

STATE OF THE ARTS

MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL



ART

at the End of the Road

By Tracy Sullivan

What do a former mining site, an accordion festival tucked beneath the pines, a roadside sculpture built from scrap metal, and a tiny gallery housed in a historic mercantile have in common?

At first glance, not much. But together, they tell a remarkable story about Montana's creative spirit—and the communities that continue building art, tradition, and connection in the most unexpected places.

In this feature, we venture beyond the familiar arts destinations to discover the people who are transforming old buildings into gathering places, preserving cultural traditions through music and storytelling, and creating works of art that inspire curiosity, spark conversation, and bring neighbors together. Along the way, we uncover a simple truth: some of Montana's most meaningful artistic experiences aren't found at the center of things—they're waiting at the end of the road.

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INSIDE



The centuries-old craft of horsehair hitching has developed into a treasured traditional art in an unlikely place: the Montana State Prison.

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Take the scenic route through eastern Montana, where museums, murals, theaters, and unexpected creative spaces reveal an arts landscape as expansive as the prairie itself.

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Photo by Tracy Sullivan

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Submissions Welcome!

State of the Arts welcomes submissions of photographs, press releases, and newsworthy information from individual artists and arts organizations.
Next deadline: August 15 for the Fall issue (October-November-December).

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WE'D LIKE
TO HEAR
FROM YOU

Bitterroot Valley artist and Montana Arts Council member Troy Collins' flag paintings capture the vibrance of the American experience, old glory and new.

Art by Troy Collins



Krys Holmes
Executive Director
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BLUE HIGHWAYS: THE ROAD TO OURSELVES

America celebrates a birthday this summer, and like most adults around a big milestone, the nation is asking itself deep questions. Who have we become? Are we living out our true character? With all this history behind us, in what direction do we want to grow now? And—one of my favorite questions—what gifts have already been bestowed on us that we have yet to develop fully?

The best way to find out who we are is to hit the highway—in particular the blue highways, named by author William Least Heat-Moon for the blue-tinted backroads and rural roads on Rand McNally maps. Let's get out into the artistic wilds, beyond the top-name concert venues and into the land of the unexpected. This issue of *State of the Arts* focuses on art at the end of the road, in the out-of-the-way places, the kind of art or creative experience that makes you look around and say,

*"I can't believe this is happening all the way out **here**."*

These are the gifts of arts-rich Montana, where until 2020 we had more painters per capita than any other state. Where more than 20,000 Montanans are working artists. Where a whopping percentage of people play guitar, make ceramic art, carve wood, write poetry, or blow glass—six in ten Montanans, according to a 2018 report from Americans for the Arts. And summer is when all these gifts pop into full bloom: The Backwoods Accordion Festival in Trego (July 18); the Singing Waters Writers' Camp (July 20-23) at Miminagish, in the Custer-Gallatin National Forest; the Art Mine in Basin, offering art workshops and concerts in a transformed mining warehouse; Aunt Dofe's Gallery in Willow Creek, this summer hosting exhibits by Lauren Grabelle, Mary Ann Kelly and Harold Schlotzhauer.

Check out the private studio of painter Todd Connor in Fort Benton, or ceramic artist Cat McIntyre in Glasgow. At Pioneer Pottery, in Roscoe, you'll find unique pieces crafted in their converted horse stables. If you find yourself in Polebridge on July 15 (or Helena July 17), don't miss the unutterably delightful String & Shadow Puppet Theater. And you can follow the Montana Bookstore Trail to 21 independent bookstores across Montana—supporting and celebrating Montana's great literary heritage.

And wherever you are—across 76 towns in the whole region—you're likely to run into Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, bringing free performances of the Bard to outdoor spaces all summer long.

What do all these road trips, all this art, all these experiences give us? They remind us that in all eras, in all phases of the darkness and the light, we are an endlessly creative nation of people. We make beauty, we share inspiring experiences, we craft joy. We can imagine ourselves into a better future—better for our children, for the human spirit, for the planet that is our ultimate gift.

Driving the blue highways of Montana, we sometimes do have the road all to ourselves. But it's also true that following all the roads that lead to art museums, installations, Saturday festivals, and surprising creative genius, also lead us right to our truest selves.

— Krys Holmes

For a full lineup of summer arts events across Montana, visit [LivelyTimes.com](https://www.livelytimes.com). For major festivals, pow wows and other events, head to [VisitMT.com](https://www.visitmt.com)

from the director



FOLK ARTS AT THE MONTANA FOLK FEST

By Taylor Burby and Eric Heidle

In 2010, following a third wildly successful year of amazing performances and cultural experiences in Uptown Butte, the National Folk Festival pulled up stakes and headed out in search of its next sponsor city. But when attendance was tallied, Butte officials learned that 165,000 people—that’s one in eight Montanans—had showed up. Butte thought about this for a minute and said, “You know what? We’re just going to keep this going next year.”

And Butte has, hosting the Montana Folk Festival every July to continue bringing folk performances, visual and literary artists, tradition keepers, and food to a sprawling swath of Uptown. This juxtaposition—rural music, craft, storytelling, and cuisine being celebrated in the tall shadows of stone buildings and iron headframes in Montana’s most historically cosmopolitan city—well, it’s about as Butte as Butte can get.

The Montana Arts Council is honoring that spirit while celebrating America’s 250th birthday by once again hosting the festival’s Montana Folklife Area. Contributors include musicians, visual artists, poets, metalsmiths, weavers, bead workers, tradition keepers, writers, and other artists, including at least one self-identified “genuine old fart” who’s also a master fly tyer.

Located near the old City Hall on Broadway Street, the Folklife Area will embrace every aspect of folk and traditional arts, conveying the identity, values, and aesthetics of the communities from which they arise. To ensure these traditions endure, communities—whether they’re ethnic, occupational, regional, religious, or linguistic—must pass down the knowledge and techniques that sustain their practices. This accumulated wisdom is a kind of collective muscle memory that links practitioners to a shared place and time, and weaving a continuous thread between past and present. But these cultural customs are far from museum relics; traditions such as Métis fiddling, saddlery, or loom weaving are living arts: they evolve within their communities of practice and adapt in form and style to new ideas. Even so, they demand active participation to endure. Because if the final practitioner of a tradition passes, they take with them a universe of cultural wisdom and knowledge as well as a unique way of knowing and living in the world.

These traditional arts are learned through careful observation and practice, usually from elders and masters and passed on from one generation to the next, often literally from one hand to the other. They can be self-taught within traditions in which the folk practitioner or artist belongs to the practice’s original cultural background. The tradition bearers representing Montana at this year’s festival were chosen not only for their artistic excellence, but also for the way they honor their craft and community—demonstrating a deep commitment to its continuation through



Métis fiddler Jamie Fox and her father performing at the Métis Music and Arts Festival in Choteau. *Photo by Eric Heidle.*



Tradition keeper Tim Ryan describes the making and use of a bent-willow Salish fish trap. *Photo by Eric Heidle.*



Kammy Johnson demonstrates how a loom is used in weaving at last year’s Montana Folklife Area. *Photo by Taylor Burby.*

mentorship, apprenticeships, workshops, and classes. Their generous participation in this year’s event will provide festival-goers with the opportunity to learn more about the artists’ stories, cultural communities, and practices, along with the methods, tools, techniques, and materials used in the creation of their work.

And no matter what a visitor might already know about these crafts, seeing them taught and used and shared is vital to their cultural survival.

Tradition bearers and folk practices represented in this year’s demonstration area will include **Alaina Buffalospirit’s** Cheyenne ledger art; weaving and fiber artistry with **Allison Grove** and **Kammy Johnson**; Apsáalooke (Crow) moccasins and elk teeth ceramics with **Birdie Real Bird** and **Tanya Plainfeather Gardner**; **Dan and Julia Schwarz’s** custom boots; **Eli Hernandez’s** farrier blacksmithing and rawhide braiding; **Elle McGill’s** cinches and pulled wool saddle pads; **John Murie’s** Chippewa-Cree moccasins and beadwork; **Lake Berkeley Decoys’** hunting decoys; **Noah Pino’s** Dakota/Diné beadwork; **Shawn Didyoung’s** silversmithing; **Spurr Watson’s** saddles; **Tim Ryan’s** Salish Tool Building and traditional games; and fly-tying with **Tim Mocilac** and **Patti Bartlett**.

Taking to the stage, the Folklife Area will also include Montana songwriter **Sterling Drake**; **Jamie Fox** and **Sapphire Ferguson-Jetty**, representing Métis fiddle traditions; folk duo **Isaac and Louise**; Western poets **Henry Real Bird**, **M.L. Smoker**, and **Ben Larson**; and **Arnold “Smoke” Elser** and folklorist **Mike Korn** in conversation about Elser’s *Hush of the Land: A Lifetime in the Bob Marshall Wilderness*, which he co-authored with Eva-Maria Maggi.

The Folk Arts Family Area

This year, the Family Area will partner with the Folklife Area to create a more engaging and educational experience for visitors of all ages. Alongside hands-on activities provided by the Montana Arts Council and face painting by Martin’s Masks, several demonstrating artists will also offer kid-friendly programming, giving younger festival-goers the opportunity to explore traditional arts through interactive, hands-on learning.

These demonstrating artists span the spectrum of Montana’s traditional practices. Allison Grove and Kammy Johnson will provide kids the opportunity to explore the art of weaving through a hands-on, guided activity. Mark Mariano and Mary Sutherland of Lake Berkeley Decoy are offering kids the opportunity to measure their wingspan. Tim Ryan will showcase Salish Kootenai College’s work preserving traditional tribal games through a hands-on craft and activity. Finally, Tom Mocilac and Patti Bartlett will be leading a fly-tying activity designed for middle and high school-aged students.

As a final note, a special thank you to Butte printmaker Christine Martin, whose original print block will be used in the Montana Arts Council’s family activity. Christine will also present and sell her original printed works in the market area, located apart from the Folklife and Family Area.



DOING A HITCH IN MONTANA

Photos and text by Krys Holmes

Gregg Hancock shows off Ronald Petersen's bridle & reins, with their unique rose-shaped knotted tassels. This piece took over three years to craft.

One of Montana's oldest traditional arts flourishes off the beaten path and mostly out of sight, at the Montana State Prison (MSP) in Deer Lodge. The complex, intricate art of hitched horsehair celebrates the relationship between people and their horses, and has become an icon of Western life and culture. Today, one of the few places high-quality hitched horsehair is made, by artisans who learned their craft from old masters, is here at the prison.

The Romanesque towers of the Old Montana Prison (used 1871-1979) rise grimly along the wide, slow-moving Main Street in Deer Lodge—itsself a tourist attraction since the new prison opened in 1979. Across the street squats the humble brick State Prison Hobby Store where crowded hooks, nails and shelves house some of the most beautiful hitched horsehair artwork available today. This folk art is sustained by the work of Ronald Petersen, Joshua Giddings, Franklin McLaughlin, and other artists who pass their skills along person-to-person. Their top-notch bridle and reins sets can go for \$7,000 or more among discerning collectors, and take up to three years to create. The Hobby Store receives 25% of proceeds to cover the overhead cost of the storefront; 75% goes to the artist to purchase more supplies, commissary, provide family support, and to save money for their reentry back into society, etc.

Horsehair hitching and braiding is as old as the Roman empire, and probably came to North America from Mexico, along with modern horses. Decorative bridles, quirts, bosals, and reatas, walking sticks, watch fobs and key chains, spread across the West, and became coveted items among cowboys and sophisticates alike. The skill of hitching undoubtedly followed a few down-on-their-luck cowboys into prisons, and by the late

1800s it emerged as a productive use of time for inmates who had long stretches of time on their hands. Charlie Russell even wrote about a cattle rustler who “quit the business and is now making horsehair bridles”—a euphemism for doing time.

Horsehair hitching centered in a few prisons, like Walla Walla, WA, Rawlins, WY, and Cañon City, CO. Montana State Prison became the best known and most prolific—and is among the only prisons keeping this tradition alive today.

Horsehair hitching is a time-consuming skill, and each piece is a unique treasure. The artists clean and dry the tail hairs, arrange them into strands or pulls, then prepare the strands. The pulls are knotted over a piece of string or twine wound around a dowel, which gives each length its round shape. It takes about an hour to produce one inch of hitched material.

For many years, you could tell where a piece was hitched by its design. Barber-pole spiral designs came from Boise, Idaho; bright reds and oranges were a specialty of Florence Prison, in Arizona. Deer Lodge produced the only pieces patterned with letters or numbers. One early Deer Lodge artist liked to weave the words *Good luck* into his brow bands—an intricacy demanding an exacting calculus.

Over the years horsehair hitching at most prisons ground to a halt. The artists at Deer Lodge continue to create, and to pass along their craft to fellow artisans. Hobby Store inmate clerk Gregg Hancock will tell you the opportunity to lose themselves in creative endeavors is healing and uplifting to the artists. But the true value—to Montana and to the creators themselves—lies in keeping alive this significant traditional art so deeply embedded in Western culture.



