. After earning a master’s degree in forestry from Yale University in 1903, he joined the USDA Bureau of Forestry. In addition to being a major innovator in forest management, Koch was a skilled mountaineer, an outspoken wilderness advocate and a successful novelist.

In his foreword, prize-winning author John Maclean praises Koch’s legacy “of close observation of the natural world, original thought, and the courage to express a conviction.”

### *Ernest Hemingway in the Yellowstone High Country*

By Chris Warren

In the 1930s, iconic American author Ernest Hemingway spent five summers at a ranch on the edge of Yellowstone National Park, where he did some of his best writing. His experiences in the mountains are connected to 12 of his most famous works, including *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.



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## 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](mailto:kristi@livelytimes.com) or [mac@mt.gov](mailto: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.

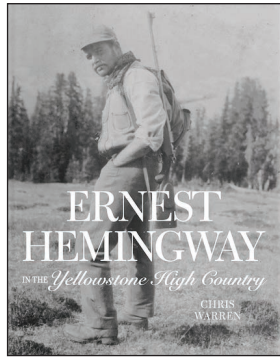
Books submitted to *State of the Arts* appear in this publication at the Montana Arts Council’s discretion and as space permits, and will not necessarily be reprinted at Lively Times.com.

# ABOUT BOOKS

Hemingway declared that the ranch near Cooke City was one of his favorite places to write in the world, on par with Paris and Madrid. Yet Chris Warren's book marks the first time this period has been thoroughly examined. After years of painstaking research, the Cooke City resident takes readers on an astonishing journey into one of the most important periods in the life of the Nobel Prize winner.

Warren examines what Hemingway did and wrote during those five summers, and how his experiences and the people he met shaped his life and work. His book portrays a Hemingway that few readers knew existed, living in a place that few scholars knew was so essential to his writing. In an appendix titled "Following Papa's Footsteps," it also offers a list of places to stop on "a Hemingway pilgrimage to the area."

Warren, who spent years researching Hemingway's connection to the area, presented a paper on the author's final short story, set in Cooke City, to the Hemingway Society in Paris in 2018. His research was instrumental in bringing the society's biennial conference to Cooke City and Sheridan, WY in 2020.



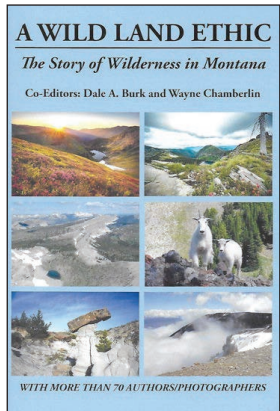
## A Wild Land Ethic: The Story of Wilderness in Montana

Edited by Dale Burk and Wayne Chamberlin

More than 40 writers – many of them pioneers of the wilderness movement in Montana – and 32 photographers tell the story of wilderness preservation in Montana. Each donated their words and images toward the collaborative efforts that inspired and fueled this collaborative effort.

Some of the most dedicated and influential wilderness advocates in the state contributed to the book, including Jim Posewitz, Hal Harper and Dr. John A. Vollertsen of Helena, retired outfitter Arnold "Smoke" Elser of Missoula, Greg Schatz of Columbia Falls, Peter Bengeyfield of Dillon, Bill Cunningham of Choteau, George Wuerthner of Livingston, and Karen Stevenson of Terry. The contents are divided into five sections: Context, Perspective and Reminisce, Places of Special Legacy, Voices For the Wild, and The Task Before Us. The appendix lists established and proposed wilderness areas in Montana as well as wilderness-oriented conservation organizations in the state.

Dale Burk of Stevensville and Wayne Chamberlin of Helena served as co-editors of the book and Burk also wrote its foreword. The Montana Conservation Elders, a nonprofit group based in Helena, helped develop the book in concert with Burk's Stonydale Press in Stevensville. The process took over three years to bring to fruition.



## Roadside Geology of Montana

By Donald Hyndman and Robert Thomas; Illustrated by Chelsea Feeny

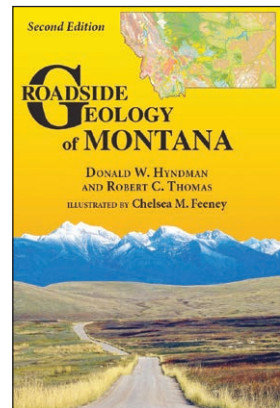
With summer stretching before us, what better time for a road trip armed with the latest edition of Roadside Geology of Montana?

The Roadside Geology series originated in 1972 with *Roadside Geology of the Northern Rockies*, followed 14 years later with the bright-yellow *Roadside Geology of Montana*.

Now, nearly 50 years after the first book, Mountain Press has released this completely revised full-color second edition that, like so many things in Montana, is big. The state brims with geologic wonders, from the northern edge of the Yellowstone caldera, the world's largest and most violent volcano, to fossils buried for millennia in Montana's badlands, to the vestiges of ice-age floods that drained Glacial Lake Missoula.

Like its predecessor, this edition begins with a chapter encapsulating "The First Four Billion Years," then traces the rocks and geology found along each major highway in sections devoted to Northwest Montana, Southwest Montana and Central and Eastern Montana (each with its own road guides). While the format is the same, the authors rewrote the text to appeal to both geologists and amateur enthusiasts, and updated maps and photos.

Written by two geologists, this guide offers an accessible and comprehensive tool for exploring the rocky underpinnings of our vast state.



## The Father of Glacier National Park: Discoveries and Explorations in His Own Words

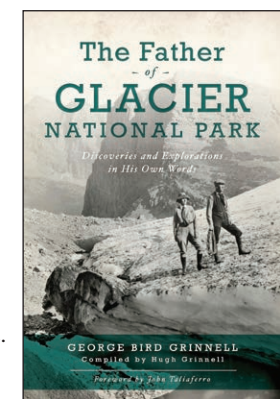
By George Bird Grinnell (compiled by Hugh Grinnell)

George Bird Grinnell was a prolific writer and record-keeper. After a long day's hunt or exploration, he diligently made time in camp for meticulous journal entries.

With his small group of explorers, he discovered and named 40 geological features east of the Continental Divide and west of the Blackfoot Reservation. His journal entries became the backbone of a series of articles he wrote about his trips from 1885 to 1898 for publication in *Forest and Stream*. His discoveries, writing and leadership eventually led to the creation of Glacier National Park.

The great West that George Bird Grinnell first encountered in 1870 as a 21-year-old man was shortly to disappear before his eyes. Nobody was quicker to sense the desecration or was more eloquent in crusading against the poachers, the hide-hunters, and the disengaged U.S. Congress than the "Father of American Conservation."

In this book, distant cousin Hugh Grinnell compiles first-person narratives from unpublished journal entries, personal correspondence, newspaper editorials and dozens of articles to take readers back to tell the early story of Glacier. John Taliaferro, author of *Grinnell: America's Environmental Pioneer and His Restless Drive to Save the West*, wrote the foreword.



## Poetry

### Mostly Cloudy

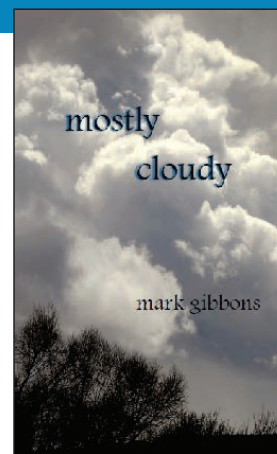
By Mark Gibbons

Missoula poet Mark Gibbons shares 50 poems in his fourth collection from Foothills Publishing, *Mostly Cloudy*. His often blunt, blue-collar writing eyeballs the characters and landscape of his home, from the Clark Fork River that flows through it to the fortunate denizens of "Sleepy Inn," with cable and a bottomless pot / of Boyd's in the office / some retro accommodation / your age where the women / outnumber the men / two to one, and all the ice / you can scoop is free.

"While Gibbons writes often about music of a certain era (Joplin, Hendrix, the Grateful Dead), his voice is its own kind of music, a kind that offers wisdom and comfort for this wild ride we're on," writes author Melissa Stephenson. "At the end of these pages I'm left crying and laughing, with little fear of whatever comes next."

The collection also features seven black and white photos by Kurt Wilson. "I think photography and poetry have a lot in common," the poet told the *Missoulian*. "It's just that little snapshot, it's just that little glimpse, that little moment that both of those things, those two art forms capture."

Gibbons teaches at area schools through the Missoula Writing Collaborative, and is involved in the Montana Arts Council's Poetry Out Loud program.



### Reimagining in 2020: Poems: First Reflections

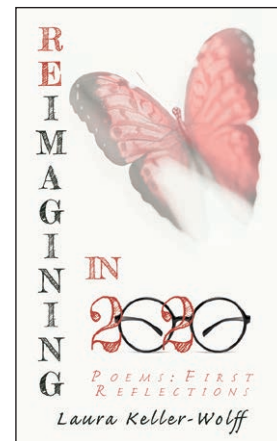
By Laura Keller-Wolff

With *Reimagining in 2020*, author Laura Keller-Wolff's second book in a series on the theme of reimagining, she challenges readers to reach for the poetics of heart and soul in times of extreme instability.

In "Not Noticing Is Weird," she asks readers to consider what sustains us: *that turquoise lake / those navy surfaces, edging from a / stony bottom, deep mysteries and cosmic / equations. What rock holds you?*

"These times push us to the edge of every sense perception, where steps toward a new world are inches away," says the author. "Yet, we need to create a bridge from volatility to the new sources of depth, symbolism and non-literal footholds to carry our world beyond. That bridge is poetry: A sister to art, a brother to peaceful co-existence."

Keller-Wolff is the founder and director of Spiration, Inc., and managed The Mural-Poetry Project, which brought youth and elders together to create 13 murals in Flathead County and one in Lincoln County, featuring local history, art and poetry. Her Dream-Well Project aims to generate poetry and art from dream analysis. Learn more at [laurakeller-wolff.com](http://laurakeller-wolff.com).



## Kids' Books

### El Copihue

By Susan Barfield, Alvaro Osses, Robinson Ancamilla, Diego Ancalao, and Nilsen Ancamilla

With support from a National Geographic Society grant, five educators (including one Montanan) collaborated to write a tri-lingual (English, Spanish, Mapudungun) children's book based on a Mapuche folktale; illustrations are by students in Mapuche schools from Araucania in southern Chile.