Blue bridle and matching quilt by Joshua Giddings. Some horsehair dyes were specific to different prisons. Montana was known for its colorful bridles, and was the only prison allowed to use pink.



An intricately crafted bosal by Frank McLaughlin comes with matching scarf slide.

Art

at the end
of the road

The People, Places, and Traditions

Keeping Montana’s Creative Spirit Alive

By Tracy Sullivan

I’ve always been fascinated by the creative projects that make absolutely no sense on paper.

The volunteer-run theater in a town of a few hundred people. The music festival devoted to a single instrument. The artist who spends years building sculpture from discarded machinery. The gallery operating out of a building that was never intended to be a gallery.

From a purely practical perspective, many of these endeavors should be difficult to sustain.

And yet they persist.

Not because they generate enormous crowds or attract national attention. Not because someone conducted a market analysis and determined they were viable. They continue because people care enough to make them happen.

The more time I spend exploring Montana’s arts and cultural communities, the more I find myself drawn to these stories.

Not the biggest stories. ***The most unlikely ones.***

The stories of people creating something meaningful with whatever space, materials, traditions, and resources happen to be available.

In Montana, creativity often emerges not from abundance, but from *ingenuity*.

It appears in former schools, mining buildings, grange halls, and vacant storefronts. It survives because volunteers organize events, musicians teach younger generations, artists repurpose forgotten materials, and communities decide that gathering together still matters.

These efforts may not always fit our traditional definition of arts infrastructure. But they reveal something important about Montana. Our artistic life is not concentrated in a handful of institutions. It is scattered across the state in hundreds of acts of creative persistence.

And some of the most remarkable examples are hiding in plain sight.



Photo by Kate Thompson.

Building Something From What You Have

One of the defining characteristics of Montana artists is their ability to see possibility where others see limitations.

An old building becomes a gallery. A vacant storefront becomes an exhibition space. A community hall becomes a performance venue. A former industrial site becomes a gathering place for artists and audiences.

Perhaps nowhere is this spirit more evident than at the Art Mine in Basin.

Located in a former mining facility, the Art Mine transformed a piece of Montana’s industrial history into a creative hub. The setting itself tells a larger story about reinvention. A place once associated with extraction now serves as a place for creation. Today, the Art Mine hosts exhibitions, workshops, artist residencies, performances, and collaborative projects that bring artists and visitors together in one of the state’s most unexpected locations.

What makes the Art Mine remarkable is not simply the artwork displayed there. It is the community that has formed around it. Artists gather to experiment, teach, learn, and share ideas. Visitors arrive expecting to see an unusual gallery and often leave having participated in conversations, events, or experiences that connect them to the place and the people who sustain it.

A similar spirit can be found at Aunt Dofe’s Gallery in Willow Creek.

The gallery traces its roots to Montana woodworker and arts supporter Dave Kirk, who envisioned a place where contemporary Montana artists could exhibit their work in a setting that felt welcoming rather than intimidating. Housed in a historic mercantile

building, Aunt Dofe’s has evolved into a unique cultural destination featuring rotating exhibitions, community events, and an artist-in-residence program.

Like many successful rural arts organizations, Aunt Dofe’s is about more than exhibitions.

It is a gathering place.

People come for an opening reception and stay for the conversation. They attend an event and leave having met someone new. They volunteer, participate, and gradually become part of a creative community.

The art matters, certainly. But so do the relationships built around it.

That may be one of the most important contributions the arts make in rural Montana.



Aunt Dofe’s Gallery past Paintallica exhibition.

They create opportunities for people to gather around something hopeful, imaginative, and shared.

On the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, the “Warriors of the Junkyard” project, officially known as *Blackfeet Metal Warriors*, demonstrate another form of creative ingenuity.

Built from the parts of rusted automobiles destroyed in the historic June 1964 flood, old bits of barbed wire, and sandstone blocks salvaged from the late-19th-century Holy Family Mission school plus countless hours of imagination and labor, the monumental sculptures by Jay Laber challenge our assumptions about what art can be and where it belongs. The “Warriors” mark each entrance to the reservation, watching over travelers as they arrive and depart. What might otherwise be considered scrap becomes storytelling. Discarded objects become landmarks. It reminds us that creativity is often an act of seeing potential where others see waste.

Visitors stop. They take photographs. They point things out to one another. They ask questions. The artwork becomes a conversation. And conversation, perhaps more than anything else, is how community begins.



Lauren Grabelle: Deer Diary
exhibition at Aunt Dofe’s Gallery
June 19-July 19



Participants play and dance at the Backwoods Accordion Festival near Trego.

Curiosity in the Landscape

Some of Montana’s most memorable works of art don’t announce themselves with gallery walls or museum signs.

They simply appear.

A display of vintage Ford automobiles standing like prehistoric stones in Edgar. A towering penguin greeting travelers in Cut Bank, proudly proclaiming the community as one of the coldest spots in the nation. A caboose in Culbertson transformed into a hand-painted “Hobo Bible,” preserving the stories, symbols, and traditions of America’s railroad travelers.

These roadside creations are whimsical, deeply local, and entirely unforgettable.

They also reveal something important about Montana communities. We have a habit of turning ordinary places into conversation pieces. We celebrate local history with humor, embrace the unexpected, and create landmarks that invite people to stop—not simply for a photograph, but for a story.

Children ask questions. Travelers share discoveries. Residents proudly explain the history behind a sculpture they’ve driven past for years.

That moment of curiosity becomes a shared experience.

And shared experiences, however small, have an extraordinary way of building community.

Whether made from old automobiles, drawn onto a railcar, or standing proudly beside a highway, these unexpected landmarks remind us that creativity isn’t reserved for formal cultural spaces. Sometimes it appears exactly where we need it most—along the road, inviting us to slow down and look a little closer.

Fordhenge in Edgar



Courtesy Wikimedia Commons

Penguin Colossus in Cut Bank



Courtesy Wikimedia Commons

Hobo Bible Art in Caboose in Culbertson



Courtesy of John Sullivan

The Traditions We Refuse to Lose

Not every artistic community is built around a building. Some are built around traditions.

Across Montana, festivals, music gatherings, workshops, readings, and community celebrations continue because people believe they are worth preserving. Many operate with volunteer support, modest budgets, and little fanfare. Yet year after year they bring together multiple generations around shared interests, stories, and traditions.

What fascinates me about these gatherings is that they measure success differently.

Success is a young musician learning a tune from an older one. It's neighbors reconnecting after a long winter. It's a child discovering an instrument for the first time or someone experiencing a new cultural tradition. These events remind us that the arts don't just preserve culture—they create opportunities to share it.

The Backwoods Accordion Festival near Trego is a perfect example. Now in its seventh year, the festival brings musicians and music lovers together beneath the pines to celebrate an instrument with deep roots in dance halls, family gatherings, and folk traditions. Players travel from across Montana and beyond, bringing polkas, waltzes, folk tunes, and a shared love of accordion music with them.

The festival isn't built around celebrity performers or elaborate production. Its heart is participation. Between scheduled performances, impromptu jam sessions

spring up, experienced musicians mentor younger players, and strangers quickly become collaborators. The accordion may be the reason people come. Community is the reason they return.

Creative expression takes many forms.

One of Montana's newest celebrations of Indigenous arts and culture, IndigiPalooza in Missoula, brings together Indigenous writers, artists, musicians, scholars, and storytellers for two days of performances, workshops, conversations, exhibitions, and cultural exchange. Founded through a partnership between Chickadee Community Services, the Missoula Public Library, and former Montana Poet Laureate Chris La Tray, the festival creates a welcoming space where Indigenous voices and traditions take center stage.

Like the Backwoods Accordion Festival, IndigiPalooza is about more than the performances themselves. It creates opportunities for people to listen, learn, exchange ideas, and build relationships across communities. Through music, storytelling, visual art, and shared experience, it reminds us that the arts don't simply preserve culture—they invite all of us to participate in it.

Whether through music, storytelling, or countless other creative traditions, these gatherings give people a reason to come together, learn from one another, and carry something meaningful into the future.



Blackfeet Metal Warriors by Jay Laber



Graphic design and illustration by Stella Nall, Bisháakinnesh ("Rode Buffalo") featured at Indigipalooza.

The Communities Behind the Creativity

As I worked on this story, I kept returning to the same question:

Why do people continue creating these spaces, events, and traditions when doing so often requires so much time, energy, and commitment?

The answer, I suspect, has very little to do with art itself. It has to do with people.

The arts give us reasons to gather.

They introduce us to neighbors. They connect generations. They help preserve local stories. They transform buildings into gathering places and traditions into living experiences.

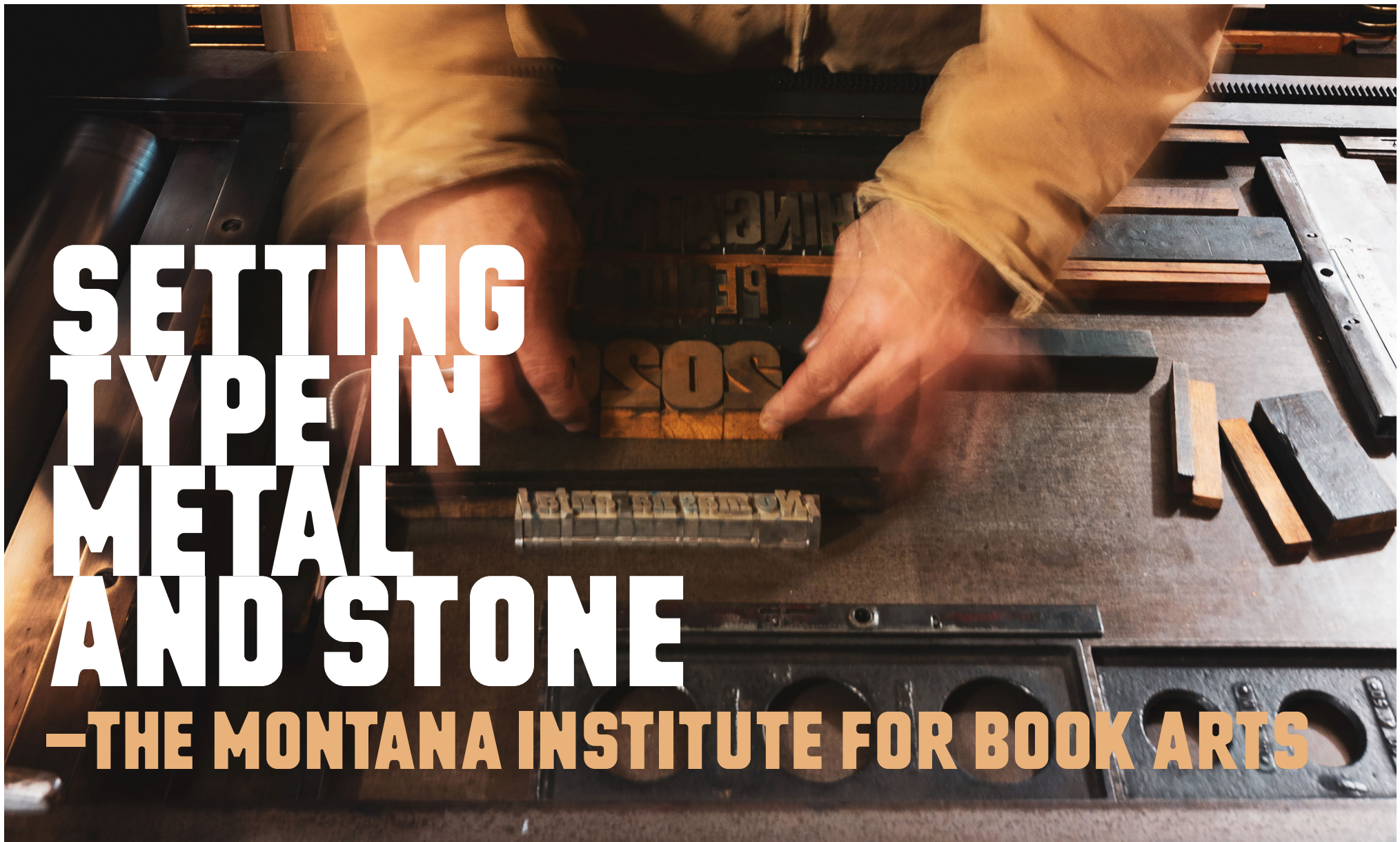
In communities across Montana, artists, volunteers, organizers, musicians, writers, and supporters continue doing this work not because it is easy, but because it matters.

Their efforts may never appear on a list of major cultural destinations. They may never attract national attention. But collectively, they form an essential part of Montana's cultural landscape.

A landscape built not simply through creative expression, but through connection.

Perhaps that's the real lesson hidden at the end of so many Montana roads. Creativity doesn't wait for perfect circumstances. It takes root wherever people care enough to build something together.

And in Montana, that may be one of our greatest works of art.



SETTING TYPE IN METAL AND STONE —THE MONTANA INSTITUTE FOR BOOK ARTS

Hand-set type continues a centuries-old tradition of craft. *Photo by Eric Heidle*

The University of Montana has long been associated with the literary arts—but words can't be read till they're printed.

So here's some news that's hot off the press: the University has begun teaching the making of books this summer, and is offering a two-part course teaching many aspects of traditional book making. The Montana Institute for Book Arts will convene August 3 – 7 in Missoula for printing, wood engraving, and bookbinding workshops, along with lectures on rare books and curation. The sessions will also include a book arts exhibition at the Montana Museum of Art and Culture.

The second session will occur from August 10 – 14 at Flathead Lake and includes workshops on papermaking, stone-carving letterforms, and designing innovative book formats. Lectures on naturalist depictions in books and art and collaboration will complement the workshops.

If you're an admirer of hand-bound books, fine letterpress printing, woodcut prints, and other aspects of traditional press work, the Montana Institute for Book Arts sessions offer a uniquely Montanan opportunity for hands-on instruction, teaching the tools of their creation and learning why books still look the way they do despite technological change.

Also, it's an engaging, tactile exploration of one of our most important graphic arts. For registration information and more details, go online to the [Montana Institute for Book Arts](https://art.mt.gov/montana250).



CELEBRATING 250 YEARS... *And Then Some*

By Eric Heidle

On July 4, 1776 in a stuffy room inside the Pennsylvania State House, 56 men formally adopted the most famous Dear John letter in history—the Declaration of Independence—officially breaking ties between England and what was now the United States of America. 1800 miles west, though, thousands of people had already been enjoying independence for thousands of years, within a roughly rectangular area that would one day be called Montana.

The observance of America's 250th birthday is cause for celebration of and reflection about this great experiment in democracy and mutual support, but there's so much more to the story. And in Montana, human history is older than nearly anywhere else in these United States: a Clovis burial site near Wilsall proves that people have been living and creating here for more than 12,000 years.

That's why the Montana Arts Council is commemorating the American semiquincentennial with a project called Montana 12,250. In addition to celebrating American independence, we're compiling artistic responses to the themes of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all of humanity's time here. We're asking visual artists, writers, performing artists, and folk and traditional creators to contribute original works, essays, and interviews for inclusion in an anthology to be published at year's end.

The Montana 12,250 anthology will be produced in partnership with the Montana Historical Society Press and distributed statewide upon publication. Learn more about the project at <https://art.mt.gov/montana250>.

Hidden Treasure in Montana

Photos and Text by Jeffrey Conger

Grizzly Claw Trading Company

This gem is totally off the beaten path! The Grizzly Claw Trading Company, owned by Dee and Susan Baker, is nestled in Seeley Lake in the town’s historic mercantile building. Like most local businesses, it began humbly and grew through dedication and hard work, featuring over 100 artists and craftsmen. This includes a mix of media from native art, ceramics, beadwork, handmade furniture and rugs, western artifacts, custom jewelry, photographs, painting, sculpture, and much more. That’s along with a bustling coffee shop inside called “Jitterbug Java,” which is a local favorite.

Originally founded in 1998, the trading company and coffee shop are at the core of Seeley’s creative community, with friendly and knowledgeable staff. Looking around the gallery, it’s hard to decide on what to look at first, whether purchasing a handcrafted silver bracelet or grabbing a latte. Stunning cowboy photographs by Juan de Santa Anna, beautiful ceramic mugs by Amanda Heimbuch from Country Girl Clay, painted hides by Frank Shorty, and original paintings by Lyle Old Weasel.



The bookshelves teem with Western authors from a wide range of genres, including novels, historical references, and guidebooks. However, the most heartfelt shelf is dedicated to the “Grizzly Claw Scholarship Fund,” with proceeds from the sale of these books to support college-bound students from Seeley-Swan High School. In addition, the trading company often collaborates with the Alpine Artisans “Open Book Club” to organize readings and book signings at events hosted across the valley featuring prominent authors.

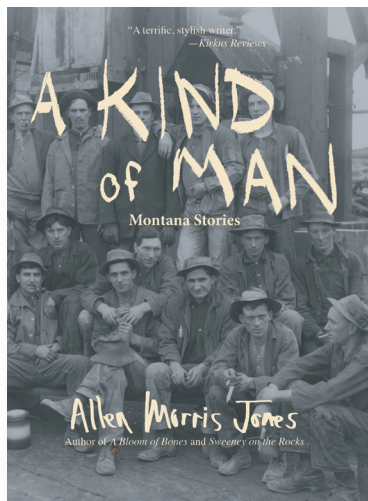
So next time traveling through the Clearwater River Valley, take time to visit Grizzly Claw Trading Co. and Jitterbug Java at 3187 Highway 83 in Seeley Lake. They are open seven days a week, year-round, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Originally occupied by the Bitterroot Salish and Pend d'Oreille tribes, Seeley Lake began its frontier days as a logging town that boasted several dude ranches, which took advantage of the breathtaking scenery. The Grizzly Claw Trading Co. and Jitterbug Java coffee shop are cornerstones of the community.



Montana Books and Recordings...



A Kind of Man: Montana Stories
by Allen Morris Jones

Some stories capture a place. Others capture the people who live there. The finest do both, revealing landscapes not just of geography, but of memory, work, loss, and resilience.

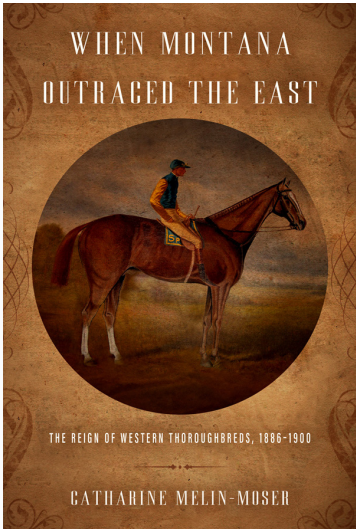
In *A Kind of Man: Montana Stories*, Montana Poet Laureate Allen Morris Jones gathers short fiction spanning more than three decades of writing. The collection moves across the state and across time, from the lingering shadows of the Little Bighorn to the challenges facing modern ranching communities, from the uncertainties of youth to the quiet reckonings of adulthood. Each story is rooted in Montana, yet the questions they explore—identity, belonging, responsibility, and change—reach far beyond state lines.

The centerpiece of the collection is the novella “A Kind of Man,” published here for the first time. Set against the backdrop of Butte’s tragic Speculator Mine disaster of 1917, the story explores Montana’s Irish heritage while immersing readers in one of the state’s defining historical events. Jones approaches the material with both historical insight and emotional depth, bringing to life the people whose lives were shaped by forces larger than themselves.

Known for his poetry, novels, and essays, Jones has long been regarded as one of Montana’s most accomplished literary voices. These stories showcase the same qualities that have distinguished his broader body of work: careful observation, memorable characters, and prose that is both elegant and unflinchingly honest. Whether writing about a ranch hand navigating the modern West or a young person searching for direction, Jones finds humanity in unexpected places.

A Kind of Man offers a compelling portrait of Montana and the people who call it home. Thoughtful, moving, and richly crafted, the collection reminds readers that the most enduring stories are often the ones closest to the ground beneath our feet.

A Kind of Man: Montana Stories is available now.



When Montana Outraced the East: The Reign of Western Thoroughbreds, 1886–1900
by Catharine Melin-Moser

Before Montana became known for wide-open spaces and working ranches, it briefly held another distinction: home to some of the fastest racehorses in America.

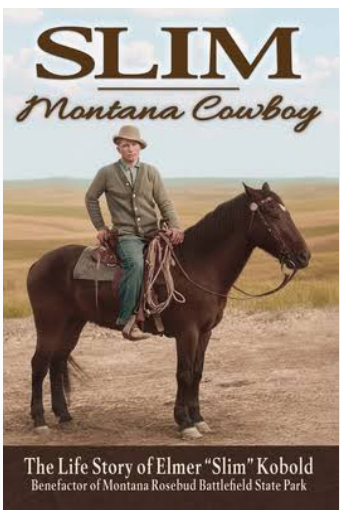
In *When Montana Outraced the East*, historian Catharine Melin-Moser uncovers a largely forgotten chapter of Western history, when Montana-bred thoroughbreds challenged—and often defeated—the established racing powers of the East Coast. Between 1886 and 1900, horses raised in the young states and territories of the West emerged as serious competitors on the national stage, reshaping assumptions about where champions could be bred and trained.

Drawing on extensive historical research, Melin-Moser introduces readers to the owners, trainers, jockeys, and horses who helped build Montana’s unexpected racing legacy. The story unfolds during a period of rapid growth and transformation in the American West, when mining fortunes, expanding railroads, and ambitious entrepreneurs created opportunities that extended even to the world of thoroughbred racing.

More than a sports history, the book reveals how horse racing reflected the cultural and economic forces shaping the region. The rise of Western thoroughbreds became a point of regional pride, challenging long-held Eastern assumptions about breeding and success while helping establish Montana’s national reputation.

For readers interested in Western history, horse racing, or the people who helped define Montana’s early identity, *When Montana Outraced the East* offers a fascinating look at a remarkable but often overlooked era.

When Montana Outraced the East is available now.



Slim—Montana Cowboy: The Life Story of Elmer “Slim” Kobold
by Elmer “Slim” Kobold

History is often told through famous names and major events. Just as often, it lives in the stories of ordinary people whose lives quietly shaped the places we know today.

Slim—Montana Cowboy offers readers a rare firsthand account of life in the early American West through the memories of Elmer “Slim” Kobold. Told largely in his own words, the book follows Kobold’s remarkable journey from a young man searching for opportunity to a ranch hand, bronc breaker, Yellowstone guide, and World War I soldier. Along the way, readers encounter a Montana that was still being defined by hard work, vast landscapes, and the people willing to make a life there.

What makes this volume especially compelling is its authenticity. Kobold writes not as a historian looking back, but as someone who lived the experiences he describes. His stories of ranch work, wildlife encounters, military service, and life on the frontier provide an intimate perspective on a period of tremendous change in the West. The result is less a formal history than a conversation across generations.

The book is enhanced by 31 carefully restored historical photographs that bring Kobold’s world vividly to life. Together, the images and narrative create a portrait of a man whose experiences reflect the grit, independence, and resilience often associated with Montana’s ranching heritage.

Kobold’s legacy extends beyond the pages of this memoir. Inducted into the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame in 2024 and remembered as a benefactor of Rosebud Battlefield State Park, he remains an important figure in southeastern Montana history.

For readers interested in ranching, western history, military service, or simply the stories of everyday Montanans, *Slim—Montana Cowboy* provides a memorable and deeply personal window into a disappearing era.

Slim—Montana Cowboy is available now.



Striped Reckoning: Tiger Kings and the Battle to Rescue America's Captive Big Cats
by Carol Bradley

Some stories begin with a simple question: How did we get here? In the case of America's captive big cats, the answer is stranger, darker, and more complicated than many people realize.

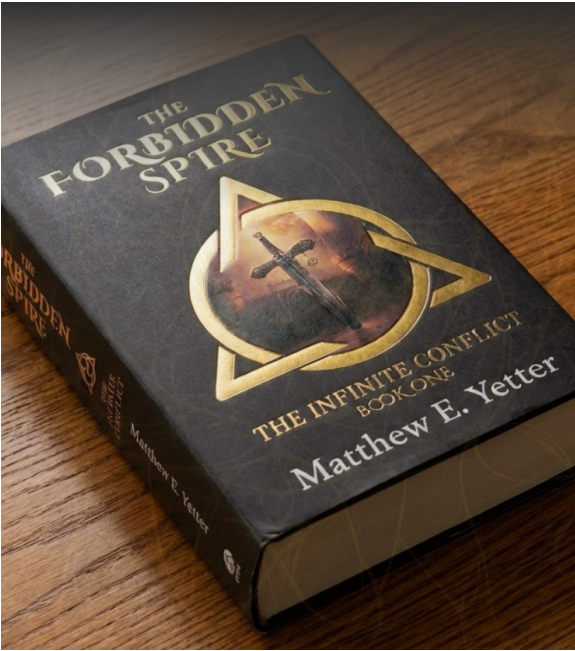
In *Striped Reckoning*, journalist Carol Bradley examines the decades-long culture that allowed thousands of lions and tigers to be bred, bought, sold, and displayed across the United States. What began with circus acts, movie appearances, and television spectacles evolved into a lucrative industry built around cub-petting attractions and photo opportunities. Behind the public fascination, however, many animals endured neglect, inadequate care, and lives far removed from the wild majesty they symbolized.

Bradley traces the efforts of animal advocates to dismantle that system, focusing on notorious operators Joe Exotic, Tim Stark, and Jeff Lowe. While the Netflix series *Tiger King* introduced many Americans to the controversy, Bradley goes beyond the headlines, documenting the years of investigations, legal battles, and grassroots advocacy that led to lasting change.

The book is especially compelling in its account of what happened after the cameras left. Sanctuaries across the country faced the enormous task of rescuing and caring for nearly two hundred displaced lions and tigers, helping build momentum for landmark federal legislation restricting private ownership of big cats.