The Mapuche are the largest indigenous culture in Chile and the book's mission is to teach respect for all cultures. The folktale tells the story of how Chile's national flower, the copihue, got its name. The tale involves the romance of a prince and princess from two rival tribes, who fall in love. There is an introduction of Mapuche culture at the beginning of the book and enhancement activities for readers at the end.

In addition to limited hard copies of the book, it is available as a self-published eBook, which is narrated in the three languages by three of the authors. Access the eBook for free at: [www.msbillings.edu/coefaculty/barfield/projects.htm](http://www.msbillings.edu/coefaculty/barfield/projects.htm).

Four of the five co-authors are from Chile; three are Mapuche, the fourth a Chilean teacher. Montana co-author Susan Barfield, Professor Emerita from Montana State University Billings, has co-authored two other tri-lingual children's books. She is executive director of the non-profit Project International Pride.



### The Story Tree – Year One

By S.A. Bergquist and illustrated by Jamie Carrier

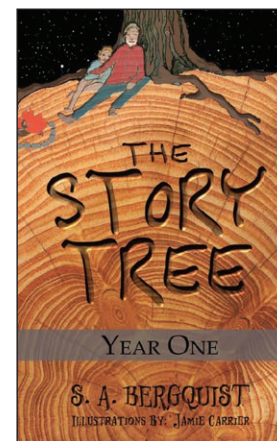
Dylan loves his time at the cabin each year. He loves the mountains, the river, the wildlife and the adventures. Most of all though, Dylan loves spending time with his Papa, and especially hearing stories each night under the Story Tree.

From Bartleby the Bear's incredible itch, to Theo the Fish's scary first day at a new school, Dylan (and other young listeners) uncover timely, entertaining stories, with lively, imaginative illustrations.

Author S.A. Bergquist has always been a storyteller, whether it's on stage as an actor, director and producer, in the classroom as the theater teacher at CMR High School in Great Falls, or among family and friends. Now, retired from teaching, he and his wife, Patty, spend as much time as possible with their grandkids.

Illustrator Jamie Carrier is a Montana native and half of the Americana duet, The Lucky Valentines.

Their book was published by The Get It Factory in January 2020.



## Nominations Open for Montana Center for the Book Prize

The Montana Center for the Book (MCB), a program of Humanities Montana, is now accepting nominations for the fourth annual MCB Prize. The nomination deadline is July 15, 2020.

The Montana Center for the Book Prize will be awarded to up to five programs across the state, nominated by a community member or self-nominated in recognition of their efforts to promote literacy and literature in their region. Award-winning programs will receive a \$1,000 cash award, be featured on the Montana Center for the Book online platforms, and have their events promoted by Humanities Montana.

The prize recognizes programs that offer creative and wide-reaching literary and literacy programming. A list of past winners and more information about the nomination process is online at [www.humanitiesmontana.org/montana-center-for-the-book-prize/](http://www.humanitiesmontana.org/montana-center-for-the-book-prize/).

Any organization or group with a literary program is eligible, regardless of nonprofit or for-profit status. In awarding the Prize, the Montana Center for the Book prioritizes geographic diversity with an emphasis on organizations that reach rural populations and youth.

# The Pandemic & the Visual Arts

By Kristi Niemeyer

Museums and galleries across the state were abruptly forced to close in March and find innovative new ways to reach audiences with exhibits and educational offerings. Most have reopened, but with new safety protocols and an a more vigorous online presence. Here are some examples:

## Billings & Beyond

For Jeremiah Young, owner of **Stapleton Gallery**, a circa 1913 photo of his Stapleton Building – home to both the gallery and Young’s interior design business – draped in red, white and blue bunting sparked the idea for a new show.

“I have been percolating an idea for some time around that image and the idea of ‘show the flag’ – meaning to stand up for, support or defend something or someone,” says Young, who also serves as gallery co-curator with Abigail Hornik. “We began reaching out to our

Small Business Administration and a grant from Humanities Montana.

The #GivingTuesdayNow campaign brought in an additional \$2,000 from local sources, which helped pay for daily operations and the new website. Meanwhile the staff took advantage of the two-month closure to clean, disinfect and paint the gallery and reinstall artworks.

## Helena

After cancelling the annual Spring Art Walk on May 8, Downtown Helena came up with a **Window Art Walk**. Twenty-five artists adorned the windows of more than 20 downtown businesses with images that demonstrate social distancing. The community was invited to decide on Best of Show via Facebook. Voting ends June 30 and the winner will be announced July 1.

The **Montana Historical Society** reopened to the public June 9, with rigorous cleaning protocols, new hand-sanitizing equipment and a request that visitors and volunteers limit socializing with staff.

The MHS also offers innovative online “Stay Connected” activities, including the “Coronavirus Quarantine Challenge,” a riff off a Getty Museum effort. MHS is posting two-dozen photos of art from its collections and asking people to re-create them using family or common household items and then post photos of their re-creations to the MHS Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest sites.

“We thought it would be a fun diversion for individuals and families who are spending a lot of time at home these days,” said Kirby Lambert, the MHS Outreach and Interpretation Program manager. He added that if enough people participate, the re-creations could become their own exhibit in the future.



## Beth Lo's playful admonition is posted at the Radius Gallery.

this time we are living.” Their collaborative works will be presented in 2021.

Open AIR founder and director Stoney Sasser, an artist herself, has been in communication with other artists navigating a range of difficult situations during the pandemic.

“Some I have spoken with have lost loved ones, and many have experienced real difficulties through isolation, anxiety and depression, financial insecurity, and national and global issues,” she writes. “Simultaneously, I have also seen artists take advantage of this time to develop and grow their creative practice, to savor long periods of time for contemplation and reflection, to take deep breaths and hold space for the observation of their existence – often all at the same time.”

Like all nonprofits, Sasser says her organization has taken a significant financial hit, compounded by the postponement of a major fundraiser originally slated for May. The support of sponsors and the local and regional community ensures Open AIR can continue through this fall, “but it is unclear how we will make our way forward.”

Still, she sees some positives in the way the pandemic has evoked a sense of community and generosity. “I think during a time that can feel helpless and out of control, it can feel really good to identify where you can take action and feel responsible for doing good in the world,” she writes.

**Radius Gallery** limits occupation to 25 at a time, and asks “for your safety and ours that visitors wear masks, accept a squirt of sanitizer upon arrival, and practice social distancing from those not in your immediate party.”

While closed in April and May, the gallery upgraded its website, explored more digital marketing strategies and purchased a 3D camera to provide virtual tours of the space.

“This is pretty sophisticated technology that allows digital visitors to actually navigate through the gallery spaces at their own pace and select ‘hotspots’ that give them more information about the works that interest them,” writes gallery director Lisa Simon.

Visit [www.radiusgallery.com](http://www.radiusgallery.com) to experience these 3D tours, which are now a standard feature of each new exhibit.

## Great Falls

The **C.M. Russell Museum Complex** reopened June 25. To protect guests, staff and volunteers, parties larger than 10 individuals must enter the museum in a staggered format. Although guided tours have been suspended through September, a new gallery map and a marked pathway through the museum help guests enjoy the museum while minimizing contact with others. Museum staff wear masks; visitors are encouraged (but not required) to do the same.

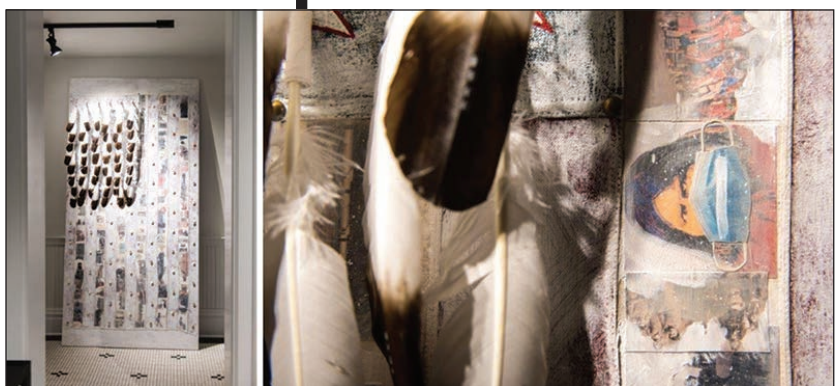
According to the website, The Russell Live Auction, originally slated for mid-March, has been rescheduled for Sept. 10-12. Auction artworks are currently on display; visit [cmrussell.org](http://cmrussell.org) for the online catalogue.

**Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art** reopened in late May with enhanced cleaning and safety protocols and began offering online classes for individuals and families June 1. The Square’s 23rd art auction and exhibition – the primary fundraiser and benefit for the museum – is still scheduled for Aug. 29, outdoors.

The Square received a \$5,000 CARES Act grant through Humanities Montana to help cover general operating costs – a welcome infusion that will help “keep our institution thriving.”



# 12



“American Me” by Ben Pease is part of “Show the Flag” at the Stapleton Gallery in Billings.

artists more than a year ago, asking for works inspired by that concept – and of course with no idea the show would be opening in a time of pandemic and protests.”

The new exhibit, “Show the Flag,” opened June 4 with a virtual gallery tour via slideshow on the Stapleton Gallery website and the option of viewing by appointment. The show is populated with work by a dozen of the gallery’s artists, including Ben Pease, whose work is an integral part of the Chicago Field Museum exhibition “Apsáalooke Women and Warriors” (closed abruptly in March due to COVID-19), and Governor’s Arts Award-winner Kevin Red Star.

Three short films have also been uploaded: “Behind the Scenes at Stapleton Gallery,” which follows Young and Hornik as they unpack and hang the new exhibit, a videos of artist Judd Thompson “grafitti-ing the gallery” and a gallery conversation with Kevin Kooistra of the Western Heritage Center.