Part investigative history and part animal welfare chronicle, *Striped Reckoning* is a compelling account of how determined individuals changed public attitudes—and ultimately the law—to better protect some of the world's most magnificent animals.

Striped Reckoning will be published October 1st.



The Forbidden Spire
by Matthew E. Yetter

Some worlds are built for a single story. Others are built over a lifetime.

In *The Forbidden Spire*, Montana author Matthew E. Yetter opens the door to Necsis, an original fantasy world he has been developing for decades. The novel serves as the first installment in *The Infinite Conflict*, an ambitious planned ten-book series that blends magic, psychic abilities, ancient mysteries, and emerging technologies into a sweeping epic adventure.

At the heart of the story is a journey into the unknown. Yetter draws readers into a richly imagined landscape where powerful forces collide and long-buried secrets shape the fate of individuals and nations alike. While the novel embraces many of the hallmarks of classic epic fantasy—quest narratives, expansive worldbuilding, and high-stakes conflict—it also explores questions about power, knowledge, and the choices that define who we become.

What distinguishes *The Forbidden Spire* is the depth of the world behind it. Rather than creating a setting solely for this novel, Yetter has spent nearly forty years developing the history, cultures, and mythology of Necsis. That long investment is evident throughout the book, which offers readers a fully realized world with its own traditions, conflicts, and sense of place.

As a debut novelist, Yetter demonstrates a clear affection for the fantasy genre and its capacity to transport readers beyond everyday experience. Fans of expansive series and immersive worldbuilding will find much to explore as the larger story begins to unfold.

Launching a ten-book epic is no small undertaking. With *The Forbidden Spire*, Yetter lays the foundation for an ambitious saga while inviting readers to embark on the first chapter of a much larger adventure—one shaped by imagination, perseverance, and decades of creative vision.

The Forbidden Spire is available now.



I Melt Like Snow in the Sun of Your Beauty
by Baroque Music Montana

Some works of art endure because they speak across centuries. Long after the world that created them has disappeared, they continue to move audiences with their beauty, emotion, and humanity.

With *I Melt Like Snow in the Sun of Your Beauty*, Baroque Music Montana presents a recording devoted to some of the most expressive music of the early seventeenth century. Recorded in the Olivier Music Barn at Tippet Rise Art Center, the album features works by Claudio Monteverdi, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Johann Rosenmüller, Biagio Marini, and other composers whose innovations helped shape the future of Western classical music.

Lutenist John Lenti developed the album's concept and performs on theorbo, joined by soprano Arwen Meyers, dulcian player Nate Helgeson, and baroque violinist Carrie Krause. Together, the musicians bring warmth, precision, and emotional depth to music that remains remarkably fresh more than four hundred years after it was written.

Recorded in one of Montana's premier performance venues and featuring artists with deep ties to the region, the project reflects Baroque Music Montana's commitment to bringing historically informed performances to contemporary audiences while highlighting the state's vibrant cultural community.

For longtime classical music listeners and newcomers alike, *I Melt Like Snow in the Sun of Your Beauty* offers a rewarding introduction to the beauty and emotional richness of the Baroque era.

I Melt Like Snow in the Sun of Your Beauty is available now.



THE PRAIRIE ART LOOP

Discovering Creative Energy Across Eastern Montana

By Tracy Sullivan
Photos courtesy of John Sullivan

*There are places in Montana
that seem to get all the attention.*

The mountain towns. The ski towns. The places with postcards, guidebooks, and long lines of summer visitors.

Then there is eastern Montana.

I've always been fascinated by the way people describe this part of the state. Depending on who you ask, it's "empty," "wide open," or simply the place you drive through on your way somewhere else. Yet every time I spend time in eastern Montana, I'm reminded how incomplete that picture really is.

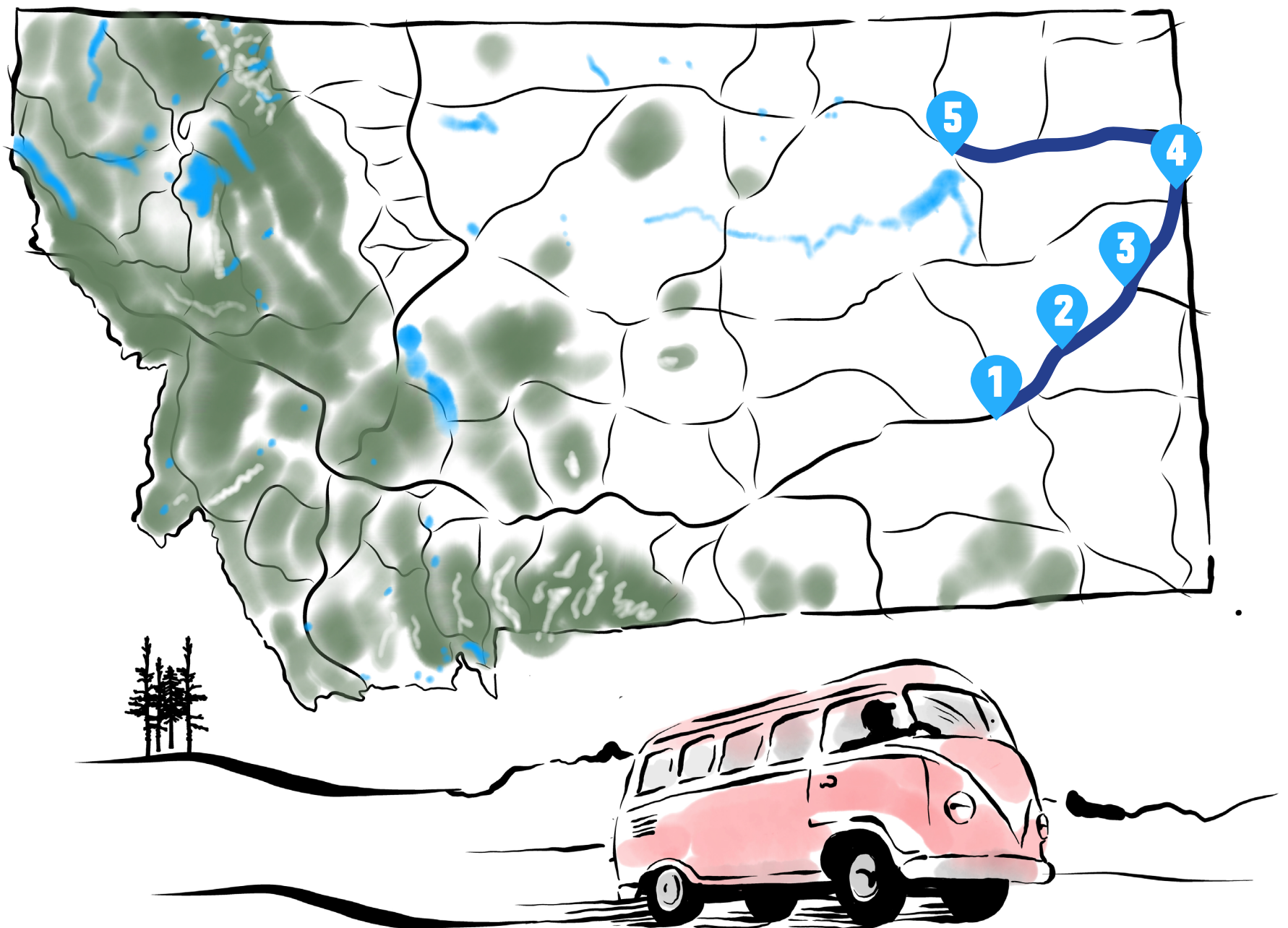
Because if you slow down, take a side road, or spend an extra hour in a small town, something remarkable begins to emerge.

Art.

Not necessarily in the way we expect to find it. You won't encounter blocks of galleries or sprawling arts districts. Instead, you'll discover creativity woven into everyday life—a sculpture standing quietly along a downtown sidewalk, a community theater that has entertained audiences for generations, a museum tucked inside a historic building, or a local café where the walls double as exhibition space.

The further east you travel, the more you begin to realize that creativity isn't confined to Montana's population centers. It exists everywhere. Sometimes it simply requires us to look a little closer.

This journey—*what I'm calling the Prairie Art Loop*—connects several eastern Montana communities that are preserving history, celebrating culture, supporting artists, and proving that creative energy can thrive in even the most unexpected places.





Photos courtesy of WaterWorks Art Museum website.



Photos courtesy of Library of Congress and Montana Historical Society.

1. MILES CITY:

Where Art Flows

The journey begins in Miles City, home to the WaterWorks Art Museum.

Few art museums have a story quite like this one. Located in a historic waterworks facility that once supplied drinking water to the community, the museum transformed a piece of local infrastructure into a vibrant cultural space. Today, the WaterWorks Art Museum serves as one of eastern Montana's most important visual arts destinations, featuring exhibitions, educational programming, and a permanent collection that reflects both regional and national artistic voices.

What I love most about places like WaterWorks is what they represent. They remind us that art often flourishes through reinvention. *A building constructed to move water now moves ideas, stories, and inspiration through an entire region.*

Before leaving town, spend time downtown. Look for public art, murals, historic architecture, and the kinds of creative details that reveal themselves only when you're not in a hurry.



2. TERRY:

Seeing the Prairie Differently

As the highway stretches east toward Terry, the landscape itself begins to feel like a work of art.

Wide skies. Long horizons. Weathered buildings. Layers of history visible in the land.

It's no surprise that photographers have long been drawn to this part of Montana. The Cameron Gallery, inspired by the legacy of photographer Evelyn Cameron and the visual history of the prairie, offers visitors a chance to experience eastern Montana through a different lens.

Whenever I visit places like Terry, I'm reminded that art often begins with observation. Before a painting is painted, a photograph is taken, or a story is written, someone first notices something worth preserving.

Eastern Montana offers plenty to notice.





Photos courtesy of the Bridger Bronze Statue Trail.

3. GLENDIVE:

Stories Cast in Bronze

One of the most unexpected artistic experiences on the route can be found in Glendive.

Along Merrill Avenue, visitors encounter the Bridger Bronze Statue Trail, a collection of life-sized bronze sculptures created through the work of local sculptor Pamela Harr. The sculptures tell stories of the people, events, and experiences that helped shape the region. Rather than reading history on a plaque, visitors encounter it face-to-face.

What makes public art so powerful is its accessibility. You don't need to buy a ticket or walk through museum doors. You simply encounter it as part of daily life.

In communities throughout eastern Montana, art isn't separate from the town. It becomes part of the town.



Recently restored *Sully Crossing the Yellowstone* by J.K. Ralston in the Nutter Buiding.

4. SIDNEY:

Preserving Artistic Heritage

Continuing north, Sidney offers another reminder that eastern Montana has a rich artistic history.

The MonDak Heritage Center serves as both a museum and cultural gathering place for the region. Visitors will find art exhibits, historical collections, educational programs, and works by renowned western artist J.K. Ralston, whose paintings helped document and define the visual story of the American West. The institution itself traces its roots back to the original J.K. Ralston Museum and Art Center established in Sidney in the 1970s.

I often think about the role places like the MonDak Heritage Center play in Montana communities. They don't simply preserve objects. They preserve stories. *They help ensure that future generations understand who we were, what we valued, and how creativity helped shape our identity.*



Photos courtesy of MonDak Heritage Center website.



Photos courtesy of Fort Peck Theatre.



Photo by Briana Page.



5. FORT PECK:

Theater on the Prairie

The final stop on the Prairie Art Loop feels almost improbable.

Nestled along the Missouri River, the historic Fort Peck Theatre has been bringing performances to audiences since the New Deal era. What began during the construction of Fort Peck Dam evolved into one of Montana's enduring cultural institutions.

There's something inspiring about finding live theater in a place many people would never expect it.

Perhaps that's the lesson of eastern Montana as a whole.

Creativity doesn't require a large population. It doesn't require trendy neighborhoods or major cultural districts. It simply requires people who care enough to create something and share it with others.

Taking the Long Way



Art is often associated with destinations. Museums. Galleries. Concert halls.

But some of the most meaningful creative experiences I've had in Montana happened unexpectedly—while wandering a small-town main street, talking with a local artist, or discovering a piece of public art where I least expected to find it.

The Prairie Art Loop is a reminder that creativity exists everywhere in Montana.

Sometimes it's hanging on the walls of a museum built inside a former waterworks facility.

Sometimes it's cast in bronze along a downtown sidewalk.

Sometimes it's found in a theater on the prairie.

AND SOMETIMES IT'S SIMPLY WAITING FOR US TO SLOW DOWN LONG ENOUGH TO NOTICE IT.



By Allen Morris Jones, Montana Poet Laureate

Driving around Montana the last few months, working as a one-man traveling road show, talking poetry and storytelling to classrooms and communities, I've been struck, and struck again, by some pretty obvious insights. The price of gas (awful), the size of our state (impressive), and the varieties of Montana's ecological zones (extraordinary). Dodging whitetail between Seeley and Bigfork, mule deer between Grass Range and Winnett, when you lose a cell signal and have fresh time to chew over this or that, it's hard not to fall in love with Montana, again and again.

Pay attention.

How can you not be awed by the diversity of landscapes in Montana? In the Northwest, you've got your old growth cedar, larch, fir. Ferns and spongy moss. Dusky grouse and a hush in the woods. A sense of burgeoning life. Fecundity. In the East, you've got your sagebrush and sharptails, pronghorns and prickly pear. This is a part of the world where the presence or absence of water determines everything else. Stock ponds attract swallows, killdeer, muskrats stitching back and forth, a few raccoons plotting trouble. You can spot the failed homestead claims by the otherwise inexplicable shelter breaks squared around missing foundations.

The varieties of landscape are contrasted against the consistency of the people. No matter where you go, there's a familiar kindness, a fierce pride of place, a sense of appropriate ownership and unspoken reciprocation. There's the need to be a part of the larger community, and all that the word implies. Home is the place where, as Robert Frost said, when you have to go there, they have to take you in. It's also the place where you feel known, where you feel seen, where, stepping off the airplane, you can finally let your guard down.

We're facing uncertain days, living in a Venn overlap of competing catastrophes. Climate change simmering in one circle, the rise of agentic AI in another, and the weakening of American Democracy in another. In the center, a cigarette burn and the words, You are here. Hard not to turn cynical, jaded, distant. But then you look around. In Montana, no matter where you're heading, no matter what's in store, you're surrounded by neighbors, community, people you can count on and people who can count on you. As long as we don't let the poisonous talking heads on TV drive us apart, don't allow the politicians to demonize us for their own benefit, we will have each other.

This is what I think about when I turn on the cruise control and turn off Apple music. How grateful I am to live where I live, do what I do. And how thankful I am for the people *waiting down the road*.



Allen Morris Jones
Montana Poet Laureate

JONESITIS

I have this idea

that we're all undiagnosed

for some damn thing or another.

Is there a dull pain under your

breast? A stab when you breathe?

Take a breath for me. Good,

now cough. Loss and regret

and gratitude. The sense

of mourning when you stand

near the edge and stare down

at the sweep of humanity.

So many lives. The Greeks had

a word for it, or maybe the Japanese.

The fear of a swallow trapped

inside, flapping into the highest

corners of the kitchen. Love,

it's raining where I am. A gray mist,

cold and beautiful, and the porcelain

planters in the garden, cradling

the dahlias, keep collecting

the tears.

— Allen Morris Jones

CUI BONO

They want you arguing, the coils of you lit

and glowing, they want you sick with scorn,

burning with spite. Your harried neighbor

shopping now in the cereal aisle, fussy child

throwing her car keys; a distracted cashier

with swollen feet, struggling to make rent;

a hired man filling up his Ford at pump

number five, anxious about his test results.

They're your enemies. *Them*. Certainly not

the men (mostly men) turning knobs on the

algorithm, bros in Palo Alto who need you

to click, then keep clicking, raking it in, making

their nut from your outrage, milking it dry,

parasites rubbing sparks from your fear.

Not the senator desperate for your money,

politicians who need you to feel such anger

that you'll finally write a check. And not

the Russian proxy stoking coals, blowing

at the coals of your outrage. For my part,

neighbor, I would like to know you better.

Tell me, please, about your fragile hopes,

sprouting green, your growing fears taking

root. Talk to me, please. Who did you love

once? And why did you stop? Friend, tell me:

Why did you ever stop?

— Allen Morris Jones

Grants for Arts Education Move Forward

Arts learning opportunities flourish throughout Montana, giving learners of all ages and abilities the chance to study with professional teaching artists, experience live performing arts, make art with fellow creatives and so much more. In June the Montana Arts Council approved 44 awards in two Arts Education grant categories, Arts Education Residencies and Arts Education Experiences, providing a total of \$240,400 in support to organizations across the state. Another Residencies opportunity won't come around again until spring of 2027, though two Experiences grant deadlines are still on the horizon: **August 13** and **December 10**. To learn more or discuss your project idea, contact Arts Education Director Monica Grable at (406) 444-6522 or Monica.Grable@mt.gov.

Elizabeth Tritthart of Butte’s Phoenix Arts Alliance demonstrates loom weaving at the Imagine Butte Resource Center.



ARTS EDUCATION EXPERIENCES FY27, ROUND 1, GRANTS AWARDED

Organization	Project Name	Community	Awarded
Alberton School District	Indigenous Experience at Alberton School District	Alberton	\$2,500.00
Alpine Artisans, Inc.	Seeley Lake Cliff Nelson Theater Camp 2026	Seeley Lake	\$2,500.00
Bare Bait Dance	WestFEST New Works Festival and Intensive: Celebrating the Mountain West’s Movement Artists	Missoula	\$2,500.00
Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery	Art Education Outreach Program	Red Lodge	\$2,500.00
Cohesion Dance Project	Professional Development Dance Workshop for Early Childhood Educators	Helena	\$2,500.00
Ennis Schools	Pro Potter Instructs Students	Ennis	\$1,560.00
Golden Valley Community Foundation	Golden Valley Creative Arts Project/An Experience in Ancient Mosaic Tile Work	Ryegate	\$1,300.00
Land to Hand Montana	Hands in the Dirt Art Experiences	Whitefish	\$1,300.00
Links for Learning	Summer LINKS Art	Livingston	\$2,500.00
Missoula Writing Collaborative	Words with Wings and Rattlesnake Writing Workshop Summer Programs	Missoula	\$2,500.00
Noxon School District 10	Elevating Student Voices- Student Showcase Support	Noxon	\$2,490.00
Opera Montana (Formerly Intermountain Opera Association)	Opera Montana's Wheels of Harmony	Bozeman	\$2,500.00
Opportunity Resources Inc	Wheelchair Accessible Pottery Wheel	Missoula	\$2,500.00
Phoenix Arts Alliance	Weaving Cross-Continental Threads Of Dialogue	Butte	\$2,500.00
SMAAART	The First Annual Friday Club Theatre Production in Condon Montana	Condon	\$2,500.00
The Omerta Arts Syndicate	Helena Art Forms	Helena	\$2,500.00
Western Montana Professional Learning Collaborative	Place-Based Contemporary Indigenous Arts	Lolo/Missoula	\$2,500.00
Total Awarded			\$39,150.00

Organization	Project Name	Community	Awarded
A Voice	Our Community Record Two Eagle River School	Pablo	\$10,000.00
Alberton School District	Garden City Guitar Alberton School Residency Program	Alberton	\$4,200.00
Bare Bait Dance	Community Workshops at Westside Theater	Missoula	\$4,900.00
Billings Symphony Society	Tutti Behind Walls	Billings	\$7,650.00
Bozeman Art Museum	Exploring Creativity - Drawing In & Outside the Lines with the Bozeman Art Museum free art classes	Bozeman	\$8,000.00
Cohesion Dance Project	School and Community Outreach - Curriculum Development and Partner Expansion	Helena	\$9,500.00
Elk River Arts & Lectures	Elk River Arts and Lectures School Visit Series	Livingston	\$9,500.00
Holter Museum of Art	ArtLab	Helena	\$9,000.00
Lowell School Parent Teacher Association	Poets in Residency at Lowell Elementary School	Missoula	\$3,400.00
MAPS Media Institute	MAPS Media Institute - Fort Belknap Program (MAPS - FBIC)	Hamilton	\$10,000.00
Missoula Art Museum	MAM's Teen Art Project - A Public Art Community Storytelling Project: Do You Know Your Neighbors?	Missoula	\$8,000.00
Missoula Writing Collaborative	Writing Across Missoula	Missoula	\$8,500.00
Montana Repertory Theatre, University of Montana	Montana Repertory Theatre's 2026 Educational Tour	Statewide	\$9,000.00
Montana Shakespeare in the Parks	Fall 2026 Shakespeare in the Schools Tour of THE COMEDY OF ERRORS	Statewide	\$10,000.00
New Agrarian School	Intensive Blacksmithing Education	Bigfork	\$5,000.00
North Valley Music School	NVMS Artists in Schools Program	Whitefish	\$5,000.00
Opportunity Resources Inc	Artists of Opportunity Residency Program	Missoula	\$9,500.00
Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art	Lifelong Learning for Military and Seniors	Great Falls	\$7,900.00
Schoolhouse History & Art Center	Visiting Artists at SHAC	Colstrip	\$9,000.00
SPARK! Arts Ignite Learning	EL-8 Grade SPARK! Arts Integration Residencies Project	Missoula	\$9,500.00
Starlight Reunion	Industrial Arts Showcase and Block Party	Missoula	\$5,500.00
The Myrna Loy	Joseph Kekuku and the Voice of the Steel Guitar	Helena	\$4,800.00
The Omerta Arts Syndicate	Helena Art Forms	Helena	\$8,500.00
The Shane Lalani Center for the Arts	Youth Education Program	Livingston	\$9,000.00
Tinworks Art	Tinworks Art 2026 Artist in Residency	Bozeman	\$5,000.00
Young Poets, Montana State University Billings	Young Poets in Orchard & Bench Elementary with additional workshops at Billings Career Center	Billings	\$6,300.00
Zootown Arts Community Center	Teen Rock Club at ZACC	Missoula	\$8,350.00
		Total Awarded	\$205,000.00

ARTS EDUCATION RESIDENCIES FY27, GRANTS AWARDED

MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

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IN MEMORY OF...



PHILIP AABERG
1949 - 2026

Montana’s cultural history often advances in lifespans that define an era, and when one such life ends, we suddenly feel that the era has ended too. That’s how it felt with the passing of Philip Aaberg in late May, a surprise of sadness that such a spirit who’d reported on Montana through music for so long could suddenly fall silent.

The music, and the natural sounds that inspired it, of course, remain. “His music—I could close my eyes and I could see the landscape I grew up in,” Phil’s son Jake recently told KRTV News. The trickle of water, the low roll of trains, and the ever-present string section of wind in his Hi-Line hometown of Chester found their way into his elegant solo piano work. The opening notes of his debut album, *High Plains*, introduce a rhythm—generous, insistent—suggesting a warm day in wheat fields below snowy peaks wavering in the long heat. “On a clear day, you can see the Rockies a hundred miles away,” he once said. “I try to communicate that sense of distance and loneliness.” These musical images,

conjured from restraint, might lead the listener to underestimate Philip Aaberg’s great range.

Born in Havre in 1949, Phil’s early musical life was shaped by the post-war quiet of the Hi-Line, where isolation and landscape tuned his ear for what would become a signature style. His piano teacher was a seven-hour train ride to Spokane away, which he nevertheless made every few weeks. But his effort and skill paid off; Phil went on to attend Harvard University on a Leonard Bernstein scholarship, where he multitasked by studying classical music and playing in a bluegrass band—and rubbing shoulders with the Beach Boys.

The experience opened doors to popular music for him, and Phil found himself in the thick of collaboration with well-known talents during the three decades he lived in San Francisco. He toured and recorded with artists like Peter Gabriel and members of the Doobie Brothers; that’s him on piano in the song that many people will recognize him for the most: Elvin Bishop’s “Fooled Around and Fell In Love.”

Montana never left Phil’s mind though; *High Plains* was written and recorded in the Bay Area but drawn from memories of home. Released in 1985 on the Windham Hill label, the album began the work for which he is probably best known, capturing a sense of place and mood distinctly his own. He’d go on to record several more albums for Windham Hill before founding his own label, Sweetgrass Music, named for the iconic range of hills to the north of Chester. When he relocated to his hometown, it’s no accident that his studio was a repurposed grain bin. This iconic bit of Hi-Line architecture proved fertile ground for Philip’s subsequent recordings, as well as another enduring passion: teaching the next era of Montana performers.

Perhaps recalling the effort it took him to take piano lessons, Phil was generous with his own time and often tutored young musicians and was as happy giving concerts in rural schools as he was the great concert halls of Europe and America. Eric Funk, MSU professor and host of “11th & Grant with Eric Funk” has said, “Phil has constantly offered himself as a mentor, teacher, performer, adjudicator, and arts advocate while using his celebrity status to help with numerous fundraising events for myriad causes and organizations.”

Along the way, Philip collected numerous well-deserved accolades, including a Grammy nomination for his album *Live from Montana*, a pair of Emmy nominations, for PBS’s *All-American Jazz* and the soundtrack to *Class C: The Only Game in Town*, the Governor’s Arts Award, the Montana Arts Council’s Innovator Award, and an Honorary Doctorate in Music from Montana State University. He also served as a member of the governor-appointed state Arts Council.

Philip Aaberg’s true legacy, of course, is in his music and the friendships it forged, and in his lyrical advocacy for Montana’s landscapes and spirit. In a lifespan that should have been longer, an era of ferocious listening and gorgeous composing has closed. His grace notes now belong to the wind.

Phil Aaberg passed on May 23 at age 77. He is survived by his wife Patty, sons Sean, Michael, Daniel, Jake and his brother Steve. The family will host an open house celebration of Phil on Saturday, August 22 in their back yard at 1355 Mill Road, Helena. “We invite people to stop by and visit, and musicians are welcome to bring their instruments and play a tune,” Patty says.