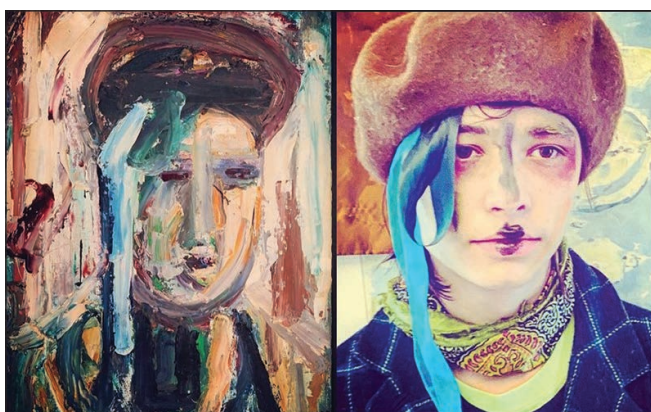
“While always intended to be meaningful on a variety of levels, ‘Show the Flag’ has gained unexpected importance from this time we’re living through,” says Young.

For the first time, the **Yellowstone Art Museum and the Billings Symphony Orchestra and Choral** had planned to combine community favorites: Summerfair and Symphony in the Park, June 26-28 at Pioneer Park. However, the pandemic and social distancing derailed a collaboration that was expected to include more than 100 artists and musicians and attract around 10,000 people over three days.

The YAM elected to move Summerfair from the park to the “cloud,” with an online event June 22-28 featuring both national and local artists. In keeping with the spirit of arts, craft, food and fun, the YAM also invited food trucks to park onsite at the YAM and partnered with the Billings Symphony to bring music to the Summerfair website.

“We look forward to our future collaboration next year, when we plan to celebrate these amazing events of visual and performing arts with you all once again at Pioneer Park,” wrote executive directors Bryan W. Knicely and Ignacio Barron Viela in a joint press release.

While the **Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery** in Red Lodge reopened June 13, the organization cancelled a major source of revenue, the annual Art in the Beartooths fundraiser. Director Kim Kapalka has been “working diligently to find other sources of revenue,” which have included infusions from the State of Montana for online art learning experiences and exhibition opportunities, loans from the



Coronavirus Quarantine Challenge at the Montana Historical Society: On the left is an undated self-portrait by Robert De Niro Sr. from the MHS collection; on the right is a reproduction with Zane Talwani of Helena.

## Missoula

The **Missoula Art Museum** reopened to the public June 4 with guidelines in place for increased cleaning, reduced building occupancy, and more.

“MAM was comforted by the support of friends, members and donors who wrote encouraging notes and gave donations after the museum closed in mid-March,” writes Carey Powers, membership and marketing coordinator.

Virtual public programs have included interviews with exhibiting artists, while educational offerings, like distance-learning platforms and art-making worksheets, helped support parents, caregivers and teachers during school closures.

In-person events, including summer camps, have resumed with a limit of nine participants. A new series called “Looking Together” features twice-daily tours led by MAM staff members Tuesday through Friday until Aug. 14.

**Open AIR** residency program was in the midst of jurying local, national and international applicants for upcoming artist residencies when the shutdown occurred in March, and opted to limit residencies to artists living and working in Montana.

The first six-week sessions begin June 29, with the final summer residency wrapping up Aug. 30. Artists plan to give on-site talks in open-air settings and some will offer workshops during their stays (learn more about programming at [www.openairmt.org](http://www.openairmt.org)).

Open AIR also initiated CoLab MT+ to connect Montana-based artists with those living and working outside of the state to make work together over the coming year “in response to

## Hockaday's Plein Air Glacier offers remote option

The Hockaday Museum of Art in Kalispell hosts the 13th iteration of “Plein Air Glacier: Paint Out” in June. Artists traditionally travel to Northwest Montana to paint outdoors in Glacier National Park and the nearby Swan and Flathead valleys. Due to COVID-19, this year’s Plein Air Glacier 2020 included an option for out-of-state or immune-compromised artists to participate remotely by painting in their own backyards and submitting their work digitally.

All works created are available for purchase during a special online art auction, 5-8 p.m. June 27 and may be viewed online June 23-July 11. Proceeds benefit the museum’s educational programs and exhibitions and help support artists, many whom have been severely impacted by pandemic closures and cancellations.

The sixth annual “Timeless Legacy” exhibition and fundraiser, featuring 19 critically acclaimed women artists from western Canada and the United States, is scheduled for 5-7 p.m. Aug. 8. The exhibit is on display Aug. 11-Oct. 31.

# ABOUT VISUAL ARTISTS

## Kristi Hager: Equal: A Work in Progress Through Sept. 17 at the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings Artist's website: [kristihager.com](http://kristihager.com)

Missoula-based painter and photographer Kristi Hager is making equality a work in progress with a series of larger-than-life paintings of women.

Inspired by the 2020 centennial of women's suffrage, Hager says, "I was thinking of the long struggle to get equal rights for a lot of people, not just women."

With the exception of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, this series of portraits highlights women from the artist's own circle who are working to overcome adversity.

"I started with my great grandmother, mother, goddaughter, friends and a hero," said Hager.

The translucent works are painted on thin, un-stretched muslin using washes of gray paint. Each head-and-shoulders portrait is unsmiling, and projects an aura of competence, confidence and quiet power.

All the women depicted in the show have experienced some form of gender discrimination. "Ask any woman you know, and you are likely to hear a story," Hager says. "I hope the young girls included in the exhibition do not have the same kinds of stories to tell in the future."

Each work was painted in acrylic on cotton scrim and is titled with the individual's initials. Near Hager's self-portrait, KJH, are portraits of her mother, NEH, and immigrant great-grandmother, AMM, who died in 1924.

"We stand on the shoulders of giants and we are asked to be giants for the next generation," says the artist. "Our time here is short, but important."

The installation threads through the first floor of the museum, connecting the YAM's other major exhibit, "North x Northwest Women's Work." On view through Oct. 4, this commemoration of the centennial of women's suffrage features 60 works selected from 441 entries by Jill Ahlberg Yohe, associate curator of Native American Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art.



AMM by Kristi Hager

## Carla Pagliaro: Chaos June 26-Aug. 21 at the Green Door Gallery in Livingston Artist's website: [carlapagliaro.com](http://carlapagliaro.com)

Livingston artist Carla Pagliaro pours her passion for space and color into a new body of work that embraces elements of everything she has done over the past 15 years.

Her approach is to first painstakingly paint realistic elements and then proceed to obliterate much of what she painted, creating a more and more abstract work. Often, her favorite and most time-consuming areas get painted out, something she finds very satisfying.

"It's liberating not to get too attached or precious about it," she says. "They are chaotic, because in these times that's just what comes out. But, of course, it has to be coherent chaos, and that's the tricky part."

"A lot of them are also pretty bloody," she adds. "I'm not sure where that's coming from, but it feels right so I don't question it."

Pagliaro, who grew up in New York, earned her bachelor's in art history at Wellesley College in Massachusetts and a post-baccalaureate certificate from Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. She spent several years in Los Angeles where she painted sets and exhibited in several prestigious galleries and museums.



Chaos #4, Cactus by Carla Pagliaro

Pagliaro moved to Montana in 1994, and continued to work as a muralist and commissioned painter, showing her work in Livingston and Park City, UT. She retired a few years ago, which has allowed her the freedom to follow her instincts and paint what she is most passionate about.

"I don't think these are going to be crowd pleasers," she told the *Bozeman Chronicle* in 2018 of her new direction. "But it's what I have to do."

## James Weikert: Familiar Landscapes July 1-31 at The Artists' Shop, Missoula Artist's website: [www.jamesweikertoriginalart.com](http://www.jamesweikertoriginalart.com)

Bozeman artist James Weikert offers a fresh take on "Familiar Landscapes" with a series of new oil paintings focusing on some of the favorite places he has visited in the past few years, from the Missouri Breaks to North Cascade National Park.

The oil painter and architectural engineer was born in Florida, grew up in New Hampshire and graduated from Norwich University in central Vermont with a degree in architecture. Drawing on his background in architecture and love of the outdoors, he created a painting style that blended elements from both the built and natural environments. His early oil paintings reflected the New England landscape of his youth.

Weikert moved to Montana in 2003, and his paintings were immediately influenced by the dramatic mountains that surrounded him. His background in architecture "helps to give me a unique perspective of the forms, colors, and patterns present within the places I visit," he writes.

Weikert recently completed the Montana Arts Council's Montana Artrepreneur Program, which helped him gain a better understanding of how to grow a sustainable art business. In addition to a full-time job in architecture, he currently maintains a studio at The Foundry, a cooperative studio and gallery space in Bozeman, and shares his work at galleries and shops across the state.

"Creating art gives me a sense of freedom I don't find anywhere else. ... It's just me, my ideas, my paint and my brush," he writes.



Anne Lake by James Weikert

## Elisha Harteis: Running With Scissors Aug. 7-28 at The Clay Studio of Missoula, with a reception 6-9 p.m. Aug. 7 Artist's website: [elishaharteis.com](http://elishaharteis.com)

Sculptor Elisha Harteis, the current artist-in-residence at The Clay Studio of Missoula, presents her Exit Show in August.

Harteis was born in Butte and grew up in Missoula. She earned her BFA in ceramics from the University of Montana in 2015, and has continued her education with a short-term residency at the Red Lodge Clay Center, a studio assistantship at the Arrowmount School of Arts and Crafts in Tennessee, and a short-term residency at the Clay Studio of Missoula.

She currently teaches ceramics in her own business, Mud Bunneh Ceramics, and recently started teaching after-school programs with elementary and middle school kids with Missoula Public Schools, the Missoula Art Museum and The Clay Studio of Missoula.

On her website, Harteis says that her current work, which often depicts children and animals, helps her address the difficult issue of child abuse "by juxtaposing the quiet brutality of abuse against the perceived, inherent innocence of children."

"Every art work, in one way or another, is my expression of negotiating my own history with the world," she writes. "My art is a subjective dance between the fissures of expectation and experience."



Running With Scissors by Elisha Harteis



## 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 Fall issue (October-December 2020) are due Sept. 4; send ingredients to [Kristi@livelytimes.com](mailto:Kristi@livelytimes.com) with About Visual Arts in the subject line.



## Allez!

The team behind the newly resurrected 120 N. Higgins Ave. in Missoula has launched a new art program down the alleyway of this historical location. Called Allez!, and pronounced "Allay," the new adventure creates an outdoor art gallery of mural artworks which will be rotated on a regular basis. The first installation of this ambitious project, which opened June 5 and continues through August, features large-scale prints of Missoula artist James G. Todd's jazz series. Todd's work was selected for the debut "because he is a true Missoula icon, but also because of the pure humanity that shines through his portraits, both the light and the dark," says program director Lillian Nelson. In the photo at left local jazz artists Beth Lo and David Horgan prepare to play.