Courtesy image.

“My art is my lifestyle; everything else is a byproduct.”

CHARLES JUDD RINGER JR.
1948 - 2026

For more than fifty years, Charles Judd Ringer Jr. transformed reclaimed steel, weathered machinery, and forgotten objects into works of art that reflected both craftsmanship and imagination. From his studio outside Red Lodge, he built a life devoted to creativity, curiosity, and the belief that almost anything could be given a second life.

Charles and his wife, Emily, met in Boulder, Colorado, in 1966 and married three years later. After traveling the country in a van with a studio trailer, they settled in Montana in 1971, purchasing an abandoned wrecking yard that they transformed into what is now the Charles Ringer Studio and Gallery. Over the next fifty-five years, the property became the center of Charles’s artistic life, where sculpture, invention, and experimentation came together in a landscape shaped by both industry and imagination.

An artist, welder, inventor, and lifelong tinkerer, Charles saw possibility where others saw scrap.

His sculptures invited viewers to look again—to discover beauty in worn steel, mechanical forms, and reclaimed materials that carried their own histories. He approached each new project with the same quiet curiosity that guided his life.

Those who spent time with Charles often remember his sense of wonder as much as his artwork. He delighted in reminding visitors that we are all “standing on a chunk of rock flying through the universe at ungodly speeds,” a reflection of the perspective and humor he carried into everyday conversations. Family members describe him as a teacher, a constant learner, and someone whose happiest places were his studio, the scrap yard, and the natural world surrounding them.

Charles Ringer died on March 20, 2026, at the age of 77. His legacy endures through the sculptures he created, the creative sanctuary he built with Emily, and the reminder that imagination has the power to transform even the most ordinary materials into something extraordinary.

SUMMER CALENDAR 2026

ANACONDA

St. Timothy's Memorial Chapel sttimothymusic.org		
	Montana Chamber Music Festival	July 12, 4:00 PM
	Gladstone & Quist	July 26, 4:00 PM
	The Lucky Valentines	August 9, 4:00 PM
	Floridis & Slayden Duo	August 23, 4:00 PM
Washoe Park cvmac.org		
	Art in Washoe Park	July 17-19, Daily
Washoe Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	August 25, 6:00 PM

AUGUSTA

Sun Canyon Lodge shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	August 11, 6:00 PM

BELGRADE

Peace Lutheran Church montanachambermusic.org		
	Montana Chamber Music Festival	July 14, 7:00 PM

BIG SANDY

Big Sandy High School mtactors.com		
	KidsMAT Camp	July 20-23, 9:00 AM

BIG SKY

Arts Council Studio at BASE bigskyarts.org		
	All Levels Pottery - 5 week session	Jul 20 - Aug 17, 6:00 PM
	All Levels Stained Glass - 5 week session	Aug 8 - Sept 9, 9:00 AM
	Intro to Water Colors	Jul 17 - Aug 28, 6:00 PM
	Soft Soldering Ring Making Workshop	July 1, 15 & 29, 7:00 PM
	Botanical Inks Workshop	August 1, 5:30 PM
Big Sky Town Center Plaza shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	July 25, 6:00 PM
Len Hill Park bigskyarts.org		
	Kenny Fiedler	July 16, 6:30 PM
	Pinky and The Floyd	July 23, 6:30 PM
	Billy Allen + The Pollies	July 30, 6:30 PM

	Magoo	August 6, 6:30 PM
	Mother Hips	August 13, 6:30 PM
	Object Heavy	August 20, 6:30 PM
	Armchair Boogie	August 27, 6:30 PM
	The Iron Maidens	September 3, 6:30 PM
Lone Peak Drive bigskyarts.org		
	Artisan Festival	July 18, 10:00 AM

BIGFORK

Bigfork Summer Playhouse bigforksummerplayhouse.com		
	The Newsies	Jul 1, 4, 9, 15, 21, 29, Aug 3, 7, 11, 16 & 22, 2:00 PM & 7:30 PM
	Young Frankenstein - the Musical	Jul 2, 7, 12, 18, 23, 31, Aug 6, 15 & 19, 8:00 PM
	The Music Man	Jul 3, 6, 10, 16, 19, 24, 28, Aug 1, 5, 8, 12 & 20, 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
	Mean Girls	Jul 8, 11, 14, 17, 22, 25, 30, Aug 4, 9, 13, 18 & 21, 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
	Benefit Revue & Gala	July 26, 7:00 PM
	Hits from the 50's, 60's, 70's & 80's	Aug 27-30 & Sept 3-5, 7:30 PM

BILLINGS

Alberta Bair Theater albertabairtheater.org		
	Chris Botti	July 15, 7:30 PM
	Bonnie Raitt: Live 2026	September 2, 7:30 PM
	The Rock Orchestra by Candlelight	September 12, 8:00 PM
	Kenny Wayne Shepherd	September 18, 7:30 PM
	Billings Symphony Presents: "Dvorak No. 8"	September 26, 7:30 PM
	Queen: It's a Kind of Magic	September 27, 7:30 PM
Crooked Line Studio crookedlinestudio.com		
	Sketchbook Studio for Kids	July 1, 8, 15 & 22, 9:30 AM
	Open Art	Mondays & Fridays, 6:00 PM & 10:00 AM
	Monday Night Painters with Carolyn Thayer	Mondays, 6:00 PM
	Mixed Media Meet Up	Thursdays, 6:00 PM
	Painting 102 with Carolyn Thayer	Thursdays, 6:00 PM
	Friday Painters with Carolyn Thayer	Fridays, 1:00 PM

	Intro to Abstract Painting with Katherine Jore	July 11 & 29, 6:00 PM
	Kids Summer Art Camp: Dungeon & Dragons	July 13, 14, 20, 21, 27 & 28, 9:30 AM
	Kids Summer Art Camp: Sculpt from the Heart	July 29, August 5, 12 & 19, 9:30 AM
Downtown Billings downtownbillings.com		
	Art Walk	August 7, 5:00 PM
 & 	Mexican Fiesta & Car Show	July 18, Daily

First Interstate Arena at Metrapark metrapark.com		
	Goo Goo Dolls Summer Tour 2026	July 30, 7:30 PM
	Luke Bryan	July 31, 7:00 PM
	Shinedown	August 12, 7:00 PM
	Chicago	September 30, 7:30 PM
Kirks' Grocery kirksgrocery.com		
Misc.	Open Mic Poetry Night	July 2 & 16, 7:00 PM

Last Chance Pub & Cider Mill downtownbillings.com		
	Counting Coup	July 16, 5:00 PM
Lutheran Church of Good Shepherd baroquemusicmontana.org		
	Baroque Quintessence!	August 24, 7:30 PM

NOVA Center for the Performing Arts novabillings.org		
	Readers Theatre	July 5, August 2, September 6, 5:30 PM
	Tiny Tot Theater Camp	July 6-10, August 3-7, 10:00 AM
	Acting Camp: Shakespeare	July 13-17, 9:00 AM
	Musical Theater Camp: Olympus the Greek Rock Musical	July 20-24, 9:00 AM
	NOVA Camp All In!	July 27-31, 9:00 AM
	Itty Bitty Camps: Pirates and Mermaids	August 10-14, 1:00 PM
	Itty Bitty Camps: Fairy Tale Forest	August 17-21, 1:00 PM
	Itty Bitty Camps: World of Wizardry	August 24-28, 1:00 PM

The Pub Station Ballroom thepubstation.com		
	Sara Evans	July 24, 8:00 PM
	James McMurtry and the Martial Law Review	August 4, 8:00 PM

	Static-X with Special Guest Dope & Render Me Silent	August 8, 8:00 PM
	Buffalo Traffic Jam - Pictures of You Tour	September 11, 8:00 PM
	The Band Perry	September 17, 8:00 PM
	Matthew Broussard	September 19, 8:00 PM
	Steve Hofstetter	September 30, 7:30 PM

The Pub Station Taproom thepubstation.com		
	North Fork Crossing	July 25, 8:00 PM
	Dying Wish	August 2, 7:00 PM
	Liam St. John	August 3, 8:00 PM
	Pulse 4	August 22, 8:00 PM
	Black Flag	September 10, 8:00 PM
	Joshua Ray Walker	September 13, 8:00 PM

Thirsty Street Brewing downtownbillings.com		
	Desperate Electric	July 23, 5:00 PM
Tiny's Tavern downtownbillings.com		
	Graveyard Spiral	July 30, 5:00 PM

Yellowstone Art Museum artmuseum.org		
	Of Neon & Bones	Now through February, 2027, Daily
	In a Nutshell	Now through October, 2026, Daily
	Folktales and Fanfare: The art of Janina Myronova	Now through August, 2026, Daily
	Embedded in the Overlap	Now through January, 2027, Daily
	Visions of America: The Spirit of Independence	Now through February, 2027, Daily

BIRNEY

Poker Jim Butte shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	July 18, 6:30 PM

BONNER

KettleHouse Amphitheater logjampresents.com		
	Tape B X Levity	July 17, 6:00 PM
	Avett Brothers	July 19, 8:00 PM
	Jordan Davis	July 23, 8:00 PM

	Maren Morris	July 25, 7:30 PM
	Wynonna Judd & Melissa Etheridge	July 28, 8:00 PM
	Young the Giant	July 29, 7:00 PM
	Josiah Queen	July 30, 8:00 PM
	Andy Grammer	July 31, 7:00 PM
	Jesse Welles	August 9, 8:00 PM
	Dirty Heads	August 10, 8:00 PM
	LCD Soundsystem	August 12 & 13, 8:00 PM
	STS9	August 14, 8:00 PM
	Caamp	August 17 & 18, 7:30 PM
	O.A.R.	August 19, 8:00 PM
	Alison Krauss & Union Station	August 20 & 21, 8:00 PM
	NeedtoBreathe	August 23, 7:00 PM
	Goose	August 24, 7:00 PM
	Mt. Joy	August 26, 8:00 PM
	Symphony on the River with Lettuce	August 28, 8:00 PM
	Bonnie Raitt	August 30, 8:00 PM
	Liz Phair & Sleater-Kinney	September 12, 8:00 PM
	Killswitch Engage	September 25, 6:30 PM
	Orville Peck	September 26, 8:00 PM

BOULDER

Jefferson County Fairgrounds | [shakespeareintheparks.org](#)

	The Merchant of Venice	September 2, 5:30 PM
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BOZEMAN

Backyard of Paul and Carrie | [baroquemusicmontana.org](#)

	Baroque Quintessence!	August 21, 7:30 PM
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Bozeman Art Museum bozemanartmuseum.org		
	Plein Air Montana 2026	July 19-25, Daily

Bozeman Library bozemanlibrary.org		
	Big Kid STEAM Play - Patchwork Quilts	July 1-12, Daily
	Preschool Storytime	Wednesdays & Fridays, 10:15 AM
	Read with a Dog	Wednesdays, 4:00 PM
	Baby Storytime	Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:15 AM
	Family Ballet	Fridays, 1:00 PM
	Teen Art Lab	Fridays, 4:00 PM

	Big Kid STEAM Play - Space Immersion Experience	July 12-26, Daily
	Tween Art Studio	Tuesdays, 3:45 PM
	Nonfiction Writers Group	Tuesdays, 5:30 PM
	Virtual Author Talk - Karin Slaughter	July 14, 5:00 PM
	Virtual Author Talk - Reyna Grande	July 16, 12:00 PM
	Bozeman Art Museum Plein Air	July 20, 1:00 PM
 & 	Music Together Storytime	July 21, 10:15 AM
	Tinworks Art Paper Puppets	July 27, 1:00 PM
	Big Kid STEAM Play - Clay Impressions	Jul 27-Aug 9, Daily
	Virtual Author Talk - Dr. Marisa Franco	July 28, 12:00 PM
	Clint Anderson and the Montana Gazette	August 2, 6:00 PM
	Bozeman Art Museum Art Play	August 3, 1:00 PM
	Cirquepalooza	August 14, 10:00 AM
	Big Kid STEAM Play - Rot-ology	August 10-16, Daily
	Classics Book Club	August 15, 10:15 AM

Bozeman Library sweetpeafestival.org		
	Sweet Pea Summer Art Show	August 7-9, Daily

Downtown Bozeman downtownbozeman.org		
	Downtown Art Walk	Jul 10, Aug 14 & Sept 11, 6:00 PM

Grant Chamberlain Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	September 8, 5:30 PM

Lindley Park sweetpeafestival.org		
 & 	Sweet Pea Festival	August 7-9, Daily

Live from the Divide livefromthedivide.com		
	Dale Watson	July 9, 8:00 PM
	Lukas Nelson	July 12, 9:00 PM
	Ken Pomeroy	July 14, 8:00 PM
	Coleman Jennings	July 19, 8:00 PM
	Rob Baird	July 21, 8:00 PM
	The Droptines	July 23, 8:00 PM
	Liam St. John	August 4, 8:00 PM
	Anna Tivel	August 12, 8:00 PM
	Joshua Ray Walker	September 11 & 12, 8:00 PM