(Photo by Lillian Nelson)



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## MAPS expands online offerings statewide

MAPS Media Institute will shift exclusively to an online format for its summer 2020 courses. The entire curriculum will remain free-of-charge, and, for the first time ever, MAPS will open select summer classes to all 8th-12th grade students statewide.

The move comes in response to the coronavirus pandemic, says Executive Director Clare Ann Harff, noting that MAPS consulted instructors, students and parents, as well as local, state, and national guidelines in the decision process.

"Our initial thoughts were to keep our students safely connected," she says. "Now we see it as a challenge to deliver the most dynamic, engaging and professional online learning experience possible."

To that end, the MAPS team of professional artists and designers has built a new, interactive website to accommodate remote learning, with instructors modifying their lesson plans to maximize the new format.

To assist students with limited or no access to a home computer, MAPS invested in 10 new iPads with all the necessary apps for summer classes.

In addition to online programming, the MAPS team also will conduct in-person activities at the campus in Hamilton every Wednesday through July. Learn more at [mapsmediainstitute.com](http://mapsmediainstitute.com).

## ARTS EDUCATION

# Pandemic problem-solving, arts-ed style

## Missoula Writing Collaborative supports kids and families

By Monica Grable  
Arts Education Director

For artists and those art-centered individuals among us, there has always been a recognition of the power the arts hold to unite us, to draw attention to social ills and to provide for ways to express ourselves. However, few of us – even those immersed in arts education – could have fathomed the degree to which arts experience would so prominently factor into our health and wellbeing in the midst of isolation.

When the COVID-19 pandemic moved us all into quarantine, teachers and teaching artists alike were faced with a choice: opt out for a time or embrace the opportunity to re-imagine their work. These are the creative thinkers – innovators by nature – so naturally they chose the latter. With hardly a beat missed, the education teams of our state's arts organizations immediately set to work to ensure they would be able to reach their arts learners and lead the way in reminding us all of the power of art.

The Missoula Writing Collaborative (MWC), a nonprofit in its 26th year of sending its writers into classrooms, began to address student needs with outreach. The moment Montana schools shut down, the staff of MWC contacted each of their partnering schools to see if they were online teaching or sending packets home.

If online, writers jumped into the creation of videos for their use or in some cases provided real-time online teaching; if sending packets, they responded in kind, quickly developing teaching packets to ensure that students were supported in their need to express themselves during isolation. Students from Lewis and Clark and Rattlesnake in Missoula, Potomac, Arlee, Dixon and Seeley Lake were the beneficiaries of their remarkable efforts.

***Maybe we are louder than ever in our seclusion. Writing loves solitude.***

– Mark Gibbons

The MWC did not stop there, however. They extended their work to holistically support families as well, through their creation of the "cabin fever guide." Posted on the Missoula County Public Schools website, the packet provided activities to share together; these included such creative items as a parent/child collaborative prompt using the language of recipes applied to things and ideas. Recipe for a puppy? 1 cup of silky fur, 1 ounce of sour breath, 4 lumpy feet ... 1 ounce of utter joy.

Taking it a step further, MWC created community through their first-ever youth Zoom Poetry Reading (available for delight-filled viewing on their website, [missoulawritingcollaborative.org](http://missoulawritingcollaborative.org)) and used Facebook and Instagram to engage student writers in an online poetry scavenger hunt that drew in students of all ages.

All of MWC's writers adapted their teaching to reach students. Teaching artist Mark Gibbons reflected on the range of feeling that students were experiencing: "Of course students miss not being together in school and sharing everything, including their poetry. We all miss being present with one another and hearing those individual voices and stories, but even more so we miss telling them."

On the need for expression through writing, Gibbons imparted, "We miss being heard, so when the world of pandemic or prejudice shuts us down, we need to write more than ever. The act of writing gives us the chance to cast ourselves, our voices, our stories out there for others to pick up and hear. Our poems beg a response, and the conversation begins. Maybe we are louder than ever in our seclusion. Writing loves solitude."

### Mother Earth

By Magnolia, grade 4

Mother earth has long leafy green hair and emerald green eyes. She smells of fresh dirt dug up from the garden. Her voice sounds like gentle waves hitting the shore of the ocean. Her face always has a warm welcoming smile on it. She glows like the moon at night. Mother earth is bigger than the biggest redwood tree and has her head up in the clouds. She is kind, gentle and forgiving. It is she who creates the weather. The sunshine that makes the flowers grow. But when she cries it starts to rain. And the snow, glorious snow. When she is happy and it is cold that is what happens. But when she is mad you can get caught in a snowstorm or worse, a thunderstorm! Mother earth has a pet cloud. Her clouds name is Ridge and sometimes she acts like a bridge when Mother earth needs a way to cross the rainbow.

And that's all I know about Mother earth.



Prior to quarantine, Aspen Decker shares Coyote Stories at Pablo Elementary.

(Photo by Clara Moser)

### I Remember

A sad poem by Liam

I remember a time.  
That time was long time ago in a galaxy about right here,  
Toilet paper wasn't worth your while.  
People weren't scared to step outside!  
If someone got with in six feet you wouldn't shout and scream and be all like  
"HE'S GETTING IN SIX FEET!!! SIX FEET!!!"  
Yaah. that wasn't a thing.  
I remember a day when you could play freely,  
Hang out, use public bathrooms,  
All the luxuries.  
I remember the decade where we were free.  
But that decade is yet to come.  
Yet to come.  
I remember the hour where  
Everyone was all like...  
Oh it's almost 3:30 o'clock  
And time to go home!  
Then the class (me) was dumbfounded  
When we went home for what could  
Be years and years.  
I remember a time.  
I remember that day.  
I remember that hour.  
But I don't remember that decade.

I remember. Oh yes, I remember.

But we can only go on.  
So onward! I say!  
Giddy up!  
Mush!  
Whatever you prefer, but we  
Can only go on.

Oh yes, my child, on is the only way.  
The one direction that drives our motivation cars and trucks  
To the gas station of hope that whispers into our ears  
"Not there, quite yet. You must keep going"

The hope is what powers our motivation that causes our wheels to keep going  
And we go on.  
On and on.

Yes, the only way ...

# ATP Kids turns “Young Frankenstein” into a movie

By Luke Walrath  
Chief Evangelist

## Alpine Theatre Project

Eighteen students from across the Flathead Valley began rehearsal on Mel Brooks’ hilarious musical, “Young Frankenstein,” on March 9. A week later, the world was forced into isolation.

With traditional rehearsal and performance now impossible, continuing on would have been crazy. Good thing we’re crazy.

Armed with only their mobile phones and a pair of earbuds, these 18 students quickly changed gears to turn what was to be their live performance into a movie – one rehearsed and recorded entirely remotely and in isolation.

### First, some background

When the “stay at home” order came from the State of Montana, we were faced with the very real prospect of cancelling the show. Director Betsi Morrison started trying to come up with solutions, but it soon became clear that any in-person rehearsal and performance was not going to be possible.

However, Betsi was adamant that cancelling was not an option as it would send a defeatist message to both the students and our community. Frankly, that’s just not our style.

So, she decided we were going to make a movie – albeit one that would have to be rehearsed and recorded in isolation. And, she was determined to do it all within the timeframe of the original production, which meant we had five weeks to rehearse, record, and edit the whole thing.

Her original concept was to have students perform “Brady Bunch Style” in boxes via Zoom video conferencing, but in front of green screens so we could control the background. She ordered green-screens and costumes via Amazon and had them shipped directly to the students’ homes, as well as props either ordered or made by production manager Rachel Burke.



Screen capture of Whitefish students Grace Benkelman and Andrew Brozek performing in Alpine Theatre Project’s video production of “Young Frankenstein the Musical.” (Photo courtesy of Alpine Theatre Project)

It became clear after one rehearsal, however, that the discrepancy in timing between each student on Zoom was going to make that platform impossible to use for performance. We knew then that each student would have to record both audio and video separately and we would have to edit it all together.

Also, since the students were going to be in front of green screens, there wasn’t any need to keep them in box frames like we’d originally planned. We could – conceivably – create the illusion that they were in the same room together. We just had to figure out how to do it – and do it all in five weeks.

### Workflow

Creating each scene was essentially a four-step process: (1) rehearse the music/scene/choreography; (2) create the audio files needed; (3) record and compile the video files; (4) edit the entire project scene by scene.

To try and track progress, I created a giant spreadsheet in Google Drive with each musical number, scene, student, etc., listed and then a volunteer parent helped me update the spreadsheet to track what had been completed. (Visit [atpwhitefish.org](http://atpwhitefish.org) for details.)

### Lessons Learned

We had major technical problems ... and ended up borrowing our board president’s 2019 iMac with a beefed up graphics processor. We also had a major data-storage issue, and ... ended up buying a new 4TB hard drive and transferring all files to that, which put us back a day.

I’m sure there were plenty of times when the kids had no idea what was going on, either, since they didn’t know what the final product would look like, but they trusted Betsi ... I am so impressed

with the students’ willingness to jump into the void and give it their all, despite performing in a complete vacuum.

The end result stands as a marker of what we, as a group, were able to do together to keep a project alive despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles. It is not perfect, and certainly rough in a few spots, but the experiment was to create it within the original timeframe. We also had to do it with the money and personnel available.

In the final analysis, though, the entire project was really to show the students (and us) that creativity and hard work can provide solutions to tough challenges. Creativity will show you new paths and hard work will help you move forward down those paths. At ATP we have a mission to imagine, create, and inspire for the betterment of our community ... And when the mission is all that matters, you’ll find a way to keep it going. Of course, you have to be just crazy enough to think it’s possible.

View the production online at [atpwhitefish.org/upcoming/2020/Frankenstein](http://atpwhitefish.org/upcoming/2020/Frankenstein); contact Luke at [luke@atpwhitefish.org](mailto:luke@atpwhitefish.org) for more information on the process.



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## Imagine! Libraries

### supply literacy kits

This June, Imagine! Libraries provided 275 literacy kits to children and families across Flathead County. Staff and volunteers loaded up buses provided by Kalispell Public Schools and The HEART Locker with 75 family kits, 100 birth-to-five kits, 50 elementary kits, and 50 kits for teenagers.

The kits themselves are full of age-appropriate books and activities like sidewalk chalk, drawing pads, terrariums and DUPLOS for the younger children, and origami sets and more complex activities for teens.

“We designed these kits to be a packet of joy in these tough times, inspiring babies, kids, teens, and the adults who love them to make art, read and create together. As much as possible we sourced materials locally from small businesses, keeping those grant dollars in the local economy,” said Ellie Newell, Imagine! Libraries Youth Service Librarian.

Montana early childhood initiative, Zero to Five, provided funding to purchase the items in the kits, which were assembled by the libraries and delivered by The HEART Locker, Kalispell Public School’s program to aid students and families experiencing housing and financial instability.

# Artists in Schools & Communities Grants awarded

At their June 6 meeting, members of the Montana Arts Council approved grant requests in three categories of the Artists in Schools and Communities (AISC) program. Awards totaling \$144,660 were awarded to nine grantees in the Arts Learning Partner subcategory, 13 in the midrange AISC Grant \$1,500-\$5,000 category, and another eight submitted to the AISC Grants Under \$1,500 category’s May round. A second round of the AISC Under \$1,500 subcategory will be accepted through a Nov. 4 deadline.

With a primary tenet of pairing professional artists with arts learners of all ages, the AISC grant program has been supporting exceptional artist residencies in a wide variety of school and community settings for nearly 50 years. Supported by National Endowment for the Arts and State of Montana funds, AISC grants provide a diversity of opportunities for arts learning across all disciplines; experiences range from a single daylong workshop to a one-hour per week session with a visiting artist in the classroom.

By doing the work of reaching arts learners across Montana, the organizations and respective teaching artists involved with AISC projects help the arts council achieve its mission of advancing arts education in the state. Newly awarded grantees for the upcoming 2020-21 fiscal year are listed here by category.

### Arts Learning Partners

- A VOICE**, Pablo: \$10,000 for Our Community Record Two Eagle River School
- Art Mobile of Montana**, Dillon: \$10,000 for grant assistance for schools and organizations for Art Mobile of Montana services
- Holter Museum of Art**, Helena: \$8,000 for Artist Encounter: Community II
- MAPS Media Institute**, Hamilton: \$9,000 for MAPS Media Institute



Michelle Fuji, artist in residence during The Myrna Loy’s 2019-’20 season, helps students to fully engage their bodies in Taiko drum poses as they begin to learn different rhythms. (Photo courtesy of The Myrna Loy)

**Missoula Writing Collaborative**, Missoula: \$5,400 for Clark Fork Poets: Creative Writing Residencies in Title 1 Missoula schools

**Montana Repertory Theatre**, Missoula: \$9,005 for Zombie Thoughts (Educational Outreach Tour 2020)

**Montana Shakespeare in the Parks**, Bozeman: \$10,000 for Shakespeare in the Schools’ Fall 2020 tour of “Much Ado About Nothing” and related workshops

**SPARK! Arts Ignite Learning**, Missoula: \$10,000 for Strategies in Arts Integration for 21st Century Learning

**WaterWorks Art Museum**, Miles City: \$8,000 for WaterWorks Art Outreach Program

### AISC Grants, \$1,500-\$5,000

**Billings Symphony Society**, Billings: \$5,000 for Tutti Behind Walls

**Bozeman Arts Museum**, Bozeman: \$5,000 for free art classes for home school students and rural schools in Gallatin and Park counties

**Cohesion Dance Project**, Helena: \$2,200 for adaptive dance school residencies

**Conservatory ASL Northwest**, Great Falls: \$5,000 for ASL CAN Film Camp 2020

**Creative Writing Center**, MSU Billings:

\$4,500 for Young Poets Residencies

**Great Falls Symphony**, Great Falls: \$5,000 for Sound Foundations

**Helena Presents/Myrna Loy Center**, Helena: \$3,000 for American Patchwork Quartet: A Celebration of Diversity in American Folk Music

**Lowell School Parent Teacher Association**, Missoula: \$3,960 for a poets residency at Lowell Elementary School

**Missoula Community Radio**, Missoula: \$5,000 for Sonic Landscapes

**Park High School**, Livingston: \$5,000 for Livingston Jazz Festival

**Russell Elementary**, Kalispell: \$3,530 for an artist in residence

**The Shane Lalani Center for the Arts**, Livingston: \$5,000 for Shane Center arts education programs

**Yellowstone Art Museum**, Billings: \$2,000 for an online Art Suitcase for Educators and Students – Year 2

### AISC Grants, under \$5,000 (May deadline)

**Arts Council of Big Sky**, Big Sky: \$1,250 for an artist in residence program

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country**, Bozeman: \$1,466 for Silver Linings Mural Project

**Bigger Sky Kids**, Wolf Point: \$1,500 for Nakoda Dance, Stories and Their History

**Electric Peak Arts Council**, Gardiner: \$1,499 for Marks on the Land: Found Object Mosaics and the Natural Treasures of Gardiner, Montana

**Missoula Art Museum**, Missoula: \$1,500 for a long-term artist residency for MAM’s Fifth Grade Art Experience (FGAE) with exhibiting artist Doug Turman

**Musikanten Montana**, Helena: \$1,500 for All Souls Recorder Workshop with Curtis Foster

**North-Missoula Community Development Corporation**, Missoula: \$850 for Movie Making Magic and ZACC Art Experience

**Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art**, Great Falls: \$1,500 for Curative Art Collective

For more information, visit [art.mt.gov](http://art.mt.gov) or contact Arts Education Director Monica Grable, 406-444-6522 or [monica.grable@mt.gov](mailto:monica.grable@mt.gov).



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# Coronavirus jumpstarts the drive-in theater

By Allison Whitmer

Montana Film Commissioner

Films are expressions of joy, drama, sadness, escape, and journeys to strange new worlds. They help us process strong emotions and explore environments that many filmgoers would never experience in person, from the ocean depths to spaceflight.

But in the middle of March, the engine of filmmaking, alerted to the spread of coronavirus worldwide, began to shut down. Within a week, not only had film and television production ceased globally, even here in Montana the production of films came to a halt. Governor Bullock

had declared a state of emergency on March 12 to prepare the state to respond to the novel coronavirus.

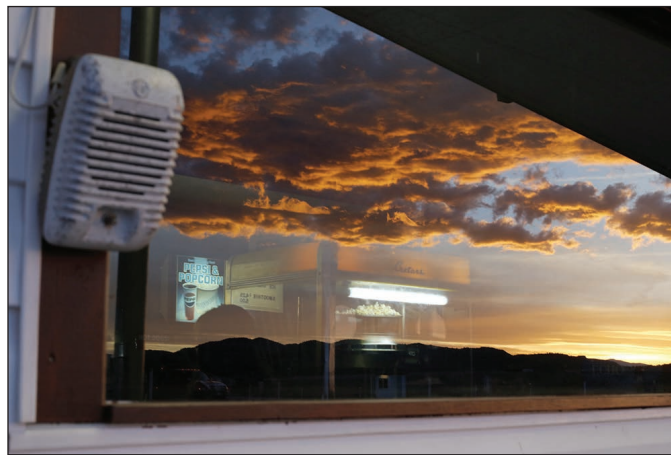
Late in the evening on March 14, I stopped by a film set in Bozeman. The streetlights glowed as it attempted to snow, and the idle hum of generators, familiar on every set, was rumbling in the parking lot. Inside, the concentrated effort of more than 50 people was evident – the crew coming to the end of their workday.

And 48 hours later, after a number of hurried discussions and planning, this set shut down, folded production into storage, and put the crew on planes for home.

In the United States alone, almost 2 million people in film and television were out of work overnight. Only news stations retained skeleton live crews, and other live shows scrambled to create home studios.

Similar stories came to me, of crews trapped in far-off countries, stranded by airline cancellations, restrictions and passport controls. Producers told of crews dropping their scheduled plans, ceasing shooting in the middle of the day and rushing to airports and trains to get closer to home.

Filmmaking has paused before – for hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters. Work in war-torn countries like Iraq, Syria and the Balkans has stopped before. Never, on this scale, has the film and television industry closed. Live theater, events and music were all cancelled. Movie theaters closed worldwide. People retreated to their televisions,



The SilverBow Drive-In concession stand dates back to 1949.

The concession stand and projection booth, built by Jens Hansen I, was originally part of a drive-in located near Deer Lodge from 1949-1973. The building was moved to its present location in 1977 by the current owners.

You can also take advantage of the concession stand or bring your own food by paying the \$5 food permit, and both drive-ins broadcast the sound through your radio. Find them online at [www.silverbowdrivein.com](http://www.silverbowdrivein.com) or on Facebook.

## Pop-up Drive-In Series

In addition to these permanent facilities, pop-up drive-ins abound in Montana this summer.

Livingston's Shane Lalani center hosts a film series at the Park County Fairgrounds running every Saturday during the summer: [www.theshanecenter.org](http://www.theshanecenter.org).

The historic Roxy Theater in Missoula is putting the finishing touches on an outdoor space and hopes to have it open for the summer: 406-728-9380 or [www.theroxytheater.org](http://www.theroxytheater.org). The theater has also teamed up with the Missoula Paddleheads for a weekly Centerfield Cinema, Thursdays at Ogren Field; learn more at [www.milb.com/missoula](http://www.milb.com/missoula).

Helena's Lewis and Clark Fairgrounds started the summer with a sold-out drive-in showing, and is planning films on Wednesdays, at least through June, with online ticketing available at [www.lccfairgrounds.com](http://www.lccfairgrounds.com).

If you'd like to watch films on a farm, Manhattan's Porter Blanchard has set up a screen in the family farm pasture and created "The Pasture" Drive-in. Find them on Facebook or call 406-580-4211.

Private screenings in your backyard can be provided by Bozeman-based Fun Flicks, which has inflatable screens measuring up to 40 feet. Visit them at [www.funflicks.com/montana-outdoor-movies/](http://www.funflicks.com/montana-outdoor-movies/) or call 406-570-5466.