Museum of the Rockies museumoftherockies.org		
	Frogs - A Chorus of Colors	Feb 6-Sept 7, Daily
	Annual Celebration of Art, Community, and Culture	Mar 20-Sept 7, Daily
	Carving the Backbone of the World: John L. “Cutapuis” Clarke	March, 2026-March, 2027, Daily
	Living History Farm	Memorial Day to Labor Day, Daily
Reynolds Recital Hall montanachambermusic.org		
	Montana Chamber Music Festival	July 18, 7:30 PM

The Ellen Theatre theellentheatre.com		
 & 	Metal + Mozart	August 22-23, 3:00 PM & 7:30 PM
	Pecha Kucha 51	September 9-10, 6:30 PM
	Steve Hofstetter	September 29, 7:30 PM

The Elm logjampresents.com		
	Paper Flowers	July 11, 8:00 PM
	Bad Napoleon	July 18, 8:00 PM
	Fitz & The Tantrums	July 28, 8:00 PM
	Cat Power	August 6, 8:00 PM
	Uncle Lucius	August 7, 8:00 PM
	STS9	August 15, 8:00 PM
	Beach Bunny	August 18, 8:00 PM
	Cannons	September 21, 8:00 PM
	Maria Bamford	September 25, 8:00 PM
	Deer Tick	September 29, 8:00 PM

Tinworks Art tinworksart.org		
	Summer Art Camps	July and August, 9:00 AM
	Chisel & Razor, Act 1 The Artistic Legacies of Edmonia & Samuel Lewis	Jun 19-Oct 31, Daily

Willson Auditorium bozemansymphony.org		
	Revolution & Revelry: Shostakovich 5	September 12, 7:30 PM & 9:30 PM
	Revolution & Revelry: Shostakovich 5	September 13, 2:30 PM & 4:30 PM

BROWNING

North American Indian Days Campground facebook.com		
	North American Indian Days	July 9-12, 6:00 PM

BUTTE

Stodden Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
  	Much Ado About Nothing	September 7, 5:30 PM
The Covellite Theatre covellitepresents.org		
	Paige and The People's Band	August 7, 7:00 PM
Uptown Butte montanafolkfestival.com		
	Montana Folk Festival	July 10-12, Daily
West Park Street mainstreetbutte.org		
 & 	Butte Farmers Market	May 16-Oct 10, 8:00 AM Saturdays

CARDWELL

1865 Highway 2 headwaterscountryjam.frontgatetickets.com		
	Headwaters Country Jam	July 23-25, Daily

CHARLO

Palmer Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	August 18, 6:00 PM

CHICO

Chico Main Lawn shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	July 21, 6:00 PM

CHOTEAU

Weatherbeater/TASGA Grounds shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	August 10, 6:00 PM

COLSTRIP

Schoolhouse History & Art Center colstripshac.org		
	Color Field, Ages 6-8	July 7-10, 12:00 PM
	Beaded Sun Catcher	July 14 & 15, 1:00 PM
	Color Theory Portraits, Ages 9-12	July 14-17, 12:00 PM
	Rothko Inspired Painting, Ages 13+	July 21-24, 12:00 PM

COLUMBUS

Columbus Community Congregational Church baroquemusicmontana.org		
	Baroque Quintessence!	August 23, 4:00 PM

Heritage Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	July 24, 6:00 PM

CONRAD

Swimming Pool Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	August 9, 6:00 PM

CROW AGENCY

Crow Fair Powwow Grounds crow-nsn.gov		
	Crow Fair	August 14-16, Daily

CUT BANK

Cut Bank City Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	August 13, 6:00 PM

DEER LODGE

Old Montana Prison Museum shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	July 31, 6:00 PM

EMIGRANT

The Old Saloon oldsaloonmt.com		
	Lukas Nelson	July 12, 7:00 PM
	Rattlesnake Milk + Cole Chaney	July 15, 7:00 PM
	Benjamin Tod + Leon Majcen	July 16, 7:00 PM
	Old Crow Medicine Show	July 18, 7:00 PM
	Sawyer Brown	August 6, 7:00 PM
	Reckless Kelly, Cody Canada & The Departed	August 15, 7:00 PM
	Lettuce - Cook Tour	August 29, 7:00 PM

ENNIS

Peter T’s Park ennisarts.org		
	30th Annual Madison Valley Arts Festival	July 25, 10:00 AM
Various Locations ennisarts.org		
	Art in the Garden Tour	August 15, 10:00 AM

EUREKA

Downtown Eureka sunburstarts.org		
 	Rails to Trails	July 11, 9:00 AM
Historical Village shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	August 15, 5:00 PM
Indian Springs Golf Course sunburstarts.org		
	Andrew Brozek	July 12, 5:00 PM

FORT BENTON

Chouteau County Library mtactors.com		
	KidsMAT Camp	August 3-6, 9:00 AM
City Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	August 6, 6:00 PM

FORT PECK

Fort Peck Summer Theatre fortpecktheatre.org		
	9 to 5	July 3-19, 4:00 PM & 7:30 PM
	The Music Man	Jul 24-Aug 9, 4:00 PM & 7:30 PM
	Blithe Spirit	August 14-30, 4:00 PM & 7:30 PM
	Performing Arts Camp	August 3-6, 9:00 AM
	Summer Theatre Showcase	August 6, 7:00 PM

GARDINER

Arch Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	July 22, 6:00 PM

GEORGETOWN LAKE

St. Timothy’s Memorial Chapel montanachambermusic.org		
	Montana Chamber Music Festival	July 12, 4:00 PM

GLASGOW

Evangelical Church fortpecktheatre.org		
	Performing Arts Camp	July 28-31, 9:00 AM

GREAT FALLS

Downtown Great Falls artsfestmontana.com		
	ArtsFest Montana	August, Daily
Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art the-square.org		
	Youth Pottery	July 7, 14, 21, 28, Aug 4, 11, 18 & 25, 4:00 PM
	Beginning Woodcarving	July 7, 14, 21, 28, Aug 4, 11, 18 & 25, 5:30 PM
	Homeschool Youth Pottery	July 8, 15, 22, 29, Aug 5, 12, 19 & 26, 10:30 AM
	Intermediate/Advanced Drawing (Adults)	July 6, 13, 20, 27, Aug 3 & 10, 10:30 AM
	Homeschool Adult & Child Pottery	July 9, 16, 23, 30, Aug 6, 13, 20 & 27, 6:00 PM
	Beginning Ceramics	July 9, 16, 23, 30, Aug 6, 13, 20 & 27, 10:30 AM
	Beginning Drawing (Adults)	July 9, 16, 23, 30, Aug 6 & 13, 5:30 PM
	Adult & Child Pottery	July 10, 17, 24, 31, Aug 7, 14, & 28, 6:00 PM
	Beginning Ceramics	July 11, 18, 25, Aug 1, 2 & 15, 4:00 PM
	Closing Reception and Artist Talk with Jesse Albrecht	September 11, 5:30 PM
	15th Annual Arts on Fire Festival	September 19, 10:00 AM

The History Museum montanachambermusic.org		
	Montana Chamber Music Festival	July 16, 7:00 PM
The Newberry thenewberrymt.com		
	Sons of Habit	July 15, 6:00 PM
	The Fray	July 19, 7:00 PM
	Uncle Lucius	August 9, 8:00 PM
	Aaron Watson	August 13, 7:30 PM
	The Steeldrivers	August 21, 7:30 PM
	The Legendary Wailers & The Skatalites	September 4, 7:30 PM
	The Iron Maidens	September 5, 7:30 PM
	Black Flag	September 11, 7:30 PM
	The Band Perry	September 16, 7:30 PM
	Matthew Broussard	September 18, 9:00 PM
	Jackyl	September 23, 7:30 PM
	Bingo Loco	September 26, 6:00 PM & 10:00 PM
	Theory of a Dead Man & Sevendust	September 28, 7:00 PM
University of Providence Campus shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	August 7, 6:00 PM
	The Merchant of Venice	August 8, 6:00 PM

GREYCLIFF

Greycliff greyclifffiberfest.com		
Fiber Art	Greycliff Fiber Festival	July 18-19, Daily

HAMILTON

Sapphire Lutheran Homes shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	August 29, 5:00 PM

HARLOWTON

Harlo Main harlomusicproject.com		
	Harlo Music Project Concert	August 8, 2:30 PM

HAVRE

Havre Library havrehilllibrary.org		
	Talks on Tuesdays	Tuesdays, 12:00 PM
Fiber Art	Yarn Circle	Fridays, 4:00 PM
Holiday Village Mall & Town Square chinookfriends.org		
	Havre Festival Days	September 18-20, Daily

MSUN/MAT Theatre mtactors.com		
	KidsMAT Camp	July 13-16, Daily
	KidsMAT Camp	August 10-13, Daily

HELENA

Anchor Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	August 3, 6:00 PM
	The Merchant of Venice	August 4, 6:00 PM
Anchor Park themyrnaloy.com		
	String & Shadow Puppet Theater	July 16, 7:00 PM
Archie Bray Gallery archiebray.org		
 	Brickyard Bash	July 25, 6:00 PM

Carroll College Lawn aliveatfivehelena.com		
	Madeline Hawthorne	July 15, 5:00 PM
Centennial Park lclibrary.org		
	Walk & Talk Book Club	Wednesdays, 10:00 AM
Cohesion Dance Project cohesiondance.org		
	Shira Greenberg’s Nutcracker on the Rocks Auditions	September 7-9

Coulter House baroquemusicmontana.org		
	Baroque Quintessence!	August 20, 7:30 PM
Archie Bray Foundation archiebray.org		
	Artist Amplified; Summer Residents Part II	August 13, 6:30 PM
	Artist Amplified; TBD	September 10, 6:30 PM

Holter Museum of Art holtermuseum.org		
	Life of Montana . . . As Ever	Jun 12-Aug 16, Daily
	Now, Next, Always: The Bray, 2000 – 2025	Jun 12-Aug 2, Daily

Lewis & Clark Brewing Company lctaproom.com		
	Cruz Contreras & The Black Lillies	July 9, 8:00 PM
	Tanner Usrey	July 12, 8:00 PM
	Nether Hour	July 16, 7:00 PM
	Whitney Morgan	July 18, 8:00 PM
	Deltaphonic	July 21, 7:00 PM
	Matt Axton and Bad Moon	July 26, 7:00 PM

	Whiskey Strut	July 30, 7:00 PM
	Silverada	August 3, 7:00 PM
	Mo Jam	August 15, 5:00 PM
	ZamTrip & American Hitmen	August 21, 7:00 PM
	Ten Years Gone	August 27, 7:00 PM

Lewis & Clark Taproom | aliveatfivehelena.com

	North Fork Crossing	July 29, 5:00 PM
	Too Slim & the Taildraggers	August 12, 5:00 PM

Lewis and Clark Library | lclibrary.org

	Books & Babies	Mondays, 10:30 AM
	Sensory Sprouts	Tuesdays, 10:00 AM
	Creative Sparks	Thursdays, 3:00 PM
	Preschool Storytime	Wednesdays, 10:30 AM
	Toddler Tales	Thursdays, 10:30 AM

Main Street Park | aliveatfivehelena.com

	Insufficient Funds Band	August 5, 5:00 PM
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The Myrna Loy | themyrnaloy.com

	Sturtz Duo w/ Heavy Diamond Ring	July 23, 7:30 PM
	Jalen Crossland	July 30, 7:30 PM

	To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything! Julie Newmar	August 4, 7:00 PM
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	Judy Carmichael	August 6, 7:30 PM
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	The Big Lebowski	August 13, 8:00 PM
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	James and the Giant Peach	August 20, 7:00 PM
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Various Studios | montanaclaytour.com

	Montana Clay Tour	July 25 & 26, 10:00 AM
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Women's Park | aliveatfivehelena.com

	Taylor & The Train Robbers	July 22, 5:00 PM
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	Lost Canyons	August 19, 5:00 PM
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JEFFERS

Trinity Episcopal Church | baroquemusicmontana.org

	Baroque Quintessence!	August 22, 7:00 PM
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KALISPELL

Downtown Depot Park | glacierartmuseum.org

	Arts In The Park	July 10-12, 10:00 AM
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Glacier Museum of Art | glacierartmuseum.org

	Where the Buffalo Roam Camp (Ages 6-10)	July 14-17, 10:00 AM
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	Time of the Tipi Rings Camp (Ages 10-14)	July 14-17, 1:00 PM
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	Feathered Friends Camp (Ages 6-10)	August 4-7, 10:00 AM
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	Flights of Fancy (Ages 10-14)	August 4-7, 1:00 PM
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Northwest Montana History Museum | nwmthistory.org

	Counting Coup: A True Story of Basketball and Honor on the Little Big Horn	September 2, 2:00 PM
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Wachholz College Center | shakespeareintheparks.org