Filmmakers are eager to get back to work, and for now, we can't wait to see you at the drive in! Follow the Montana Film Office on social media, or visit [montanafilm.com](http://montanafilm.com).

phones and laptops. Ironically, at the same time, the consumption of films skyrocketed.

As of this writing, live events, theatre, and many movie theaters remain closed, or open to very restricted seating to slow the spread of coronavirus.

But there is a silver lining. The evolution of car culture in the U.S. spawned an incredible industry of drive-in movie theatres.

From a peak of 4,000 drive-in theatres in the late 1950s, about 300 remain operating in the U.S. Lucky for us, there are still two permanent drive-ins in Montana, located in Billings and Butte.

Here's more about where you can find one of our local drive-in theaters or be on the lookout for a pop-up drive-in in your town.

**Amusement Park Drive-In**, 7335 Mossman Lane in Billings, 406-200-5077: With two screens and open seven nights a week, you can have pizza ordered to your car, bring in food for a \$5 fee, or even rent the place for private parties. Find them online at [www.amusementparkdrivein.com](http://www.amusementparkdrivein.com) and on Facebook.

**Silver Bow Drive-In**, west of Butte, 406-782-8095 or [sbdriveininfo@gmail.com](mailto:sbdriveininfo@gmail.com): This historic drive-in is also a twin screen, open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The Silver Bow Drive-In has been family owned and operated by the Hansen Family since 1977 when it was first built with a single screen tower. A second screen was added in 1980 creating the first twin drive-in theater in Montana. In 2004 the second screen was rebuilt and expanded, allowing for a capacity of nearly 500 cars.

## BZN Film

### Fest slated

### for Aug. 27-30

The third annual BZN International Film Festival has been rescheduled from June to Aug. 27-30, 2020.

The four-day event celebrates independent filmmaking, creative expression and emerging and established voices with films that promise to educate, encourage and inspire audiences to get involved and take action to protect our planet. This year's selection focuses "on how community – both locally and globally – supports and heals after disasters and during tragic challenges."

Over 70 films will screen at various theaters in downtown Bozeman, complemented by a rich slate of Q&A sessions, panel discussions, community-wide events and parties. Additional events include the Opening Film and Reception on Thursday, Family Free Night on Saturday, and an Awards Ceremony and Filmmakers Brunch on Sunday.

This year, in conjunction with the live festival, BZN is also going virtual, with films available for Gallatin and Hyalite Peak passholders from Aug. 27-Sept. 5.

## Rewind: MSU grad's redemptive film earns rave reviews

The day after his feature-length documentary "Rewind" debuted before 280 million households, with a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes and rave reviews from *The New York Times*, Montana State University film graduate Sasha Joseph Neulinger went fishing.

"This is the first day, the beginning of the next chapter for me, where child sexual abuse isn't at the primary focus of my existence," said Neulinger, who was headed out to a rural Montana stream near his home rather than hopping on 34 airplanes for a six-week, 12-city speaker's tour advocating for children's victim rights.

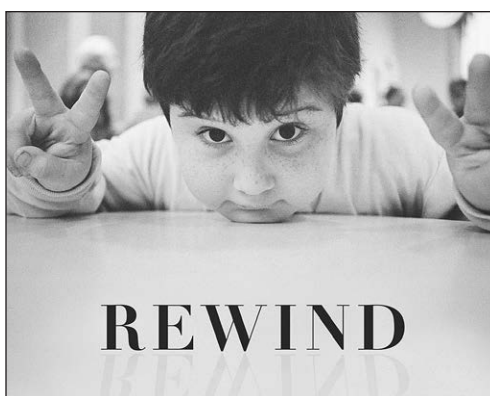
Neulinger, 30, has worked for seven years, since he graduated from the MSU School of Film and Photography, to bring his story of surviving childhood sexual abuse to life.

He also directed the film, which *Esquire* magazine called one of the best films of 2020 and a Rogerebert.com review predicted "will have a transformative impact on countless lives."

But "Rewind" is not for children. The film details Neulinger's own harrowing story of sexual abuse and the angels, as well as the monsters, of his childhood.

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic ended a speaking tour that was to build on the debut, Neulinger's phone has been ringing off the hook since the film aired recently on Independent Lens. "Rewind" was available to view for free until June 10 on the national PBS website and is also available on several video-on-demand sites.

And while nearly all the film revisits his childhood growing up in suburban Philadel-



phia, the documentary, as well as its creator, came to maturity in Montana, Neulinger said.

"It is kind of incredible how supportive the MSU filmmaking community has been," Neulinger said. "... It is special that a film that is this personal and timely, and that has received so much praise internationally, was made here in Montana."

... "I was looking at film schools in bigger cities, but when I landed on the MSU website and saw the campus surrounded by mountains, it spoke to me," Neulinger said. He and his mother visited campus, and the late Paul Monaco, then director of MSU's film program, met with them.

"I remember he told me that what is special about the MSU program is that you can get out of it as much as you are willing to put into it, and we will support you in doing that," Neulinger said. "MSU was such a positive experience that Montana quickly became my home."

He was near graduation when he began

rethinking his past.

"I still had that self-deprecating voice from unresolved issues from my childhood, and I thought there might be some answers in our home videos," he said.

"To my surprise, my dad had more than 200 hours of home video dating back to the early 1990s," which Neulinger retrieved and brought to Bozeman. "I quickly realized that this was going to be a film."

Even though he did not have much money, Neulinger did have support from MSU friends and filmmakers ... and eventually MSU film professor Dennis Aig introduced him to producer Cindy Meehl, who had produced "Buck" and "Unbranded," other successful documentaries that found wider audiences. She came on board in about 2017 "with a plethora of experience and resources to finish this film the way we wanted to finish it.

"Rewind" was accepted into the juried 2019 Tribeca Film Festival a little more than a year ago, resulting in positive reviews and interest by distributors.

"Ultimately, we chose Independent Lens and PBS so the film could be seen by as many people as possible while being commercial free," Neulinger said. They also contracted with Film Rise for video-on-demand rights. The film can be streamed on Apple iTunes, Google Play, Amazon and Microsoft Movies for the next 15 years. Neulinger hopes it will be an important resource of understanding and inspiration for generations of people dealing with abuse.

– Excerpted from a story by Carol Schmidt, MSU News Service



## Peter Bowen (from page 1): “An American original”

Buckley considered Bowen one of his very best friends, even though they met in person only once during a correspondence that dated from 1982 to a few days before Bowen’s death.

Buckley said he has more than 1,000 letters from Bowen, and someday would like to compile their correspondence and publish it.

“He was an American original,” Buckley said, “and a dear friend. I always learned something with everything he sent me. There was always a story. His well of stories was deeper than the Marianas Trench.”

Peter Bowen was born May 22, 1945 in Athens, Georgia and was adopted immediately after his birth by Keith and Marie Bowen. Keith was an educator and in the first years of Peter’s life they lived in Colorado and Indiana while his father obtained his doctorate. Then, when Peter was 10, the family moved to Bozeman where his father became a professor — and wrestling coach — at Montana State College. His mother was one of the earliest volunteers at the Museum of the Rockies.

Bowen said in an autobiographical sketch that his newspaper route ended at a Bozeman bar called The Oaks, where he would linger and listen to the stories being told by old cowboys. “They were men in their eighties and nineties,” Bowen said, “and some had ridden up in the cattle drives from Texas in the 1870s. ... That gave me the habit of eavesdropping in bars. You can hear whole novels in an afternoon.”

Clearly the romance of the West had an effect, and he loved the out of doors, riding his bicycle to favorite fishing and hunting haunts. A few days before Bowen was supposed to start junior high school, he took a rifle he had illegally purchased — he was only 12, after all — and decamped to a hideout in the Bridgers, high above town, stopping at the post office on

the way to drop off a letter to his parents.

He stayed up there for weeks. His mother helped get supplies to him, but finally went to the sheriff and asked whether they should mount a rescue effort to bring him down. “No, it’ll snow soon, and he’ll come down,” the sheriff supposedly told her. And it did, and he did.

Eventually, he went to the University of Michigan, which he attended “without much effect on either of us,” Bowen said.



Peter Bowen (Photo by Michael Smith)

“Montana and the West were in his blood, a river of history that poured out best over a hammering typewriter.”

— Rick Ardinger

There he discovered the folk music world at a coffee house on campus, which he ended up managing for a time, bringing in acts like Tom Rush, Doc Watson and a young Joni Mitchell. He also fell in love with South Side Chicago blues.

Like his character Yellowstone Kelly, Bowen himself was good at more than one thing. He learned the construction trade to put food in his mouth, and those skills would later serve him well as he fell in love with wood-working. He also would work as a cowboy, a folksinger and a fishing guide while he practiced the craft of writing.

A big, gruff, shaggy man, he loved many dogs and a very few people. For years he lived by this river or that in Montana, writing and fishing and enjoying his solitude.

When the first and second Du Pré novels, *Coyote Wind* and *Specimen Song*, came out, they were greeted with critical fanfare — including a memorable *New York Times* rave review headlined “Thoreau in Montana.”

The series continued to collect readers and praiseful reviews over the next two and a half decades.

Even though reclusive, he was always a great correspondent, and his few friends, like Buckley, heard from him frequently.

One of those people he cared for and kept in touch with was Christine Whiteside, whom he met back in the ‘60s at the Ann Arbor coffee house. More than half a century later, Bowen and Whiteside were married in 2013, and made their home in Livingston.

Bowen wrote several other novels, including one, *Buffalo Star*, a fictional account of Daniel Boone’s wanderings in Montana. Rick Ardinger, Limberlost Press editor and publisher, read the manuscript years ago and only recently discovered it had not been published. He said Limberlost plans to do so in 2021-22.

Ardinger said Bowen was “as wild and compelling and engaging as a historical character” from one of his novels. “Montana and the West were in his blood, a river of history that poured out best over a hammering typewriter,” he added.

A 16th and final Du Pré novel is also completed, pending finishing touches from Whiteside, who also served as Bowen’s editor in recent years. At least three other Montana historical novels await publishers, including *Water Rose*, a love story and thriller set in the Prohibition era.

Bowen was working on a memoir at the time of his death. “I am at 60,000 words and with a clear path to the end, and if I can avoid getting ill I will be done before May,” he wrote a friend a week before his death. Whiteside said that the part he has written will be treasured by family members. “But no one can finish it, because they were Peter’s stories, and only he knew them.”



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### Tippet Rise and poetry foundation offer film series

During National Poetry Month in April the Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Foundation inaugurated its new website, [brinkerhoffpoetry.org](http://brinkerhoffpoetry.org), dedicated to bringing the ongoing tradition of universal poetry to people everywhere.

Launching with the website is a new series of short films, in which contemporary poets and guest artists bring to life poems by Emily Dickinson, Kayo Chingonyi, and Seamus Heaney.

Established in 2016 by Peter and Cathy Halstead, cofounders of Tippet Rise Art Center in Fishtail, the foundation has gradually created an archive of poetry films. The new website is the first step toward serving the public more directly.

The foundation is also partnering with Tippet Rise Art Center to present a series of videos featuring sculptor Mark di Suvero reading poems that have inspired him. Eight of the videos have premiered on the Tippet Rise website, and an additional eight will run on the foundation’s website.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 concerns, Tippet Rise has cancelled its 2020 concert season, as well as sculpture tours; however, a robust series of podcasts, recorded concerts and photographs of the center’s artwork are available at [tippetrise.org](http://tippetrise.org).

## MCF grants help Montanans tell and share their stories

The Montana Community Foundation, Inc. (MCF) distributed \$3,500 in grants from the William B. Pratt Endowment Fund to support Montana indigenous, folk, traditional, and media arts. This year’s grants include:

- **\$1,500 to the Myrna Loy Center for the Performing and Media Arts (Helena)** for Music of the Medicine Line, a four-day festival about Metis music and culture that acknowledges the artistic, musical and social contributions of the Metis and Little Shell People of Montana.

- **\$500 to Tobacco Valley Board of**

**History (Eureka)** for a History Suitcase on Hand Quilting to be used by local elementary, middle and K-8 schools, as well as by the local home school association.

- **\$1,500 to the Big Sky Film Institute (Missoula)** for the Native Filmmakers Club that takes a selection of Indigenous-made documentary films and their filmmakers into classrooms across the state.

This year is the first year of granting from the endowment, established at MCF in 2018. The 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.

“I hope that, in a small way, these grants will help Montanans become more aware of the wide diversity of people and cultures, which make up our wonderful state, and help them better understand and celebrate these cultures,” said Pratt, a former MCF employee.

For more information, call 406-443-8313 or visit [www.mtcf.org/Funds/William-B-Pratt-Fund](http://www.mtcf.org/Funds/William-B-Pratt-Fund).

## MONTANA POETS LAUREATE

### It Comes Down to This

The man who owned the only saddlery shop in town refused, until the day he died, to sell back my grandfather’s grass dance regalia. When the shop owner was still alive, the wiry hairs on his knuckles stood on end each time a new wind blew down Main Street. Later he grew to call this “cancer” but I will always call it *he should have known better*. His wife, in some form of mourning, says she too won’t sell us a single piece, even if we can prove with old photos of my grandfather that it was his. Instead, she says we have to buy the whole shop, leather-crafting tools and all. (I heard it said once that her husband made her promise this on his deathbed, but who can say for sure.) Last month, on a below-zero midnight, the building next door burned to heaps of wreckage and ash, a brick wall separating the flames from a glass case that holds my family’s heirloom. They called this “luck,” that the whole block didn’t go down too. *I call it what’s ours is ours.*

— M.L. Smoker, from the collection, *Another Attempt at Rescue*



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. *State of the Arts* will feature their poems on an alternating basis during their two-year term.

# PUBLIC VALUE PARTNERSHIPS



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## The 3 Rs at work in Montana

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 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. Here are some of the best examples of these stories:

### Building Relationships

#### Hockaday Museum of Art, Kalispell:

The annual “A Timeless Legacy” exhibit and fundraiser was conceived as a way to showcase women painting in Glacier National Park, both historically and currently. Responding to requests by previous participating artists, in 2018 we expanded “A Timeless Legacy” to include male artists, and invited our Canadian neighbors to participate as well, revising the title to “A Timeless Legacy: Peace Park” to reflect this change.

Each “A Timeless Legacy” event includes several awards to artists in the show, including the “purchase award”, where a donor-funded account is used to purchase works for the Hockaday’s permanent collection. At the 2018 event, Canadian artist Doug Swinton and Billings artist Charles Fritz were each given the Van Kirke Nelson Hockaday Purchase Award. The deciding committee felt that purchasing one work from an artist on either side of the border exemplified the sentiment behind the exhibit, and represented the bond between Canada and the U.S. in the original Glacier-Waterton Peace Park concept.

When the award was announced, Doug was so excited he ran over to Charles and gave him a hug, though the two had never met. It turns out that Charles was one of Doug’s most cherished inspirations when Doug was in high school and he still considers Charles an important stylistic influence. Charles took the show of affection in stride and smiled widely after hearing Doug’s story. This is just one of the many examples of how art connects people across time and borders. The Hockaday is honored to be the conduit for these connections.

The two most important techniques we use to engage our visitors and build relationships are 1) smile, say hello and listen, and 2) pick up the phone and talk to someone. We welcome and thank each participant or visitor in person whenever possible. We follow up

a purchase with an email or phone call to the artist and a personal thank-you to the purchaser.

While we also work continuously to ensure our connection to those who can’t travel through a strong social media presence, our most important “specific technique” for building relationships is: we take the time to listen and work with our patrons and artists in old-fashioned one-on-one conversation.

### Creating Relevance

#### Montana Repertory Theatre, Missoula:

Montana Rep is expanding and diversifying its programming. We are beginning to offer a wider variety of productions, involving a more diverse company of artists. It is an essential part of our new mission to bring the most immediate and relevant theatre work into our community and state, while still appealing to an audience that prefers more traditional theatre.

The Rep’s production of “Go. Please. Go.” was a world premiere from a young playwright just emerging on the national scene, while the 2020 spring tour was “War of the Worlds,” a classic American story and



Montana Repertory Theatre: The 2020 spring tour was “War of the Worlds,” a classic American story and legend presented with a fresh new approach and appeal.

legend presented with a fresh new approach and appeal.

The Rep’s open rehearsal policy has created a completely new way for us to connect with our supporters. Many theatre goers and loyal Rep patrons have cherished the new opportunity to go behind the scenes and witness the entire process as it unfolds. We intend to continue and expand this exposure and availability for our supporters.

The annual gala fundraiser was entirely revamped this year. In previous years, the evening consisted of a performance of the touring production, with pre-show cocktails and post-show dinner. This year, in addition to food, drink and a live theatre experience, attendees received numerous announcements about the upcoming season and video messages from guest artists. Utilizing this time to unveil future projects and meet guest artists garnered a tremendously positive response.



Carbon County Arts Guild: Leroy Miller, a local musician and former member of Smash Mouth, shares guitar licks with youngsters during the Beau Theige’s Guitar exhibition.

### Return On Investment

#### Carbon County Arts Guild, Red Lodge:

Executive director Kim Kapalka reports that Beau Theige’s Guitar exhibition from Montana Art Gallery Director’s Association (MAGDA) “captivated visitors because not only did the artist create interesting objects but the visitors enjoyed the fact they could touch the instruments and play them.”

In conjunction with the exhibition, which was on view at CCAG May 2 through June 23, 2019, the guild organized a special tour and activity with four rural schools: Luther, Fishtail, Nye and Molt. The students from these “one-room” schools were invited to the Depot Gallery to tour the show, play the guitars, and then build a one-string guitar to take home. The largest school was Luther with 29 students, followed by Fishtail (6), Nye (4) and Molt (2).

Tippet Rise Foundation provided funding for an instructor and supplies for the project. The guild invited Leroy Miller, a local musician and former member of the band Smash Mouth, to assist with the tour and instruct the activity. “It worked out great,” says Kapalka. “Leroy’s knowledge of music, guitars, and his ability to make a guitar from a cardboard box, broom handle, nuts, bolts and a guitar string was terrific.”

He discussed the blues, Bo Diddley and how to play on the one string-guitar before the students made their own “Diddley Bow” in a project that integrated the disciplines of art and music.

The following week, several parents came to the arts guild to see what made their children so excited about music and art. A demo and closing reception were held June 21-22, which featured artist Beau Theige, who visited and talked to guests.

Kapalka says this MAGDA-supported hands-on exhibit “has been the most popular show to date,” with more than 700 visitors. “It is wonderful to have MAGDA organize quality and affordable shows that can travel to smaller venues,” she adds.

### 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](http://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](http://art.mt.gov/gac#ind)

**Organizations:** [art.mt.gov/gac#orgs](http://art.mt.gov/gac#orgs)

**Schools:** [art.mt.gov/gac#schools](http://art.mt.gov/gac#schools)

**Programs and Services:** [art.mt.gov/ps](http://art.mt.gov/ps)



Hockaday Museum of Art: Guests mingle at last year’s reception for “A Timeless Legacy.”

## Deadline Aug. 1 for Cultural Trust grants

Cultural Trust Guidelines are now posted on the Montana Arts Council’s website, [art.mt.gov](http://art.mt.gov). The application deadline is Aug. 1, 2020, for the July 1, 2021-June 30, 2023 grant period.

In 1975, the Montana Legislature set aside a percentage of the Coal Tax to restore murals in the Capitol and support other cultural and aesthetic projects. This unique funding source forms the Cultural Trust, with grant money derived from interest allocated every two years.

The Cultural and Aesthetic Projects Advisory Committee has 16 members, half appointed by the Montana Arts Council and half by the Montana Historical Society. The committee reviews all grant proposals and makes funding recommendations to

the Legislature, which determines who will receive grant funds. The Montana Arts Council administers the program for the Legislature.

Applications must be for cultural and aesthetic projects, including but not limited to the visual, performing, literary and media arts, history, archaeology, folklore, archives, collections, research, historic preservation and the construction or renovation of cultural facilities.

Applications are encouraged for applicants serving rural communities, racial and ethnic groups, people with disabilities, institutionalized populations, youth and the aging.

Applications must be made online. For information and guidelines, visit [art.mt.gov](http://art.mt.gov).