	Much Ado About Nothing	August 14, 6:00 PM
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Wachholz College Center | wachholzcollegecenter.org

	Sierra Hull	July 14, 7:30 PM
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	Killer Queen: A Tribute to Queen	July 24, 7:30 PM
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	Sara Evans: We Got The Beat Tour	July 25, 7:30 PM
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	Marty Stuart & His Fabulous Superlatives	July 26, 7:30 PM
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	Old 97's	July 28, 6:30 PM
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	Great Bear Festival	August 8, 3:00 PM
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Misc.	Rob Schneider	September 17 & 18, 7:30 PM
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LAUREL

Town Square | shakespeareintheparks.org

	The Merchant of Venice	July 19, 6:00 PM
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LEWISTOWN

American Prairie National Discovery Center | montanachambermusic.org

	Montana Chamber Music Festival	July 15, 7:00 PM
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Creekside Park | centerfestmt.com

	Centerfest	August 1, 11:00 AM
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Fergus High School | montanacowboypoetrygathering.com

	Montana Cowboy Poetry Gathering & Western Music Rendezvous	August 6-9, Daily
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Main Street | lewistownchokecherry.com

Misc.	Chokecherry Festival	September 12, Daily
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LIBBY

Libby Elementary School | shakespeareintheparks.org

	The Merchant of Venice	August 16, 5:00 PM
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LINCOLN

Lincoln Community Room | lclibrary.org

	Storytime	Thursdays, 11:15 AM
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LIVINGSTON

Shane Lalani Center for the Arts | theshanecenter.org

	Summer Concert Series - Bo DePeña Band	July 16, 5:00 PM
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	Summer Concert Series - Maple	July 23, 5:00 PM
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	Summer Concert Series - Elana Hayden & The Sugar Daddies	July 30, 5:00 PM
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	One Love Livingston	July 25, 6:00 PM
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	Darrell Scott	August 1, 7:30 PM
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	Annual Spotlight Gala	August 22, 6:00 PM
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	Livingston Bluegrass Festival	September 18 & 19, Daily
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The Blake Pavilion at the Shane Center | shakespeareintheparks.org

	The Merchant of Venice	September 4, 6:00 PM
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MISSOULA

Bonner Park | missoulacityband.org

	Missoula City Band Summer Concert Series	July 1, 8, 15, 22, 25, 29, August 5 & 12, 7:30 PM
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Downtown Missoula | missoulaevents.net

Art & 	First Friday Art Walk	Jul 3, Aug 7, Sept 4, 5:00 PM
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Missoula Art Museum | missoulaartmuseum.org

	Summer Camp: Art Mash-Up! Create, Collect & Imagine	July 13-17, 9:00 AM
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	Summer Camp: Draw It. Stamp It. Print It. BOOM.	July 20-24, 9:00 AM
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	Summer Camp: Gallop Into Art: Wild Horses! Wild Art!	July 27-31, 9:00 AM
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	Summer Camp: Print Lab: Exploring Process, Play, And Personal	August 10-14, 9:00 AM
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Missoula Children's Theatre | mctinc.org

	The Jungle Book Day Camp	July 13-17, 9:00 AM
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	The Jungle Book Performance	July 17, 4:00 PM & 6:00 PM
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	Alice in Wonderland Day Camp	July 20-24, 9:00 AM
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	Alice in Wonderland Performance	July 24, 4:00 PM & 6:00 PM
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	Peter and Wendy Day Camp	July 27-31, 9:00 AM
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	Peter and Wendy Performance	July 31, 4:00 PM & 6:00 PM
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	Stellaluna	September 19, 6:00 PM
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	The Frog Prince Production Class	September 9-23, 4:00 PM
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	The Frog Prince Performance	September 23, 5:00 PM
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	Fossil Fun with Paleontologist Kallie Moore	July 13, 2:00 PM
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	Raptors of the Rockies	July 25, 1:00 PM
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	Montana Dinosaurs 101	July 29, 1:30 PM
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Monks Bar | monksbarmt.com

	Mighty Mystic Sky's The Limit Tour	July 26, 7:00 PM
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	Indigipalooza Dead Pioneers	July 31, 8:00 PM
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Radius Gallery | radiusgallery.com

	Christian Benoit, Elyse Harrison, and Ann Shure	Jun 12-Jul 18, Daily
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	Printmaking exhibit with Jason Clark, Jonathan, Fitz, Katie Machain, and Dagny Walton	Jul 17-Aug 22, Daily
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	Solo exhibit with Lillian Nelson	Jul 24-Aug 15, Daily
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	Stephanie J. Frostad, Amy Brakeman Livezey, and Sean O'Connell	Aug 21-Sept 26, Daily
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	Solo exhibit with Jen Fujimoto	Aug 28-Sept 19, Daily
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	LeAnn Boyd, Jessie Kristy, Olivia Tani, Tara Wilson	Sept 25-Oct 28, Daily
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Riverside Parking Lot | clarkforkmarket.com

	Clark Fork Market	May-September, 8:00 AM Saturdays
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The UM Oval | shakespeareintheparks.org

	The Merchant of Venice	August 27, 6:00 PM
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	Much Ado About Nothing	August 28, 6:00 PM
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The Wilma | logjampresents.com

	Steve Earle	July 20, 8:00 PM
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	Indigipalooza MT	August 1, 7:00 PM
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	Uncle Lucius	August 6, 8:00 PM
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	Osees	September 5, 8:00 PM
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	Paper Flowers	September 11, 8:00 PM
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Misc.	Broad Comedy	September 24, 8:00 PM
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U of M Campus | montanaweavespin.org

Fiber Art	A Thread Runs It	June 16-21, Daily
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Washington–Grizzly Stadium logjampresents.com		
	Jelly Roll & Post Malone	July 21, 7:30 PM
Zootown Arts Community Center zootownarts.org		
	Sturtz Duo w/ Heavy Diamond Ring	July 22, 7:30 PM
	Hudson Power Company	July 27, 7:30 PM
	Nick Shoulders w/ Forthcoming	July 31, 8:00 PM
	James McMurtry w/ Bettysoo	August 1, 8:00 PM
	Bart Budwig w/ Junior	August 9, 7:30 PM
	Silkworm w/ Sasha Bell Band	August 25, 8:00 PM
	Joe Kaplow's Homestead Gold w/ Izaak Opatz	September 2, 8:00 PM

Paradise Valley		
Pine Creek Lodge pinecreeklodgemontana.com		
	Lucero	July 15, 7:00 PM
	Andy Frasco & The U.N.	July 16, 7:00 PM
	The Last Revel with Western Wallflower	July 17, 7:00 PM
	Of Monsters & Men	July 18 & 19, 7:00 PM
	Holland Dotson & Kohl Johnathon	July 22, 7:00 PM
	Clay Street Unit	July 24, 7:00 PM
	Steve Earle	July 25, 7:00 PM
	Blue Öyster Cult	July 26, 7:00 PM
	The Travelin' McCourys	July 29, 7:00 PM
	Nick Shoulder - Apocalypse, Never! Tour	July 30, 7:00 PM
	Futurebirds	Jul 31 & Aug 1, 7:00 PM
	James McMurtry	August 2, 7:00 PM
	Daniel Donato's Cosmic Country	August 5, 7:00 PM
	Larry Keel Experience with Buffalo Galaxy	August 6, 7:00 PM
	The Brothers Comatose	August 7, 7:00 PM
	Sister Sadie	August 9, 7:00 PM
	The Mother Hips	August 12, 7:00 PM
	Shadowgrass	August 15, 7:00 PM
	Satsang	August 16, 7:00 PM
	Gov't Mule	August 18, 7:00 PM
	Jen Robinson	August 19, 7:00 PM

	Honey Island Swamp Band	August 20, 7:00 PM
	The Infamous Stringdusters	August 21, 7:00 PM
	Abby Webster with Driftwood	August 23, 7:00 PM
	Zoso with Dan Dubuque	August 26, 7:00 PM

Philipsburg		
Winninghoff Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	August 26, 6:00 PM

Polson		
Lake County Courthouse Lawn sandpiperartgalleryandgifts.com		
	Courthouse Art Festival	August 8, Daily
Miracle of America Museum miracleofamericamuseum.org		
	Live History Days Celebration	July 18-19, 9:00 AM

Polson Fairgrounds Amphitheater shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	August 17, 6:00 PM

Sacajawea Park sandpiperartgalleryandgifts.com		
	Flathead Lake Festival of Art	July 18 & 19, Daily
Sandpiper Art and Gift Gallery sandpiperartgalleryandgifts.com		
	Backroads of Montana	Jun 22-Sept 5, Daily
	Big Sky Grit and Glamour	Sept 5-Nov 7, Daily

Pony		
Pony Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	September 5, 5:00 PM

Red Lodge		
Broadway Street redlodgeartwalk.org		
	Red Lodge Art Walk	Jul 11, Aug 8, Sept 12, 3:00 PM
Lions Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	July 11, 6:30 PM

Rexford		
Abayance Bay Marina abayancebaymarina.com		
	New Wave Time Trippers	July 11, 7:00 PM
	Rylee Mix	July 16, 6:00 PM
	Super Diamond	July 18, 8:00 PM
	Rick Gerber	July 22, 6:00 PM
	Ten Band - Pearl Jam Tribute	July 25, 8:00 PM
	Halladay & Rob Quist	August 1, 8:00 PM

	Jamie Wyman Band	August 5, 6:00 PM
	BC/DC - AC/DC Tribute	August 8, 7:00 PM
	Jordan Lane	August 12, 6:00 PM
	The Last Revel	August 21, 8:00 PM
	Ghosts of Ednor	August 26, 6:00 PM
	Zoso	August 29, 7:45 PM
	Michelle Rivers and Hannah King New Album Release	September 1, TBA

Rocky Boy		
Rocky Boy Powwow Grounds havrechamber.com		
	Rocky Boy Powwow	Jul 31-Aug 2, Daily

Roundup		
Roundup City Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	July 20, 6:00 PM

Seeley Lake		
Double Arrow Resort shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	August 24, 6:00 PM
Seeley Lake Community Foundation alpineartisans.org		
	Loon and Fish Art Show and Festival	July 17-19, Daily

	Open Book Club presents Nicholas Triolo	August 8, 7:00 PM
	Open Book Club presents Mark Gibbons	September 12, 7:00 PM
Various Locations alpineartisans.org		
	Nature of Art Workshops	September 11-13, 9:00 AM

Silver Gate		
Silver Gate Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	July 12, 6:30 PM

Stanford		
Stanford Fairgrounds cmrstampede.com		
	CMR Stampede Quick Finish Art & Auction	July 18-19, Daily

Townsend		
Heritage Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	September 6, 5:00 PM

Trego		
The Trego Pub backwoodsaccordionfestival.com		
	The Backwoods Accordion Festival	July 18, 2:00 PM

Trout Creek		
Trout Creek Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	August 23, 5:00 PM

Twin Bridges		
Riverside Park shakespeareintheparks.org		
	The Merchant of Venice	August 31, 5:30 PM

Virginia City		
Virginia City Opera House umwestern.edu		
	The Bat! A Murder Mystery Melodrama	Jun 17-Jul 19, 2:00 PM, 4:00 PM, 7:00 PM
	Vaudeville's Greatest Hits	Jul 24-Aug 2, 2:00 PM, 4:00 PM, 7:00 PM
	Xantippe! A Western Melodrama	Aug 5-Sept 6, 2:00 PM, 4:00 PM, 7:00 PM

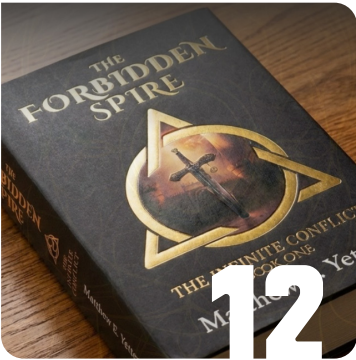
West Yellowstone		
Pioneer Park destinationyellowstone.com		
	Music in the Park - Red	July 18, 7:00 PM
	Music in the Park - North Fork Crossing	August 7, 6:30 PM
	Music in the Park - Austin English	August 15, 6:30 PM

White Sulphur Springs		
Castle Museum Lawn shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	September 3, 5:30 PM
Red Ants Pants redantspantsmusicfestival.com		
	Red Ants Pants	July 23-26, Daily

Whitefish		
Big Mountain Ranch underthebigskyfest.com		
	Under the Big Sky	July 17-19, Daily
	Caleb Meyer	August 6, 5:00 PM
	Amy Lay	September 3, 5:00 PM
Various Galleries whitefishgallerynights.org		
	Whitefish Gallery Nights	Jul 2, Aug 6, & Sept 3, 5:00 PM

Whitefish Theatre Company whitefishtheatreco.org		
	The Music of Queen: A Tribute Concert	July 24-26, 8:00 PM
	The Music of Heart: A Tribute Concert	August 14-16, 8:00 PM
Whitehall		
Star Theatre - Main Street Green shakespeareintheparks.org		
	Much Ado About Nothing	September 1, 5:30 PM

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