# MONTANA ARTREPRENEURS

## MAP artists respond to pandemic and protests

By Annie Allen Clark

The arts feel like a balm, a salve ... perhaps a tincture during this year of evolution and change. I search for articles, stories, photos that revolve around art, creativity and the human beings that exist behind these healing sources. I commend these beings for the determination and grit it takes to put aside worry, fears and sadness and lead us away from the pandemic and political atmosphere.

Some of the artistic individuals that I follow have participated in MAP (Montana Artrepreneur Program) – an art-centered business development program taught by working artists and offered through the Montana Arts Council. One of its key components is collaboration and connectivity with other artists.

As a coach for MAP, I was curious about the artists who have come through the program. How have they been affected and adapted to the present world turmoil? I decided to pose the following question to some of our MAP artists: “How has the world situation of pandemic and protests changed, evolved and/or halted your creativity and products?” The answers reveal how the world of MAP is like a warm reunion of great ideas and creative minds.

**Artist Shelley Freese:** “I’m a visual artist. While I sell the occasional original, most of my sales are in my children’s books and household items printed with my watercolor art ... After much travel and many shows these past years, I decided to try renting a space in a business in downtown Miles City, alongside antique dealers, rescued/reclaimed vendors, and other artists and craftspeople. I began in February and cut back drastically on the number of out-of-town shows I applied to. Things went really well, especially since I made sure I was near my booth space, drawing and painting and answering questions from interested shoppers on Fridays and Saturdays. From Feb. 1-March 15, I easily covered my booth fee plus the 10 percent of sales reserved for the business owners, and made a respectable profit.

“The business shut its doors in mid-March and re-opened in late May. Though my income dropped, I added free, local, socially-distanced delivery to customers, which made up for some of the loss. As with businesses everywhere, Miles City faced a significant impact due to events cancellations, including the annual World Famous Bucking Horse Sale, which nearly triples our population during the third weekend in May. Other events that bring in locals and tourists alike are facing uncertainty.

“My yearly income tracking shows a large decrease from 2019’s figures; custom commissions are also down. This crisis has brought home to me the need to update my website and concentrate more on online sales.”

**Artist Katie Redfield:** “I think more than anything the combination of current events forced my hand to get creative in a way other than in the creation of my art. I’ve had to



Stacey Frier’s diminutive one-of-a-kind journals speak to our need to communicate in these times.

try and think outside my normal plan to get inventory to move and to have it be seen. With all the galleries closed for weeks and most shows delayed or cancelled, it’s been a practice in coming up with other ways to keep moving ahead ...

“I’ve been trying to not fight it too hard, and appreciate taking extra time and care with my work and producing brand new products that may reach a wider audience. I’m trying to cast a broader net. The world feels heavy enough that new creativity is coming hard, but I’m appreciating making what I know.”

**Artist Karen Savory:** “It’s been hard to stay motivated for lots of reasons, a heavy heart being on the top of the list. Hard to make joyful art when the world around you isn’t so joyful. But the spring weather has meant daily long walks in the mountains and time to admire nature and forget the world for hours, which helps immensely ...

“All my shows have been cancelled for the year so that decreases motivation but it also takes some pressure off to create things that I know will sell and gives me permission to try different things. I’ve started working on a few projects that are more political than I might normally do, but if not now, when? It’s my way to make a stand ...

“Also with this extra time I’m looking forward to doing some plein air painting with a group of friends and working in different mediums than I normally use. So a year of experimentation and sadness so far, but the Pollyanna in me sees reasons for hope – I can’t help it, I’m just an optimist at heart!”

**Artist Ivette Kjelsrud:** “While coronavirus and stay-at-home might have slowed down my production, I took the opportunity and time to make my personal space beautiful. When justified protests turned to riots and violence, it made me want to crawl into my studio and never leave again.”

**Artist Lynn Liebers:** “I would say the pandemic has affected my creativity in that my landscape photography workshop with Rocky Mountain School of Photography was cancelled this spring. My art printing business is very slow. I have taken a job with Hobby Lobby in the framing department which will feed my creative side.”

**Artist Ann Wilbert:** “I would say that it has actually increased my sense of wanting to make beautiful things. I have been making things almost every day even though I suspect that people are even more hesitant to buy unnecessary things right now. I don’t feel like my art form is that expressive of what is happening in the world – just trying to add some beauty, and maybe a sense of light.”

**Artist Liz Ze Harter:** “The predominance of my work is mixed-media assemblage, which often emerges as whimsy despite my heart and spirit nudging me to go deeper. However, in the past few months I am being called and challenged to take that leap. I find myself driven to create works that speak to ‘inclusiveness,’ especially as we, as a nation, seek to relate to racial and sexual identity.”

**Artist Lisa Gibson:** “Having to stay home has, somewhat, increased my creativity as I’ve been determined to NOT go bonkers and have chosen to think of it as an ‘adventure.’ I’m approaching my materials in a more creative fashion as well, and have thought of new ways to use them. However, I’ve had less time to devote to my art since the economic situation has necessitated doing other things to address our specific needs. The anguish I’m sensing from the world has definitely caused a more reflective mindset – it’s a strange time!”

**Artist Kody Bundy:** “No one could have been prepared for what this year has been like so far. It started off well enough. I returned from the EQUUS Film and Art Festival held in Louisville at the Kentucky Horse Park, followed by another show in Park City, where I got more exposure and picked up a commission, which is always nice.

“Park City, one month later, became a hotspot for the coronavirus. Then one of the galleries I had some of my pieces in closed due to the virus. Shows have been cancelling left and right. That doesn’t leave many other choices besides online shows and my website.

“Kimble Art Center came up with a virtual Monster Art Rally after we had to cancel the in-person event. Each artist remained in his or her own studio and worked on a piece live while over a hundred people watched us online. It was great!”

As for myself, how has the year 2020 changed, evolved and/or halted my creativity and products? Strong emotions trigger my creativity, the outflow of art is stimulated and the need to produce is constant. I’ve been fortunate in that I am illustrating a children’s book for a young author in Texas. We began this project before the pandemic had entered our world and we continue on this journey together.

Every day my journal provides comfort as characters spill out on simple brown Kraft paper. My hope is to capture these images in a book for my loved ones and perhaps put it out to the world as well. It’s my personal way of making sense of the changes that are occurring. Change and evolution are a balm for the soul and artists reach their full potential when challenged. I sit back and ponder knowing good things are coming!

**Applications are being accepted to the Montana Artrepreneur Program through June 30. Learn more at [art.mt.gov/map\\_](http://art.mt.gov/map_)**



### C&A Advisory Committee: New deadline July 15

Applications for membership on the Cultural and Aesthetic Project Advisory Committee will be accepted through July 15, 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 tentatively scheduled for Oct. 13-14 in Helena. Those who are interested are invited to send a letter of interest and a resume or bio electronically by July 15 to Kristin Han Burgoyne at [kburgoyne@mt.gov](mailto:kburgoyne@mt.gov).

### Strategic Investment Grants

Funding is currently available for grants of up to \$1,000 for nonprofit arts organizations, artists and arts educators. Deadlines are monthly.

Visit [art.mt.gov](http://art.mt.gov) or email [kburgoyne@mt.gov](mailto:kburgoyne@mt.gov) or call 406-444-6449.

## Applications open for MAC Communications Specialist

The Montana Arts Council is looking for a Communications Specialist, and seeks a team-oriented, hard-working and fun-loving individual with an aptitude for learning new skills who will thrive in a small office environment.

MAC is a dynamic agency where all members work strategically to address issues of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion.

The Communications Specialist will:

- Design and implement a communication plan
- Oversee content development and production of *State of the Arts* newspaper
- Manage MAC’s website and social media presence
- Develop concepts and create designs that improve understanding and build connections

A successful candidate will demonstrate critical thinking skills,

effective written and verbal communication, and strong attention to detail. Knowledge of marketing and promotional strategies is essential. A successful candidate must be capable of understanding the nuances of communicating to varied audiences. The position also requires excellent customer-service skills and the ability to manage multiple projects.

To apply for this position, submit a resumé and cover letter through the State of Montana Careers site, [statecareers.mt.gov](http://statecareers.mt.gov). The cover letter should describe how your knowledge and skills align with the duties of this position. Applications are reviewed as received; the position will remain posted until filled.

For more information, contact Kim Hoxie at [khoxie@mt.gov](mailto:khoxie@mt.gov) or call 406-444-4934.

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## STATE OF THE

# Arts

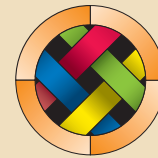


Participants in the Verge Kids Improv class share a giggle during the end-of-class demonstration at the theater in Bozeman. Improv teaches resilience, improves interpersonal communication and reminds us to be playful.

(Photo by the late, beloved Tim Stiller)

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### MAILING ADDRESS:

PO BOX 202201, HELENA, MT 59620-2201

### STREET ADDRESS:

830 N. WARREN ST., HELENA, MT

V: 406-444-6430; T: 711

Fax 406-444-6548

website: [art.mt.gov](http://art.mt.gov)

email: [mac@mt.gov](mailto:mac@mt.gov)

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Cynthia Andrus, Chairman

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Tracy Linder

Jay Pyette

Angela Russell

Corby Skinner

Jean Steele

Renée Westlake

All Montana Arts Council members can be reached by email at [mac@mt.gov](mailto:mac@mt.gov) or by mail c/o Montana Arts Council, 830 N. Warren Street, Helena, MT 59620

#### MAC Staff

Tatiana Gant, Executive Director  
[tatiana.gant@mt.gov](mailto:tatiana.gant@mt.gov) • 406-444-6546

Jenifer Alger, Chief Financial Officer  
[jeniferalger@mt.gov](mailto:jeniferalger@mt.gov) • 406-444-6489

Kristin Han Burgoyne, Database & Grants Director,  
Accessibility Coordinator

[kburgoyne@mt.gov](mailto:kburgoyne@mt.gov) • 406-444-6449

Monica Grable, Arts Education Director  
[monica.grable@mt.gov](mailto:monica.grable@mt.gov) • 406-444-6522

Shawna Korth, Business Specialist  
[shawna.korth@mt.gov](mailto:shawna.korth@mt.gov) • 406-444-6510

Brian Moody, Program Officer  
[brian.moody2@mt.gov](mailto:brian.moody2@mt.gov) • 406-444-4700

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Call 406-444-6449

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